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Impact-oriented networks in the context of philanthropy: second evaluation of the Bosch Alumni Network

Final Report

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Executive Summary

The following report presents the findings of the **second evaluation of the Bosch Alumni Network (BAN)** and builds on the results from the first one by offering comparisons as well as new data sources, research instruments and insights. BAN is an impact-oriented network with over 9,000 members combining current fellows, former grantees, staff and partners of the Robert Bosch Stiftung (RBSG), which has been developed, steered and curated by the International Alumni Center Berlin (iac Berlin) in collaboration with RBSG and its alumni.

This evaluation was carried out by the Center for Social Entrepreneurship and Social Innovation at the Vienna University of Economics and Business. It is the result of a 15-month research project (03/2025-05/2026) and is comprised of reviews of relevant literature and background documents from iac Berlin, the analysis of 60 interview protocols (26 semi-structured interviews with BAN actors, 22 qualitative survey inputs from regional coordinators and 12 from inactive members) and two independent surveys with a number of 551 combined participants, as well as matched longitudinal and cross-sectoral comparison between 2020 and 2026 data.

A healthy impact model

Our analysis reveals a healthy, thriving network with an intact impact model and a high degree of dynamism. All three key actors, RBSG, iac Berlin, and the members themselves, continue to actively contribute to the functioning of the network. RBSG holds the key role of identifying and selecting members and providing knowledge as well as financial, and legacy resources. iac Berlin holds expertise in network building and is responsible for curating the social, structural, and narrative infrastructure. Members contribute by bringing their experience, knowledge, and above all their time. We estimate that these voluntary efforts amount to an **average per-member investment of 4.4 hours per month**, equivalent to roughly 83 full-time employees across the network, thereby exceeding iac Berlin's own dedicated BAN coordination capacity by a factor of 16 to 20x¹.

Survey results show that member engagement is not rigid over time but varies along several typical pathways. **The largest group (38.6%) describes their involvement as fluctuating**, depending on time, interest, and the relevance of current offers. Newer members who joined after 2020 tend to be more active than longer-standing ones. These contributions lead to active yearly participation in both online and offline activities and, together with prior relationships from RBSG programs, create and maintain members' **individual networks** of roughly 60 surface-level and 12 regular connections

¹ For a more detailed breakdown of these numbers see 2.1.3

on average. Most members (66.6%) have between 10 and 100 contacts, an ideal range for weak-tie networks: large enough for diverse exposure and small enough for meaningful connections. A geographic visualization reveals how the **network spans across five continents**, with Germany as the dominant hub and emerging regional clusters in Sub-Saharan Africa.

The network structure and resulting connections lead to a variety of **direct benefits**. Beyond the four identified in the first evaluation (building knowledge, accessing resources and opportunities, gaining legitimacy, receiving social and emotional support), we identified four new benefit dimensions: space to experiment, developing network competence, personal growth, and mission alignment. Benefits are broad and tangible: nearly 90% receive valuable information, over 70% learn new skills, and almost a quarter have hired or contracted another member.

These benefits feed into **broader social impact**. 71.7% of members engage in at least one collaborative action per year, leading to an estimated 850 to 3,100 joint projects and 600 to 1,900 co-developed innovations² across the network. BAN also strengthens civic resilience: 37.8% report that the network has helped them continue their professional work despite difficult economic, social, or political environments, and 41.6% see it as a space to develop joint visions and strategies in their field.

Positive experiences create **feedback flows that reinforce the network**: members who benefit are more likely to engage further. Reported future intent in 2020 indeed predicted actual activity in 2025, confirming the circular nature of the impact model. A key finding of this second evaluation is that the network is held together by a **normative core of trust, reciprocity, and accessibility**. When present, these shared values significantly amplify interaction, benefits, impact, and future engagement across nearly all dimensions measured.

Marked changes below a calm surface

The second evaluation has also shown that the five years since the first evaluation have brought changes beneath the surface of apparent stability. **The engine of the network is still running, but in a lower gear**. Member activity and benefit reception remain consistent when viewed from an annual perspective. When examined at higher frequency (every other month or more), however, declines become visible, both in the cross-sectional and longitudinal data. The matched panel of 109 members who participated in both evaluations shows that their average high-frequency engagement dropped from 18% to 12%.

Three dynamics explain how aggregate engagement remains stable despite this decline. First, **platform behavior has shifted**: fewer members log in regularly, while more engage through curated content such as the weekly digest. Bosch alumni.net increasingly functions as a portal. It is a starting

² For a more detailed breakdown of these numbers see 2.4.1

point for interactions that continue on other channels. Second, members appear to **engage more purposefully and with clearer goals**, suggesting a shift toward efficient rather than exploratory use. Third, **newer members (post-2020) show significantly higher activity levels**, effectively compensating for the natural decline among longer-standing members.

Network structure has remained largely stable, with even higher additionality than in 2020. Fewer members report contacts from their original program (76.8% vs. 88.0%), while more report new connections that would not have existed without BAN (74.3% vs. 66.0%). The network is transitioning **from a "reunion network" of program alumni toward a "discovery network"** of pre-selected, impact-oriented professionals who find unexpected collaborators across sectors and regions.

Much of what happens in the network takes place in **invisible spaces**. Communication within BAN is best understood as an iceberg: only about 12% of interactions occur on boschalumni.net, with the rest migrating to messaging services, email, and face-to-face encounters. A cluster analysis identified three visibility archetypes: co-creators (visible and active on the platform), cross-channel communicators (highly active but largely off-platform), and observers (low activity, longer membership), each requiring different approaches. There is also a substantial pool of **inactive members who rarely interact with BAN but remain interested**: of 138 inactive survey respondents, 83.3% expressed interest in a reconnection session.

Members are overall very satisfied with the Bosch Alumni Network. The online platform and the work of the coordination team at iac Berlin received particularly high satisfaction. Onboarding was the only element with a notably higher share of negative perceptions, and roughly 50% of respondents had no perception of it at all.

Nine recommendations

The evaluation identifies nine areas for action, grounded in the data and developed in dialogue with iac Berlin and the Robert Bosch Stiftung:

1. **Strengthen governance roles.** Formal roles such as Regional Coordinators and Impact Field Hosts function as the network's deliberately created hubs. Designing "role careers," investing in role-holder support, and ensuring equitable geographic distribution could strengthen this critical layer.
2. **Reinforce norms, also through physical presence.** Trust, reciprocity, and accessibility drive outcomes across the entire impact mode and form its normative core. Making desired behavior visible, lowering the social cost of reaching out, and prioritizing local in-person gatherings (= the single most consistent wish across all data sources) would strengthen it.
3. **Navigate around the iceberg.** Invisible communication is not inherently a problem, but it becomes one if connections and outcomes disappear beneath the surface entirely. Inviting

members to share back, interfacing off-platform content, and mobilizing cross-channel communicators as bridge-builders could increase visibility and network health, without forcing all activity onto a single platform.

4. **Redesign communication for relevance and reach.** Mailings and the weekly digest have become the most important touchpoint, but their current format does not cut through for many members. Shorter, more targeted formats, diversified channels (including WhatsApp, Signal, LinkedIn), and improved personalization of platform notifications could substantially extend the network's communicative reach.
5. **Update boschalumni.net into an opportunity hub.** Rather than a general-purpose social feed, the platform could be structured around three functions: being inspired by what others are doing, finding and offering help, and discovering concrete opportunities to act. A platform cleanup, an "ask/offer" layer, and better accommodation of different user types would support this transition.
6. **Maintain network velocity.** The escape velocity analysis shows that BAN sustains its active membership but falls slightly below the threshold for maintaining its volume of new collaborations. A balanced strategy of steady intake through partner pipelines, re-activation of inactive members, and better retention of active ones is needed. Improving the current 2.6:1 ratio of new total members to new active members through better onboarding would be one of the most leveraged interventions available.
7. **Build re-entry pathways and revise onboarding.** Inactivity is not (only) a motivational problem but a structural one: programming feels too broad and communication does not reach those at the periphery. Curated re-entry formats, direct personal outreach, and improved onboarding for new members could address both ends of the engagement lifecycle.
8. **Strengthen involvement in the Global South.** Members from the Global South now make up 25.7% of respondents, with African membership nearly tripling among post-2020 joiners. Ensuring equitable access to in-person interactions, strengthening regional coordination, and fostering direct South-South ties would match the network's investment to where its growth and energy are concentrated.
9. **Reinvigorate the relationship with the Robert Bosch Stiftung.** The evaluation identifies a risk of gradual decoupling between RBSG and BAN. Structured internal onboarding at RBSG, systematic use of BAN expertise in Stiftung projects, targeted use of the network for recruitment and procurement, and regular reporting of BAN's value to RBSG leadership could shift the relationship from distant patronage toward active partnership.

These recommendations are mutually reinforcing: improving communication directly supports re-engagement of inactives, strengthening governance roles improves the capacity to reinforce norms, and clarifying the geographic strategy is closely linked to maintaining network velocity. We recommend

that they be approached not as independent options but as an interconnected set of interventions whose combined effect will be greater than their individual parts.

1. Introduction

This report presents the findings of the second evaluation of the Bosch Alumni Network (BAN), an impact-oriented network which has risen to a membership base of 9,000 people and consists of former and current fellows, grantees, staff and partners of the Robert Bosch Stiftung. It is a direct follow-up to the evaluation 5 years ago and builds on the conceptual results of the previous evaluation, compares changes over time, and discusses new research questions. Firstly, the report provides an updated overview of the state of research on impact-oriented networks in the context of philanthropy (chapter 1.1.) and will then cover the networks development over time as well as some contextual remarks regarding the two evaluations. Chapter 1.3 will then introduce the goals and methods of the second evaluation in more detail.

1.1. IMPACT-ORIENTED NETWORKS

Impact-oriented networks (IONs) have increasingly been the focus in academia and practice in recent years (Kania and Kramer, 2011; Lundell et al., 2024; Plastrik et al., 2014; Vandor et al., 2019, 2020; Wei-Skillern and Silver, 2013). Such networks promote collaboration and center around shared purposes, experiences, or spaces. In doing so they promote positive social effects for their members as well as the network as a whole. IONs can provide significant benefits at both the outcome and actor levels. At the outcome level, they enable collective problem-solving, foster innovation, build trust and social capital, and enhance community resilience. At the actor level, IONs offer access to valuable resources, legitimacy, social and emotional support, and opportunities for engagement and impact amplification. These networks are particularly effective in addressing complex social problems through collective action and collaboration. Recent technological developments, particularly the emergence of digital social networks, have contributed to the increased effectiveness of IONs (Hoppe and Reinelt, 2010; Vandor et al., 2019, Wei-Skillern and Silver, 2013).

Alumni-networks represent a specific type of such IONs, usually first centered around the participation in a program, a collective learning experience or at an institution and are subsequently strengthened by ongoing interactions and mutual benefits of network membership (Vandor et al., 2020, Vogel, 2024). Interaction can sometimes happen across different regional contexts and across a variety of sectors or disciplines. These networks are associated with several benefits for their members. They have been argued to induce mutual support and collaboration, resource sharing and exchange of information or even social support and resilience (Fuchs et al., 2017; Hwang and Kim, 2009; Schrenk and Kaghazchi, 2024, Vogel, 2024).

These benefits translate into social impact when members co-create new projects, ventures and ideas, form collaborations and innovate together. Between the launch of the networking 2017 and 2020, this has led to the creation of an estimate of 3,300 new projects in the network and 2,000 innovative ideas (Vandor et al., 2020). This is not surprising since according to Xiao & Chongjian (2023) network embeddedness and user communities are beneficial for people in entrepreneurial projects or who work on collective innovation.

The Bosch Alumni Network has also been found to be associated with increased resilience for individuals who work in difficult economic, social and political environments as well as with an increased ability to act as a collective. Moreover, the increased capacity of members helps improve their impact-oriented professional work. Against this background, they attribute 24.9% of their success and impact to the Bosch Alumni Network (Vandor et al., 2020). However, the network has undergone profound changes since the last evaluation five years ago which took place two years after its launch. The COVID pandemic disrupted many physical events and spaces of in the Bosch Alumni Network, current geopolitical uncertainty including democratic backsliding (International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, 2024) put a strain on civil society organizations and preliminary findings suggested that the relationship between the network and the Robert Bosch Stiftung has slightly changed over time. Nonetheless, the network has seen strong and continuous growth, increasing the number of members (and thereby the number of potential connections for each existing member) to over 9,000 while still working on the same budget as in the beginning (iac Berlin, 2026). Against this background, the current report aims to shed light on the ongoing impact of the network and investigate newer developments that have become relevant since the last evaluation.

1.2. THE BOSCH ALUMNI NETWORK (BAN)

1.2.1. Context: The road leading up to the foundation of the Bosch Alumni Network

The Robert Bosch Stiftung was established in 1964 and has since then aimed to advance philanthropic and social endeavors of the founder Robert Bosch. Since then, the foundation has invested roughly 2.5 billion in charitable work (Robert Bosch Stiftung, 2025) and currently employs about 170 people across its two locations in Stuttgart and Berlin (Robert Bosch Stiftung, 2026). These contributions make it one of the largest and most active philanthropic institutions in Europe. Initiatives from the foundation include activities like direct funding to the design and implementation of events, exchange platforms and programs to strategic partnerships.

The Bosch Alumni Network itself originated from efforts of people from some cohorts or programs to stay in touch with each other which formed smaller alumni groups. Some of them remained rather small and informal while others gained momentum and set up an association. (Vandor et al., 2020)



The history of an overarching Bosch Alumni Network dates back to **November 2015**, when the executive board of the Robert Bosch Stiftung decided to increase its alumni work. This was based on the assumption that former fellows and grantees could also contribute to realize the foundation's objectives after their participation in a program had finished.

Subsequently, in **early 2016**, the board of the Robert Bosch Stiftung approached Darius Polok, a former fellow and at the time the managing director of MitOst, to create a concept for concerted alumni work. It was aimed to serve three fundamental purposes: (a) being able to better disseminate tenders and announcements of the Robert Bosch Stiftung; (b) keeping contact with former program participants, grantees, partners, and employees; (c) and as a result, having an instrument for strengthening the long-term work and impact of the foundation.

By **autumn of 2016** a common understanding of the fundamental pillars of a renewed alumni work had emerged: (a) after taking part in a Robert Bosch Stiftung program, fellows would be offered a way to stay connected – both with each other and with the Robert Bosch Stiftung; (b) the alumni would not only be connected with each other within one program, but across all programs – thereby furthering partnerships among “change makers”; (c) an alumni center outside of the foundation should be established in order to overcome the traditional sponsor-grantee relationship.

On **January 1, 2017**, the International Alumni Center Berlin (iac Berlin) was founded as a legal entity (gGmbH) to take on coordination and administrative support. A few weeks later, the first Alumni Council with former and current fellows was held, first thematic clusters were kicked off, and further plans and events presented.

On **April 1, 2017**, the online platform boschalumni.net was launched. At the same time, the physical facilities of the International Alumni Center as a think- and do-tank in Berlin were opened, complementing the virtual offering with a tangible, physical space for events and the iac Berlin team.

In **2020**, the COVID-19 pandemic shifted much of the network's activity to digital formats. The share of member-initiated events temporarily increased online to maintain connectivity. The network demonstrated resilience: one in three members reported that the BAN had helped them continue their work despite a difficult environment. Since 2020, the Robert Bosch Stiftung has shifted its approach from individual support through fellowships and exchange programs toward a more ecosystem-centered model. Rather than primarily investing in individuals, the Stiftung works through partnerships, alliances, and collaborative initiatives designed to strengthen broader ecosystems and foster systemic change.

In summer **2021**, to advance its further decentralization, the role of Impact Field Hosts was introduced, tasked with strengthening thematic communities. By then, the network had grown to an estimated 7,800 members.

In **2022**, following the Russian full-scale invasion of Ukraine, the network proved its value as an infrastructure for crisis response. BAN members in Ukraine used the network to mobilize support, funding, and contacts. The Robert Bosch Stiftung launched a special fund for Ukrainians, drawing heavily on its alumni contacts. The role of Cluster Moderators was introduced to strengthen professional field communities.

In **2023**, a member survey, followed by a four-day Network Strategy Retreat in the Spanish Pyrenees with 16 members and the coordination team, addressed key questions around transparency, involvement, and future structures. A roadmap for the coming years was developed, reinforcing the commitment to decentralized governance and member ownership. The network now connects people from more than 120 current and former programs. The first Call for Learning Formats was issued to support member-driven knowledge exchange and training offers.

In **2024**, the network counted over 8,750 members from roughly 140 countries. The network has hosted regional Forums in Africa, the United States and Europe.

In **2026**, a strong emphasis was put on the topic of resilience with 3 thematic Bosch Alumni Forums and a dedicated call for learning formats. In 2027, the Bosch Alumni Network will celebrate its 10th anniversary.

Figure 1 illustrates some of the internal developments of the Bosch Alumni Network. The initial growth of the number of members has slowed down but there are still new members joining every year. The

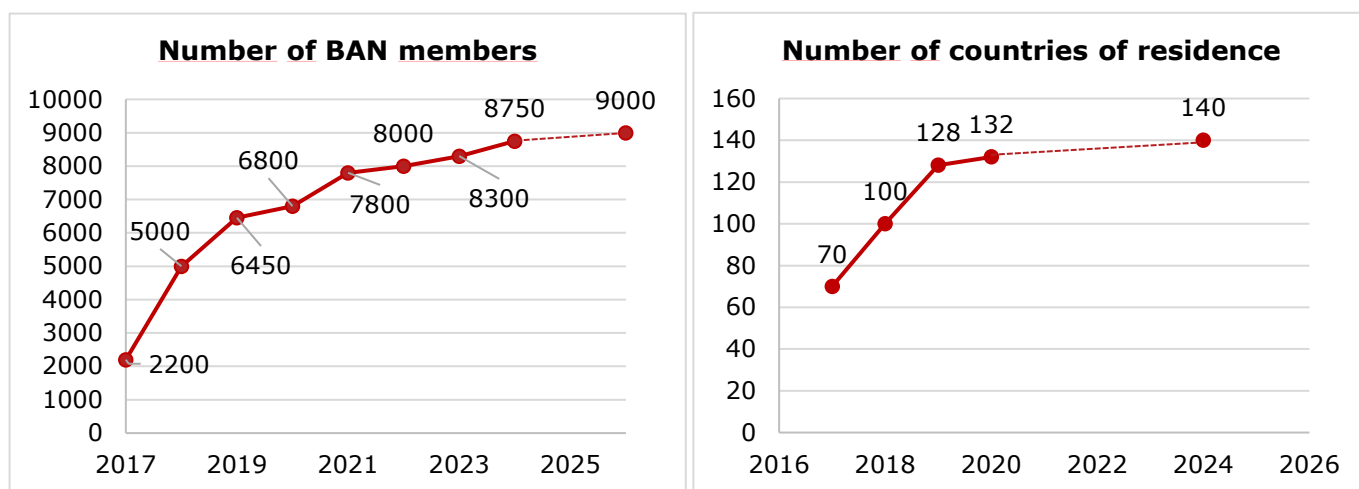


FIGURE 1. MEMBER NUMBER DEVELOPMENT, COUNTRY DIVERSITY

network has also become even more diverse as BAN members now come from about 140 different countries. Apart from these more measurable developments new impact fields and clusters have emerged (e.g. science), new Bosch Alumni Forums have been organized in Africa (2023) and the United States (2024) and the network offers some new call schemes (e.g. call for learning formats).

1.2.2. Results of the first evaluation in 2019/2020

The evaluation conducted between 2019 and 2020 came at an early but critical point in the network's formation. The platform *boschalumni.net* had only been launched for about two years and there was a quick rise in the number of network members. As part of the project, interviews and a large-scale survey were conducted to explore this growing alumni network. The evaluation depicted Bosch Alumni Network as an expanding network characterized by high levels of member engagement and significant time investment, with over 90% of members participating online and more than 25% engaging in offline activities (Vandor et al., 2020). Collectively, the members contributed approximately 5,920 hours per month to the network by providing mutual support or exchanging information about updates and opportunities. Member satisfaction was found to be strong, with 79% expressing positive views towards the *boschalumni.net* platform and 70% being satisfied with offline events. In 2020, the network generated substantial benefits and impacts: 73% of members have identified at least one important professional opportunity through BAN, 59% have gained access to valuable resources, and a total of 3,300 collaborative projects have emerged from within the community. A remarkable finding was that nearly a quarter (24.9%) of members attributed their personal professional successes directly to their involvement with BAN.

The results of this first evaluation already indicated that the network was beginning to decentralize, which, amongst others, was exemplified by 65% to 75% of all events and 80% of opportunities being initiated by non-iac Berlin members. However, there were still areas for improvement, particularly around the onboarding processes, which only 38% of members rate positively. Many members also perceived the network as somewhat or very fragmented, with 60% agreeing that the network functions more as a collection of smaller sub-networks rather than one large community. Additionally, non-alumni participants reported fewer contacts, lower identification with the network, and diminished trust, indicating further potential for development in inclusivity and integration.

1.3. THE SECOND EVALUATION PROJECT

1.3.1. Research questions

As outlined in Section 1.2.1, the goal of this second evaluations project is to understand the current architecture of the Bosch Alumni Network against the background of changes in the network itself, changes in the world, as well as the conditions for philanthropic member networks.

Five years have passed since the first evaluation project of the Bosch Alumni Network was carried out. Since 2019/2020 the network landscape has changed internally alongside external events also shaping

certain elements. Internally, the network has experienced stronger decentralization with the creation of new roles and tools, growth in the membership base and the departure of the program-based recruitment of new members. Externally, COVID-19 has had diverse impacts as a digital accelerator while macro contexts like democratic backsliding and geopolitical conflicts have been specifically noticeable for the civil society sector. Against this background and with respect to earlier findings this evaluation aimed to compare results with the last findings and investigate new topics. The following many research questions have been formed as a result of this process:

- **How does the Bosch Alumni Network create benefits for members? What is their impact on the world?**
- **Which factors influence how the network creates value (individuals, instruments, meso- and macro-indicators)?**
- **What kind of “invisible” communications or activities are happening in BAN?**
- **How did interactions, experiences, benefits, and effects change over time / since 2019/2020?**
- **What are the most important unmet needs of members, including inactive members?**

1.3.2. Method

To explore these research questions, we followed a three-stage methodological approach, comprising of background research and talks with the team at iac Berlin, qualitative interviews with members, actors of Robert Bosch Stiftung and staff of iac Berlin as well as two quantitative surveys.

Stage 1: Background research

In order to get an understanding of the historical development, goals and basic functioning of the Bosch Alumni Network as well as to anchor the evaluation within a broader framework of impact-oriented networks, we started our analysis by conducting background research on impact-oriented networks (see 1.1 and throughout the document).

Stage 2: Qualitative exploration

To get a very detailed and nuanced understanding of Bosch Alumni Network a series of qualitative data sources have been explored. Firstly, 15+ papers, background documents and prior data collections at iac Berlin have been reviewed. Secondly, preexisting qualitative input from a survey with 22 regional coordinators and a survey of 12 members with low engagement were analyzed. Thirdly, 26 semi-structured narrative interviews with BAN Members, experts from the Robert Bosch Stiftung

(RBSG) and iac Berlin have been carried out via video/phone calls. The interviews varied in length (roughly 25-60 minutes) and were performed either in German or English. Together this led to a sample of 60 qualitative respondents.

A set of five topics have been at the focus of qualitative data exploration: (a) how Bosch Alumni Network is understood and used by its members, (b) the level of ownership that alumni take on within the network, (c) if at all, how their usage and its intensity has changed over time (d) what their benefits and motivations are and lastly (e) what types of unmet needs and wishes they have for the network. Building on the grounded theory methodology from the first evaluation the interview guideline has been revised in collaboration with iac Berlin staff. Interview questions were focusing on members general perception of the network, their activities (offline, online), the roles they take on, changes over time specifically regarding the relevance of "off-grid" usage (channels outside of boscha-lumni.net), motivations to participate in BAN, benefits they receive from BAN, feedback on certain elements within BAN and whether members had unmet need and wishes from the network³.

Building on the iterative sampling strategy from the last evaluation, we reviewed and redeveloped a list of potential interview partners in collaboration with the iac Berlin. People from different groups including participants of the previous study, active members, inactive members and people from Robert Bosch Stiftung have been categorized along a set of characteristics: professional background, cluster affiliation, seniority, gender, age, country and role. The categorization enabled a balanced selection process during interview outreach. An overview of the sampling criteria and the final sample can be found in Annex A.2.

Content analysis⁴ and interpretation of this compiled interview material (570+ transcribed pages) was then analyzed thorough a mix of inductive (feedback, needs, changes over time etc.) and deductive coding (impact logic e.g. social impact, direct benefits etc.). More than 1,500 codes have been generated through the following steps:

1. Development of system of categories (based on the existing impact model of the first evaluation, literature and first data exploration)
2. Axial coding of a first set of interviews by three separate members of the research team leading to an inductive generation of new codes and sub codes
3. Collective revision and extension of the coding system
4. Finalization of coding system
5. Selective coding of remaining interviews
6. Analysis and interpretation of more than 1,500 codes (see Table 1. Coding framework. Most of these branch out into further sub codes)

³ Please find the full interview guideline in Annex A.1

⁴ Mayring (2015)

Perception of BAN	Feedback
Formal roles	Activities
Social Impact	Platform engagement
Direct benefits	Challenges
Network structure	Engagement- and activity types
Motivation	Relevance of program background
Network interactions	

TABLE 1. CODING FRAMEWORK. MOST OF THESE BRANCH OUT INTO FURTHER SUB CODES

Stage 3: Quantitative Survey

Following qualitative exploration, two quantitative surveys aimed to add additional understanding of the Bosch Alumni Network through the analysis of a bigger member sample. This has distinct advantages: First, the approach allows the collection of a more representative dataset, which can be used to carry out statistical analyses to explore more robustly, whether qualitative observations are shared in a larger context too. Second, the long-term observation of key parts of the survey across both evaluations allows for cross-sectional as well as longitudinal comparisons. Exploring these in between-group and within-group comparisons as well as regression models allows exploring underlying relationships in the data.

The main survey was based on the last iteration of the evaluation with some newly developed question items which were developed collaboratively with iac Berlin. The final survey consisted of 63 questions, with 17 either being optional or included in opt-in sections of the survey. Different survey pathways were also built into the survey depending on people's specific activities or network roles. The survey themes were structured along the following topics: membership history, engagement, connections and communications, interaction and benefits, interaction and social exchange, network health, network evolution, benefits of BAN, professional impact, demographics and optional sections on their organization followed by open feedback opportunities.

The second, smaller survey was specifically designed to capture perceptions and opportunities of more distant, unengaged members of the network. Over the last five years, this inactive part of the membership base has become of more interest. The survey was significantly shorter with only 8 questions, some of them optional depending on previous engagement in the network. Both surveys were available in three languages: German, Englisch and French.

Together both surveys allowed observations on very different members of the Bosch Alumni Network. Prior to launch, both surveys were reviewed and tested extensively in collaboration with iac Berlin and further team members at WU Vienna in several iterations.

The surveys were conducted through Qualtrics, a widely used third party platform, and were available between 17.10.25 - 06.01.26 (main survey) and 23.01.26 – 06.02.26 (survey of inactive members). Participants were recruited through official channels of iac Berlin (boschalumni.net, physical events, newsletters). This strategy was similar to the last evaluation and ensured that members could be approached by official and trusted channels, which proved useful in the last survey. Data was processed by the team at WU Vienna to ensure confidentiality of respondent's answers. For inactive members, a different communication strategy was used, since the more common BAN communication channels are most likely not frequented by members in the periphery of BAN. Members who have been identified as being inactive (not logged into the platform in the past two years) have been reached out via an email from a well-known person from the iac team. 990 people participated in the two surveys combined. The raw data set for the main survey included 783 cases. 28 cases were excluded for not being part of the official survey period e.g. tests. 335 cases have been excluded due to being largely incomplete. Another 5 were excluded for lacking GDPR consent. One person has been eliminated due to incoherent qualitative answers. One case was eliminated due to it being a second entry by that person leading to total number of 413 valid cases. The raw data set for the inactive survey included 235 respondents. After similar cleaning steps the total number of valid cases was 138 meaning a combined 551 valid participants.

