

The birth of a boost book

Collecting best practices in translators' associations

Iztok Ilc

Every association encounters problems and obstacles of all sorts from time to time. How to solve them? Asking somebody who has gone through the same ordeal for advice is of course sensible, but it would be much easier to have many examples of good practices gathered together in one place. This is the goal of our [Best Practices Working Group](#).

The turning point was our meeting in Bucharest in February 2018 where Ika Kaminka ([Norsk Oversetterforening](#)), who was coordinator at the time, proposed building some sort of a web page or a blog with all the useful information about running an association. We started with the premise that a lot of useful information is hidden in the annual activity reports that every member association sends to CEATL. But it's not very realistic to expect people looking for a solution to read pages of texts which includes information that isn't relevant to them. It is like looking for a needle in a haystack.

After a fruitful discussion on how to organize this kind of "big data"

Ika, Shaun Whiteside ([Translators' Association](#)), Lavinia Braniste (ART LIT) and I ([DSKP](#)) decided upon a basic structure which revolves around three major issues: recruiting and keeping the membership, financing and lobbying. Then the monumental task of sifting through the annual reports began. It was a necessary yet tedious task to get a broad picture of just about everything related to these three topics: what do associations offer to their members; are membership fees the same for everybody or is there a diversification according to the status of a member (student, retired, associated member, full member); where do associations get their funds, how do they deal with bureaucracy and politicians when they want to bring up a specific problem for discussion, etc.

“The goal is to collect concrete examples of good practices”



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During conversations with colleagues some problems stood out from others: the most pertinent for all associations is how to recruit new members, how to persuade them to be part of an association in times when such structures seem old-fashioned, how to secure funding and how to improve the general acknowledgment for the work of literary translators.

Instead of endless lamenting about jaded association members, troubles with money and general political ignorance, the goal of our group is to collect concrete examples of good practices, as many as possible even on a single theme. Although we are aware that cultural/political situations in our countries are different and therefore not all practices can be directly transplanted everywhere, in this way associations can see various examples of problem-solving and try them out.

Our project, called Association Boost Book, was thus born and our plan more or less set. Having been initially concerned that it was overambitious, these fears were allayed at the CEATL

2018 AGM in Copenhagen with the inclusion of Eva Valvo ([STRADE](#)), Francesca Novajra ([AITI](#)) and Kalina Janeva ([MATA](#)). Simina Popa (ART LIT) also joined our group at the CEATL 2019 AGM in Norwich.

When we presented the first draft at CEATL's annual general meeting in Norwich (2019), the response from colleagues was very positive. Some technical questions still have to be solved, primarily where the page should be stored, and how it should be accessed. At this point I would like to invite my CEATL colleagues to share their stories, material from good vibes sessions, minilabs or anything which might be useful for the others, in line with the old adage *A trouble shared is a trouble halved*.