

## SECTION 4

### MEMBER RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION ACTIVITIES AND RESOURCES

#### Attracting members

#### **What activities and resources do you use to attract members and to encourage them to remain in the association?**

One of the key conditions for the existence of any organised group or association is that it is able to attract new members and retain their membership for as long as possible, and this applies equally to language teacher associations. The following list of concrete suggestions, compiled from international sources, is primarily intended to advise newly-founded associations on the most efficient ways to gain and retain new members – though it may also prove useful to organisations that are already well established. We received a large number of responses offering a wealth of relevant experiences, which can be separated into two categories: 1) advice on the different ways in which associations can be publicised, and 2) special initiatives and key thematic areas that associations can focus on in order to make membership worthwhile. These categories are set out below and illustrated with selected case studies.

#### **1. Different ways of publicising associations**

For most associations, the question of how best to attract and retain new members is central to their work. Associations owe their existence to their members, and need to be able to count on the assistance of a body of reliable, long-term supporters in order to meaningfully carry out their activities. Equally, membership fees are the main source of funding for the majority of associations, most of which are run on a voluntary basis. This stable income forms the basis of their activities, and is only occasionally partly supplemented by other revenue sources such as sponsorship, conference attendance fees, individual initiatives led by the association or subsidies from educational policy programmes and organisations. Over the last few years language teacher associations have also begun to experience a certain degree of competitive pressure when it comes to attracting new members – a growing trend as the total number of such associations is increasing.

For these reasons, it is increasingly important that associations are able to effectively present themselves to the world and communicate the advantages that come with membership. Associations exploit their full creative potential to this end, as well as making use of all the different communication channels available to them. The most important of these at present is undoubtedly the association website, where the association's self-presentation is usually prominently displayed and accessible to a wide audience at the touch of a button. However printed materials, brochures, leaflets, folders and posters are all still relevant and are distributed at large conferences, information meetings and official functions.

“We advertise indirectly through our website, which we attempt to make as attractive as possible. We also have an information brochure about our association which we make available at any large conferences, as well as posters which we display at conferences and meetings.” **(IDV)**

“We have a website on which we post all information regarding professional opportunities, as well as information related to meetings. Also, we maintain a contact person in each school, and this person informs young teachers about the association. Moreover, there are monthly meetings to which non-members are also invited and they are free to join the association. Invitations to these monthly meetings are sent per fax or e-mail to the secretary’s office of each school in the county, who then informs the chairperson of the language department, who then in turn informs the members. Also, our e-mail addresses are in the database of the association’s secretary and we get e-mails sent to us regarding all things of interest.” **(RATE - Romanian Association of Teachers of English)**

“Our website, newsletter, our executive members promote when they are presenting or meeting with teachers in the field.” **(BC Association of Teachers of Modern Languages Canada)**

“We send folders to schools where we introduce ourselves. We also send e-mails to offices to schools and ask them to distribute the information on our home page and association to the language teachers.” **(Fransklaererfoeningen, Norway)**

“We send out our journal to a number of schools and to high school English teaching coordinators with information about our newest programmes. We also inform the English Department’s Alumni club and various other organizations that might spread the news about our programmes.” **(TEA Teachers of English in Austria, Austria)**

“By organising activities in the usual manner as well as by presenting the ARPF through posters, leaflets, on our website and on Facebook we have been able to make our organisation known throughout Romania” **(ARPF - Association Roumaine des Professeurs de Français, Romania)**

“Retaining members is done mostly through the sections, attractive pamphlets and presentations in Esperanto events aim to attract new members. Our message to the wider Esperanto community is the vital role of language teaching in creating the new generations of Esperanto speakers.” **(International League of Esperantist Teachers, ILET / Internacia Ligo de Esperantistaj Instruistoj ILEI.)**

Face-to-face information events and personal communication are also still just as important for publicising associations and presenting their work.

“Members are recruited during the face to face communication, meetings, the European Language Day events, conferences, workshops, discussions etc. Information about

recruitment of new members can be found on our website.” (**LKPA - Language Teachers’ Association of Lithuania**)

“New teachers are approached directly by colleagues who are already members, and are also invited to various meetings and training courses. Association members teach at universities as well as at primary and secondary schools.” (**Félag Þýzkukennara - Der isländische Deutschlehrerverband, Iceland**)

Many associations also encourage young and prospective language teachers to become members. These can expect to receive a number of benefits and support for their continuing professional development.