A demographic overview of the main survey samples showed that 55 percent of respondents were female. Respondents were between the ages of 23 and 83. In contrast to the last survey there were a significantly larger number of respondents above the age of 45. A large proportion of respondents joined the network in 2017 (44.2%) which is similar to the last survey. The sample population reflects the diversity of the network as a whole with 79 different countries of residence being reported. There was again a large share of people that reside in Germany (35.4%) and overall, in Europe (67.5%). Positive self-selection is plausible; however, response-time comparisons of six major variables suggest no non-response bias (Armstrong and Overton, 1977)

When taking into account some of the general sample characteristics we can make the assumption that the main sample represents a similar member population as the first evaluation. It is mainly representative for the 4,471 active individuals who have engaged with boschalumni.net in the past two years. The inactive survey is most likely representative for the remaining members who have not been very active in more recent history.

1.3.3. Key improvements to the last evaluation

The second evaluation enabled new findings across three central areas. Firstly, in addition to comparison to cross-sectional analyses for values in 2026, the data structure now also offers comparisons of key data points over time between the full samples of both evaluations (e.g., "how did the overall

frequency of collaborations change between 2020 and 2025?") allows cross-sectional analysis between the two evaluations as well as longitudinal comparisons through data matching (e.g., "Did members who intended to contribute more to the network in 2020 actually contribute more in the years after?"). This approach allows differentiated long-term observations of the Bosch Alumni Network which reveals changes over the 5-year period between the two evaluations.

Second, some new variables have been introduced based on new research questions, for example regarding mission drift, social support, personal motivation and network health. These items gave insights into new topics that have not been part of the first evaluation. Third, a key research question for the second evaluation concerned the inactive parts of BAN and their relevance for the network. Therefore, a second, smaller, survey was created to better understand this invisible dimension in BAN. Beyond these main changes, numerous small improvements (more survey testing, larger qualitative sampling, AI-aided text-analysis, more controlled models in analyses) were implemented throughout the process.

1.3.4. Outline of the report

This report is organized as follows: Chapter 2 revisits the impact model of the Bosch Alumni Network and describes its key actors (Chapter 2.1), network structure (2.2), member benefits (2.3), social impact (2.4) feedback effects (2.5), trust and norms (2.6) and a summary of the impact model (2.7). Along with the impact model, we explore some noteworthy changes that have been found between both evaluations (Chapter 3).

Chapter 4 provides additional analyses and sheds light on the visible and invisible parts of BAN (Chapter 4.1), present results of the inactive survey (Chapter 4.2), discusses general feedback (4.3) network escape velocity (4.4). We conclude the evaluation with a summary and discussion of the relevance of these results for the Bosch Alumni Network (Chapter 5.1 – 5.10).

2. The impact model of the Bosch Alumni Network revisited

One of the main results of the last evaluation was the development of a **circular impact model** that aimed to conceptualize how the Bosch Alumni Network worked, what the contributions of certain actors are, what benefits and impacts originate for members and for society, and how feedback and returns flow back to these actors. Before going into more detail, we can note that results from this second evaluation largely confirm our observations from last time: the Bosch Alumni Network still works in a

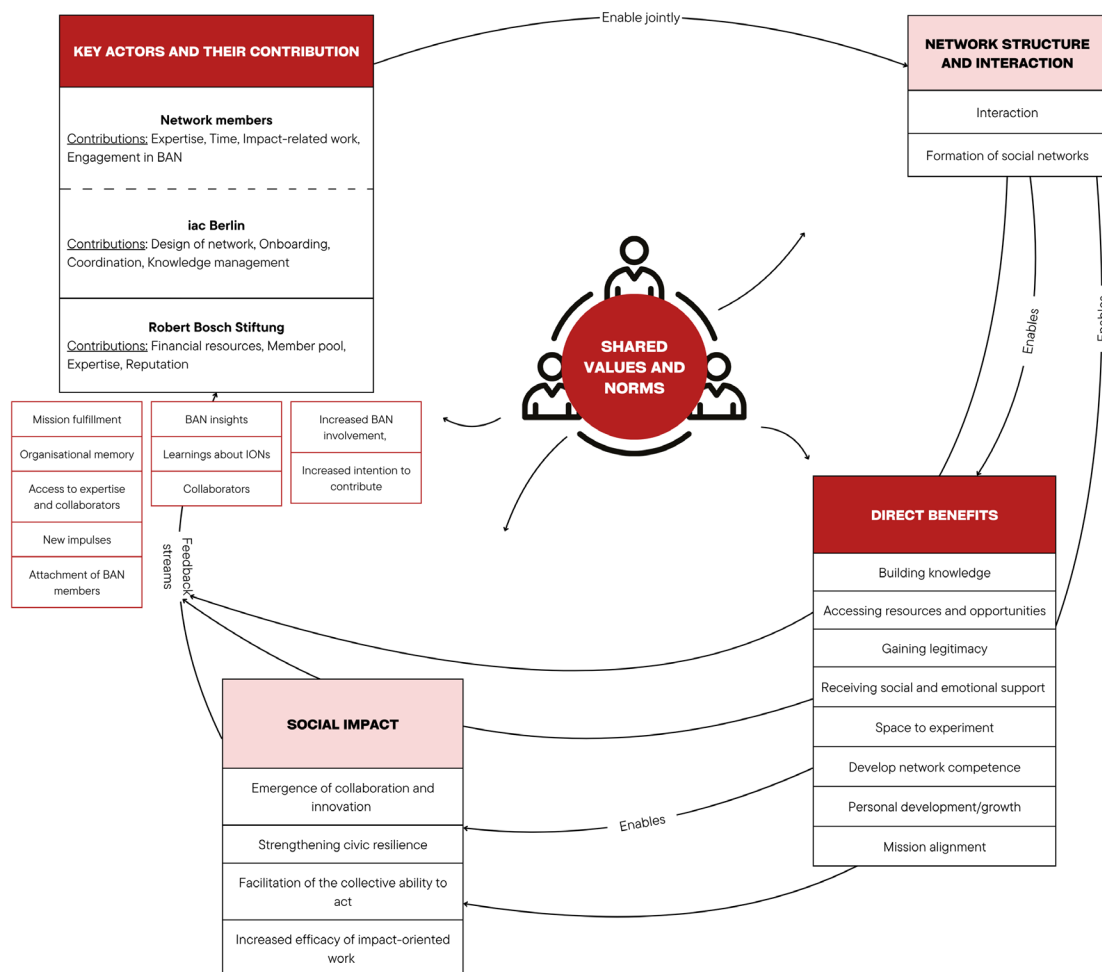


FIGURE 2. UPDATED IMPACT MODEL OF THE BOSCH ALUMNI NETWORK

circular manner, with exchanges and collaborations creating benefits and impact that reinforce each key actor's commitments to exchange and collaborate more.

Based on the insights from the qualitative part of the study (and supported by the quantitative findings), the model was, however, **updated and enhanced compared to its 2020 version**. New elements have been identified related to benefits (space to experiment, developing network competence, personal growth and mission alignment) and shared values and norms which serve as "the core" of the network. The impact model has also been visually overhauled during this re-evaluation (see Figure 2. The earlier 2020 impact model can be found in Annex B.

The upcoming chapter is going to reintroduce this model and go into some of the newer findings. Chapter 3 is then going to follow a similar logic with deeper analysis and a strong focus on comparisons between results of both evaluations.

2.1. KEY ACTORS AND THEIR CONTRIBUTIONS

2.1.1. The Robert Bosch Stiftung

The Robert Bosch Stiftung is the initiator of the Bosch Alumni Network and remains a central actor for its development by contributing financial resources, knowledge, and strategic direction. One of Europe's largest foundations associated with a private company, the Robert Bosch Stiftung was established in 1964 on the basis of the philanthropic legacy of industrialist Robert Bosch. The foundation holds over 90% of the shares in Robert Bosch GmbH and is financed by its dividends, channeling these resources into work across health, education, and global issues.

The Robert Bosch Foundation has been contributing profoundly to the network. In addition to shouldering **financial costs**, the Bosch Alumni Network's **membership base has been selected and invested** in by the Stiftung through decades of program work and support which now makes up a large part of the membership base. These longstanding investments in thousands of impactful members and their organization build a strong foundation of trust and appreciation towards RBSG and BAN. Currently, Robert Bosch Stiftung also enables access to Robert Bosch partners, which are now mainly responsible for the introduction of new members to BAN. Additionally, the Stiftung also brings with it a well-known reputation in the civic and philanthropic field which lends legitimacy and attractiveness to the network. Finally, many **employees of Robert Bosch Stiftung** are part of the network themselves, using it to connect with experts, learn, grow and collaborate (see also chapter 2.5.3) while equally contributing to the development of other network members.

KEY ACTORS AND THEIR CONTRIBUTION
<p>Network members</p> <p><u>Contributions:</u> Expertise, Time, Impact-related work, Engagement in BAN</p>
<p>iac Berlin</p> <p><u>Contributions:</u> Design of network, Onboarding, Coordination, Knowledge management</p>
<p>Robert Bosch Stiftung</p> <p><u>Contributions:</u> Financial resources, Member pool, Expertise, Reputation</p>

FIGURE 3. KEY ACTORS OF BAN

2.1.2. The International Alumni Center (iac Berlin)

The International Alumni Center (iac Berlin) is responsible for the shaping and maintenance of the network's infrastructure and is therefore the actor most involved in the operative aspects of the Bosch Alumni Network. Founded by the Robert Bosch Stiftung in 2017, the iac Berlin was established as a center of expertise for alumni communities and impact-oriented networks in philanthropy, designing learning spaces, disseminating knowledge, and developing methods and tools.

In its **coordination role**, the iac Berlin conceptualizes and oversees the implementation of the alumni network as an open space for participants to explore and engage with and therefore holds vital knowledge and expertise on network building. Additionally, the iac Berlin is responsible for the **onboarding of new members**. It also creates the necessary **spaces** for network functioning: the physical infrastructure like Community Space in Berlin, Linienstraße 65a or other events as well as the online infrastructure on boschalumni.net. Lastly, iac Berlin and its staff **actively moderate and support activities** within the network by either directly connecting with members or by creating relevant connections between members.

Members of Bosch Alumni Network acknowledge these efforts from iac Berlin as 77.0 % of survey respondents agree with the statement "*the network depends on the coordination team at iac. Without them, it would not function properly*". The team in Berlin is seen as equally important as the members themselves (where 77.2% agree that the network would not function without them), which speaks for their significance in BAN. Overall, this indispensability of iac Berlin is a compliment to their work, but might also create risks of making the network overly centralized and depending on a central node (see also the discussion in 3.3.2)

2.1.3. The network members

The third key protagonists in the Bosch Alumni Network are undoubtedly the members themselves. They are participants, contributors and some of them even take on formal roles within the network, such as regional coordinators and impact field hosts. They contribute resources such as knowledge, personal professional experience and most importantly their time into the network. Together, these contributions are important in putting the variety of opportunities from BAN into practice. Member backgrounds and their specific contributions are as follows:

- Bosch Alumni Network members from the survey sample are **based in 79 different countries**, meaning that BAN is comprised of people with diverse backgrounds and/or local knowledge. Still, about two thirds of members are currently living/working in Europe, but newer members specifically are more often located in Africa.
- On average, members have a work experience of 19 years, providing the network with a deep pool of expertise.

- Members are associated with a variety of fields of work ranging from civil society (46.2% of survey respondents), culture (39.7%), education (38.0%), social innovation (29.8%), governance (20.8%).
- They similarly choose **diverse approaches in creating social impact**. The most frequently mentioned approaches were networks and alliance building (43.1%), improving peoples' life through education (42.9%), consulting and supporting others in their creation of impact (42.1%), developing and sharing new ways of research (31.0%) and improving peoples' lives through culture (22.5%).

Members bring these experiences and resources into the network by engaging in various activities. We asked respondents to estimate the time per month they spend with the network and its members (e.g., interacting on boschalumni.net, chatting or working with other members, etc.) to measure their involvement. On average, members spend about 4.4 hours a month with the network with a total of 1,763 hours per month in the sample alone. This amounts to the resources of roughly 11 full-time employees in the sample alone. When extrapolating these values to the number of active members in the network the **hours spent equate to the work of 82.5 full-time employees**⁵.

To put this in perspective: the iac Berlin dedicates an estimated 4 FTEs to the coordination of BAN. The members' own time investment thus exceeds the coordinating team's capacity by a factor of roughly 16 to 20. This ratio underscores a defining characteristic of the network: the iac Berlin does not produce the network's value directly but rather catalyzes a vastly larger volume of member-driven activity through its coordination, facilitation, and infrastructure work. Their most prominent motivations for being engaged in the network are expanding one's professional network (59.6%), access to funding opportunities (48.4%), staying in touch with alumni from my program (43.0%), learning new skills (41.7%) and staying in touch with the RBSG (39.5%).

The engagement of members takes many different forms. It can be grouped into activities that take place on the online platform boschalumni.net and those mostly taking place in physical formats like events⁶. Turning to online activity first, Figure 4 displays the engagement in online activities by the frequency. As can be seen, members engage in many of these activities at least once a year, some of them even on a bi-weekly basis or even higher frequency.

The most frequent **online activities** were logging in to boschalumni.net (95.8% of survey participants logged in at least once a year), reading of emails or the weekly digest (94.4%) and checking news

⁵ Extrapolation is based on assumptions of the ratio of survey respondents to total active members (those who visited boschalumni.net at least once in the preceding two years, N = 4,471 at the time of data collection). The definition of "time spent with the network" in this evaluation is broader than in the first evaluation and includes both platform-based and off-platform interactions, which means the two figures are not directly comparable.

⁶ Online events like Webinars have also been grouped in the offline category, as they require a certain level of physical participation.

and opportunities (93.9%). Many also seek engagement with members by participating in online events (78.0%), by messaging them directly via boschalumni.net (74.1%) or by using the people search function (74.0%). Members of BAN also contribute to the content on online channels by reacting to posts and discussions (74.1%), posting events and/or projects (59.8%), tagging other BAN members (54.7%) as well as posting a job offer (32.3%), travel activities (29.3%) or private content (24.4%).

When it comes to activities that members engage in a more frequent basis (every other week or more), reading emails or the weekly digest (59.8% of survey participants), checking news or opportunities (35.6%) and logging in to boschalumni.net (28.8%) are named most often. About half of the active membership base is trying to stay informed about what is happening on the platform channels and is doing so on a regular basis. More context-specific activities (e.g. posting content, participating in online events) seem to be less prevalent. Only about one to ten percent of a dedicated part of BAN frequently engage with the network in these ways.

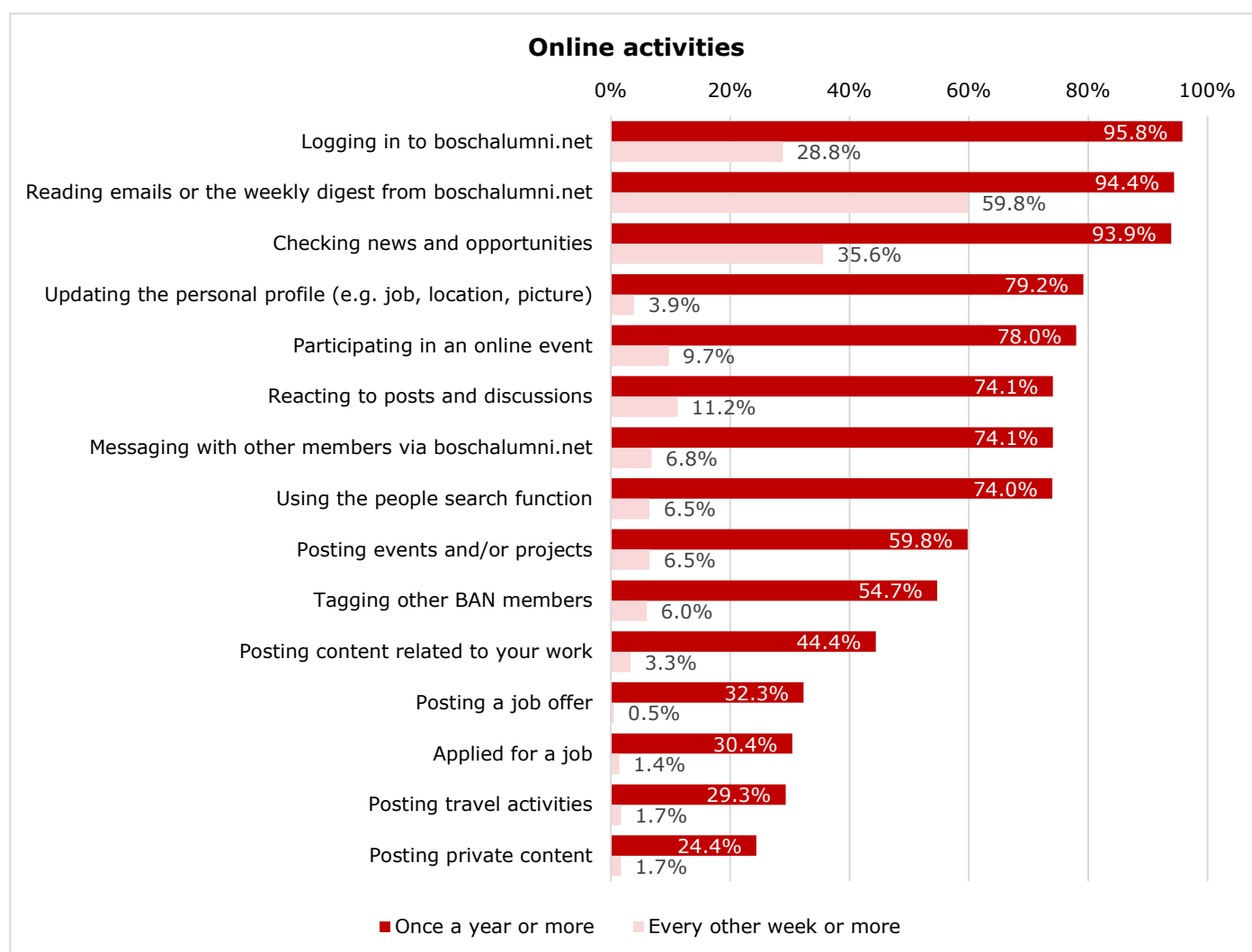


FIGURE 4. FREQUENCY OF ONLINE ACTIVITIES, ONCE A YEAR OR MORE AND EVERY OTHER WEEK OR MORE

Figure 5. Frequency of Designed/Offline Activities shows the second group of activities, displaying whether an **offline activity** was engaged in once or several times over the course of their membership. The most frequent offline/designed activities that BAN members engage with are Webinars (30.0% of respondents said that they have been involved several times), Workshops (25.4%), and other training or learning formats (22.8%). Overall, members have contributed to all the available opportunities and events from the survey and 87.7% have participated in at least one of them. This suggests that the by far most common experience of a BAN membership is hybrid, containing both virtual and physical exchanges.

Some BAN members also contribute to the network by taking on **formalized roles within the network** infrastructure. 18.6% of respondents indicated that they have or had the role of regional coordinator, 14.7% have been a jury member, 7.3% have been active as a cluster moderator. Many also seem to be open to taking on such roles in the future as 40.0% indicated interest during the survey.

Designed activities

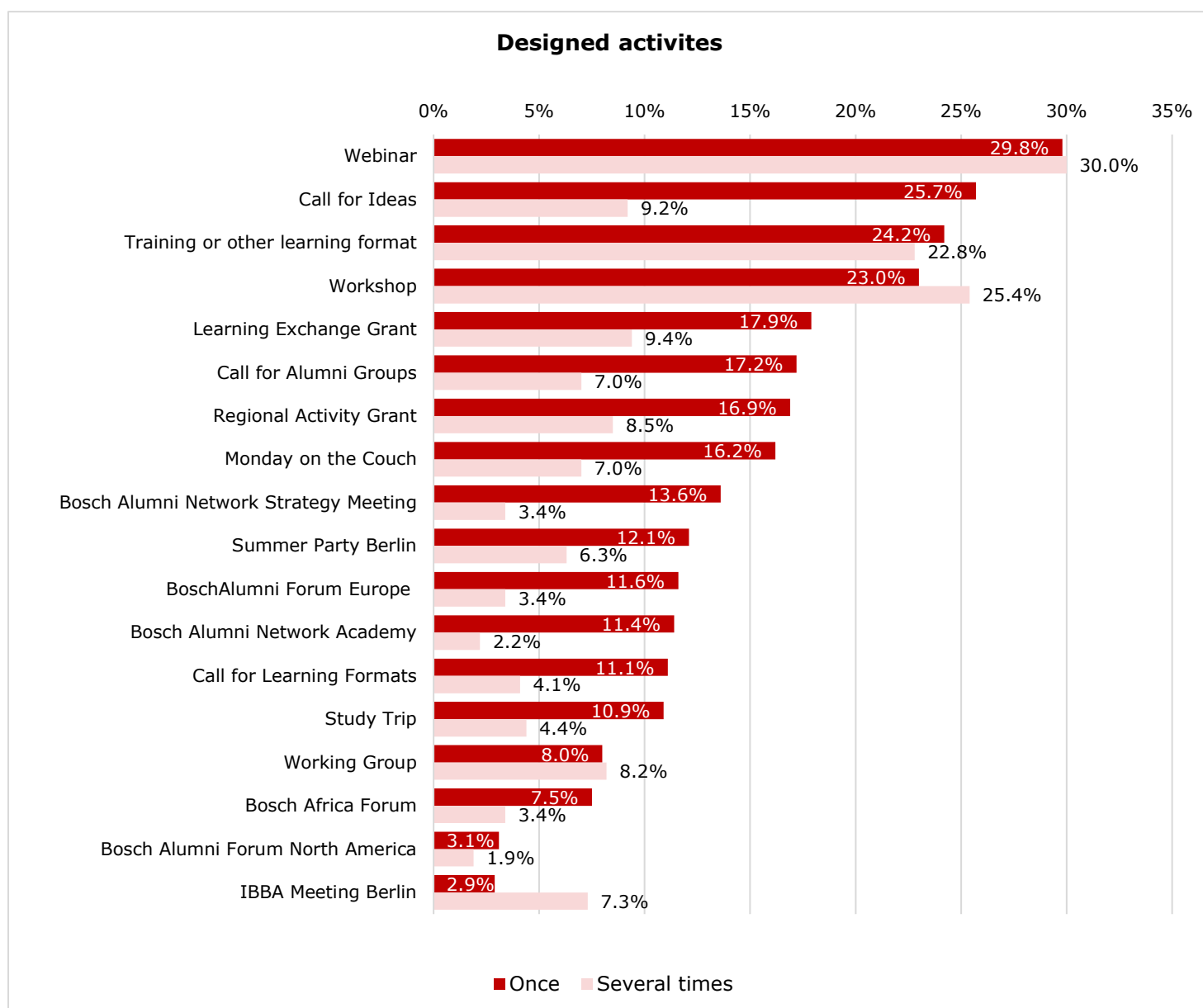


FIGURE 5. FREQUENCY OF DESIGNED/OFFLINE ACTIVITIES, ONCE SINCE JOINING THE NETWORK AND SEVERAL TIMES SINCE JOINING

2.1.4. Member engagement pathways

The Bosch Alumni Network has been active since 2017 which means that some members have already be part of the network for many years. Against this background, the current evaluation had a stronger focus on long term engagement of members. A key result was the observation that engagement of members is not rigid over time. It fluctuates along a set of pathways that were developed during the qualitative exploration and further confirmed through the quantitative survey.

Building on observations in the interviews we directly asked survey respondents to assess their own involvement in BAN since joining the network to see whether these pathways persist in a quantitative setting. The results show that the largest share of members (38.6%) describe their involvement as fluctuating (Figure 6.) with almost equal amounts of people either stating they have never (5.1%) or always (6.3%) been involved and similar parts stating their involvement is decreasing (16.3%) or increasing (15.7%). There is also a significant member pool who exhibits low involvement (16.6%).

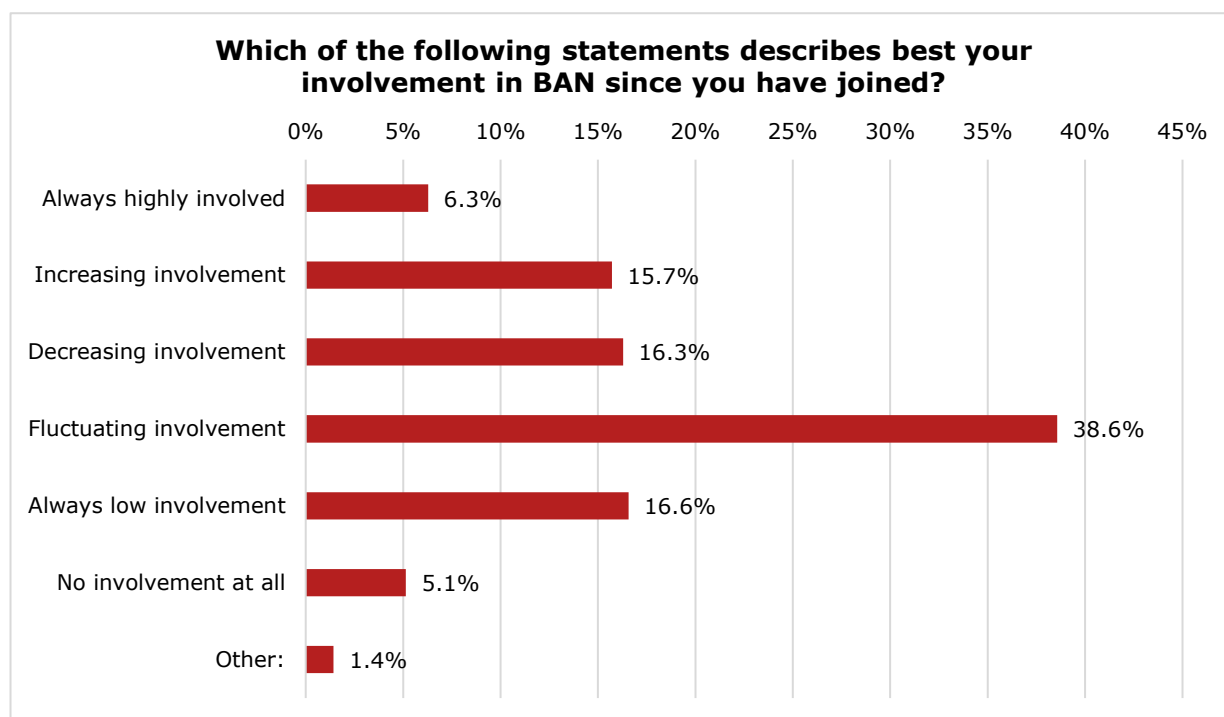


FIGURE 6. LEVEL OF MEMBER ENGAGEMENT

Based on this we have created four main engagement pathways:

- Fluctuating engagement:** Members in this group are active depending on their time, interest or relevancy of offers. The actual intensity of their engagement can vary. Some in this group are more in the periphery who sometimes interact with the platform and look at opportunities when prompted. Others, who are heavy users might also be in this path, but when they are active their engagement level tends to be more visible (Figure 7). An example for this type of engagement is given here:

„It's the sheer volume of daily tasks that sometimes keeps me from following what interests me online. Still, I always enjoy checking in every now and then to see what's going on in this diverse online community. And I do so regularly". (Anonymous survey response)

- **Rising engagement:** In the beginning the members in this group are more in the periphery or are not yet familiar with the offers and benefits the network has to offer (Figure 7). Over time, either through their own exploration of the network or due to being contacted by someone in the network they become more involved as seen in the case of this interview participant:

"When I first joined, I wasn't very active ... I didn't know how to use the app ... Recently, after a coordinator showed me the opportunities, my motivation increased a lot."
(Member interview 2)

- **Declining engagement:** Initially this group has had more active participation but over time they didn't maintain the same level of engagement (Figure 7.). Reasons for their drop in activity range from lack of time, lack of relevant opportunities to specific moments where they were faced with disappointment or frustration from the network. One of the interviewed members described their engagement in this regard like this:

"I had the role of regional coordinator for about two years, encouraging others to participate. Now my role is less formal. I like to stay connected, but I don't want to facilitate others anymore." (Member interview 14)

- **Constant (high or low) engagement:** Some members have either never been very active or their activity level was always high (Figure 7.). People in the first group are likely not very proactive and examples for people in the latter group could be new members who are constantly exploring different elements of the platform since joining. Data from Figure 6 suggests that the number of people with constant low involvement is bigger than those with constant high involvement.

