



Flanders
State of the Art

HOW TO DEVELOP A CONFERENCE WITH A LEGACY

A GUIDE

VISITFLANDERS



THE AFRICAN MUSEUM, TERVUREN

The elements of **association 1.0** are used as a basis by many associations. An **association 2.0** puts its members first, which is obviously crucial for a member organisation. An **association 3.0** offers opportunities to tackle the challenges that an association 2.0 encounters: a customer-oriented approach instead of focusing on the involvement of members or the continuous broadening of advocacy so that everyone continues to recognise themselves in the association.

According to the association 3.0 model, a **modern association** is characterised by:

- A clear vision on the future of the industry or profession

- A focus on social issues and proactive advocacy
- A position of authority in terms of knowledge and data
- An intermediary role in innovation
- Services and a training programme that are in line with a strategy or combined in an autonomous body
- A decisive and flexible association organisation
- A hybrid business model

More information [cooperationnext.nl](#) (only in Dutch)

1.4.3 OPEN EMPOWERED COMMUNITY

An organisation that wants to develop a conference with a legacy is a **strong, open and connected community (open empowered community)**. This vision can also be applied to how the conference's local organising committee functions.

-> See **Tip: How to start with a strong LOC?**



An open empowered community is united around a **collective ambition**. **Collective** refers to all the members. In addition to everyone involved who is cooperating based on a shared, common responsibility. This is more than a 'mission', which often mainly focuses on the organisation. Instead, the ambition focuses on the intended impact and effects. A collective ambition is inspiring and motivating, as is also the case when entering into partnerships.

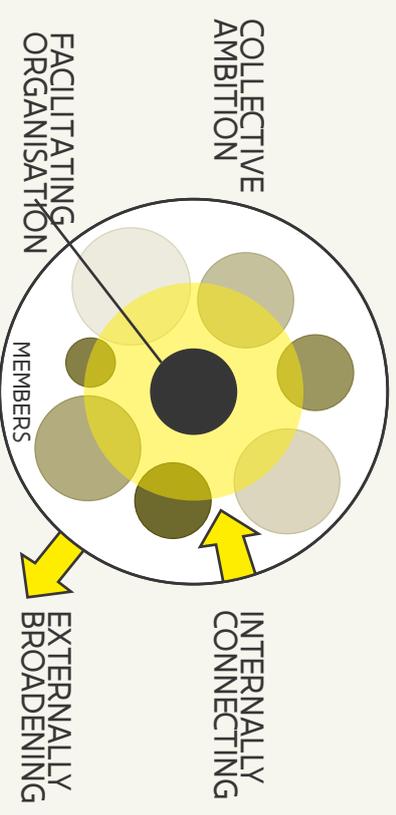
In addition, 'internal connection' and external broadening are the two most important activities/roles of an open empowered community:

The **internal connection** of the members, supporters, not (just) by 'servicing' or approaching members as customers, but by actively involving them and capitalising on their strengths. This benefits the members themselves as well as the organisation as a whole and its social relevance.

You focus on members' knowledge and strength with the aim of connecting personal ambitions with the desire to work with others to make a real difference. The identity of the members of a community, moreover, is defined in relation to the other members and what connects them.

As an association, you should not only look over the wall of your association and observe, but also actively, and preferably even pro-actively, interact with the 'outside world'. That is what **external broadening** means. Member loyalty does not just imply a connection between the organisation and the member, but also between members themselves and between members and the 'outside world'. The value of the community therefore no longer consists of bringing together as many similar members as possible, but of the connections between members who are very diverse. The members also connect with external actors and partners inspired by the same collective ambition.

OPEN EMPOWERED COMMUNITY



As an association you must do more than just organise conferences and provide services. You must have a **facilitating organisation** to make a difference in your field, with your members, etc.

A network is not a community

NETWORK	VS.	COMMUNITY
Connecting		Belonging
Communication		Interaction
Information and knowledge		Empowerment
Participating		To contribute to
Nice experiences		Giving a purpose
Feeling of safety		Discovering the future
Quantity		Quality
Self-organised		Consciously organisation
Opportunity of advantages (what's in it for me?)		Solidarity/looking care of all members
No membership (maybe pay-as-you-go)		Membership fee (package of services to unburden)
Stand alone		Part of a bigger group (ecosystem)
Value = connection between 2 dots		Value = relation between 2 dots

These models were developed by [Marc Mestdagh](#) (in Dutch only): association adviser, community expert and founder of the [BSAE](#) (in Dutch only).

EXAMPLES:

- communicating to participants or local residents compared with ensuring interaction with participants and residents;
- passive listener or participant compared with actively contributing to solutions or thinking along to solve practical challenges;
- a large number of participants (quantity) compared with participants to build qualitative and effective expertise or initiate a change in mindset;
- pay-as-you-go to participate in the conference compared with a fee to participate and acquire even more knowledge later; participate in working groups etc.;
- a conference as a 'fun experience' compared with a conference with a purpose;
- etc.

ROADMAP: HOW TO DEVELOP A CONFERENCE WITH A LEGACY?