“The Committee approaches teachers who are interested in joining the Association. These are often young teachers.” (**Association des Professeurs de Français de Malta**)

Associations often charge varying membership rates in order to remove financial obstacles from the path of anyone interested in joining. In these cases, only professionally well-established members are required to pay the full rate, whereas trainee and early career language teachers as well as retired or emeritus members are eligible for a reduction.

“We offer less expensive memberships to beginning (up to 3 years) teachers and have a fund to help financially challenged teachers pay for their dues.” (**American Association of Teachers of German, USA**)

However there is plenty of direct and indirect evidence that members make a return on their membership fees in the end – whether through receiving free publications, discounted admission to association events or other benefits. It also appears that the two previously mentioned phenomena of personal contact with future association members and discounted admission to events both help to create a sense of solidarity within the professional association and can have a very positive effect.

“What works best is to approach people directly with arguments in favour of membership. Reduced admission charges for members at events also have a positive effect, as do competitions, but word of mouth remains the most effective form of publicity.” (**Slovenischer Deutschlehrerverband SDUNJ, Slovenia**)

Sometimes the desire to be able to reach more potential members remains unfulfilled:

“It would be important to have a good data base of actual names of English teachers to send information to as usually it seems to get lost in the general SPAM that teachers receive via email or the information is not passed on to others within a department in a school.” (**TEA Teachers of English in Austria, Austria**)

## **2. Special initiatives and key thematic areas as factors making membership worthwhile**

Language teacher associations offer a broad range of both long-term initiatives and one-off creative events in order to attract members and to make it worthwhile for them to remain in the association. The activities of an association include training of all kinds, which ranges from large national and international academic conferences and seminars to regional meetings, local courses and study groups. In all of these events the opportunity to make personal contacts plays an important role. For example, the International Conference of German Teachers assembles around three thousand German teachers from all over the world, providing a global forum for the exchange of knowledge. During the conference participants are divided into thematic groups and spend a week working in intensive collaboration, allowing them to get to know each other on a personal level.

“Our most effective publicity comes from the conferences that we initiate and co-organise – from the International Conference of German Teachers (IDT) to regional conferences, as well as in recent years the German Olympiad for schoolchildren, which is growing in importance.” **(IDV)**

“Conferences are our biggest means of attracting members. Participants must join the organization in order to attend our conferences. We also produce resources aimed at assessment or administration and are now tying in organizational memberships in order to have widespread access to those resources.” **(Canadian Association of Second Language Teachers)**

“Our biggest membership drive usually happens with our conference, that only takes place once every two years. Probably if we were to have the conference every year we could recruit more members.” **(TEA Teachers of English in Austria, Austria)**

“Our association is the only training centre in Portugal offering specialist training courses for German teachers.” **(APPA Portugal)**

“Conferences and training courses allow us to come into contact with teachers of German as a second or foreign language” **(AKDAF - Arbeitskreis Deutsch als Fremdsprache in der Schweiz, Switzerland)**

“ELTA organises regional and national conferences and workshops to help teachers grow professionally. ELTA members are given the possibility to participate in workshops and conferences in other sister associations in the region. ELTA is following the strategy to be near the language teachers wherever they are to meet their needs and interests in teaching. As for recruitment ELTA Albania has set up ELTA branches in almost all the cities in Albania, which keep track of the latest teaching methods. We raise awareness for the benefits ELTA offers to the English language teachers through our web page, ELTA magazine and different publications concerning language teaching.” **(English Language Teachers Association in Albania)**

“Having language conferences both locally and on a larger scale. And in different parts of the country.” **(LMS-Sweden)**

“Our conference is now staged annually as it brings about a notable increase in membership applications, as well as an excellent opportunity to collect outstanding membership fees. We always try to develop an attractive programme with well-known guests from Portugal and beyond, and we also invite colleagues to share their experiences.” (**Associação Portuguesa Dos Professores De Francês-APPF Portugal**)

“Every month we offer seminars, workshops and exchange meetings. Our events are also publicised through the Goethe Institut’s Educational Cooperation Programme.” (**Türkiye Almanca Öğretmenleri Derneği / Türkischer Deutschlehrerverein, Turkey**)