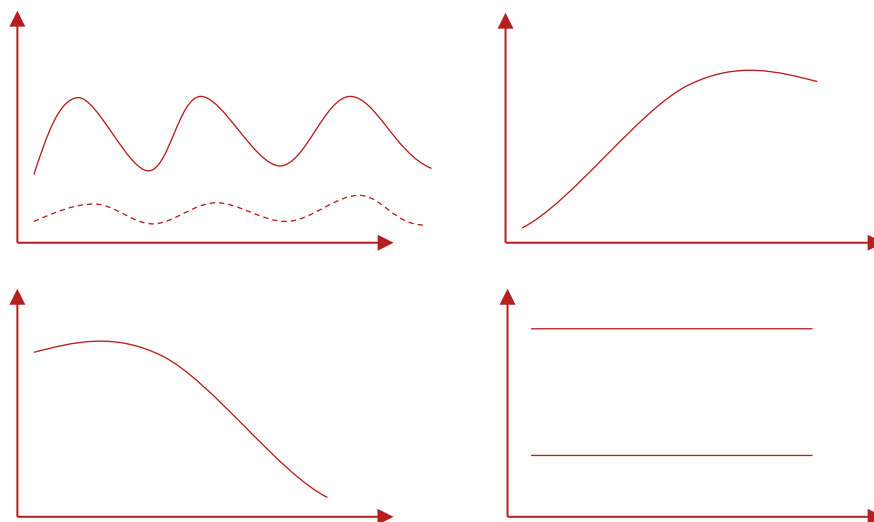


FIGURE 7. ENGAGEMENT PATHWAYS: FLUCTUATING (UPPER LEFT), RISING (UPPER RIGHT), DECLINING (LOWER LEFT) AND CONSTANT (LOWER RIGHT)

As we can see, **engagement in the network typically fluctuates, meaning that a typical member of the network is likely not always aware of current developments.** However, there could be potential to spark their engagement again through repeated onboarding or notifications of new offers. Interestingly, there was a group that deviated from these general observations. Comparing longstanding members with newer ones shows that newer members, who joined after 2020, seem to be more active than members who have been part of the network for a longer time. 31.7 % of newer members have increasing or constant high involvement while only 19.8% of the group of members who joined before 2020 had the same level of involvement.

2.2. NETWORK STRUCTURE AND INTERACTION

2.2.1. Interactions between members

Following the logic of impact model, the actors and the contributions that have been discussed in chapter 2.1 jointly bring the network to life. Together they create the overall network structure and enable interactions between these actors. In the last evaluation we called this **constant interplay between social network structure and interactions** between members the “engine” of BAN. Interactions between members themselves (e.g. getting to know new members, reconnection with members they already know) increase the size of individual networks and strengthen existing relationships, which also shape and reinforce the network structure (size, density, positions, permeability). The network structure, in turn, again influences the opportunities for connections between individual members. Any form of member interaction is thus a foundation of the network as well as an opportunity for collaboration and further growth of their individual networks.

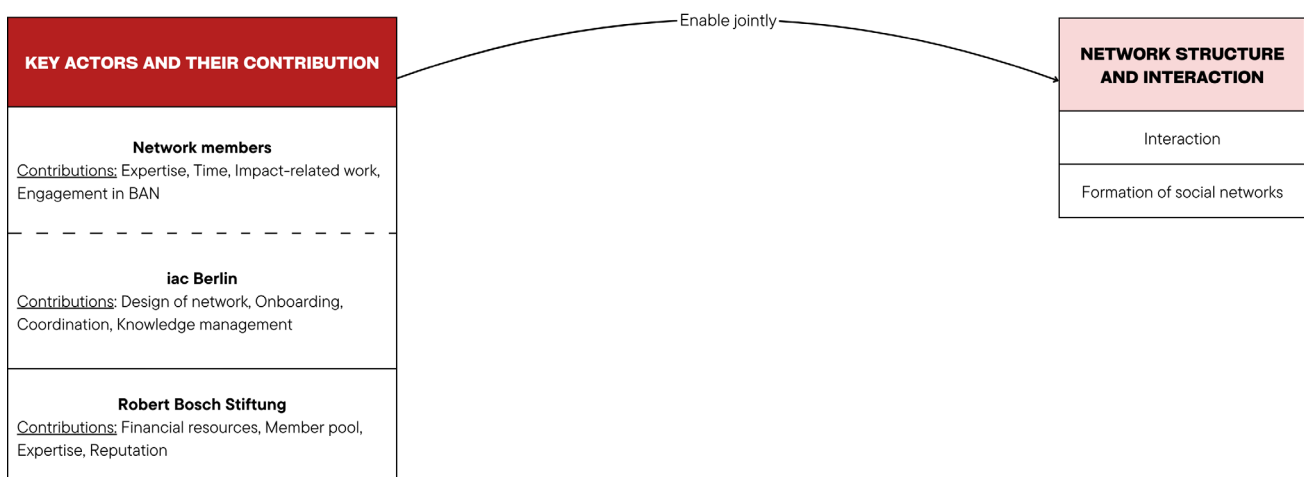


FIGURE 8. KEY ACTORS ENABLE THE NETWORK STRUCTURE

Based on where and how members communicate (see Section 2.1), the interactions between them happen both on- and offline. Again, we observe that the vast majority of members engage in such

interactions (Figure 9). On a yearly basis, respondents from the survey most commonly interacted by discussing work with another members, (85.5%) followed by informal conversations / small talk with another member (84.0%). Furthermore, 74.1% indicated that they reconnected with someone from a program at RBSG, 69.7% said they introduced members with each other and 66.8% of the sample indicated that they have discussed private matters with another member (which is quite remarkable for a professional network). A smaller share of members stated that they have interacted with members on a more regular basis, meaning every other week or more. Roughly 15% frequently discussed work or had informal conversations with members and only a tiny part of the members participated in private discussions or introduced members to each other.

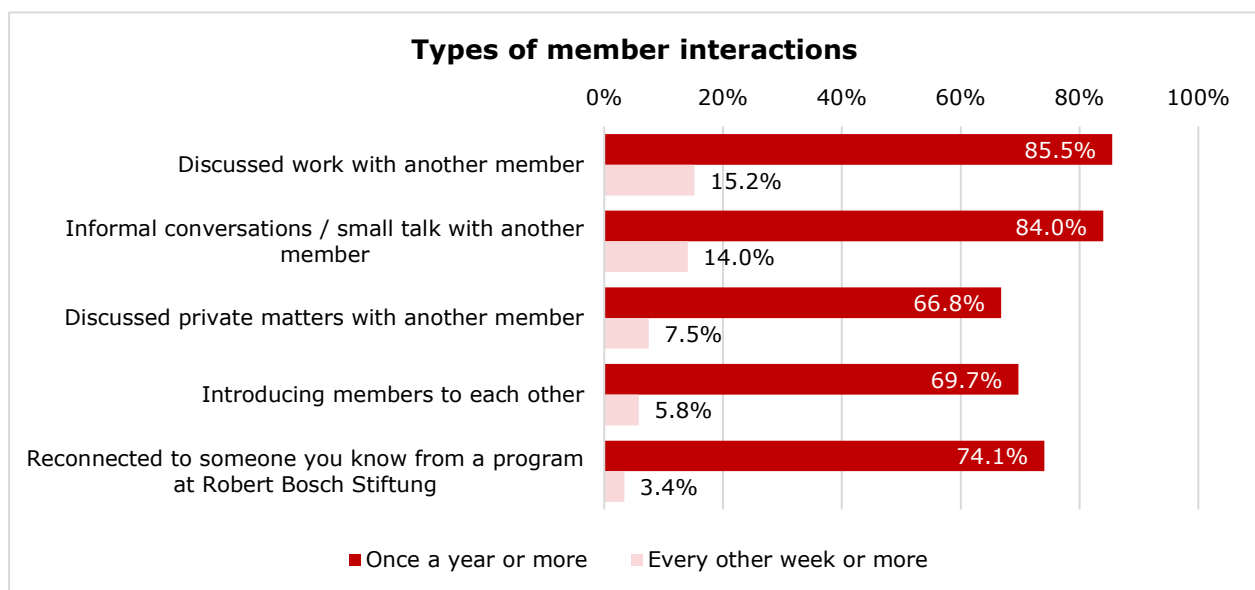


FIGURE 9. MEMBER INTERACTIONS, ONCE A YEAR AND EVERY OTHER WEEK OR MORE

2.2.2. Communication channels

One of the key questions in this evaluation was, how much of the communication between members and thus their inaction (and likely much of the benefits and impacts following from it) are visible to other members and the iac Berlin. To gain insight into this, we asked network members to estimate the share of time they use across different channels when communicating with other members.

We find that **a majority of interactions**, and therefore a large part of the network, are seemingly **invisible to others**. By far the biggest share of member interactions (31.5%) seem to happen on messaging services (e.g. WhatsApp, Signal etc.) followed by physical meetings (18.2%) and email (15.3%). Only about 10% of interactions happen via calls or social media (Figure 10.). Bosch-alumni.net hosts only 12.1% of interactions (see also chapter 4.1 for a “deep dive” on the prevalence and implementations of invisible communication in the BAN). Annex C illustrates a data driven excursion into channel usage over the years that members have joined.

While it still serves a crucial role as the place for initiating contact, 54.0% of members said that after getting to know other members on boschalumni.net they typically continue their conversation on other channels. These results indicate that **boschalumni.net is not a social network but a social portal**). It hosts certain elements of Bosch Alumni Network but is not the central hub for communications within the network. It matches members with people or opportunities, but it does not function as a space where interaction mainly happens. For a deeper engagement with these key study findings see also discussions of this key study finding in sections 3.2 and 5.5.

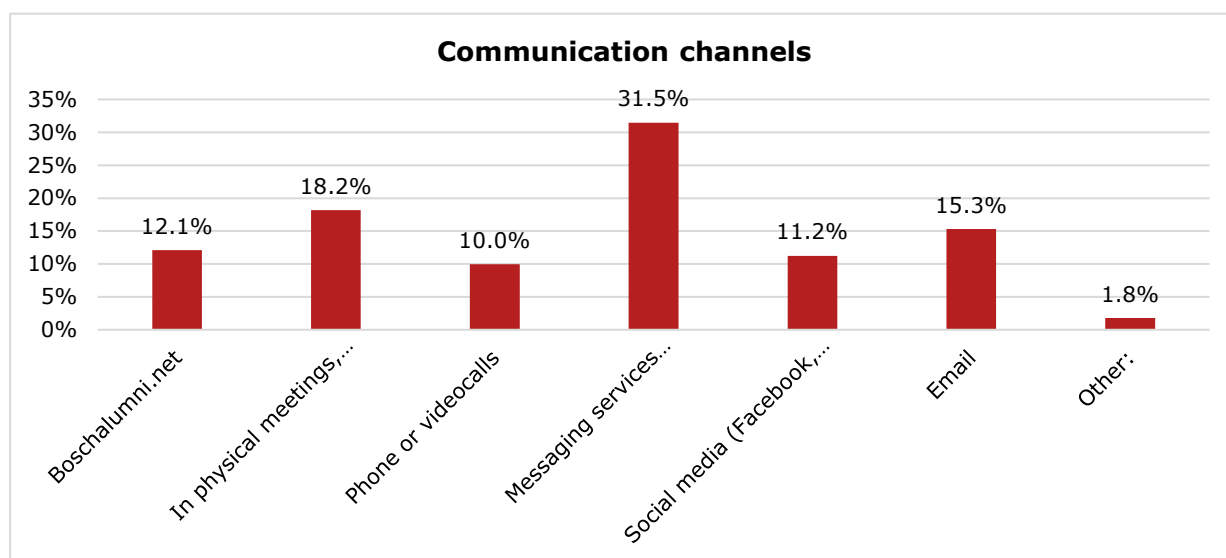


FIGURE 10. AVERAGE SHARE OF DIFFERENT COMMUNICATION CHANNELS

2.2.3. Network diversity and health

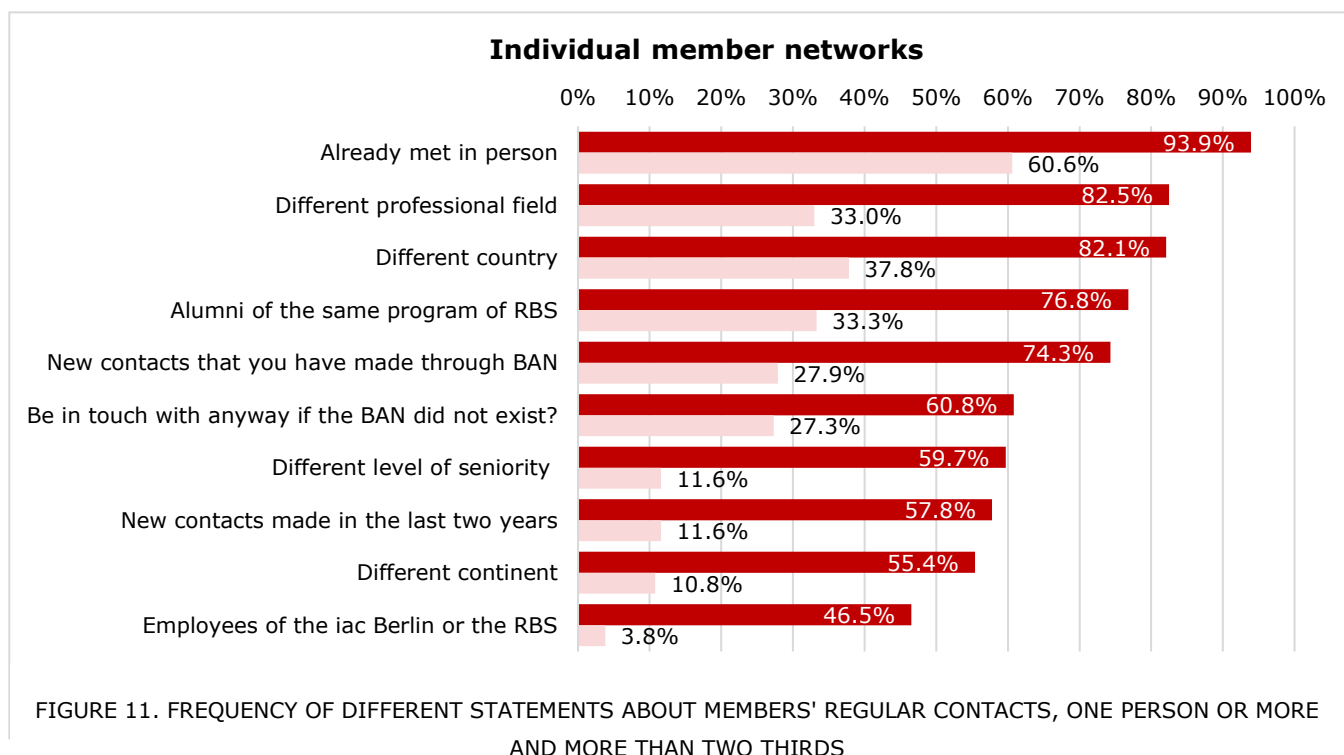
One of the major outcomes of interactions between members is the formation and growth of (individual) social networks. The first evaluation revealed that respondents had sizeable and diverse networks. The present evaluation underlines these results and shows that BAN has a healthy network structure with many weak ties and a strong layer of medium sized networks. The 413 survey participants had an average of 60 surface level connections, meaning that they have made at least one conversation with these since being in BAN. This amounts to 21,500 surface level connections in the sample alone. The number of people they were regularly in contact with (twice a year or more) was smaller with an average of 12, which amounts to 4 400 of these connections in the survey sample.

There are varying degrees of individual network size. 23.0% of members had 0-10 surface level contacts, 66.6% had 10-100 and 10.4% had more than 100 connections. This very large layer of medium sized network is **ideal for weak-tie networks** as it allows diverse exposure but is still small enough for meaningful connections and access of nonredundant information (Levin & Cross, 2004). This mid-range connectivity also supports brokerage. Burt (2004) demonstrated that people whose networks

bridge structural holes between groups can provide earlier access to a broader diversity of information. For this, they require enough non-redundant contacts to span different clusters, but not so many that relationships become purely nominal. Moreover, the large share of medium-sized personal networks contributes to a more balanced overall network structure and reduces the risk of overdependence on a few highly connected hubs. As research on scale-free networks suggests, networks that are heavily dependent on a small number of hubs are extremely vulnerable to the targeted removal of those hubs (Albert, Jeong & Barabási, 2000, Granovetter, 1973). A network where most members maintain a moderate number of ties, distributes connectivity more evenly and creates a more resilient architecture.

Another indicator for network health is the diversity of individual social networks, i.e. the degree to which members maintain a balanced mix of old and new contacts, virtual and physical interactions, in-field and out-of-field connections, and co-located and international ties (Burt, 2004; Ugander et al. 2012). Our observations for such parameters in BAN are displayed in Figure 11., showing the average share of close tie-relationships (in touch twice a year or more often). Here, 93.9% report that they have already met at least one of their regular connections in person, 60.6% even meet face-to-face with two thirds or more of their connections. Moreover, their networks span across various disciplines and countries. 82.5% stated that they had at least one contact from a different profession field while 82.1% had at least one contact in another country. Overall, this suggests a useful level of diversity accessible to individual members.

Individual program history still seems to be relevant for members as 76.8% stated that they have at least one regular contact who has participated in the same program funded by Robert Bosch Stiftung and 33.3% said that these members make up about two thirds of their regular network. Despite this,



and the fact that a significant number of members have been part of the network for a long time (see chapter 1.3.2), 57.8% reported that they met at least one of their regular contacts in the last two years.

The results provide evidence for the **ongoing additionality of the network**, beyond merely staying in touch with the initial cohort of people that were part of the same program from RBSG. While 60.8% of survey participants said that at least one person is someone they would be in touch with even without the existence of BAN, only 27.3% made similar claims for more than two thirds of their individual network. Bosch Alumni Network is aiding members in making connections as well as keeping in touch with people they would likely have lost contact with otherwise. Interestingly, while active membership has been growing with controlled speed by 0.9% over the past 7 years (4,185 in 2020, 4,471 in 2026), the network still provides plenty of opportunities to make new relevant contacts. More than 70 % report have made at least one new close-tie contact in the last two years, 11.6% even built the majority of their network in this time.

2.2.4. Network geography

We were also interested in displaying BAN in a more tangible way by **visualizing the geographical connections** that members maintain across the network. Survey participants had the option to specify in which countries up to three of their closest connections reside. Combined with data on their own country of residence, this allowed us to create a network map of BAN, which can be seen in Figure 12⁷. The size of each node and its label is proportional to the number of times a country appears as a point of origin; the opacity of the connecting lines indicates the frequency of connections between two countries.

The map reveals several notable structural features. First, it visualizes the geographical footprint of the network, with relevant connections spanning over 85 countries across five continents. **Germany** is clearly the **dominant hub**, with the largest node and the highest density of incoming ties. This reflects both the large Berlin-based member community (including iac Berlin staff) and the legacy of Robert Bosch Stiftung programs that often involve a period of exchange with Germany. Some programs were also only available in German or were entirely hosted in Germany. This hub-and-spoke pattern around Germany is characteristic of networks that originate from a single institutional anchor (Barabási, 2009), but the map also shows that BAN has developed significant connectivity beyond this central node.

Second, Europe displays the densest web of cross-country connections, with particularly strong corridors between Germany and countries such as Turkey, Georgia, Poland, France, the United Kingdom,

⁷The data presented here refers to a subset of 341 people who answered the question on the country of their most frequent contacts. This data was then put into the visualization software Gephi to achieve the network graph from Figure 12

and several Southeast European and post-Soviet states. This pattern likely reflects the Stiftung's longstanding programmatic focus on European integration and transatlantic dialogue. Within this European cluster, **several secondary hubs** are visible: the United Kingdom and France, for instance, serve as connectors not only to Germany but also to countries in Africa and the Middle East, creating bridging ties that extend the network's reach beyond Europe.

Third, in Sub-Saharan Africa, a notable cluster has formed around Kenya, Nigeria, Uganda, and Ghana, with multiple ties running both between these countries and back to Germany. This African sub-network shows a degree of internal connectivity. Members in East and West Africa are connected to each other, not only to European hubs. This suggests the emergence of **regional networks in Africa** that operate partly independently of the center.

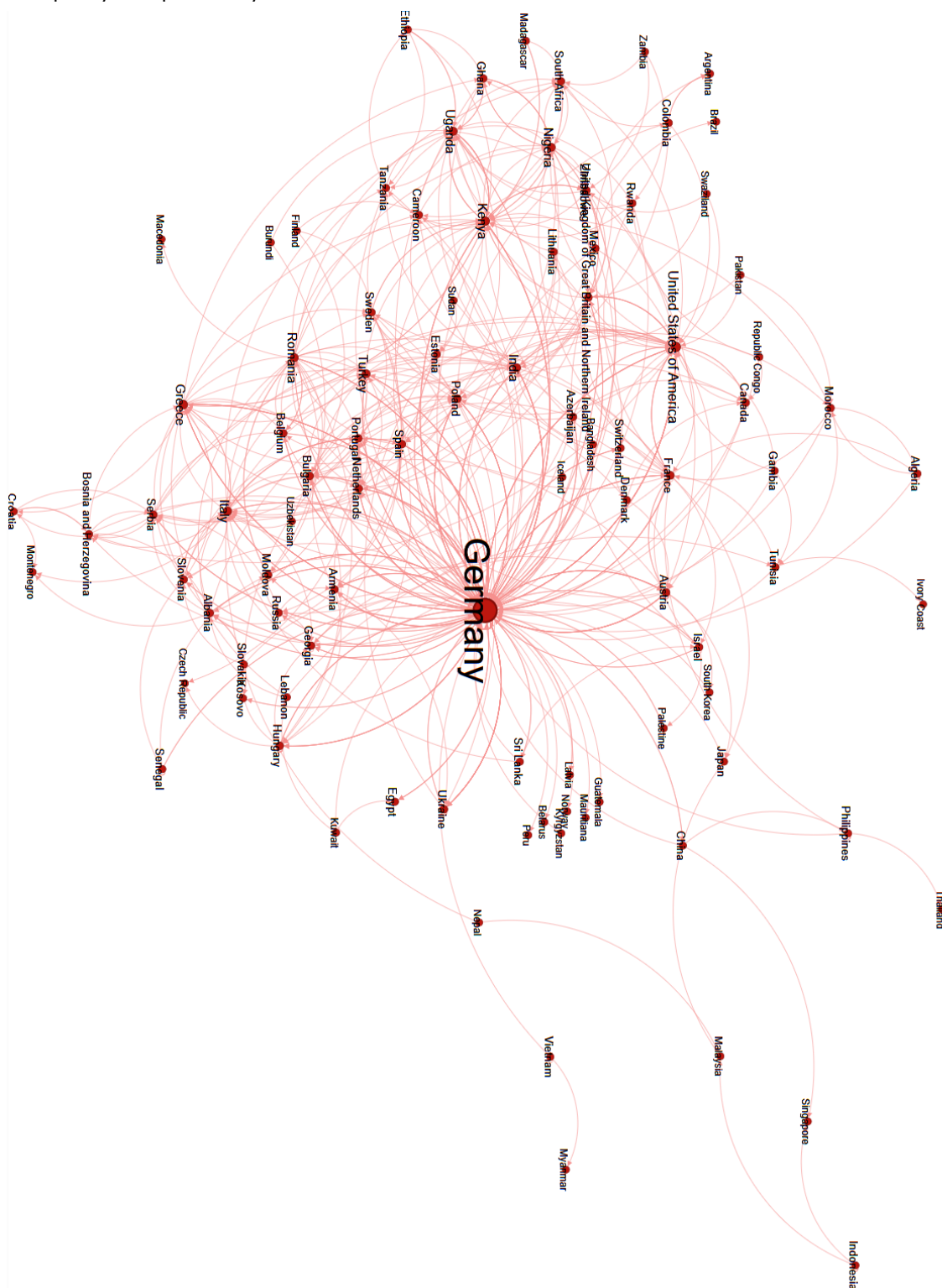


FIGURE 12. TEE GEOGRAPHICAL RELATIONSHIPS OF BAN

Fourth, Asia and Latin America remain more peripheral, with fewer nodes and thinner ties. Countries like India, China, and Japan connect primarily to Germany and to one or two European countries but show little interconnection with one another. Similarly, in Latin America, Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, and Guatemala appear at the edges of the network with limited mutual ties. These regions may represent areas where programmatic investment has been more recent or less concentrated overall, or where sampling effects play a role⁸.

2.3. DIRECT BENEFITS

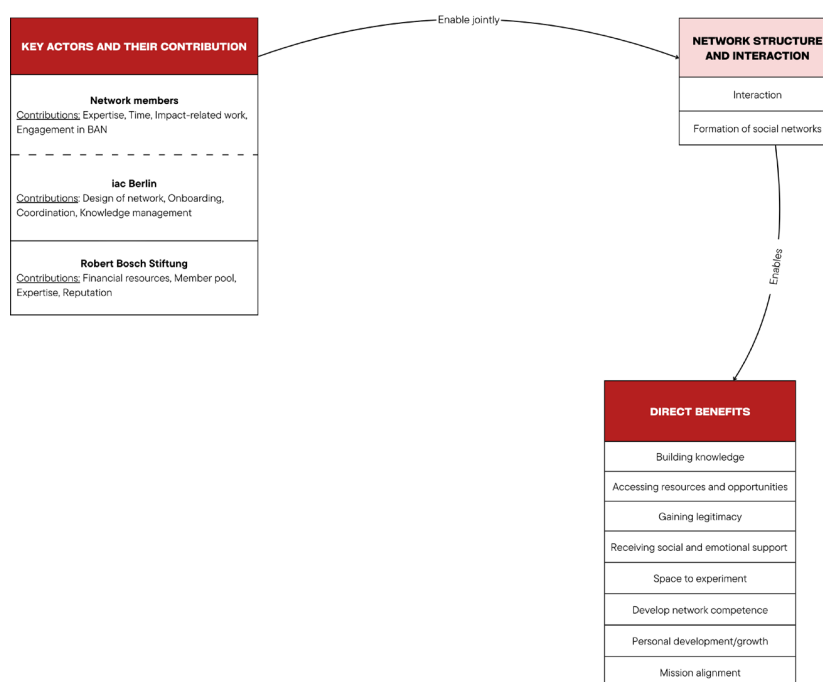


FIGURE 13. ACTORS AND NETWORK STRUCTURE ENABLE MEMBERS TO GAIN BENEFITS

Contributions from the key actors and the subsequent interactions and formation of social networks facilitate direct benefits for members. Based on qualitative interviews we identified four new categories of benefits that had not been yet addressed in the 2020 evaluation, bringing the total to eight visible benefits. The main categories are building knowledge, accessing resources and opportunities, gaining legitimacy, receiving social and emotional support, space to experiment, developing network competence, personal growth and mission alignment.

⁸ Since the question on the country of residence of up to three people was optional, this map does not include answers from the whole sample of 413 people but a subset of 341 respondents. It is possible that sampling efforts for the survey lead to some areas being underrepresented leading to them also not having much visibility here.

2.3.1. Building knowledge

Being a member of BAN enables people to access information and build new knowledge either directly through the platform or indirectly through contact with others. Direct learning opportunities include trainings, workshops, study trips, learning exchange grants or other forms of direct interactions with members. Indirect opportunities include any information or knowledge that can be found through exploration on the platform. Members can tap into valuable knowledge as demonstrated here by one of them:

"I found some interesting information about [...] things happening in Africa that I would not have had the chance to know about otherwise [...] I also learned from general reflections on topics like the importance of community, which I used in my work" (Member interview 8)

Results from the survey further illustrate that a large share of members are able to gain knowledge as a result of being part of BAN. 89.6% of respondents indicated that they have received valuable information at least once a year, with 55.4% indicating that this happens every other month or more (Figure 14). This is the single highest score in the survey and underlines the ubiquity of BAN as a source of information. Likewise, 73.4% reported having a new skill or competency, and 44.8% said that they were able to stay in touch with developments in their field/profession at least once during the last year.