“Each year in November we organise the National French Week which is intended to promote the French language throughout the USA. We also stage a National French Contest which sees 100,000 primary and secondary school pupils take tests in French at various levels. Our annual conference, which takes place in July (in 2011 in Montreal and in 2012 in Chicago), is attended by between 300 and 800 people with guests invited from several countries.” (**American Association of Teachers of French (AATF), USA**)

“We invite both elementary school teachers as well as secondary school teachers to our events, and try to make sure that they are held at times during which both bodies can attend. This summer our summer course, a one-week writing workshop, is held in cooperation with the University and carries University credit, and is thus open to University students as well. We hope that this mixing of the generations will encourage students to join our association when they eventually become teachers.” (**The Association of Foreign Language Teachers of Iceland**)

“Our activities are designed with the aims of the association in mind, which are as follows: 1) to carry out research in the field of language pedagogy and to pilot innovative classroom practices; 2) to provide training to language teachers in line with the principles of linguistic pedagogy as well as the guidelines issuing from the work of the Council of Europe; 3) to disseminate research findings and best classroom practice; 4) to support plurilingual education by all means possible, from putting forward concrete proposals to contesting official guidelines. In view of these aims, we prioritise training opportunities on a local, regional and national level, which allow teachers to learn about the work of the association and offer members the chance to share their experiences with each other. Our website and our journal are also important resources for the work of the association.” (**LEND – Lingua e Nuova Didattica – Italy**)

“Our most popular events are: local and regional training and professional development courses and workshops, which mainly take place at weekends (8-16 hours); training courses for young teachers (1-2 weeks during the summer holidays); and annual national conferences (3 days) at which everyone has the opportunity to attend all the

plenary presentations as well as 4-5 workshops.” (**DVR – Deutschlehrerverband Rumäniens, Romania**)

Most conferences are open to the wider public, but some are organised exclusively for association members. Where non-members are admitted the admission fee varies according to membership status.

“We organise conferences for our members as well as competitions for teachers and students.” (**Association lituanienne des professeurs de français, Lithuania**)

“Regular teacher training seminars are publicised in the local newspapers and teachers can only attend if they join the association or renew their membership. Some of these events are run by internationally renowned figures and thus they attract new members.” (**Malta Association of Teachers of English as a Foreign Language - MATEFL**)

Although members appear to find it valuable to participate in such events, in a few cases attendance is mandatory:

“In order to retain their jobs, all German teachers are required to attend training courses at the Goethe Institut in Almaty or in Germany and to take part in the German teacher conferences. Schoolchildren and students of German have greater opportunities to work or study in German speaking countries, and this provides excellent publicity for the German language and for the DLV.” (**DLV, Kazakhstan**)

Association members are able to share their experiences and access professional development opportunities on the academic level through publications, which associations normally see as one of their most important activities. Conference proceedings are usually (though not always) published by the associations themselves, either on paper in traditional printed format or in online editions – with the latter becoming increasingly common.

“The Italian Association of Germanists’ online magazine *BAIG* is the primary medium for the publication of conference proceedings.” (**AIG – Associazione Italiana di Germanistica, Italy**)

Many associations regularly publish a journal or newsletter. These are usually free for their members, or can only be received once membership fees have been paid.

“1-2 times per year we publish the specialist magazine *DaFiU – Deutsch als Fremdsprache in der Ukraine* (German as a Foreign Language in Ukraine).” (**UDGV - Ukrainischer Deutschlehrer- und Germanistenverband, Ukraine**)

“In order to receive our journal, published twice a year, members need to pay their membership fee.” (**The Association of Foreign Language Teachers of Iceland**)

As a further incentive for membership, associations also offer their members a regular and reliable information service.