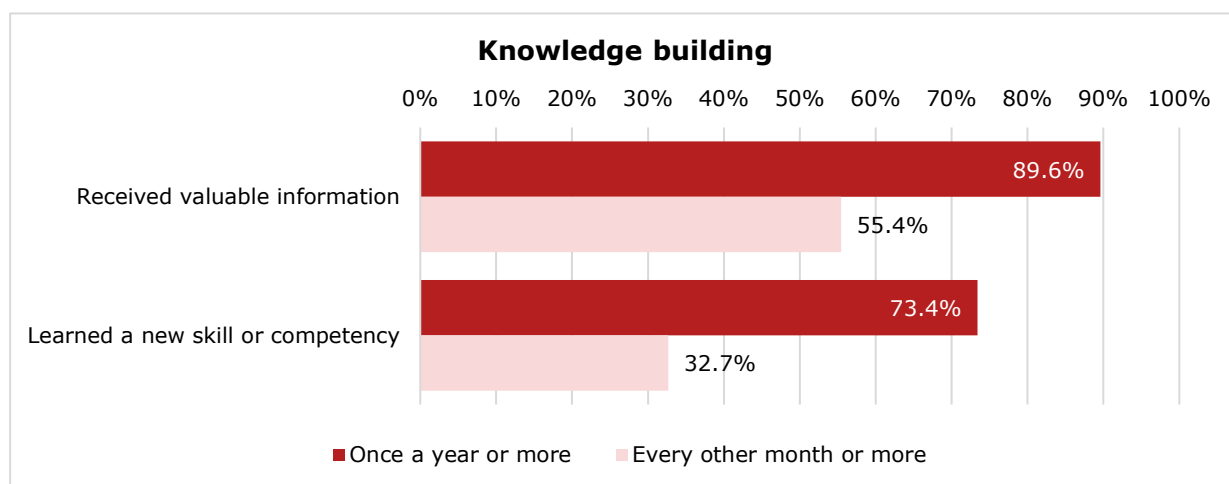


FIGURE 14. FREQUENCY OF EXPERIENCES IN REGARD TO KNOWLEDGE BUILDING, ONCE A YEAR OR MORE AND EVERY OTHER MONTH OR MORE

2.3.2. Accessing resources and opportunities

The second direct benefit for members of BAN is the possibility to access resources and opportunities that can manifest themselves in various ways. Examples are getting access to a work or event space, receiving work materials, getting referred to funders to being hired or contracted by another member. On average, members reported that they discovered about five professional opportunities through the Bosch Alumni Network since joining it, with 89% having at least one instance where they were able to

identify relevant opportunities. Not all of these opportunities are discovered with the same frequency: our survey data shows that 60.3% have gained access to space or materials at least once the past year, 51.7% have been referred to an important contact, 30.8% have been referred to a funder or received funding through BAN (Figure 15). Members not only seek out opportunities in BAN, but they also try to create visibility for their own work and offers. 45.8% have said that they have promoted their own work at least once a year

Finally, a surprisingly large share of almost a quarter of members (24.2%) have hired or contracted another BAN member over the past year, suggest the high professional relevance and quality of the network. An example of this was also provided in one of the interviews:

"Through BAN I met the CEO of the organization where I currently work. That transition was only possible because of this network." (Member interview 18)

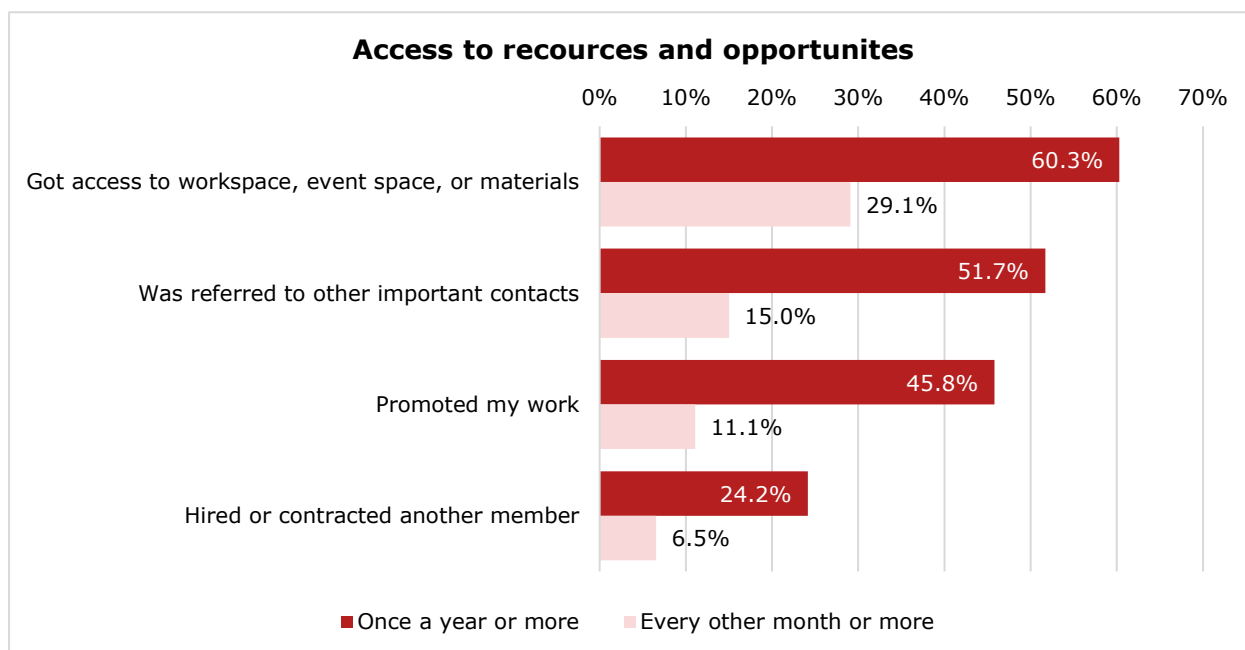


FIGURE 15. FREQUENCY OF EXPERIENCES IN REGARD TO ACCESS TO RESOURCES AND OPPORTUNITES, ONCE A YEAR OR MORE AND EVERY OTHER MONTH OR MORE

2.3.3. Gaining legitimacy

The Bosch Alumni Network also generates value through recognition and legitimacy. Internally, members gain visibility by showcasing their projects, expertise, and achievements to a curated community of peers on boschalumni.net. Receiving feedback, endorsements, and invitations to collaborate reinforce their standing within the network. Externally, membership functions as a signal: being associated with the Robert Bosch Stiftung and its alumni community lends credibility in professional and civic contexts. As one member put it:

"[...] because Bosch is already a well-known name, and regardless of which program you were in or you graduated from it has always carried a certain reputation." (Member interview 13)

Survey results support this: 56.2% of members reported that being able to claim BAN membership can be helpful in building credibility with others, and 41.6% stated that their membership has concretely benefited them or their organization in terms of recognition and reputation. In signaling theory terms (Spence, 1973), BAN membership serves as a credible quality signal that is costly to acquire (requiring selection into a competitive Stiftung program or partnership and reflecting the trust of RBSG in this person) and therefore difficult to imitate, which is precisely what makes it informative to outside observers.

2.3.4. Receiving social and emotional support

Another direct benefit for members of Bosch Alumni Network is the access to social and emotional support. The emergence of informal support mechanisms validates the observations from last time that there seems to be at least some kind of community-like quality to BAN. Connections made in BAN often go beyond professional contexts and project focus and some members develop deeper relationships or even friendships. Among survey respondents, 25.7% said that they can rely on other members when things get difficult at work, 36.8% reported that other members are willing to listen to their professional or personal problems and 32.2% said that their membership has helped them to navigate personal or organizational hardship (Figure 16)

Participants were also asked if they feel that BAN is a "safer space" in which they can feel like themselves to which 57,6% agreed and only 4,8% disagreed. The Bosch Alumni Network is a positive force

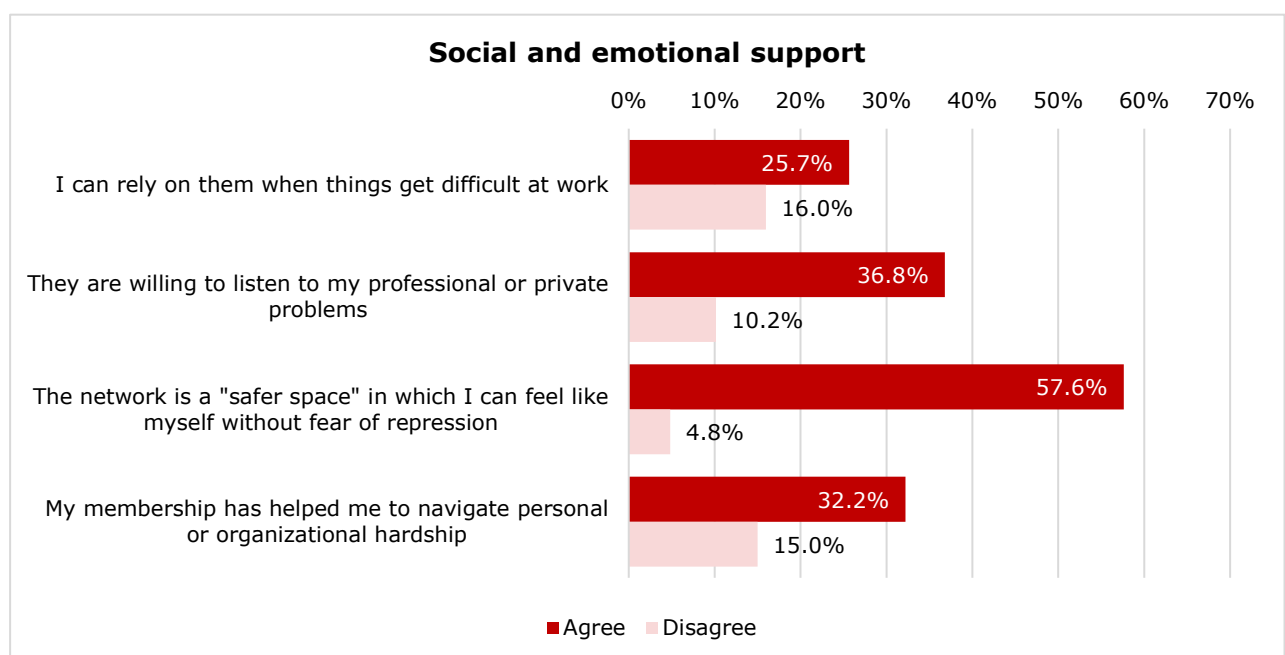


FIGURE 16. AGREEMENT TO STATEMENTS RELATED TO SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL SUPPORT

where people can seek support during challenging periods. One respondent from the interviews shared that, for them, network is an open space where you can easily ask for help:

"The WhatsApp group of our India batch is our sacred space. Whenever someone faces a challenge, at least four people respond with support, even offering hands-on help like solving tech problems. That's how supportive the network is." (Member interview 18)

2.3.5. Space to experiment

Qualitative and quantitative data analysis has revealed four new direct benefits beyond those described in the 2020 impact model. The first identifies BAN as a space that enables experimentation and prototyping. The network allows its members to pilot projects in a low-risk, high-trust environment and some of these project have been prototyped within BAN and later scaled to external markets. In the survey, 54.5% of respondents agreed that the network provides the freedom to experiment. Interview partners highlighted that interactions with peers and exposure to others' initiatives serve as sources of inspiration, and that the network offers concrete opportunities to collaborate and launch joint projects. One respondent described their experience as follows:

"We developed the format for systemic change in BAN ... It was possible to pilot it and later bring it to the open market [...] experimentation is strongly supported within the network" (Member interview 1)

The finding resonates with Sarasvathy's (2001) theory of effectuation, which holds that entrepreneurs under uncertainty do not begin with fixed goals and optimal strategies but rather experiment with available means, form partnerships, and allow ventures to emerge through iterative action. This resembles the pattern that BAN members describe when they speak of piloting formats within the network before bringing them to the open market.

2.3.6. Develop network competence

The second new dimension concerns BAN's capacity to strengthen members' own networking competence. As a result of dedicated information, training or informal and formal roles (such as Impact Field Host or Regional Coordinator) members can learn how to use, curate and build networks effectively. 31,7% of the survey participants have already taken on such roles in the past and 40.0% said they would be willing to do so in the future. During the interviews a member described their own personal journey and the role that Bosch Alumni Network played:

"Years back [...] I'm not sure I would have [been] given the opportunity to be a jury member. It's [BAN] giving everyone the opportunity to be a leader" (Member interview 16)

Developing competence in this area seems to be an important direct benefit for many members as they are strongly interested in working together and building networks. 43.1% said that their own

work is in the field of network and alliance building. 59.6% have said that expanding their profession network is one of the most important motivations for engaging in BAN.

2.3.7. Personal development/growth

Beyond acquiring specific information or skills, BAN can also benefit its members by providing a space for personal growth. In the survey, 55.0% of respondents stated that BAN has contributed to their professional development in areas such as leadership, organizational growth, and communication. Younger and less experienced members in particular appear to build professional self-efficacy and confidence through their engagement with the network⁹. One member reflected on how the network served not only as a source of professional opportunities but as an environment that encouraged them to believe in their own capabilities:

„I was just always in my shell, you know [...]. The BAN gave me the opportunity the first time to ever travel out of my comfort zone. Give me the opportunity the first time to share my story on a certain physical platform. [...] Today I'm taking on the leadership role.“ (Member interview 2).

It can be noted that this pattern is consistent with Bandura's (1977) theory of self-efficacy, which holds that confidence in one's own ability to succeed in specific situations is shaped not only by direct mastery experiences but also by vicarious learning (i.e. observing peers who succeed) and verbal persuasion from trusted others. BAN appears to activate all three mechanisms: members take on roles and responsibilities that generate mastery experiences, they observe peers across programs navigating similar challenges, and they receive encouragement from a community that actively supports initiative-taking. This underlines the value of visibility of communication and creating visible role models of successful collaborations, which are discussed in Sections 4.1 and throughout Section 5.

2.3.8. Mission alignment

Previous chapters on direct benefits have shown that BAN supports members in their growth, letting them identify relevant opportunities and find partners to collaborate with. It turns out that over time the network can also help them retain their organizational goals. 33.1% of the survey respondents said that BAN has helped them or their organization to stay aligned with their mission¹⁰.

"when you go against the 'mainstream' you feel alone, in times of crisis experiencing a brotherhood between countries and a cohesion of values is an unexpected force" (Anonymous survey response)

⁹ Agreement with the statement on personal development correlated with lower age and less work experience.

¹⁰ Excluding >40 % respondents that checked "not applicable".

Respondents were also asked to reflect on whether external influences have had an impact on their work or their organization's decision-making in the past (Figure 17). About a third of respondents (31.2%) have stated that they prioritized goals of their funders over their own, 42.2% have said that they favored more easily accessible target groups over more complex demands and 21.1% reported having held back criticism toward the government to not risk losing economic support. Amid these occurrences, Bosch Alumni Network has been helpful with not drifting away from their initial goals or their own mission. Almost half of survey respondents (45.2%) said that, over time, BAN has helped them to stay focused on their mission.

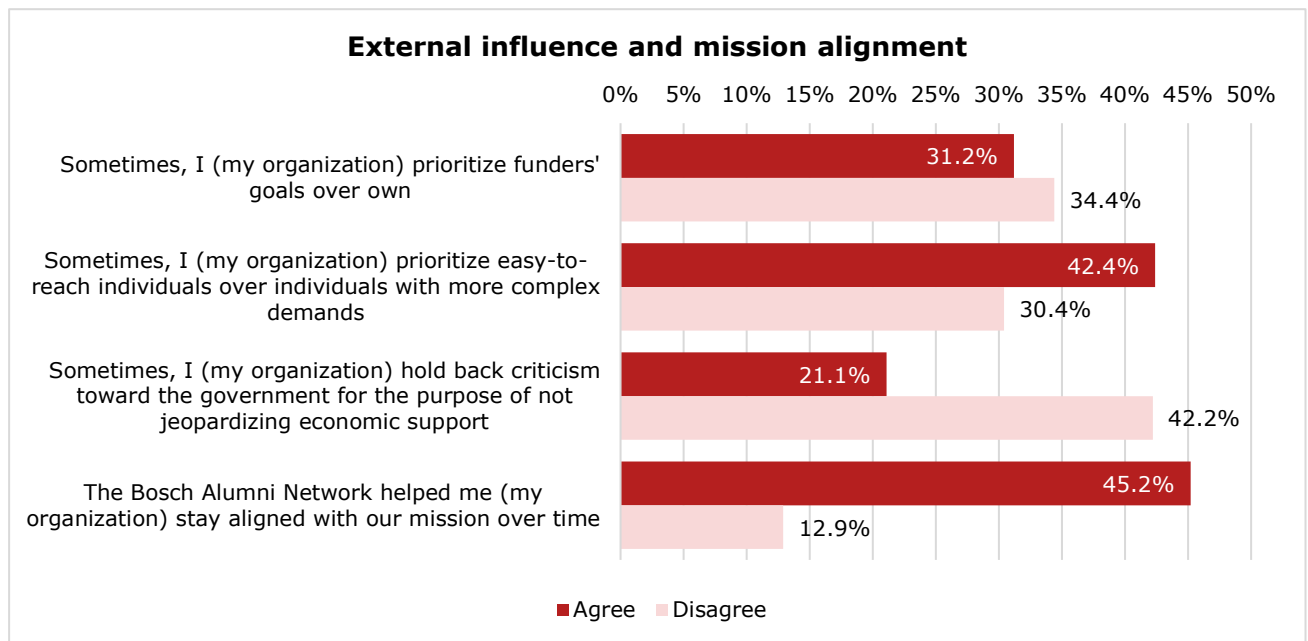


FIGURE 17. AGREEMENT TO STATEMENTS RELATED TO EXTERNAL INFLUENCE AND MISSION ALIGNMENT

2.4. SOCIAL IMPACT

Chapters 2.1 to 2.3 show who the main actors in BAN are, how their contributions enable interactions, and which benefits members can access through the network. Eventually, these actions together lead to the creation of broader social impacts manifesting on the level of organizations, fields, and society. Four of these social impacts have been identified: emergence of collaboration and innovation, strengthening of civic resilience, facilitation of collective ability to act, and increased efficacy of the impact-oriented work of members (Figure 18).

2.4.1. Emergence of collaboration and innovation

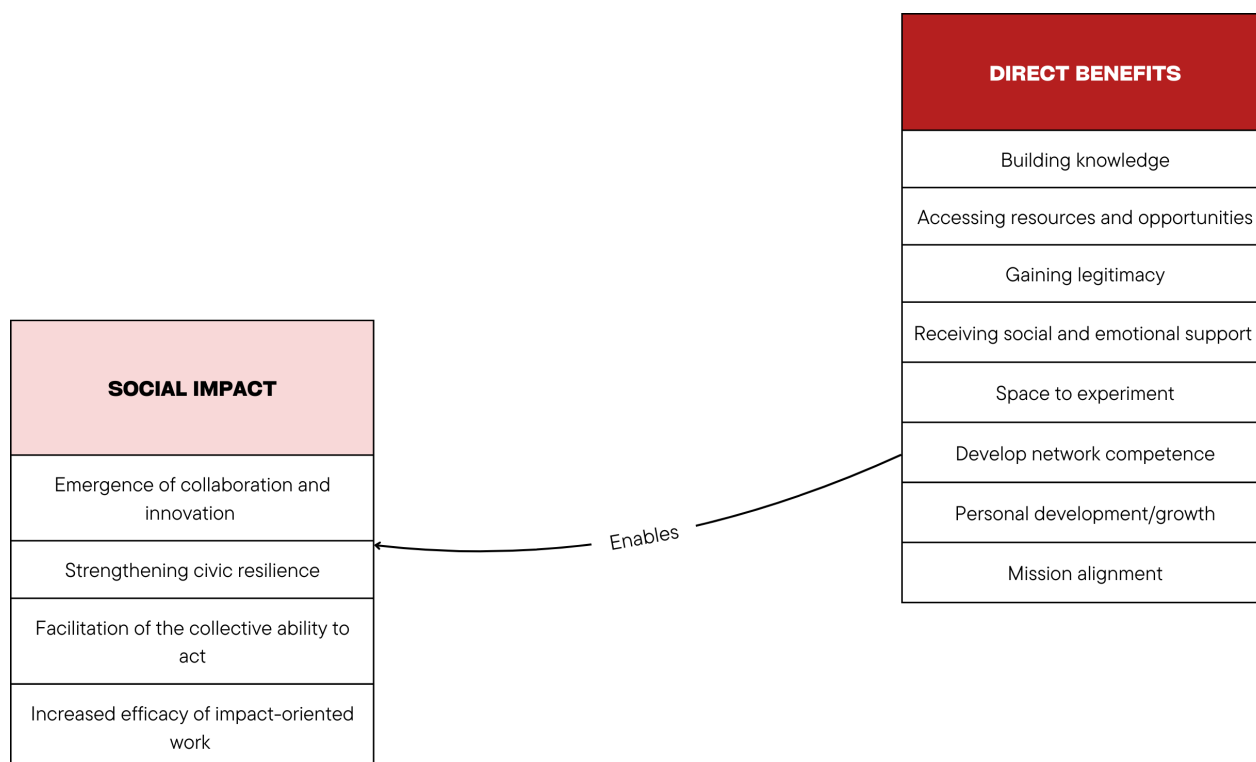


FIGURE 18. DIRECT BENEFITS LEAD TO SOCIAL IMPACTS

Co-creation and co-innovation are major drivers of impact as they lead to new projects, which often allow members to serve their (social) goals better (see below). Results from the survey show that the development of collaborations is a surprisingly common experience in the network: **more than two thirds (71.7%) of members have engaged in at least one collaboration** over the past year. The largest share of people (64.2%) have stated that they have worked jointly on a project or activity at least once a year. More than half (52.1%) have received support in building a new project, venture or idea, 44.1% reported to have started a new project or organization together with another member and lastly, 29.3% said they co-developed an innovation. Similar to other observations, the more frequent (every other month or more) engagements have been less prevalent with general joint work (20.6%) being the most frequent one (Figure 19). Interviews have given further context into why BAN is so successful in creating such impact.

"The network is totally unique. I don't know many other associations that give such opportunities for development. It's unique openness: you can create what you need, do it the way you want. For example, we co-organized a retreat in Kenya with colleagues from Africa. It was beautiful, with freedom of co-organization and innovation." (Member interview 14)

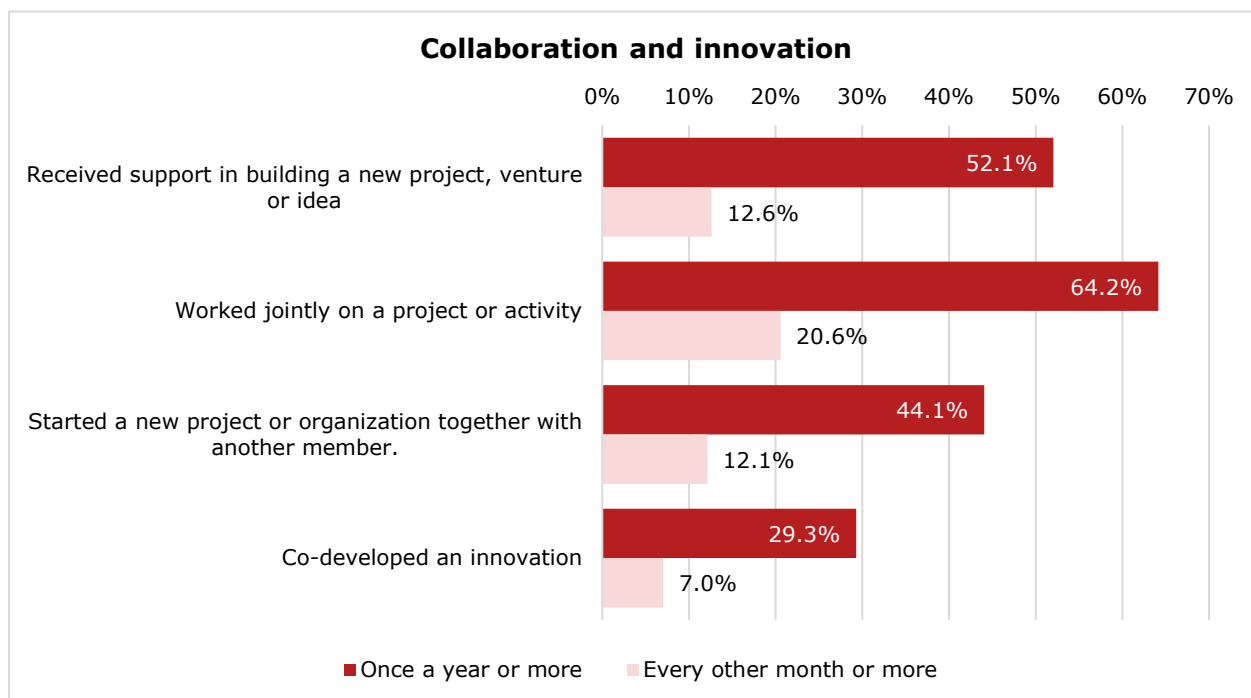


FIGURE 19. FREQUENCY OF EXPERIENCES RELATED TO COLLABORATION AND INNOVATION, ONCE A YEAR OR MORE AND EVERY OTHER MONTH OR MORE

BAN members¹¹ provided many examples of collaborations through the survey, including, among others, the following:

- „.... [we created] demos of peaceful futures using augmented reality through the training "Futures Thinking in Conflict-Affected Contexts...." "
- „...We are currently working as an NGO on designing a video game with another Bosch alumnus from Tunisia, [Name redacted] from [Organization redacted], the founder of [Name redacted] initiative focused on immersive technologies... "
- „...I am co-developing an innovative follow up project to empower functional structures in East Africa to contribute to climate action.... "
- „...I joined the Indian-German Media Network and helped organize various journalism workshops "
- „...At the [Organization redacted] we are creating an inquiry-based program for governmental spaces that are open for local communities. This works comes from the knowledge different members of the hub have... "
- „...Worked with three members to brainstorm digital hubs for African refugees. It's still in the pipeline... "

¹¹ All of the following examples are anonymous survey responses

- „...We started to work on a podcast training program and guide for the Southern African regional group... “.
- „...we opened up a film training program [Organization redacted] which has seen production of up to 5 short movies about social wellbeing and all of them with female Directors... “
- „...I collaborated with [Name redacted] to adapt her learnings from [Organization redacted] into my experience in sustainable jewelry design. We are currently developing a lampshade prototype to build on our exchange... “
- „...After the Transforming Education Summit in Tanzania, the ideas that came out from there has led me to develop a mentoring program, which will be used to train refugees on holistic well-being, trauma-informed best practices, job skills and resilience. This will be co-created by network members who attended the same event and hopefully be rolled out as a pilot project in the Ugandan refugee camp, next year (2026) ... “
- “...I worked with other passionate individuals to develop a DEI toolkit which I still continue to use and spread among my colleagues till today. Also we are still in discussion and looking for more ways to improve the toolkit... “

Similar to the last evaluation we have tried to calculate and extrapolate the absolute number of these collaborations across the network, based on the available data. Results show that the possible **impact of BAN in terms of collaborations and innovations created is sizeable**. Together, Members of the network have worked on anywhere between 850 to 3,100¹² joint projects and co-developed between 600 and 1,900 innovative solutions. These values indicate that Bosch Alumni Network has immense potential for creating social impact, even when taking into account that not every collaboration or innovation will be successful. Also, not every collaboration project might be directly aimed at impact (though the first evaluation has shown that 98% of members indicated that they pursue at least one of the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals in their work which makes it plausible that a large part of the collaborations and innovations contribute to broader social impact).

2.4.2. Strengthening civic resilience

BAN is also able to support resilience, especially in regions where civic society is under pressure or when individuals are experiencing challenging times. In many places, civic resilience is increasingly important, and BAN helps to build it. This is exemplified regarding the case of the war in Ukraine where one respondent shared how valuable the connection to BAN has been:

¹²The large range in values is the result of both calculating the number of collaborations (850 and 600) in the sample itself and extrapolations (3,100 and 1,900) to the number of 4,471 active members. Calculations were based on the following assumptions: “Once a year” reports were counted as one collaboration, “every (other) month” was counted as six collaborations, “every (other) week was counted as 24 and “(almost) every day” was counted as 50 collaborations. Extrapolations were then further discounted by a third since not every collaboration or innovation necessarily implies a uniquely new project.