“We send regular newsletters to all Italian university teachers informing them of the latest news from the Italian Education Ministry regarding university level Germanic studies, linguistics and the teaching of German as a foreign language. We also sometimes provide analysis.” **(AIG, Italy)**

“We keep in regular personal contact with our members via a fortnightly information bulletin and email updates. Sometimes this information is forwarded on to non-members within schools, who may then become interested in joining the association themselves.” **(Associação Portuguesa Dos Professores De Francês-APPF, Portugal)**

“We have an online network, which we maintain through a monthly newsflash that keeps members informed of our current activities, and by updating our association website. There is also a bulletin on paper published by the LMS, for which I write a column on French.” **(AEFS association des enseignants de français en Suède, Sweden)**

“The new website “Vizafle” has been available to French teachers in Romania since March 2011. This project was developed by the ARPF in partnership with the French embassy and the National Education Ministry.” **(ARPF - Association Roumaine des Professeurs de Français, Romania)**

“We have an extensive database of 16,000 names. We are in contact with members on a monthly, sometimes weekly basis using “blasts” to inform them of important events, opportunities etc. Most teachers/professors have daily access to email in their offices and at home.” **(American Association of Teachers of German, USA)**

Competitions with special prizes are also a good way of attracting members, and many associations make use of them accordingly:

“We stage various competitions designed to promote innovation, with attractive prizes generously provided by our partners in order to encourage participation.” **(SUNG - Verband der Deutschlehrer und Germanisten der Slowakei, Slovakia)**

“Our association publishes all kinds of brochures to promote the French language. In addition, the AATF has launched a promotional campaign under the slogan “The World Speaks French” with the assistance of the French embassy in Washington. This includes a website (<http://www.theworldspeaksfrench.org>) and a wide range of documents.” **(American Association of Teachers of French (AATF), USA)**

“We have an annual competition with prizes of holidays and educational residencies awarded both to the winning students and to their teachers. This creates an incentive for

colleagues to take part.” (**Associação Portuguesa Dos Professores De Francês-APPF Portugal**)

“We attend reading competitions in our schools in the capacity of objective jury members, and we also help teachers to develop their own German projects and German teacher days.” (**Türkiye Almanca Öğretmenleri Derneği / Türkischer Deutschlehrerverein, Turkey**)

The work of an association can also harness its members’ individual creativity to introduce interesting cultural issues and activities, which are then ideally implemented under consideration of intercultural perspectives:

“German songs with guitar accompaniment; a painting evening (theme: Turkish-German relations); a photo-safari exhibition (Traces of German in Beyoglu and Spring in Istanbul); a painting evening for creative and socially engaged German teachers; an Easter arts and crafts evening; a Turkish-German cookbook...etc.” (**Türkiye Almanca Öğretmenleri Derneği / Türkischer Deutschlehrerverein, Turkey**)

“We believe it is very important to develop new methods for promoting the German language. For this reason the Association created a short film called “Wir lernen Deutsch!” (“We are learning German!”) which we also recommend to schools, colleges and universities as a means of promoting German.” (**Ukrainischer Deutschlehrer- und Germanistenverband, Ukraine**)

“Since 2000 two national projects have been carried out: Living Together in Peace (a regional studies project that ran from 2000-2006) and Literature in my Backpack (2005-2010). We are currently preparing and implementing a project on Teaching German with Theatre. At the 20<sup>th</sup> Conference of the DVR at the end of October 2011 there will be a workshop on the use of theatre in teaching. At the same time a group of 20 schoolchildren will take part in the conference, where they will plan a production of Kleist’s *The Broken Jug* and then perform this at the plenum.” (**DLV – Deutschlehrerverband Rumäniens, Romania**)

Finally, it is important to consider membership benefits that do not accrue from the work of the association itself, but which members can take advantage of outside the association – such as discounts on books, films, magazines (whether professional or otherwise) and theatre tickets, among others.

“Members receive discounts in certain theatres and bookshops and when purchasing magazines and films etc.” (**TEA Teachers of English in Austria, Austria**)

In summary, it is clear that one of the most useful tools for attracting new members is a well-designed website, complete with a dedicated presentation of the association as well as useful information on events, meaningful networking opportunities and relevant training. New members are particularly drawn to the opportunity to share their opinions and experiences

with others at association events, whether these are large international conferences or smaller, more thematically specialised meetings. Association publications play an important role, whether these are teachers' magazines, conference proceedings or news bulletins on the work of the association. These materials are freely accessible to members, who can also choose to contribute actively to their production and publish their own work in them. Other opportunities for attracting members include language courses, field trips, competitions, meetings focussing on specific cultural, social or political aspects of the country being studied, and more general events allowing members to share their experiences with each other.