"But we still have these talks [about the war] and you know, for me it is the most precious thing in the [...] network. [...] not only the projects, not only this outcome, but this support." (Member interview 17)

One person described that BAN offers access to people with similar problems and that it is easy to tap into their experiences:

"You realize that the other members are facing similar challenges, and sometimes even tougher ones. That's where sharing ideas, networking, and mutual support come in." (Anonymous survey response)

On a larger scale, respondents of the survey express appreciation of the network when it comes to strengthening their resilience. 32.2% stated that "my membership has helped me to navigate personal or organizational hardship", 29.8% said that "my membership has been most valuable in challenging or disruptive time" and 37.8% experience that the Bosch Alumni Network "helped me continue my professional work despite difficult economic, social or political environments".

Further quantitative analysis revealed that statements regarding civic resilience were more common across three dimensions:

- Members in the clusters "Civil Society", "Peace" and "Social Innovation" had a stronger sense of support in these areas ($r=0,1-0,2$).
- Countries with lower GDP, rule of law, control on corruption, political stability¹³ and in the Global South seemed to have benefited more from BAN regarding resilience ($r=0,1-0,2$).
- People who engage a lot in BAN activities ($r=0,4$) and spend time in the community ($r=0,3$) are also the ones who receive support from BAN and build resilience through it.

The Bosch Alumni Network seems to be an important anchor for people that are affiliated with certain topics like peace and civil society, people from regions where **external pressures** are more noticeable or people who generally engage very much with BAN

2.4.3. Facilitation of the collective ability to act

Another important impact area of the Bosch Alumni Network concerns its potential to facilitate field building: bringing people from different regions and professional backgrounds together and enabling them to develop shared agendas, joint narratives, and collective action in their respective domains.

First, BAN does so by enabling its members to connect their own existing networks and expertise with an international, cross-sectoral community. Rather than replacing members' prior affiliations, the network functions as a connective layer that links otherwise separate professional worlds, e.g. journalism

¹³ Based on the Worldwide Governance Indicators by the World Bank

and urban planning, Eastern European civic activism and West African social enterprise, climate policy and education. Members can create and participate in thematic or regional subnetworks that form around shared concerns, effectively **growing and building new fields of practice** from within the larger network. One member described this dynamic:

"How do you bring people together either regionally or thematically [...] so that they can leverage their commonalities and their collective strength. For me, that is actually the exciting question and relevance" (Member interview 15)

Second, BAN facilitates members' collective capacity to act by creating spaces where people with similar goals or challenges can develop connections, exchange ideas, and build partnerships along shared interests. In the survey, 44.8% of respondents agreed that the network has helped them stay in touch with the latest developments in their field or profession and beyond. This goes beyond individual learning and instead resembles what Fligstein and McAdam (2012) call the construction of *strategic action fields*: arenas in which dispersed actors develop shared understandings of the state and importance of a field, who the relevant players are, and what needs to be done. These processes of alignment and sense-making lead to members jointly developing new approaches: 41.5% agreed that the network provides a space to develop joint visions and strategies for actors in their field. The practical relevance of this field-building function became particularly visible in the **response to the Russian full-scale invasion into Ukraine**, where BAN members¹⁴ rapidly mobilized across regions and professional backgrounds to coordinate aid and develop joint approaches to supporting Ukrainian civil society. Specifically, initiatives such as ReStart Ukraine have benefited from its connection to BAN and the RBSG and have been co-initiated by a member of BAN.

2.4.4. Increased efficacy of impact-oriented work

The final area where the activities in BAN facilitate social impact is related to the actual target group that members reach with their work. The sum of all the previously mentioned effects and processes contribute to more and better impact-oriented work, done by the members themselves or their organizations. Aggregating this impact is not possible within the scope of one study, as each member follows different theories of change and would require a separate assessment to capture their impact truthfully.

A few numbers, however, do help us get a sense of the types of impact created. 55.9% of survey respondents¹⁵ have been able to increase the number of programs, products and/or services in the last year. 66.7% of BAN members stated that they have been able to maintain despite sociopolitical challenges. These results allow direct insights into the success and impact of organizations represented by BAN members.

¹⁴ Together with the Robert Bosch Stiftung and partner organizations such as MitOst.

¹⁵ The survey questions from these results were optional and are therefore only a sub-sample of 80-90 people

The organizations represented in the survey also provide a sense of the broader reach of BAN members' work. Respondents stated that they or the organizations they work in **employ a total of approximately 99,100 individuals**^{16, 1}. While this figure should be interpreted with caution, it illustrates the considerable organizational footprint of the network's membership base. Given that 93.7% of respondents in the current survey reported working with a mission-oriented theory of change, and 42.9% specifically mentioned improving people's lives through education as a core approach, it is reasonable to assume that a substantial share of this employment is directed toward socially or environmentally oriented work.

Finally, when asked to estimate what share of their **professional success** they **attributed to their BAN membership**, respondents indicated an average of **25.9%**. This is a subjective and inherently imprecise measure, but it suggests that a meaningful part of members' professional trajectories, and by extension the impact their organizations create, has been shaped or supported by the connections, resources, and opportunities the network provides.

2.5. RETURN FLOWS

Interactions, benefits and impact create a feedback loop, hence the visible circularity of the impact model. These positive feedback mechanisms reinforce the network and all the key actors (Network members, Robert Bosch Stiftung, iac Berlin) can benefit from them. The core of the network with its shared value and norms is a new addition of the second evaluation and illustrates BANs normative core which positively influences all experiences in the network.

¹⁶ This figure is driven substantially by a small number of larger organizations. The average number of employees per respondent was approximately 484, while the median was 13, indicating a highly skewed distribution. The aggregate should therefore be read as indicative of the network's organizational reach rather than as a precise measure of employment impact.

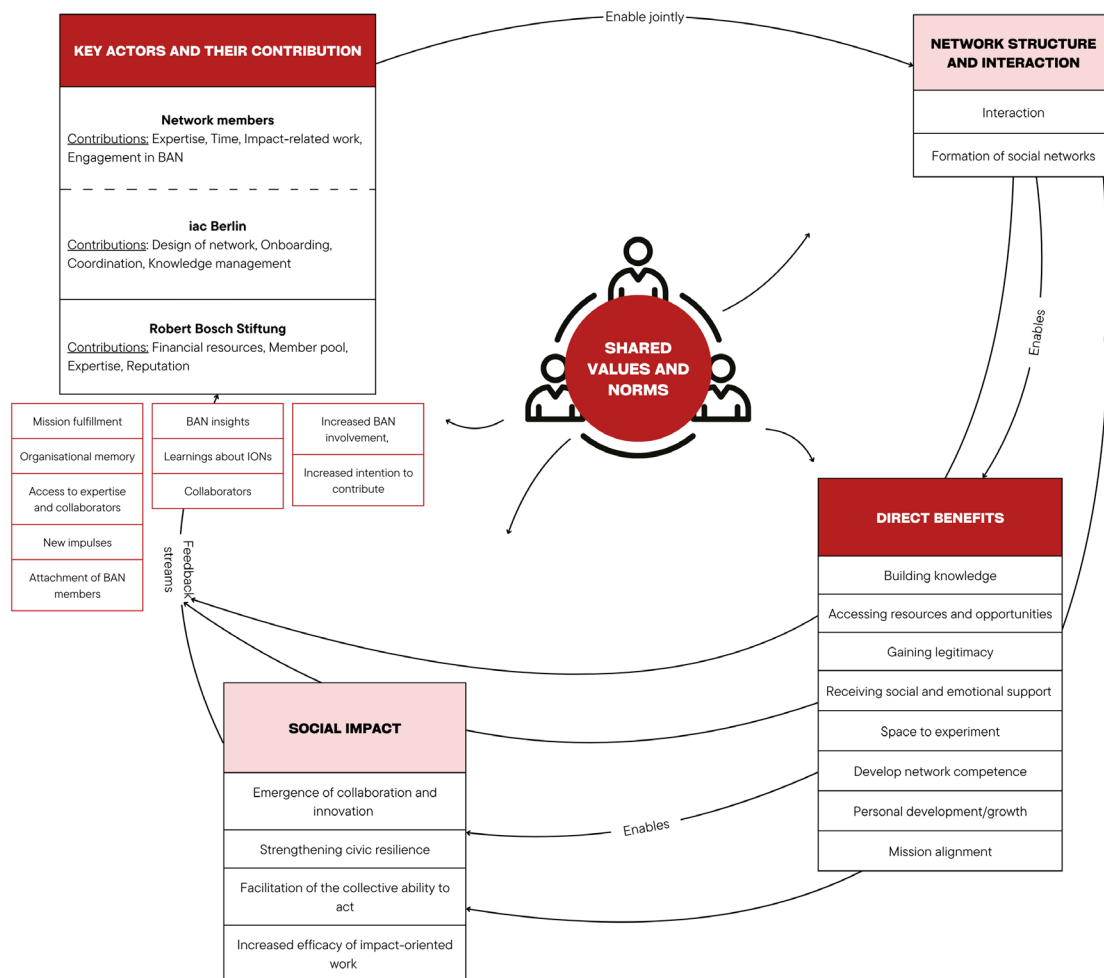


FIGURE 20. UPDATED IMPACT MODEL OF THE BOSCH ALUMNI NETWORK

2.5.1. Flows back into the network

Positive experiences in the network motivate members to continue and deepen their own engagement. Interactions, direct benefits and social impact lead to appreciation of the network and further motivate members to invest time and resources back into BAN. In the last evaluation we found that higher levels of interaction were associated with stronger future intent. Survey data from this evaluation shows that this **stronger intention indeed predicted future activities**: respondents in the evaluation from 2020 who indicated that they wanted to increase their engagement in the future where in

fact considerably more likely to be active in the current study¹⁷. These results demonstrate the circular nature of the network and underly the robustness of the data collected.

Generally, there was again strong future intent on the part of the members. 77.0% of members in the survey said that they “want to collaborate more with other members”, 64.6% “want to develop a project with another member and 56.7% reported to “want to share more opportunities and resources in the network”. Many members (40.0%) are also interested in taking on a more formalized role like regional coordinator, impact field host or cluster moderator. Particularly noteworthy is the fact that the **motivations of members were higher** when they **experienced benefits and impact** as well as higher levels of **trust and norms** (see also 2.5.4).

2.5.2. Flows back to iac Berlin

Member activities as well as overall network processes provide many resources for iac Berlin. A more latent feedback flow is the ability to gain insights and “feel the pulse” of the diverse professional fields present in BAN through direct member contact. This knowledge can be invaluable with member experiences from all over the world.

Related to this, the members of the network can also be seen as an incredibly base of potential collaborators. A large majority of them are very interested in connecting with the staff in Berlin, as 73.8% of the survey participants have said that they want to collaborate with the iac Berlin and/or the Robert Bosch Stiftung. Their strong appreciation specifically for the work of the team in Berlin is exemplified by how satisfied they are with their work. 70.0% have a positive view of the work of iac Berlin, while only 2.9% have a negative view.

Another valuable return flow concerns the learnings that can be acquired from running a network like BAN. Over the years, iac Berlin has accumulated know-how in network design and curation through direct communication with its members or the development of new offers for their community. Interviews have also shown that actors from Robert Bosch Stiftung also see potential learning value through iac Berlin’s possibility to pilot and experiment with certain offers and formats.

2.5.3. Flows back to Robert Bosch Stiftung

Bosch Alumni Network serves as valuable resource, organizational memory and learning opportunity to the Robert Bosch Stiftung. Firstly, the team at RBSG can use BAN as a resource themselves, like other members of the network. Of all survey respondents, 15 stated that they are currently employees of the Robert Bosch Stiftung or have been in the past. Of these 15 team members, 80.0% said that they have received valuable information through the network, 66.6% were referred to important contacts and 53.3% have learned a skill or competency. Second, RBSG can access knowledge of the

¹⁷ Longitudinal analysis shows: 2020 intention predicts 2025 activities ($r=0.$, $-0,4$)

network and the expertise that comes with it through iac Berlin. This includes expertise in professional fields and formats as well as knowledge about potential collaborators or general impulses.

Qualitative data has shown that the feedback flows towards Robert Bosch Stiftung might have shifted since last evaluation and that there is risk of decoupling between RBSG and BAN. Members themselves have hinted at a lack of clarity in their own (or BANs) relationship with RBSG demonstrated by a comment from one member:

"the alumni network also seems quite independent [...] [I would like to] understand maybe a bit more about the [Stiftung's] commitment to it" (Members interview 19)

Conversely, qualitative data from RBSG actors showed that they sometimes used BAN and iac Berlin synonymous. Together with a strategic move away from the previous program structure these risks should be considered when thinking about the relationship and visibility of RBSG.

2.6. TRUST AND NORMS: THE CORE OF THE NETWORK

Shared values and norms constitute the normative core of the network, and their presence facilitates interaction, benefits, impact, and feedback effects. Reciprocity, trust, and accessibility have been identified as particularly strong normative pillars within the Bosch Alumni Network. In the survey, 79.4% of members stated that people in the network can generally be trusted, 69.0% reported feeling comfortable discussing new ideas with other members, and 57.4% found it easy to approach other members and ask them for help (Figure 21). Although the network is defined through its regional and sectoral diversity people seem to value the environment and some even create friendships.

This can be illustrated by many examples from the survey¹⁸:

- *„...One of the strengths of this network is how it connects us with individuals from diverse backgrounds and experiences. It has given me access to experts and professionals both within my sector and beyond, allowing me to receive guidance and support at no cost... "*
- *„...Several people have become close friends [...]. Their support has shown up in honest conversations, check-ins during tough moments, and a sense of community that I really value..."*
- *„...The program and subsequent community that came out of the hours online was one of the most supportive environments I've ever co-created... "*
- *„...Being part of a network of common minded people, offered me a lot. Making me feel visible and sharing the challenges that I encounter on professional and social level..."*

¹⁸ All of the following example are anonymous survey responses

These figures are notably high and consistent with what the literature identifies as enabling conditions for productive networks. Putnam (2000) argues that generalized trust and norms of reciprocity are the essential lubricants of collective action. Without them, cooperation becomes costly, tentative, and unsustainable. In the network governance literature, Provan and Kenis (2008) identify trust density as one of the key predictors of network effectiveness, proposing that networks in which trust is broadly distributed across members, rather than concentrated around a central node, are better positioned to sustain collaborative governance over time. The trust levels observed in BAN suggest precisely this kind of **distributed normative foundation**.

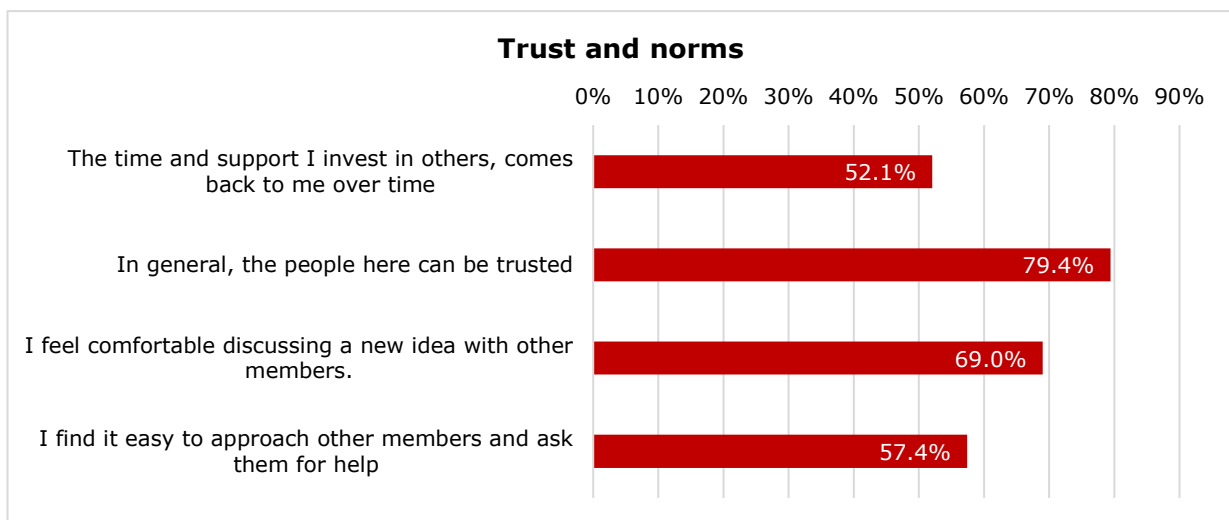


FIGURE 21. AGREEMENT TO STATEMENTS RELATED TO TRUST AND NORMS IN BAN

This perceived core of the network has a positive influence on almost all experiences in the network. Specifically, people that felt that other members in the network follow the same societal goal(s) as themselves displayed an even stronger normative core. Figure 22 illustrates the differences in effects for members experiencing low versus high level of shared values and norms (median split). While a bit abstract, these figures show that network **members who experience higher trust, reciprocity**

and accessibility are the ones who **interact more**, receive **more benefits**, report **higher social impact** and have **stronger future intent** to be active in the network.

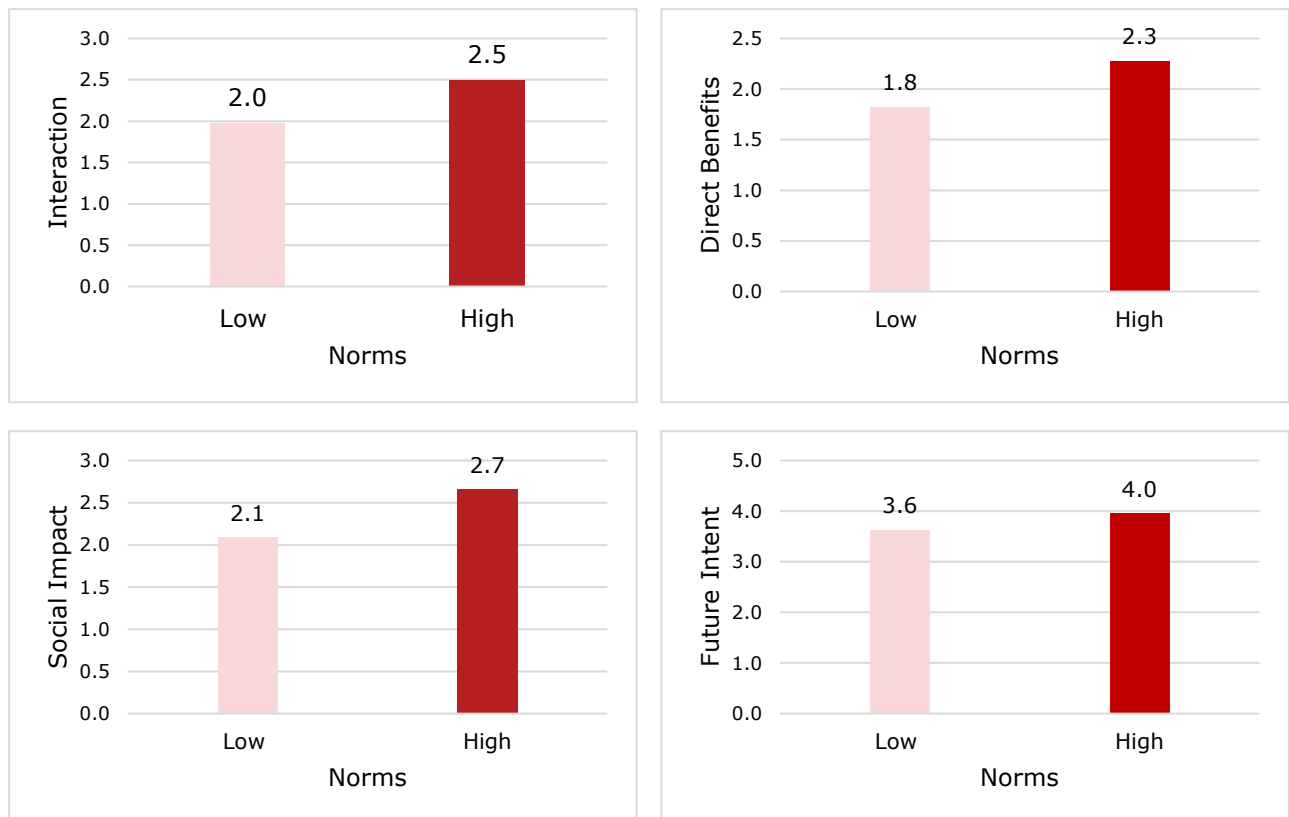


FIGURE 22. COMPARISON BETWEEN MEMBERS WITH HIGHER AND LOWER TRUST ALONG NETWORK ELEMENTS

A more tangible example of this can be found when looking at singular activities and comparing low and high trust with each other. (Bi-)Weekly log ins on bosch alumni.net has been less frequent (24.3% of respondents) with people who experience a low normative core than people with a high normative core (32.2%)

2.7. SUMMARY OF THE IMPACT MODEL

Chapter 2 has shown that the Bosch Alumni Network **continues to function as a circular system** in which contributions from three key actors (the Robert Bosch Stiftung, the iac Berlin, and the members themselves) enable interactions, generate benefits, create social impact, and produce feedback effects that reinforce further engagement. The model developed in the first evaluation (Vandor et al., 2020) has been confirmed and expanded: **four new benefit dimensions have been identified** (space to experiment, network competence, personal growth, and mission alignment), and a normative **core of shared values, trust, reciprocity, and accessibility has been recognized as a foundational enabler** of all network processes. Members contribute substantial resources to the

network, with an estimated **equivalent of over 80 full-time employees** in aggregate monthly time investment, and 87.7% have participated in at least one event or format over the past year.

However, an exploration of communication habits reveals that much of BANs value is created in spaces that are **not visible to the broader network**. Thereby, the main digital platform **boschalumni.net** **functions less as a social network and more as a social portal** (or train station): a starting point for connections that then migrate to messaging services, email, and face-to-face encounters. Only 12.1% of member interactions take place on the platform itself, yet it remains essential as the space where many of these journeys begin. Members engage with the network at **varying frequencies** and along different pathways (fluctuating, rising, declining, or constant), with the largest group (38.6%) describing their involvement as fluctuating depending on time, interest, and the relevance of current offers.

The network's structure is international, cross-sectoral, and shows **healthy levels of diversity and additionality**. Members maintain an average of 60 surface-level and 12 regular connections, with over 70% reporting at least one new close contact in the past two years, a sign that networks are actively renewing rather than ossifying. A geographic visualization of members' closest connections reveals a network spanning over 85 countries across five continents, with Germany as the dominant hub and emerging regional clusters in Sub-Saharan Africa and Southeast Europe, while Asia and Latin America remain more peripheral.

Benefits are broad and tangible: nearly 90% receive valuable information, over 70% learn new skills, and almost a quarter have hired or contracted another member. These benefits feed into social impact in the form of collaborative projects, innovations, strengthened civic resilience (particularly in challenging political and economic environments), and the facilitation of field-building and collective action. Underpinning all of this is a normative core of trust and reciprocity that, when present, significantly amplifies interaction, benefits, impact, and future engagement. At the same time, the report identifies a visibility gap: **much of the network's considerable value creation remains invisible** to other members, to the iac Berlin, and potentially to the Robert Bosch Stiftung, raising questions about institutional learning, sustained support, and the network's ability to recognize and build on its own successes.

3. Changes in the last five years

3.1. DATA COMPARABILITY BETWEEN BOTH EVALUATIONS

Overall, the comparability of the data from the two evaluations is good. In terms of thematic interests, there are no significant differences in cluster affiliation between the two samples. Demographic characteristics such as age and work experience have increased by almost exactly six years, suggesting that many of the same individuals participated in both waves and have, in effect, aged alongside the network. Table 2 provides further details on sample characteristics.

Respondents from both surveys also report similar levels of yearly activity, indicating no meaningful differences in the time and effort they invest in BAN. Roughly two thirds of each sample joined the network before 2020; newer members are slightly overrepresented. As in the first evaluation, we consider the sample representative of the members who visited the platform at least once in the preceding two years, which were 4,471 at the time of data collection in 2025 (4,185 in 2020).

Toward the end of the survey, respondents in both evaluations were able to answer a set of questions¹⁹ which led to the creation of a unique, anonymized identification code. On this basis, we were able to construct a matched panel of 109 members who participated in both evaluations, allowing us to complement the cross-sectional year-on-year comparisons with genuine longitudinal analysis at the individual level.

	2020	2026
Ø Age	36.6	42.8
% Women	57.7	55.7
Work experience , in years	12.8	18.9
Number of countries in the sample	88	79
Percentage of members who are based in Germany	30.4	35.4

TABLE 2. COMPARISON OF DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF THE MAIN SURVEY SAMPLE

¹⁹ People were for example asked to give the first two letters of their mother's name and the month of their birth.

3.2. PLATFORM ENGAGEMENT

Comparisons show that between the two evaluation periods, **once-a-year engagements in the network have been largely stable or slightly increasing** across most types of activities (Figure 23). Core activities such as logging in (94.0% vs. 95.8%), reacting to posts and discussions (71.0% vs. 74.1%), and using the people search function (72.0% vs. 74.0%) remain virtually unchanged. At the same time, several activity types show notable increases: posting events and projects rose from 44.0% to 59.8%, tagging other BAN members from 44.0% to 54.7%, and posting job offers from 21.0% to 32.3%. Messaging via the platform also increased from 66.0% to 74.1%, suggesting that boschalumni.net is being used more actively as a direct communication channel at least once a year. Reading emails or the weekly digest saw an increase too, rising from 89.0% to 94.4%, underlining its importance as communication instrument. The overall engagement pattern is consistent across both evaluations, with increases concentrated in activities that involve actively contributing content or connecting with others, which may reflect the network's sustained investment in member activation and role-based engagement formats.

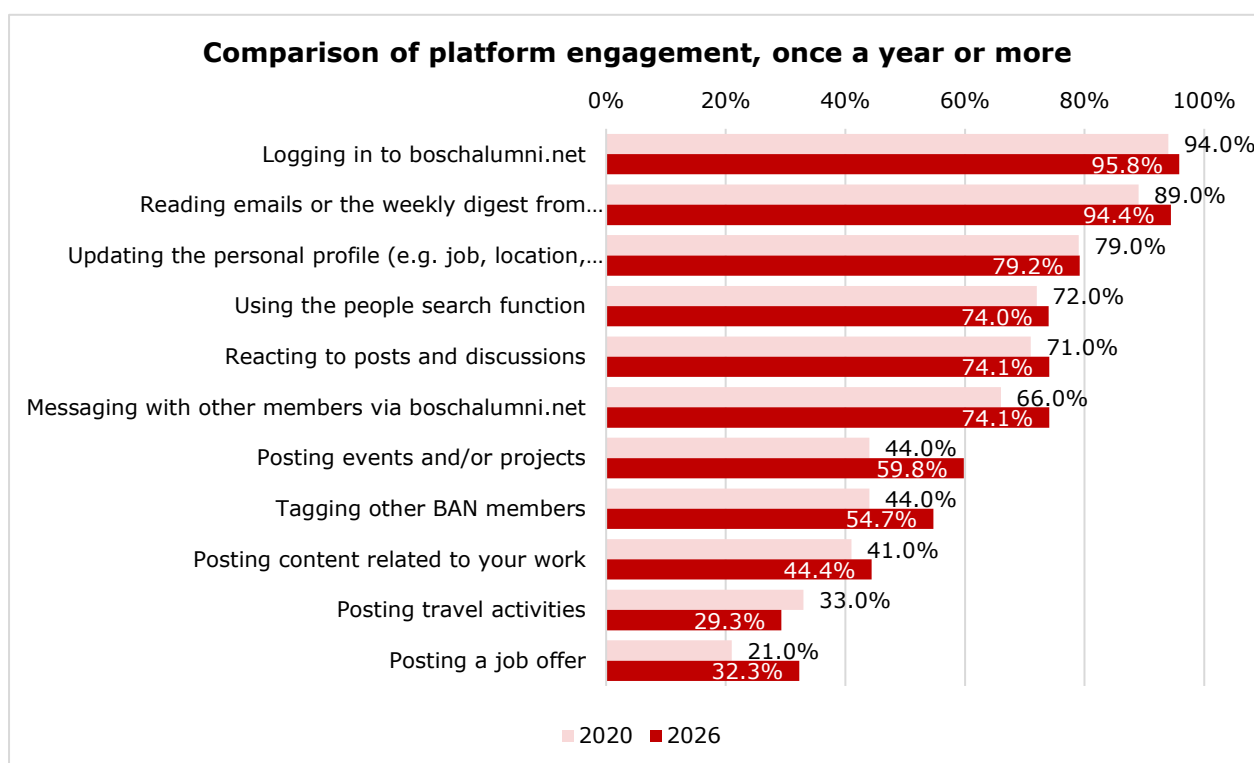


FIGURE 23. CROSS-SECTION COMPARISON OF THE FREQUENCY OF ONLINE ACTIVITY, ONCE A YEAR OR MORE

The picture shifts somewhat when we look at the share of members who engage in activities at high frequency, i.e. every other week or more (Figure 24). Overall, high-frequency engagement has remained stable across most activity types, but with notable exceptions. Frequent logins dropped from 39.0% to 28.8%, and regular use of the people search function fell from 11.0% to 6.5%. Together, this suggests that **fewer members browse the platform routinely**. At the same time, frequent reading of emails or the weekly digest rose substantially from 53.0% to 59.8%, indicating that **emails and the digest**

have become a more central touchpoint for staying informed. Posting events and projects (4.0% to 6.5%) and tagging other members (6.0% to 6.0%) remained at similar levels, as did most content-creation activities, which continue to be carried out by a small but consistent core of active contributors. Taken together, these shifts suggest a subtle change in how members engage with the platform at high frequency: fewer are logging in to browse, while more are consuming curated content pushed to them via email. This lends further support to the idea that **boschalumni.net increasingly serves as a portal**, where journeys within the network start (often, after being announced via email), and then often continue on different communication channels.

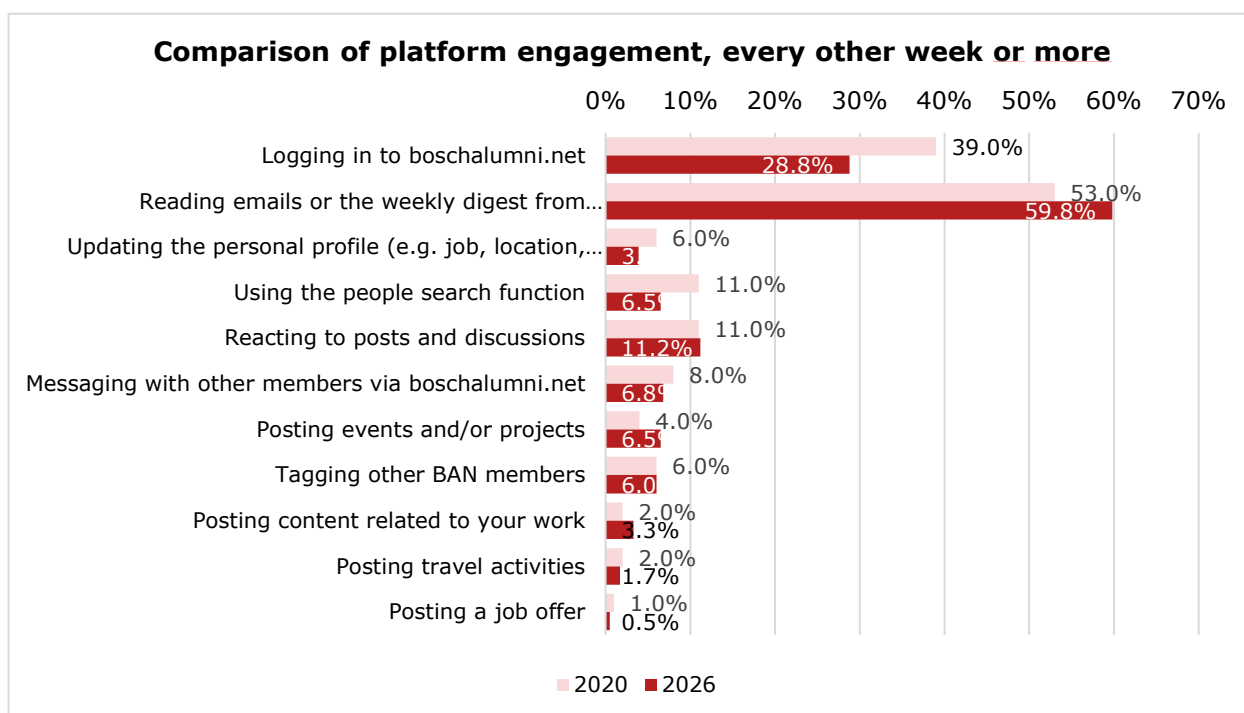


FIGURE 24. CROSS-SECTION COMPARISON OF THE FREQUENCY OF ONLINE ACTIVITIES, EVERY OTHER WEEK OR MORE

The availability of different comparative data sources allowed as deeper analyses of behavior changes over time. These revealed **considerable differences in engagement under the seemingly unchanged surface**. Figure 25 illustrates the average levels of high engagement across **all categories of activities** on the platform for the first (collected in 2019) and second evaluation (collected in 2025). These show almost no difference.

A second analysis, however, reveals a very different picture (Figure 26). Looking at the longitudinal panel data of the 109 respondents who participated in both the 2020 and 2026 evaluations, we see that their average level of high-frequency engagement has decreased significantly: from 18.2% in 2020 to 12.2% in 2026. Even this strong decline is likely understated, as the panel is subject to survivorship bias: members who ceased their activity altogether between the two evaluation periods are by definition absent from this subsample, which is thus skewed toward more active long-term users (Denrell, 2003).

The true decline in engagement across the full membership base is thus almost certainly steeper than what the matched panel captures.

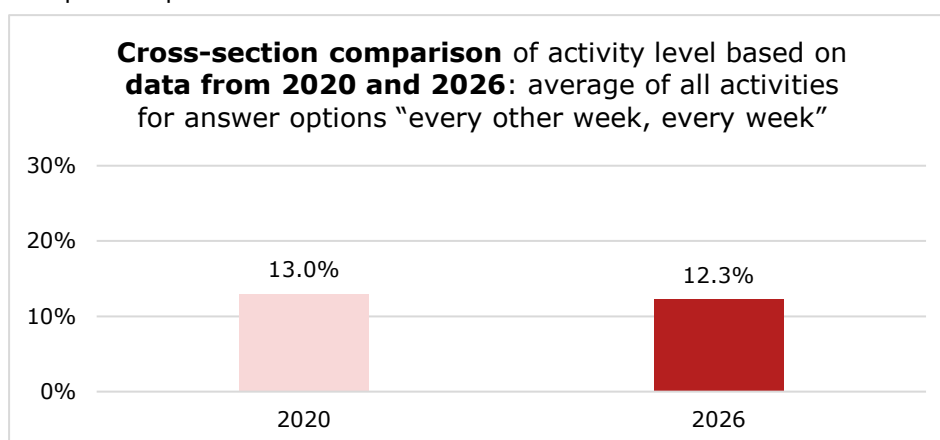


FIGURE 25. CROSS-SECTION COMPARISON BASED ON THE DATASETS OF BOTH THE EVALUATION IN 2020 AND IN 2026

This is in line with our earlier observation on fluctuating engagement patterns (see Section 2.1.4) and suggests that **many members reduce their frequency of engagement over time**. The reasons for this vary. Some members may simply become more efficient in using the platform, requiring fewer visits to achieve the same outcomes. Others may reduce their activity precisely *because* the network has been successful: having discovered a collaboration or opportunity through BAN, they shift their attention to implementation²⁰. Still others may drift away due to changing careers, a declining sense of fit, or other personal circumstances (see Section 2.1.4).

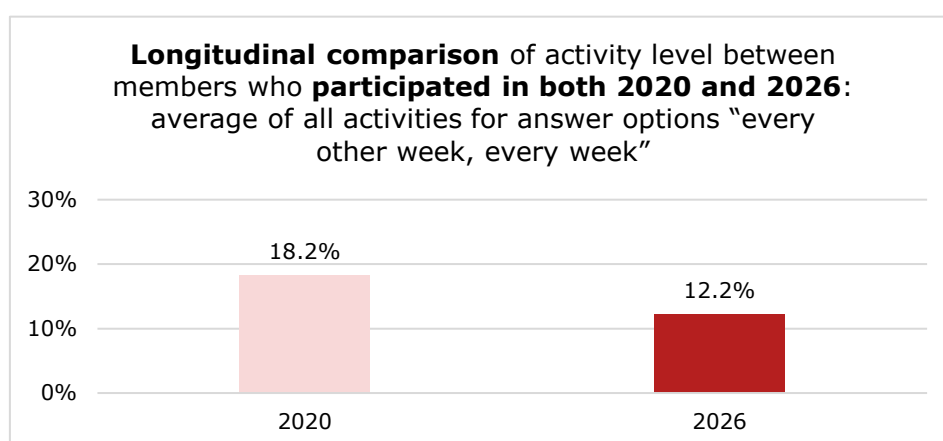


FIGURE 26. LONGITUDINAL COMPARISON BASED ON THE DATASETS OF BOTH THE EVALUATION IN 2020 AND IN 2026

²⁰ The Tunisian NGO quoted in Section 2.4.1 can serve as an illustrative example: if the founders decide to implement their new project, they will likely focus their attention fully on building and marketing the immersive game. Such a complex undertaking would keep them from initiating new ambitious projects within the network for some time. Their engagement decreases precisely because the network had been successful in helping them build a new collaboration.

Taking these results into account, the question arises why are bigger differences in average activities levels between the two evaluations? A third analysis (Figure 27) provides the answer: Comparing the current activities of members that have joined prior to 2020 with those who have joined in 2020 or after, **we see significantly higher activities among the newer members (17.5%) than among those already active before 2020 (10.3%)**. This suggests that members joining after 2020 were not only onboarded successfully but are much more likely to use the network on a frequent basis.

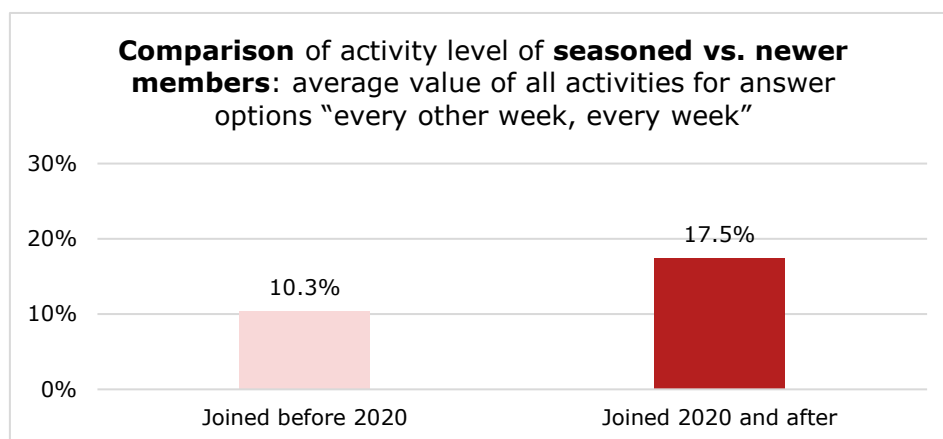


FIGURE 27 COMPARISON BASED ON THE DATASETS OF THE EVALUATION 2025, FILTERED BY DATE OF JOINING THE NETWORK

This assessment holds true when looking at some of the most important types of engagement: New members were 55.5% more likely to log in to boschalumni.net on a weekly basis, 46.3% more likely to post, 79.5% more likely to tag another member. This means that many of the visible actions happening on the platform are driven by newer members, indicating that an influx of members is a positive force for BAN.

3.3. NETWORK STRUCTURE AND INTERACTION

The network structure, too, remains largely stable between the two evaluations. The Bosch Alumni Network in 2025 continues to be **international, cross-sectoral, and provides even higher additivity than in 2020**. These results are noteworthy (and might even be surprising) because several developments might have pointed in the opposite direction: membership growth has slowed, much communication has moved away from visible channels, and members have aged with the network, making it plausible that their personal networks would have become more rigid and self-reinforcing over time.

Nonetheless, Figure 28 shows that the composition of members' individual networks (the people they are in more regular contact with) has remained mostly unchanged, with some notable exceptions. Fewer members reported that their regular contacts included alumni of the same program they themselves had participated in (76.8% vs. 88.0%), suggesting a **gradual shift away from program-based clustering toward broader, cross-program connectivity** that is not rooted in the "primary socialization"

of a specific programs anymore. At the same time, the data reveals higher additionality, i.e. the degree to which BAN itself generates network interactions that would not have occurred otherwise. The share of members reporting at least one new regular contact made through BAN rose from 66.0% to 74.3%, while the share of members whose contacts consisted of people they would have been "in touch with anyway" dropped from 74.0% to 60.8%. Both shifts point in the same direction: BAN is increasingly adding new connections rather than merely reinforcing pre-existing ones. It is thus **increasingly less a "reunion network" of program alumni and becoming a "discovery network"** of pre-selected, well-trained, impact-oriented professionals.

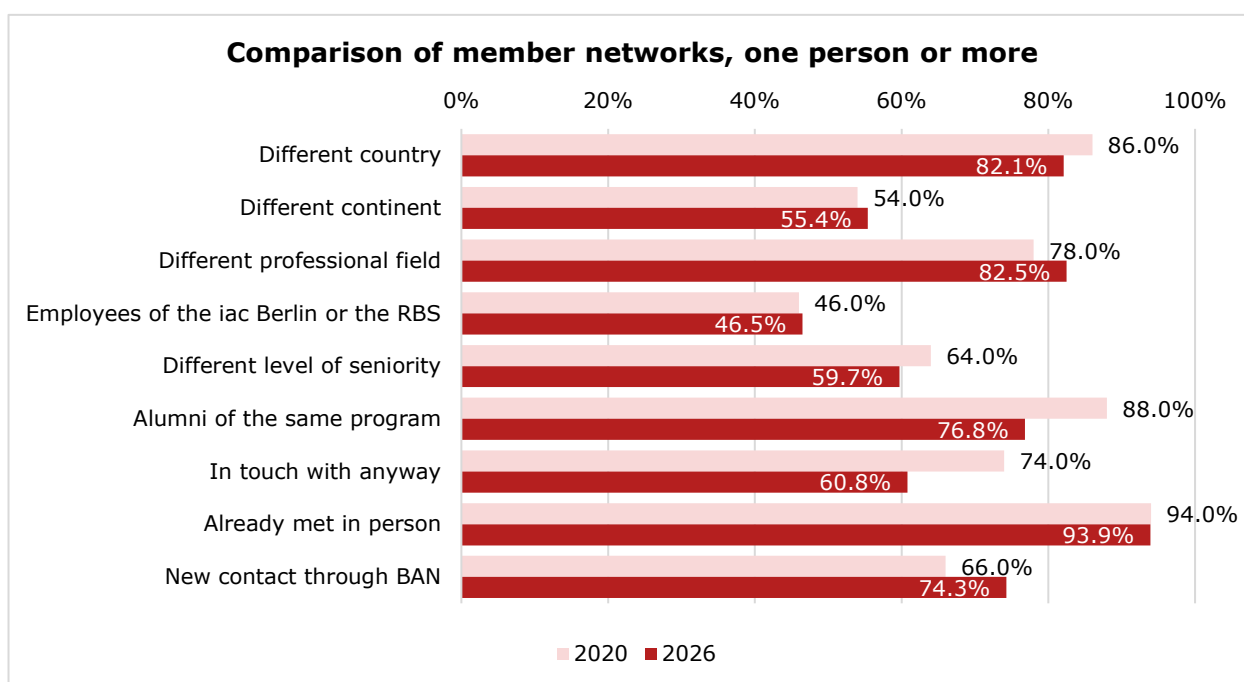


FIGURE 28. CROSS-SECTION COMPARISON OF THE FREQUENCY OF DIFFERENT STATEMENTS ABOUT MEMBERS' REGULAR CONTACTS, ONE PERSON OR MORE

The size of members' own network has increased over time when looking at surface level connections. Compared to the last evaluation there was a 50% increase from **40 to 60 surface-level connections**, i.e. other members with whom a respondent has had at least one conversation, online or offline. More regular connections, defined as other members that a respondent is in touch with at least twice a year online or offline, remained essentially stable, shifting only marginally from 13 to 12.

When asked whether some of their regular contacts had been established within the past two years, 57.8% of respondents indicated that at least one had. Read alongside the stable number of regular connections, this points to a pattern of ongoing renewal rather than accumulation: members are not simply adding contacts on top of existing ones but gradually replacing some older ties with newer ones. Their core network is not static but slowly turning over, bringing in fresh perspectives while maintaining at a consistent size.

3.3.1. Excursion: Network structure in the Global South

Exploring the survey data revealed that members from the Global South have slightly different experiences in BAN. Their personal networks tend to be **more international and geographically dispersed**: a higher share of their regular contacts live on a different continent, and they report having made more new contacts in the past two years than members from the Global North.

This greater geographic spread comes with a trade-off. Members from the Global South are **less likely to have met their regular contacts in person**: 88.4% have met at least one other member face to face, compared to 96.4% in the Global North. This gap matters, as the data shows that having met in person has a significant positive effect on interaction frequency, perceived benefits, reported impact, and intended future engagement, making physical encounters one of the strongest drivers of a productive network experience.

These observations are particularly relevant for the future trajectory of BAN. Members from the Global South already make up 25.7% of respondents, which is a substantial share of the network. Their representation is also growing: among members who joined before 2020, 9.1% were based in **Africa**, whereas among those who joined 2020 and after, this **share has nearly tripled** to 26.3% (Table 3). As the membership base shifts, ensuring that members from the Global South have equal access to the in-person interactions that drive network value will become an increasingly important strategic consideration.

Members joined...	before 2020	2020 and later
Share of members based in Africa	9.1%	26.3%

TABLE 3. COMPARISON OF JOIN PERIOD, AFRICAN MEMBERS

3.3.2. Network structure according to members’ perception

The main quantitative survey also explicitly asked members to assess how different aspects of the Bosch Alumni Network have changed over time. Figure 29 summarizes their perceptions across six dimensions. There is strong consensus that BAN has grown in size (81.7% perceive an increase) and become more diverse (79.7%). A clear majority also perceives an increase in the number of activities (66.3%) and in

the quality of offers (60.3%). These are encouraging signals: **members recognize not only quantitative growth but also qualitative improvement** in what the network provides.

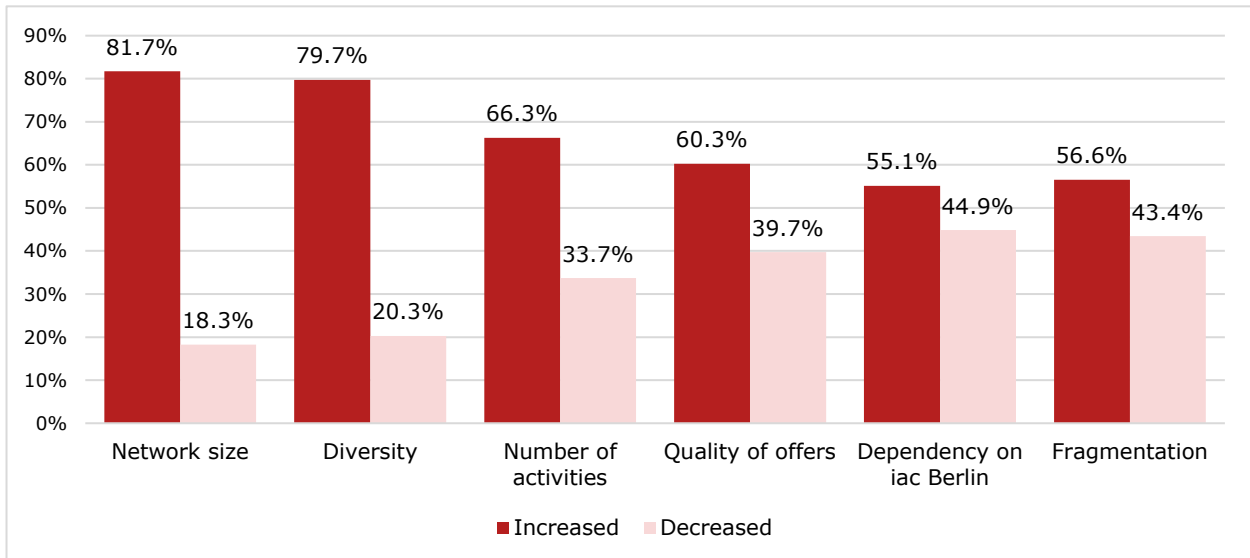


FIGURE 29: PERCEIVED NETWORK CHANGES

Two dimensions received more mixed assessments. A slim majority (55.1%) perceives that dependency on the iac Berlin has increased, while 44.9% see it as having decreased, suggesting that **iac Berlin** as the coordinating center **remains highly visible and, for many, indispensable**. This is probably a fair and positive assessment, as iac Berlin has increased some of its most effective interventions (i.e. informal roles) as well as the sophistication of its support to the network over time. Similarly, 56.6% perceive increased fragmentation, compared to 43.4% who see a decrease. This perception of fragmentation is consistent with the earlier finding that much member interaction has migrated to invisible communication channels, making it harder for any individual member to perceive the network as a coherent whole.

The growing number of members as well as increasing diversity could also come with a **potential loss of clarity and cohesion** as some qualitative interviews have indicated. Indeed, several qualitative interviews indicated that the growing size and diversity of BAN, while valued, may carry costs. Some respondents acknowledged that they do not have a strong sense of how the network has changed overall. One person described their view on the network like this:

"We actually don't, wouldn't know how much the network has changed because for us the network is what we are doing with our you know for our own sort of group of people" (Member interview 21)

This observation should be regarded **as important, but not as alarming**. For some members, the network is primarily experienced through their immediate contacts and thematic communities and not as an overarching structure. This is a natural characteristic of large, decentralized networks: as they grow, members' horizons tend to become more local even as the network becomes more global. We have observed this already in the first evaluation of BAN (Vandor et al., 2020) and it consistent with

Watts' (1999) key insight that actors in small-world networks navigate primarily through local clusters, even when shorter connections to distant parts of the network would exist. As long as information can still reach members in their respective subnetworks through general communication channels (e.g., boschalumni.net, mailings) and through bridge-builders who span across clusters, the network can remain functionally efficient even at larger scale. Indeed, as Barabási (2009) has shown, growing networks naturally produce a small number of highly connected hubs through preferential attachment. These nodes serve as connectors between otherwise separate clusters. In BAN, roles such as Regional Coordinators, Impact Field Hosts, and Cluster Moderators function as such hubs, ensuring that information and opportunities flow across the network's increasingly differentiated substructures while allowing the broader membership to benefit from the positive scale effects of a larger and more diverse community.

3.4. BENEFITS

Looking at benefits from a comparative perspective reveals considerable stability between the two evaluations. When examining benefits experienced at least once a year or more (Figure 30), the results are nearly identical across all categories. Some small declines can be observed in areas such as receiving valuable information (94.0% vs. 89.6%) and learning a new skill or competency (78.0% vs. 73.4%). Overall, BAN continues to provide its members with a **comparable breadth and level of benefits as six years ago**, when considering benefits that occur once a year or more.

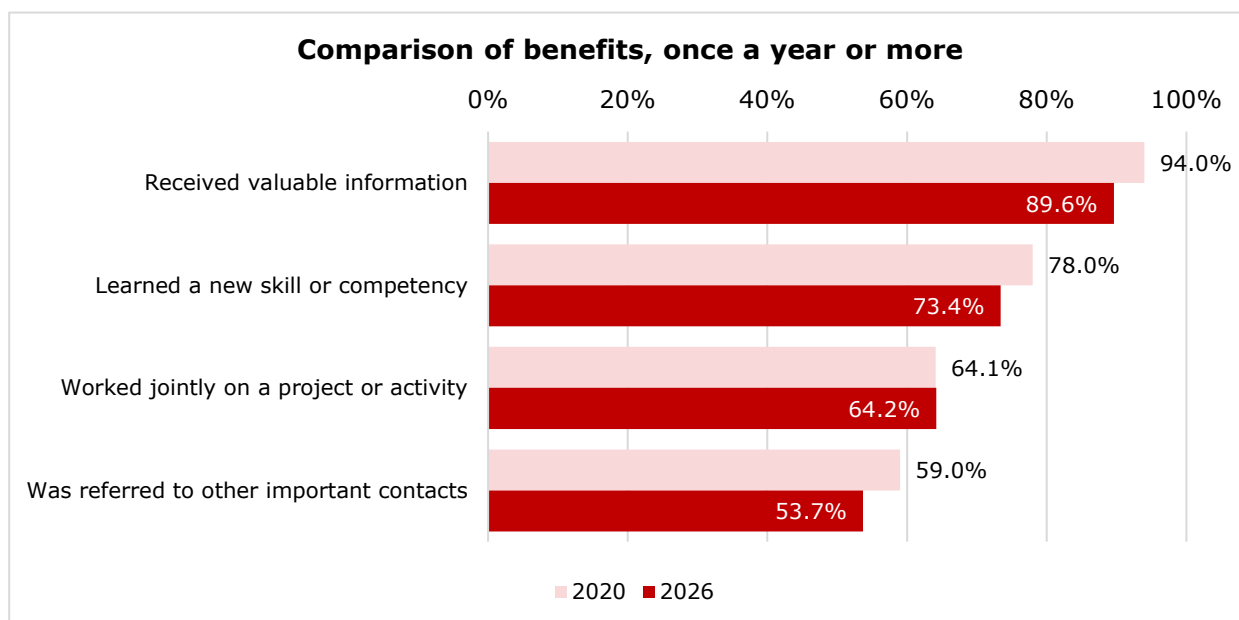


FIGURE 30. CROSS-SECTION COMPARISON OF THE FREQUENCY OF BENEFITS, ONCE A YEAR OR MORE

Differences between the two evaluation periods become visible, however, when examining the frequency at which these benefits are experienced. This is specifically the case in the frequency-bracket "every other month or more" which can be seen in Figure 31. Here, nearly all benefit types show **lower prevalence in the second evaluation at this frequency**, with some declines being substantial. The share of members who frequently received valuable information dropped from 72.0% to 55.5%, frequent

learning of new skills or competencies fell from 41% to 33%, and referrals to important contacts declined from 22% to 15%. Being able to regularly find people to work jointly on a project has also gone down slightly (25% vs. 21%). These patterns are consistent across both the cross-sectional and the longitudinal analysis. Further regression analyses indicate that the decline in frequent benefits can be **largely explained by the general reduction in high-frequency engagement** discussed in Section 3.2. Interestingly, people who have a higher frequency of direct benefits related to their professional work (e.g. BAN helped them in professional development) are also the ones who experience lower levels of reciprocity. Chapter 2.6 has already discussed the importance of high levels of norms like reciprocity as a driver of member engagement.