## CASE STUDY 4.1

### *HANDS ON - HÄNDE HOCH! A TEA PROJECT*

#### SEMINAR FOR ENGLISH TEACHING ASSISTANTS



**TEA – Teachers of English in Austria**  
**Verband der Englischlehrenden in Österreich**

<http://www.tea4teachers.org/joomla/>

**Dr. Candy Fresacher, TEA-President**

With a few coincidences, a lot of networking and the great enthusiasm of many Teaching Assistants, TEA – Teachers of English in Austria – managed to start a new programme that we hope will bring new and innovative methods of solving some of our membership problems.

Before our international conference in 2010, TEA asked Teaching Assistants in Austria under the Fulbright Commission's programme, if they would like to act as helpers during our 3-day event. In return, the TAs could participate in some of the workshops and seminars that were on offer. The students really enjoyed the opportunities given to them. This led to the thought that perhaps many of the teaching assistants would appreciate additional workshops to help them to be better at assisting the English teachers they were working with. An idea was born.

Anne Storey and Silvia Jindra, two TEA board members, then went about looking for sponsorship. They discussed the matter with Dr. Lonnie Johnson of the Fulbright Commission in Austria and got his approval and a number of names, telephone numbers and email addresses to help in contacting the right people at the Ministry for Education. Funding is important and funding usually only occurs if the proposal is a good one and falls into a niche that is not covered by others. Both these criteria were filled with our proposal. Suddenly the Ministry was not only in favor of the idea, but felt it needed to be implemented immediately.

Within a short four month period TEA organized a two-day event entitled "Hands On" to offer the Teaching Assistants throughout Austria additional hours of assistance with their task of helping English teachers. There was a limit of 70 places for the workshops and they were filled almost immediately. TAs came from across Austria to participate in the programme that included such topics as: Classroom dynamics, Tough topics, Make 'em talk!, Instant lessons, or Tips and Tools. There were additional afternoon and evening programmes as well. Here are two quotes from participants:

*Thank you for a wonderful weekend. I enjoyed the seminar and learned a lot. It was a great opportunity to meet the TAs from the western part of the country and reconvene with the TAs I met in Graz. Miriam Keller (Oberwart, Burgenland)*

*For any seminar the idea is that it brings together people with a common interest. "Hands On!" did this very well, and obviously targeted specific concerns expressed by TAs. TEA's efforts to obtain suggestions and elicit feedback certainly paid off. This means that any future seminars will be even better than the first. As for TEA itself, it functions as a really effective network not only for the work of TAs, but also for their social life. Curtis Maughan (Vienna)*

TEA is having trouble reaching young English teachers in Austria. We feel that with this initiative, we are not only offering a service to the TAs, but also to their supervising English teachers. In addition, by having these new, young, native-speaking English TAs in our TEA community, we are able to offer our Austrian TEA members the possibility to network with native speakers both in informal gatherings, or at more formal workshops where new ideas for classroom work can be exchanged. We are sure everyone has benefited from this new idea and our next Hands On event with sponsorship of both the Ministry and the PH (Educational College) is again in the planning stages.

## CASE STUDY 4.2

### RAISING THE PROFILE OF GERMAN:

#### THE DAY OF THE GERMAN LANGUAGE IN UKRAINE



#### UKRAINIAN ASSOCIATION OF GERMAN TEACHERS AND GERMANISTS (UDGV)

*Ivan Franko National University of Lviv*

**President: Prof. Dr. Alla Paslawska**

<http://franko.lviv.ua/udgv/>

German as a foreign language in Ukraine is going through challenging times, since here, as elsewhere, German is losing ground to English. Some consolation can be taken from the fact that Ukraine has the fourth highest number of learners of German in the world, but we should not forget that this number is decreasing while other languages are expanding their influence. This is why over the last three years the Ukrainian Association of German Teachers and Germanists (UDGV) has introduced a number of measures to raise the profile of German and to recruit new members to the association.

On October 1 2009 the Association staged a “**Day of the German Language in Ukraine**” under the motto “Is it worth learning or even studying German in the age of globalisation?!”