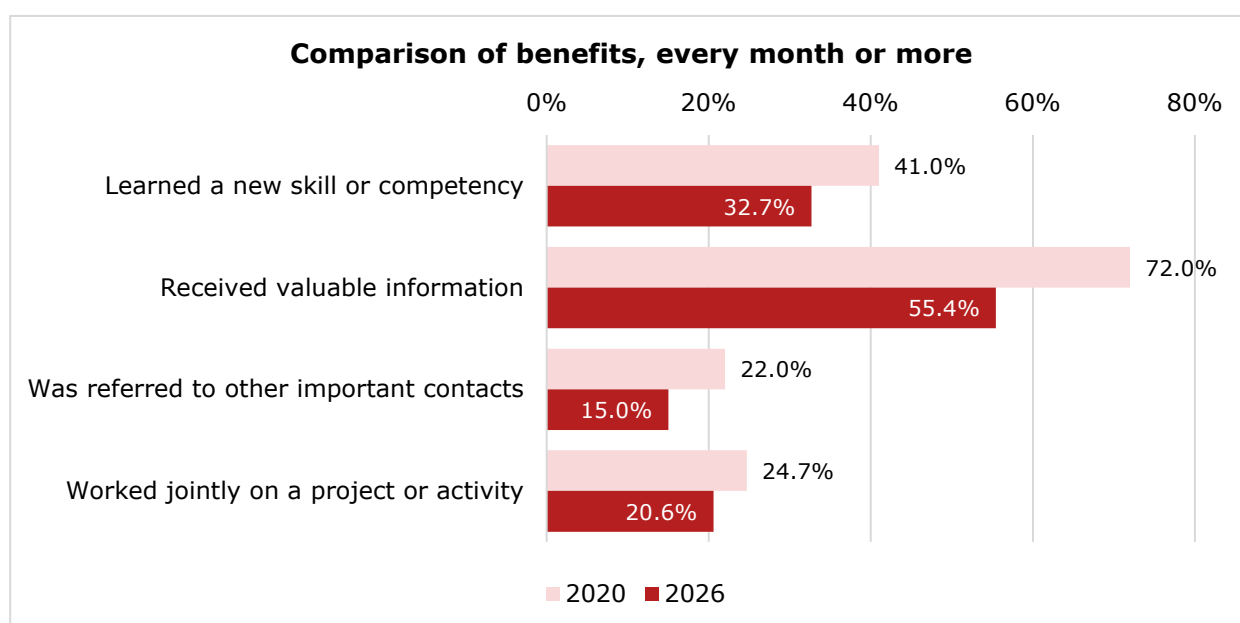


FIGURE 31. CROSS-SECTION COMPARISON OF THE FREQUENCY OF BENEFITS, EVERY OTHER MONTH OR MORE

The declining frequency of benefits is a relevant finding, as the experience of receiving benefits is directly tied to social impact in the circular model of BAN's theory of change. Nonetheless, two considerations are important when interpreting these results. First, the financial resources available to BAN might not have changed substantially over time. In this case, even a slightly increasing number of offers might end up in fewer offers per member per month on average, including services that do not scale well (physical training). Under this consideration, the fact that despite significant membership growth, the network is still able to generate yearly benefits for a similar share of its active membership as in 2020 has to be regarded as a notable achievement in terms of **resource efficiency**. Furthermore, four new benefits have been introduced (see chapter 2.3) and while comparisons with the first evaluation are not possible in that regard they also illustrate the value that BAN members have been able to gain through being part of the network.

Second, there are indications that members are engaging the network more purposefully and less exploratorily than before. A larger share of respondents in the second evaluation stated that they usually have a clear goal when engaging with the network (Figure 32), suggesting that some of the decline in

frequent, broad-based benefit reception may reflect a shift toward more targeted and efficient use of the network rather than an erosion of its value.

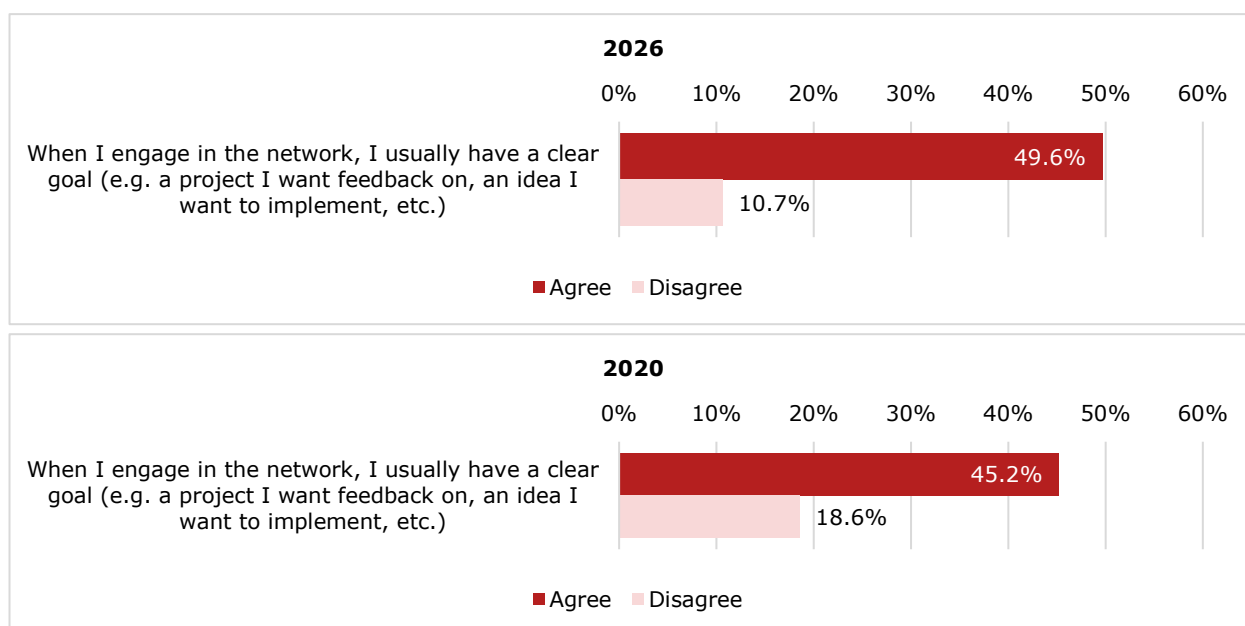


FIGURE 32. CROSS-SECTION COMPARISON OF THE AGREEMENT OF STATEMENTS RELATED TO PURPOSEFUL ENGAGEMENT WITH BAN

3.5. SOCIAL IMPACTS

Despite reductions in the frequency of benefits, Bosch Alumni Network is still helping organizations to co-create, collaborate and be successful in difficult environments. Similar to the results from chapter 3.4, the frequency of co-creative outcomes remains stable or shows even small increases when looking at benefits occurring at least once a year, for example in the case of hiring or contracting another member (20.0% vs. 24.2%) (Figure 33).

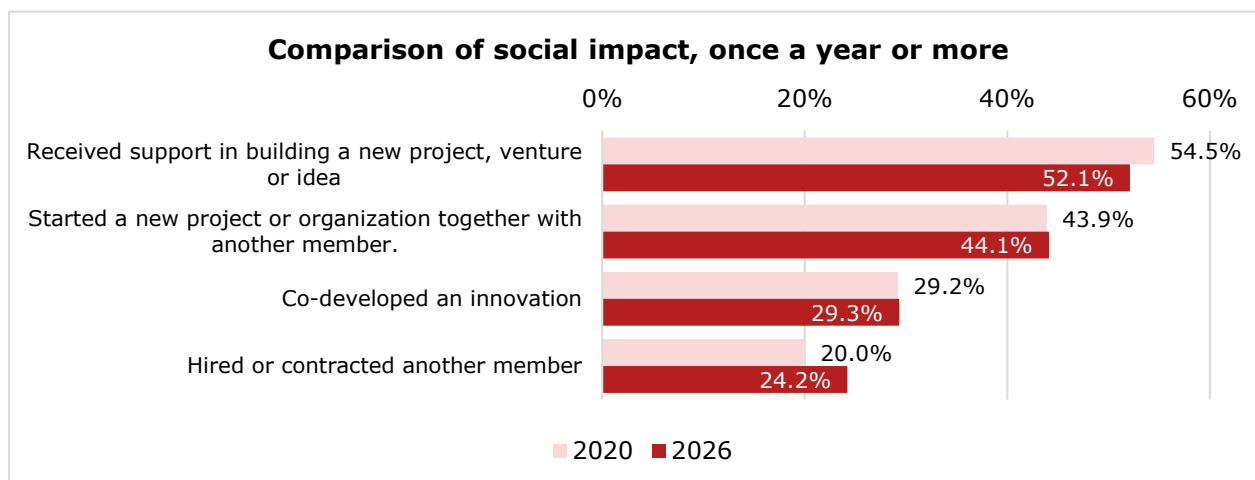


FIGURE 33. CROSS-SECTION COMPARISON OF THE FREQUENCY OF STATEMENTS RELATED TO SOCIAL IMPACT, ONCE A YEAR OR MORE

When more frequent impacts (every other month or more) are observed, similar results to the last chapter emerge (Figure 34). More resource-intensive benefits such as receiving support for a new venture or idea (19.0% vs. 12.6%) and starting a new project with another member (13.6% vs. 12.1%) have decreased, though from already lower baselines.

Interestingly, while more frequent output of benefits has slightly gone down more members have engaged in at least one yearly co-creative action (e.g. starting a new project or co-developing an innovation). In 2020, 61.8% participated in one or more of these actions while in 2026 this number has gone up to 71.7%.

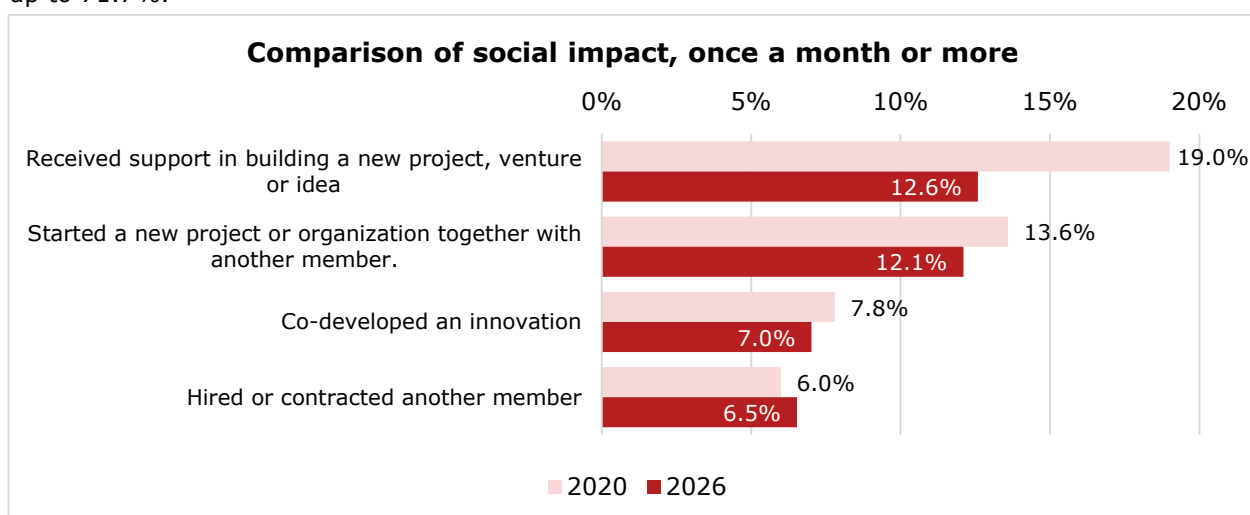


FIGURE 34. CROSS-SECTION COMPARISON OF THE FREQUENCY OF STATEMENTS RELATED TO SOCIAL IMPACT,, ONCE A MONTH OR MORE

With respect to **broader impact dimensions, the network has retained or even strengthened its ability to create social impact**. The share of members who feel that BAN has helped them continue

their professional work despite difficult economic, social, or political environments increased from 34.1% in 2020 to 37.8% in 2025, while the share who disagreed with this statement dropped notably from 26.5% to 20.1% (Figure 35). Given the turbulence of the intervening years a global pandemic, the war in Ukraine, rising political polarization, and economic pressures across many of the regions where BAN members operate, etc.) this shift suggests that the network's role as a source of civic resilience has become more, not less, relevant. For members working **in challenging contexts, BAN appears to function as a stabilizing infrastructure/resource**: a community that provides not only practical support but also the sense of connectedness and purpose that sustains professional commitment when external conditions deteriorate.

BAN also retains its ability to strengthen members' collective capacity to act. Survey respondents agree to a virtually identical extent across both evaluations that the network has helped them stay in touch with the latest developments in their field or profession and beyond (44.5% in 2020 and 44.8% in 2025). Additionally, BAN continues to be perceived as a space to develop joint visions and strategies for actors in their field, with 43.8% agreeing to this statement in 2020 and 41.6% in 2025. The stability of these figures is noteworthy: despite the network's growth, some perceived fragmentation, and the migration of much interaction to invisible channels, BAN's field-building and agenda-setting functions have not weakened but remained are robust features of the network's architecture.

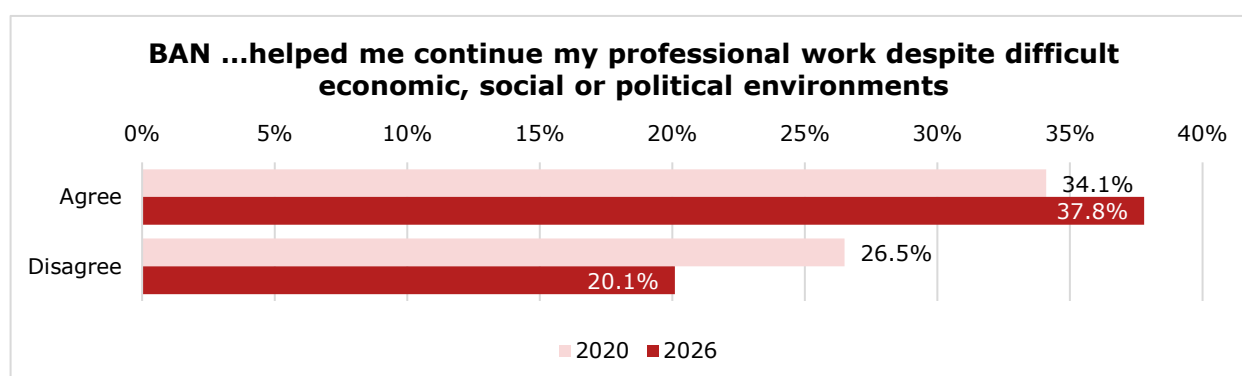


FIGURE 35. AGREEMENT AND DISAGREEMENT TO A STATEMENT RELATED TO MEMBERS ABILITY TO ACT

3.6. SHARED VALUES AND NORMS

The core of the network (see chapter 2.5.4) seems to be quite stable, but with slightly decreased perception of reciprocity and trust (Figure 36). A smaller number of survey respondents (52.1%) were under the impression that the time and support they invest comes back to them overtime. Further analysis shows that lower values for reciprocity are both visible in cross-section²¹ and longitudinal data.

²¹ Older and newer members alike

Possible explanations are that the general reduction in frequency of benefits, specifically support in members professional contexts could explain the general perception of lower network reciprocity.

Comparisons of accessibility reveal that members are under the impression that they can easily get in touch with their fellow members. 69.0% stated that they feel comfortable discussing new ideas and, which is only slightly less than in the last evaluation and more people (57.4%) find it easy to approach a member and ask them for help.

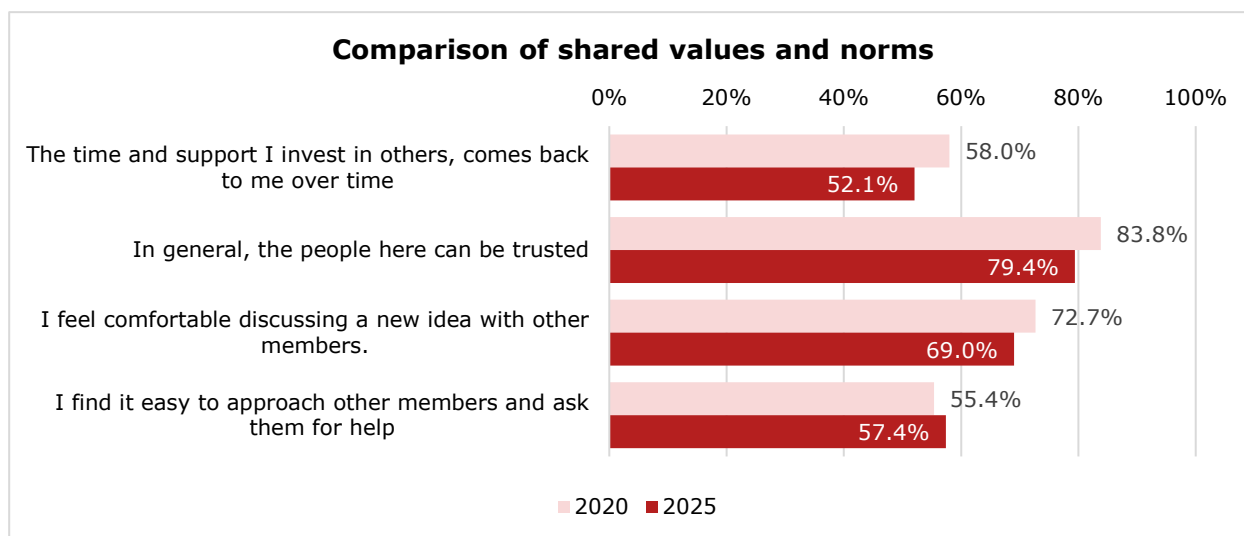


FIGURE 36. CROSS-SECTION COMPARISON OF THE FREQUENCY OF STATEMENTS RELATED TO SHARED VALUES AND NORMS

3.7. SUMMARY OF CHANGES OVER TIME

The two datasets show good comparability and allow for direct comparison across a wide range of variables. The overarching findings suggest structural stability: **despite significant membership growth and largely unchanged financial resources, BAN continues to deliver yearly engagement, benefits, and social impact at levels comparable to 2020.** Beneath this stability, however, the data reveals a gradual transition of membership engagement. High-frequency activities and interactions have declined across both cross-sectional and longitudinal analyses, leading to somewhat lower extrapolated numbers of collaborative projects and innovations. At the same time, the share of members who co-create impact at least once a year has increased, and the network's role as a source of civic resilience has strengthened.

Three dynamics help explain this pattern. First, platform **behavior has shifted**: fewer members log in regularly, while more engage through curated content such as emails and the weekly digest, with boschalumni.net increasingly functioning as a **portal or "train station"** for interactions that continue on other channels. Second, members appear to use the network more purposefully and with clearer goals, suggesting a shift toward efficient rather than exploratory engagement. Third, **newer members**

(post-2020) show significantly higher activity levels, effectively compensating for the natural decline among longer-standing members and keeping aggregate engagement stable.

The network's structure has evolved in meaningful ways. BAN has become **less program-based and more characterized by additionality**: fewer members report contacts from their original program, while more report new connections that would not have existed without BAN. Surface-level networks have grown substantially (from 40 to 60 contacts), while regular connections remain stable at around 12 to 13, with evidence of ongoing renewal.

The **growing representation of Global South members** (now 25.7% of respondents, with African membership nearly tripling among post-2020 joiners) adds diversity but also raises questions about equitable access to in-person interactions, which remain one of the strongest predictors of network value.

Shared values and norms continue to underpin the impact model, though perceived reciprocity has declined somewhat, likely reflecting the general reduction in frequent experiences of direct benefits.

In sum, BAN in 2026 is a larger, more diverse, and in many respects more mature network than in 2020. It has successfully transitioned from a primarily program-based community to a broader opportunity and support network. Its core challenge going forward is not a loss of impact but rather ensuring that the quality and frequency of engagement keep pace with its growing scale and geographic reach.

4. Supplementary analysis: visibility, inactive wishes and roles

Building on the impact model of the Bosch Alumni Network (Chapter 2) and its influencing factors (Chapter 3), this chapter contains the additional analyses with regard to topics of particular relevance: first, we outline findings of the evolution of the BAN on a temporal dimension (Section 4.1). Then we present positive feedback from members (Section 4.2) and their wishes for the BAN in the future (Section 4.3). We close this chapter with some preliminary insights into the perceptions and attitudes towards the role of the Robert Bosch Stiftung (Section 4.4).

4.1. VISIBLE AND INVISIBLE PARTS OF BAN: MANEUVERING AROUND THE ICEBERG

One key finding of the second evaluation concerns the invisible parts of BAN and specifically the invisible interactions of members (see chapter 2.2). We argue that communication in BAN is best understood as an iceberg (Figure 37) where the tip represents the most visible members and actions. Visibility was defined by the likelihood of other members or staff of iac Berlin being able to observe an interaction which would enable them to take part in it. Interactions that happen on boschalumni.net are largely above surface and mainly used to promote activities, react to content or to stay informed. Some personal/face-to-face interactions are also visible to others if they are either organized by iac Berlin or their staff is present or at least aware of them happening. Both **allow members who are not directly involved to learn, contribute, join, correct, highlight and forward** them which in turn creates more interactions. Boschalumni.net is less frequently used to stay in touch with other members over time.

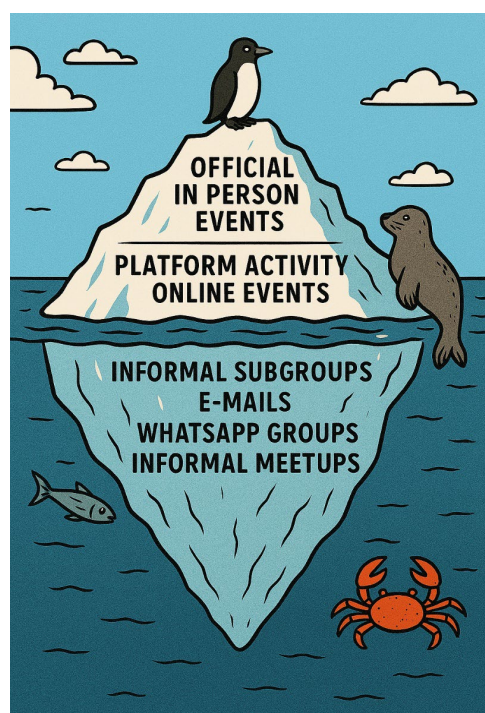


FIGURE 37. THE ICEBERG MODEL OF VISIBILITY

Survey data has shown that communication on boschalumni.net only makes up about 12.1% of all interactions and personal interactions make up 18.1%. The remaining parts are likely invisible (e.g. messaging services, email, personal meetings and calls or social media interactions) which means that the network is much larger and more productive than its easily observable parts. These below the surface communications

hinder many members' opportunities to gain experience or engage. The analysis revealed distinct **user archetypes** that have first been created as a result of the qualitative explorations and later adopted through survey data. Animals represent ideal user types²² and their predominant visibility character. User types are not rigid over time and are not exclusively tied to engagement level but rather how visible their activities usually are (for a stronger focus on activity versus ownership see chapter 2.1.4 of the last evaluation). The penguin was labeled as co-creator, the seal was labeled as the cross-channel communicator, the fish was labeled as "the observer" and the crab was labeled as "inactives" (this group will be further discussed in the upcoming chapters)

4.1.1. Visibility archetypes: cluster analysis

To test whether the visibility archetypes initially developed through qualitative exploration could be empirically corroborated, we carried out an exploratory cluster analysis²³. Such analyses use algorithms to group respondents based on similarity across multiple variables, identifying naturally occurring patterns in the data without imposing predetermined categories.

To test whether the previously identified groups from the qualitative exploration could also be identified in the survey data, we carried out an explorative cluster analysis. Such analyses use.... Please complete

Three groups emerged from this analysis, closely matching the archetypes from the qualitative interviews: Co-creators (n = 40), Cross-channel communicators (n = 182), and Observers (n = 131). Table 4 illustrates characteristics of these groups and shows in which aspects they differ from each other.

²² User types have also been established in the last evaluation. While there are some similarities in terms of their naming and their characteristics, they represent different concepts. Results on user types and ownership from the first evaluation are also not irrelevant as a result of the second evaluation. The iceberg model represents a different understanding that became apparent during the evaluation period.

²³ Hierarchical cluster analysis (ward method) along visibility indicators: online and offline activities, number of connections, usage of boschalumni.net, interaction with members, ownership.

	"Co-creator"	"The cross-channel communicator"	"The observer"
∅ Surface / deep connections within BAN	~ 44 / 11	~ 99 / 20	~ 32 / 6
Communication channels: share of messaging services	17.9 %	31.3 %	36.9 %
Hours per month spent with the network and its members	5.8 hours	7.4 hours	1.5 hours
„most of my communication takes place on bosch alumni.net “	100.0 %	0.0 %	0.0 %
Logging in to bosch alumni.net : every other week or more	65.0 %	40.1 %	9.2 %
„...I typically continue the conversation on other channels later“	40.0 %	70.3 %	51.1 %
Motivations for being in the network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 33.3 % "staying in touch with the iac Berlin Team" • 29.6 % "staying in touch with contacts from previous BAN events" • 40.7 % "staying in touch with alumni from my program" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 26.5 % "staying in touch with the iac Berlin Team" • 29.6 % "staying in touch with contacts from previous BAN events" • 36.7 % "staying in touch with alumni from my program" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 19.7 % "staying in touch with the iac Berlin Team" • 19.7 % "staying in touch with contacts from previous BAN events" • 53.5 % "staying in touch with alumni from my program"

TABLE 4. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE VISIBILITY GROUPS INSIDE THE BOSCH ALUMNI NETWORK

The clusters differ markedly in how members use communication channels and how much time they invest. **Co-creators** have the lowest share of messaging services among their communication channels (17.9%, compared to 31.3% for cross-channel communicators and 36.9% for observers) and are the only group in which 100% state that most of their communication takes place on *boschalumni.net*. About two-thirds of them log in at least every other week. **Cross-channel communicators**, by contrast, are the most likely to continue conversations on other channels (70.3%, versus 40.0% for co-creators and 51.1% for observers). **Observers** stand out through their minimal time investment: they spend only 1.5 hours per month with the network and its members, far below the 5.8 hours of co-creators and 7.4 hours of cross-channel communicators.

Network size also varies considerably. Cross-channel communicators maintain the largest individual networks, with roughly 99 surface-level and 20 deeper connections on average. Co-creators hold approximately 44 surface and 11 deep connections, while observers report the smallest networks at around 32 surface and 6 deep connections.

Motivations for membership reveal a further distinction. Observers are most strongly driven by staying in touch with alumni from their own program (53.5%), whereas co-creators and cross-channel communicators show a more balanced spread across motivations, including staying in touch with the iac Berlin Team and contacts from previous BAN events. Only 9.2% of observers log in on a weekly basis, underscoring the distance this group maintains from the platform.

4.1.2. Visibility archetypes: Co-creator

Co-creators are active, visible, loyal, and express high levels of gratitude toward the network. They have a high level of overall engagement and the **highest level of visibility** among the three groups. On average, they have joined the network slightly later than the other two groups. Members of this group are **more frequently based in the Global South** and maintain a higher share of regular contacts outside their own country. Their engagement is strongly oriented toward online activities, expressed through **consistent use of *boschalumni.net*** which all co-creators (100%) identify as their primary communication channel.

Across all three groups, co-creators report the greatest direct benefits, opportunities, and impact from their membership. They are also the group most likely to attribute their own success to being part of BAN. Typical examples include members who regularly organise meetings and webinars or who have co-initiated learning programs or study trips. As one member from this group described:

"Now, because I am involved, I keep posting about stuff on the platform website and whatever is happening on other networks so that people are involved, and they know what is happening."
(Member interview 11)

4.1.3. Visibility archetypes: Cross-channel communicator

Cross-channel communicators are the largest group in the analysis ($n = 182$) and highly active participants who maintain the **biggest individual networks**, averaging around 99 surface-level and 20 deeper connections. While their overall activity level is comparable to co-creators, their **visibility on official channels is lower** because much of their interaction takes place through informal tools such as email, WhatsApp, and WeChat. This group is the most likely to **migrate conversations away from boschalumni.net**, with 70.3% stating they typically continue exchanges on other channels. They also invest the most time in the network at 7.4 hours per month, and their strong offline engagement further distinguishes them.

On average, cross-channel communicators have been part of BAN for the shortest period. Networking itself ranks as a prominent motivation for this group. Examples include a coordinator of a media network formed within BAN and a member who communicates primarily with Chinese colleagues via WeChat. One person summarized their off-platform engagement like this:

„[...] boschalumni website less for communicating. We communicate over email, we communicate over WhatsApp, you know, now the network [their network] is mostly being run out of WhatsApp“ (Member interview 21)

4.1.4. Visibility archetypes: The observer

Observers watch from a distance; they engage rarely but can be activated. They both have the **lowest activity level** as well as the **lowest visibility** among the three groups in the cluster analysis. Additionally, the number of surface and regular connections is the lowest. Observers barely log on to boschalumni.net (9.2% of them do so on a weekly basis), **only 22.1% get updated by other members** when relevant opportunities arise (much lower than the other two groups) and only 41% receive updates through mails and the weekly digest. This lack of involvement means observers have less awareness of current offerings.

Despite this low activity, they have been part of the network for the longest time on average and hold considerable appreciation for BAN. Their **primary motivation is staying connected with alumni** from their own program (53.5%), suggesting a narrower, cohort-based orientation rather than broader network engagement. They invest just 1,5 hours per month, which is a fraction of what the other groups spend.