To raise the profile of the German language a **Calendar Competition** entitled “Why I’m Learning German” was run. Pupils and students from all over Ukraine submitted over 400 posters and collages depicting their ideas about the importance of German, which confirmed once again that the German language and the teaching of German have maintained their strong position in spite of all criticism. The number of learners of German who took part in the competition exceeded all our hopes, nor had we anticipated such a huge amount of imagination and enthusiasm for the German language. The competition demonstrated that there is still a lot of interest in learning German in Ukraine, and it would be a good idea to show the entries to head teachers who argue against teaching German in favour of other languages.

The UDGV also printed **publicity leaflets for German**, in which general arguments were presented as to why being able to speak German is still a valuable skill. The leaflets were distributed to interested parties in various Ukrainian cities as part of the Day of the German Language, and we hope that through this initiative we were able to reach new audiences and awaken their interest in German.

On the Day of the German Language there was also a **panel discussion** entitled “**German in Ukraine: the current situation and future perspectives**”. Colleagues from Germany, Austria and Ukraine were invited, along with partners from the Goethe Institut Kiev, the Austrian-Ukrainian Cooperation Office, the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), the German Central Office for International Schools, and the German and Austrian embassies. We believe it is important to bring together the various players who influence the development of the German language in Ukraine: experts who are confronted every day with problems in German language teaching and know how to solve them; authors of German textbooks and learning materials; and many others who contribute to the overall picture of the German language in Ukraine.

The panel discussion addressed issues such as problems of quality assurance; finding appropriate ways to prepare for independent external assessments in German; and the need for new textbooks and learning materials as well as new approaches to German language teaching. It was also emphasised that it is essential to develop teaching methods based on the Common European Framework of Reference that would pay equal attention to the development of all learning strategies and allow learners’ achievements to be objectively evaluated.

The Day of the German Language in Ukraine was a national event, with Lviv as the main venue - though additional support came from Donetsk, Kharkiv and Kiev. Relevant material was also sent to all the regional groups of the UGDV (covering every region of the Ukraine including Crimea), allowing local UGDV coordinators to run similar events on their own doorsteps.

In Lviv, the programme for the Day of the German Language included a wide range of interesting events, and students and learners from both Lviv itself and the surrounding area took part. Throughout the day people were able to learn about opportunities for studying German in Ukraine at **information stands** in the foyer of the university. Students from the German department **raised awareness of the German language with colourful leaflets, stationery, t-shirts and balloons**. A **book fair** was organised where a variety of textbooks and dictionaries were available, both in and about German. Afterwards, visitors were treated to a **performance** of “Four Comic Scenes”. During the coffee breaks delicious **culinary specialities from German speaking countries** were on offer, specially prepared by students of the University of Lviv’s Department of German Philology, Intercultural Communication and Translation for those taking part in the Day of the German Language. To close, there were screenings of German and Austrian films.

### CASE STUDY 4.3

**“CHANGING APPROACHES TO THE TEACHING OF GERMAN AS A FOREIGN  
LANGUAGE”  
PEDAGOGICAL CONCEPTS AND FORMS OF LEARNING IN THE NEW  
MILLENNIUM**

Faculdade de Letras da Universidade do Porto, March 25-26 2011

The Portuguese German teachers' association has offered a number of training and professional development courses for several years now. These are hosted by the association's own training centre (Formappa), which delivers government-accredited courses to Portuguese schools with the aim of giving teachers of German as a foreign language the opportunity to keep their skills and knowledge up to date.

The association also organises biannual congresses, each of which runs under a particular motto. In March this year this was “Changing Approaches to the Teaching of German as a Foreign Language: Pedagogical Concepts and Forms of Learning in the New Millennium”. A range of guest speakers were invited from Portugal and beyond to give workshops and lectures.

As a concrete example we will now describe the criteria used by participants to evaluate the congress activities.

Before the congress the registered participants were informed that their participation in activities at the congress would allow them to gain points that would contribute to their professional advancement. Participants were also legally required to fulfil the following conditions:

- To participate in at least two thirds of the activities on offer
- To produce a written personal evaluation of the significance of the congress, and of the influence of the activities they attended on their own teaching practice
- To write a short piece containing concrete examples or suggestions of activities or methodologies to be used in their own teaching, based on what they learned in a specific session at the congress

The submitted pieces were carefully examined by a pedagogical commission at the association and evaluated for their creativity and relevant content.