Exemplified by this member's statement:

„I don't visit the platform that often. I'm getting like the summaries of emails [...] occasionally I'll go on the platform“ (Member interview 7)

4.1.5. Visibility archetypes: The inactives

On first glance, this group seems invisible and even out of reach, which resulted in the fact that their experiences were underrepresented in the qualitative interview process. Examples for relationships of this group are friendships and professional partnerships that don't leave a footprint on the platform. Some people in this group could have been quite visible previously, but then their activity/visibility declined. To better understand this group, we carried out a secondary inactive survey (see Chapter 5.2).

One of the more active members offered some perceptions on this group of inactives:

"I know a lot of people who are part of the network but hardly engaging any of the activities and you can't force them" (Member interview 11)

Some people have naturally diverted their focus of the platform and the more visible channels:

"I think one-on-one or small group communication within the network was almost always done off of the platform [...] e-mail or WhatsApp or signal or things like that. Yeah, so kind of a mix [...] the platform was annoying sometimes" (Member interview 9)

One person also reflected on their own pathway to inactivity:

"I was like kind of head of that group, but it was [...] hard to make time, you know [...] so it's just like I think I'd never did anything with this and that was kind of like how I disengaged very progressively from the network" (Member interview 25)

4.1.6. Summary of visibility archetypes

Communication within Bosch Alumni Network takes many forms and some interactions will inevitably happen without leaving a visible footprint on the platform or events. The cluster analysis reveals that a small but dedicated group of co-creators is strongly committed to official channels, with all of them centering their communication on boschalumni.net. This group reports the greatest benefits and attributes more of their success to BAN membership than any other archetype.

The largest segment of the active network are cross-channel communicators who regularly move beyond visible channels while remaining highly engaged both on- and offline. With the largest individual networks (averaging ~99 surface connections) and the highest monthly time-investment (7.4 hours), they are the engine of informal networking within BAN and serve as a glue between visible and invisible parts of the network.

A substantial group of observers invests comparatively little time (1.5 hours per month) and engages minimally with the platform. Despite having been members for the longest period on average, their low activity limits their awareness of current opportunities and offerings.

4.2. INACTIVE SURVEY: PERIPHERY OR FALLING OUT?

One of the key goals of the second evaluation was to understand members' pathways to inactivity, find out what their unmet needs are and how they could be brought back into more active roles within the network. An **additional survey was carried out to capture the voices of members who had not engaged with the network for at least two years**²⁴. These members were mobilized through a targeted, direct email campaign. 235 members participated in this survey and a valid sample of 138 cases have been selected for the analysis. All of these members had not participated in the main survey and a large majority (89.9%) stated that they indeed did not engage with the Bosch Alumni Network and its members in the past 24 months, which indicates that the second survey was successful in capturing an inactive audience within BAN.

Despite being inactive for years, **the vast majority (83.3%) was interested in a reconnection and orientation session** that was promoted towards the end of the survey. These results indicate that at least for subset of the roughly 5,500 members who are not active in the network there has a lot of interest in reengagement. The following quantitative and qualitative results reinforce this impression.

4.2.1. Barriers

Inactive members of BAN face two dominant barriers: a perceived **mismatch between the network's offerings and their professional needs**, and a **lack of time**. As Figure 38 illustrates, nearly half of inactive respondents (48.6%) indicated that the opportunities provided do not match their professional needs, while a similar share (44.9%) cited time constraints as a key obstacle. About a third (29.0%) selected "other" reasons²⁵, and 12.3% pointed to accessibility issues with the platform itself.

Qualitative responses add further texture to these findings. The most frequently mentioned themes similarly were time constraints, a lack of personal relevance, geographical issues or relocation, uncertainty about what BAN actually offers and how to engage with it, as well as language barriers. As one member described:

"The platform, there's simply not much overlap between my work and what is expected of me and what it offers, so to speak. Yes, and that's why it has become less and less over the years"
(Anonymous survey response)

²⁴ Based on internal platform data, based on boschalumni.net logins.

²⁵ Most of these refer to specific circumstances leading to a mismatch or lack of time, such as life-stage constraints ("I have a toddler") and mismatch due to geographical or professional changes ("The projects are often exciting and creative—but a far cry from what's on my mind right now"). Some relate to barriers around a lack of clarity, newsletter and communication design, while a few mentioned language barriers, eroding interest, and frustration with unsuccessful engagement efforts.

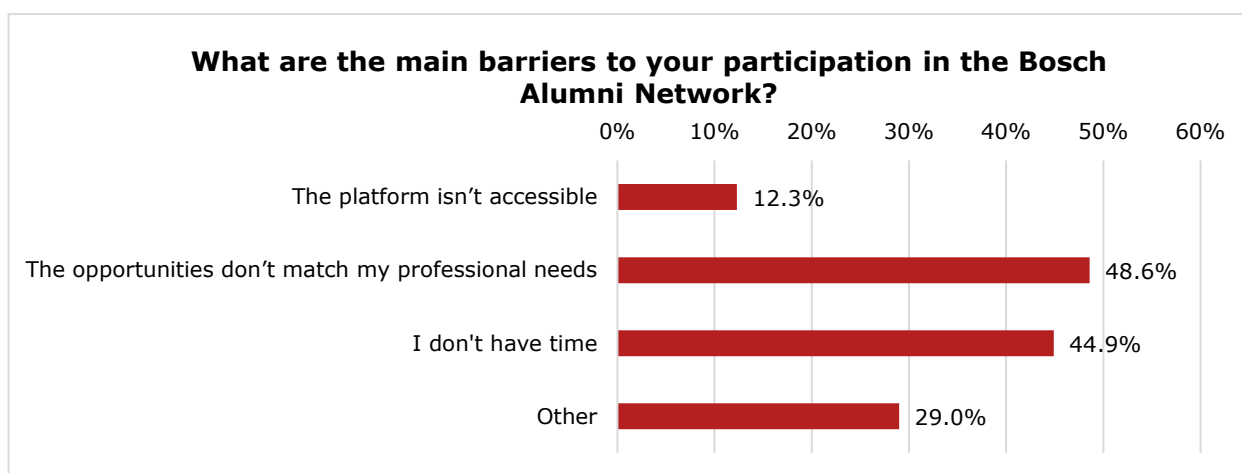


FIGURE 38. FREQUENCY OF BARRIERS FROM THE SURVEY OF INACTIVE MEMBERS

4.2.2. Motivators for re-engagement

The inactive survey also asked participants which types of offers could raise their commitment in the future. The results (Figure 39) point to a clear **demand for more targeted and transparent engagement opportunities**. The most frequently selected option was thematic networking with their own field or sector (56.5%), followed by greater clarity about relevant opportunities (53.4%) and professional development opportunities (48.9%). In-person local meet-ups were chosen by 43.5% of respondents, while about a third (32.1%) wished for greater support from iac in connecting them with others and helping them understand what is available.

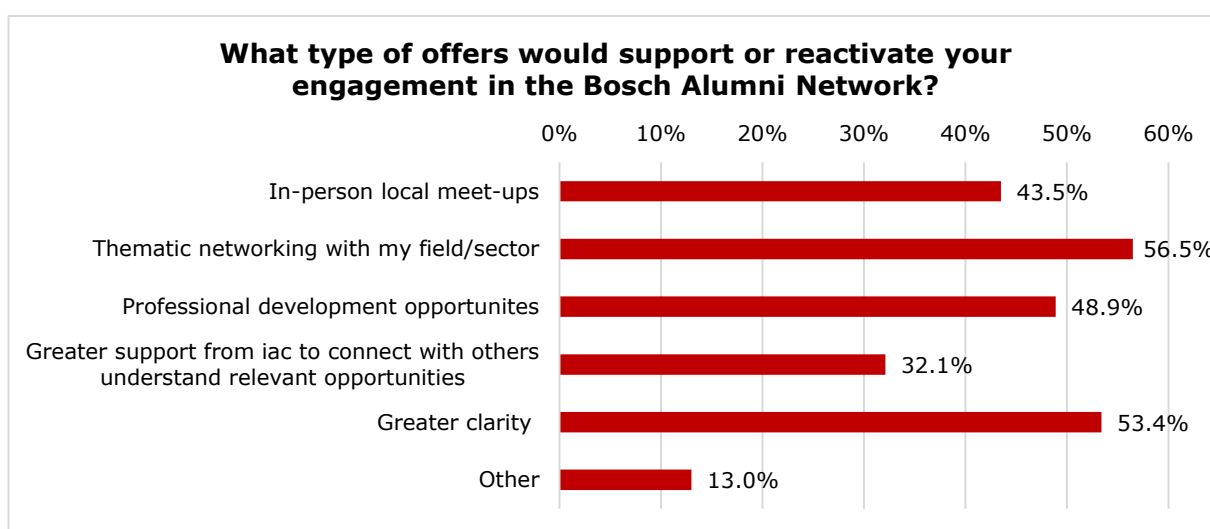


FIGURE 39. FREQUENCY OF MOTIVATORS FROM THE SURVEY OF INACTIVE MEMBERS

Among qualitative answers in the survey some of the more frequently mentioned topics were a wish for more personal meetings offers (e.g. local meet ups), relevant workshops (e.g. professional development or sustainability) or improved accessibility (e.g. complicated platform, hard to see what the newsletter is about). Remarks on difficulties with the newsletter have been described like this:

Open-text responses reinforce and deepen these findings. The most prominent theme is a desire for **local, low-threshold, in-person format**, such as "Stammtische" or casual meet-ups that can be integrated into everyday routines without requiring travel to central locations. Several respondents explicitly contrasted this with online events or distant venues, noting that even when interest existed, the effort of attending was too high to follow through. Closely related is the demand for **sector-specific content**. Respondents named a wide range of professional fields, from public health and geopolitics to journalism, sustainability, education, and management consulting, suggesting that current programming feels too generic for a professionally diverse membership (or they are not aware of respective offers). The wish for professional development emerged as a concrete sub-category: members described interest in **practical, applied workshops** (e.g. on AI in media, podcasting, GIS tools, leadership) and noted that their own organisations often cannot fund such opportunities.

A recurring theme in the qualitative responses concerns **communication design**. Multiple respondents described the newsletter as too long, difficult to scan, and unclear in its relevance. One characterised it as a "Bleiwüste" (wall of text) that does not invite reading. Another member put it like this:

"The newsletter has an ambitious format... I can't tell at a glance what it's about" (Anonymous survey response)

Again others noted that email subject lines signaling generic platform activity (e.g. "someone made a post") fail to draw attention. Some stated they only respond to direct, **personal outreach via email, WhatsApp, or Signal**, and that platform-based communication does not reach them in practice.

Beyond content and format, several respondents expressed a **wish for more active matchmaking**, such as curated introductions, mentorship, peer learning with members of similar profiles, and inter-generational exchange. Self-directed exploration of the platform does not work for some of this group; they wish for BAN to take a more proactive role in connecting them with relevant people and opportunities. A smaller but notable sub-group went further, expressing a readiness not just to receive but to contribute, offering skills, organising local activities, or collaborating on funded projects. This signals an **underused resource: members who would re-engage if invited to do something** rather than merely attend.

Finally, a subset of respondents simply seems to lack an overview of what BAN currently offers. For this group, the issue is not dissatisfaction with existing programs but an inability to form a judgment about their relevance which suggests an orientation problem that sits upstream of all other barriers.

4.3. GENERAL FEEDBACK AND WISHES FROM MEMBERS

General satisfaction from members in the main survey was very high. Respondents have either a positive perception of BAN elements or did not know enough about them to provide feedback (Figure 40)

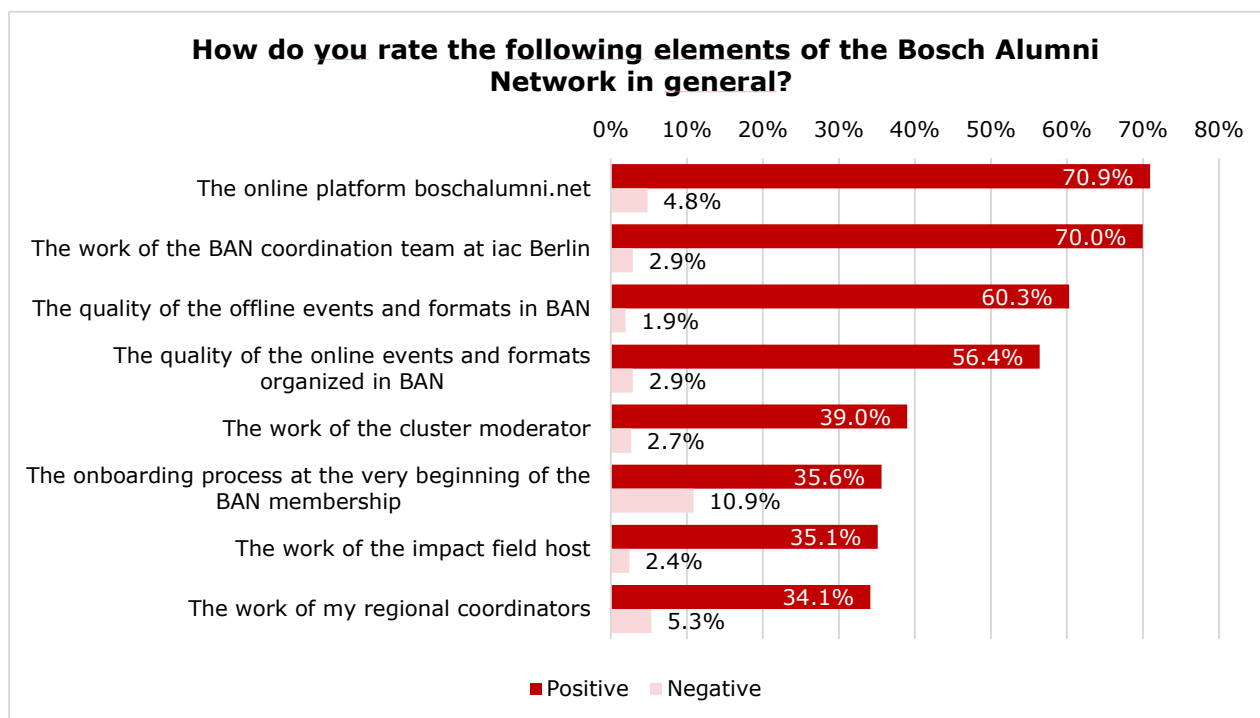


FIGURE 40. FREQUENCY OF POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE VIEWS TOWARDS ELEMENTS OF THE BOSCH ALUMNI NETWORK

The onboarding process was the only element with a slightly higher number of negative views even though the ratio is still 3.5:1 positive). However, the fact that about 50% of survey respondents had no perception about the onboarding process could be seen as a challenge. Together with results on the inactive users who have stated that they would wish for more support in understanding relevant opportunities, there seems to be room for improvement in terms of onboarding. Annex E provided a supplementary overview of people who have reported negative views in terms of onboarding and how they are spread across different years

4.3.1. Hidden drivers of satisfaction

During data exploration we found some noteworthy patterns regarding satisfaction with the Bosch Alumni Network:

- Some clusters have a more positive perception of roles: Members in the Culture cluster had positive view on the impact field hosts, members in the cluster Education and Social Innovation had more positive views towards impact field hosts and cluster moderators and people in the

Peace cluster had positive views about impact field hosts, cluster moderators and regional coordinators

- People in the clusters Europe and Governance were less satisfied with their cluster moderation
- boschalumni.net has highest satisfaction in the Global South and among younger people and members with less work experience
- Offline offers have higher satisfaction in Germany, Europe; lower in the Global South (likely due to limited availability) and among members with more work experience
- Members from regions with lower GDP have exhibited higher satisfaction with boschalumni.net, online offers, onboarding and cluster moderation
- Satisfaction is generally higher for those who engage in the network with clear goals and who experience trust and accessibility (core of the network)

4.3.2. Qualitative survey feedback: Barriers and reasons for inactivity

Respondents had the option to leave open network feedback throughout certain sections of the survey. **The onboarding experience** has been a topic in the qualitative response options in the survey. A few respondents noted that they would have liked a more dedicated onboarding session or format. Understanding offers and general accessibility of the platform seems to be an issue for several people. One person specifically mentioned that they do remember having an onboarding session but only for the technical aspect of BAN and that there was not much emphasis on explaining what the network was about once their program had ended. Together with results from the inactive survey, it becomes clear that some members struggle to have a good overview of what is on offer.

Some members also mentioned **barriers and frustrations** when dealing with BAN. The most common barrier for people was lack of time (e.g. due to other responsibilities), which was also one of the main reasons why people have stopped engaging with the network (see chapter 5.2.1). There were also frustrations with certain areas and clusters being perceived as less active than others, which lead to a sense of isolation for some (e.g. no opportunities to participate in face-to-face events in their region). One survey respondent described their perception as such:

"...around the quality of some of the online spaces I joined; and the usual number of participants [...] tends to be way less than the number of registrations" (Anonymous survey response)

For a few, transparency or clarity in decision making was another cause for frustration. Some specifically mentioned this regarding grants and positions with one person saying:

"What they do and decide [assumption: the network] is not transparent to people that are not in Berlin" (Anonymous survey response)

Lastly, even among active members there are some that (partially) **grow apart from the network over time**. Reasons for disengagement can be unsuccessful applications, perceived lack of offers for people with more work experience, having already experienced many of the elements within BAN and a

perceived reduction in new people since big programs have ceased to exist. A more experienced survey respondent illustrated their perception of a lack of suitable offers for themselves:

"The events are not really interesting. Especially for people who are already a little further along in their careers. There are so many great alumni, there is still a lot of potential here" (Anonymous survey response)

In some cases, disengagement has only been temporary as members have been brought back by certain elements of the network. Two people specifically remembered moments where they saw specific offers and understood what BAN had to offer and therefore returned more actively. The team at iac Berlin also brought members back by reaching out directly for their expertise. Many respondents in the survey also saw other members themselves as a source of motivation to keep coming back to BAN:

"Some people and their amount [...] in this place keep bringing me back" (Anonymous survey response)

"I wanted to reconnect with people who share a similar drive for positive impact and lifelong learning" (Anonymous survey response)

These responses illustrate the potential value that the membership base in BAN has and that there are ways to fuel the engagement of people in the periphery.

4.3.3. Wishes

In the final parts of the survey, respondents were able to openly share their wishes for Bosch Alumni Network in the optional part of the survey. 94 respondents provided feedback with respect to their wishes for improvements and changes. These wishes mirror key issues raised across many parts of the research project and in this report, painting an increasingly convergent picture.

The most frequently expressed wishes include:

- **More physical, in-person, local, gatherings.** This the dominant theme by far, coming up more than any other single wish, and in many variants: "Stammtische", regional meet-ups, picnics, the BAF (Bosch Alumni Forum), "Sommerfest," alumni workshops, and others. A recurring sub-point is **location accessibility**: several respondents find central venues like Paretz or Kreisau too far away and suggest more geographically distributed or centrally located alternatives. The underlying message is consistent: offline interaction builds trust, connection, and motivation in ways that online formats cannot replace, but the current offerings are too few, too distant, or too hard to integrate into daily life.
- **Keep what works.** A striking number of responses are not complaints but endorsements that express gratitude for the many elements of BAN that already work well. Mentions include: learning grants, the BAFs, impact fields, regional clusters, the jobs section, the spirit of openness and trust. Several respondents explicitly say, "keep going" or "keep most of what exists." This

underscores that even the members with wishes for changes and improvement do so from a basic understanding that network already generates value for them, and functions mostly well.

- **Thematic depth and sector relevance.** Many wish for more focused, sector-specific tracks rather than broad programming. Named fields include sustainability, de-colonisation, post-growth, geopolitics/security, public health, education, arts/culture, journalism, AI, data visualization, EU integration, and migration. One respondent captures it well: generic offerings feel relevant to everyone and therefore to no one in particular. Some suggestions include "thematic schools" (week-long deep dives) and sector-specific webinars.
- **Equity and fresh faces.** Some respondents articulated a pointed concern about the same people repeatedly receiving grants, leading clusters, or being visible. The wish is for more equitable distribution of opportunities across regions, career stages, and individuals and for mechanisms (rotation, term limits for coordinators, better regional representation) that ensure this²⁶. In one case, this comment seemed to imply a criticism of the competency of their regional coordinator:

"Coordinators need more training, they look overwhelmed with the new role and sometimes are not responsive enough" (Anonymous survey response).

- **Funding and tangible project support.** Grants, micro-grants, seed funding, and support for project sustainability come up repeatedly. Several respondents note that seed-funded projects end abruptly and wish for BAN to function more as an incubator that not just helps launching projects but also growing them find institutional "homes". The "Kleine Fördermöglichkeiten" were mentioned as a positive example in this context.
- **Better onboarding and re-entry pathways** Some wished for easier ways to reconnect with BAN after an away period to better understand what has changed and what they might have missed: *"I hope to see more dynamic re-engagement mechanisms [...] make it easier for members to reconnect after a period of inactivity [...] regional events or thematic gatherings [...] could serve as 'entry points' for coming back"* (Anonymous survey response).
- **Strategic clarity and direction.** A smaller but substantive group wants BAN to articulate a sharper purpose. Responses range from "not sure what the goal is" to calls for measurable impact, less fragmentation, and a deeper rethinking of priorities in light of global shifts. They

²⁶ One respondent put it like this: "I would also recommend that new individuals should be encouraged to participate and apply for opportunities. maybe once someone is leaving a position, they can be encouraged to recommend a new member. The platform should try and not recycle the same person for such a long time. I have seen people that keep leading different activities on the platform, it is like they will never leave so when do we leave space for freshers or new ideas. Also in Call for ideas, regional grants and Learning formats, the platform should keep records and try to ensure it is not the same set of people getting the grant every year."

want more sense of direction and to better understand where the network is going "*More precise direction in why it is doing [things] less fragmentation in events/initiatives, create actual and measurable impact*" (Anonymous survey response). One respondent explicitly argues for refocusing on international cooperation and peace rather than "social issues." Another wants BAN to become "a real hub for change-makers." The tension between breadth and focus runs through many parts of the network.

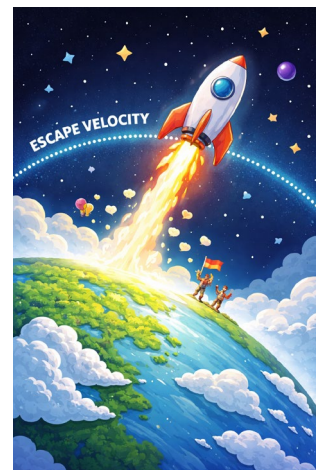
- **Platform and communication improvements.** Concrete usability issues surface: application forms that reset when navigated away from, internal messaging that goes unanswered, a newsletter that's hard to scan, an app that's been abandoned. The suggestion to model direct-connect functionality on LinkedIn (opt-in visibility, mutual connection requests) is specific and practical. Several say they don't use the platform and react only to direct personal outreach.

Interestingly, many of these issues also seem to mirror the main barriers and motivators discussed for Inactives above (Section 5.2). This has convenient strategic implications, suggesting that a number of measures (e.g. improving communication channels, offering in-person events, clarifying strategic positioning, rotating recipients of grants, roles and supports, etc.) can benefit different groups at the same time.

4.4. NETWORK ESCAPE VELOCITY

Previous chapters have shown that newer members (post-2020) are more active than longer-standing ones and are offsetting some of the decline in frequent engagement among the latter group (Section 3.2). This raises a fundamental question for BAN's sustainability: *how many new active members does the network need each year to maintain its current level of output?*

To answer this, we estimated the minimum annual intake of new active members required to sustain the network across three key indicators: the number of active members, the number of new collaborations launched, and the number of close ties formed²⁷. We call this threshold the network's "**escape velocity**", borrowing the physics term for the minimum speed an object needs to overcome gravitational pull. In BAN's case, the gravitational pull is the natural decline in activity as members age with the network, shift priorities, or drift into inactivity. Escape velocity is the rate of new (or re-activated) member intake needed to counteract this pull and keep the network operating at a consistent level.



4.4.1. Number of active members

The total number of BAN members has risen by approximately 32% since the last evaluation, from 6,800 to 9,000. The number of active members (those who logged into the platform at least once in the preceding two years) has also grown, but far more modestly: from 4,185 to 4,471. We estimate that without any new members joining since 2020, the number of active members would have declined substantially over time (Figure 41).

²⁷ Note: These calculations are based on assumptions from survey data and only represent rough estimates.

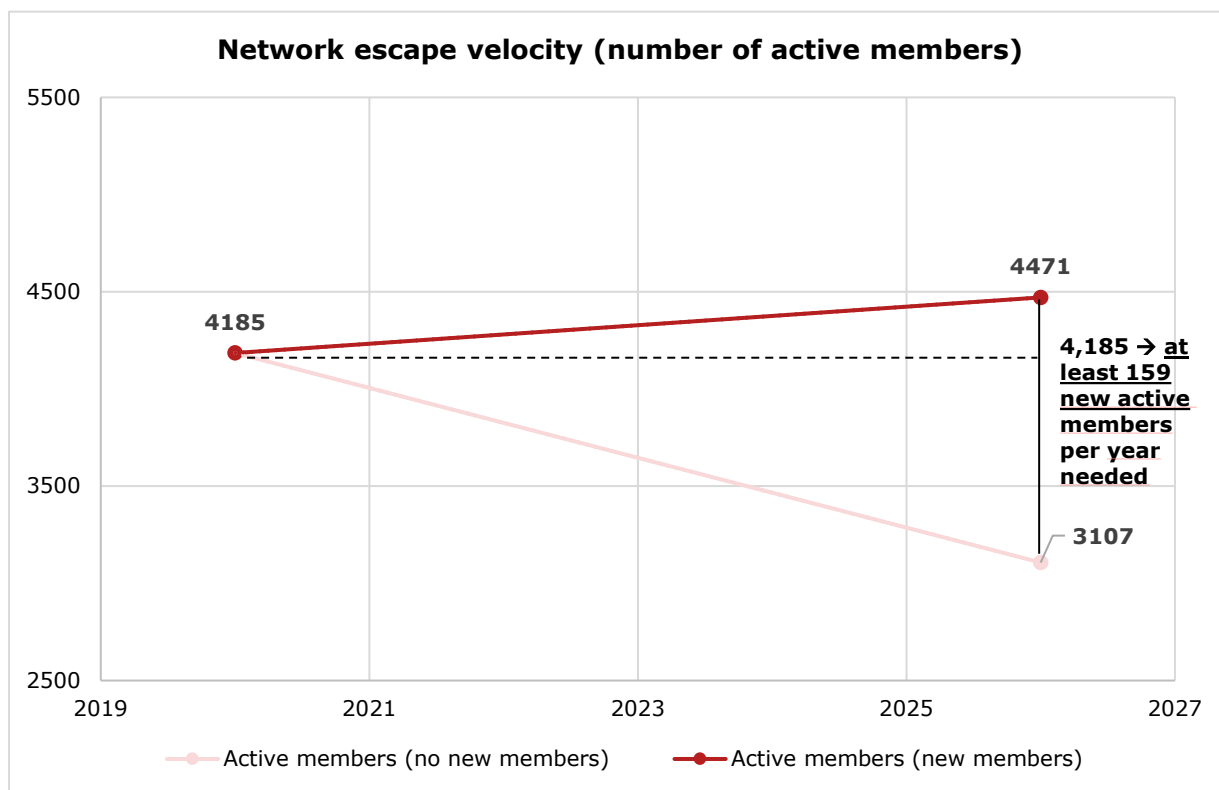


FIGURE 41. ILLUSTRATION OF NETWORK ESCAPE VELOCITY FOR THE NUMBER OF ACTIVE MEMBERS

Our results show that the current level of new member influx (approximately 206 new active members per year since 2020) has surpassed the escape velocity threshold of **159 new active members per year** that would have been needed to maintain the 2020 level of active members. However, the comparatively small absolute increase in active membership (from 4,185 to 4,471 despite 3,200 new total members) reveals that a large number of existing members are becoming inactive over time. The ratio of total members to active members is declining (see Annex D), meaning that the network is growing at the top but thinning in the middle.

4.4.2. New collaborations

While members who joined before 2020 launch slightly more collaborations per year than newer members (an estimated 2.3 vs. 1.8), some of these longer-standing members also leave the network or reduce their activity. We estimate that approximately **260 new active members per year** would have been needed to maintain the level of new collaborations launched in 2020. With an actual intake of roughly 206 per year, BAN fell slightly below this threshold (Figure 42). The shortfall is modest, but it means that the absolute number of new collaborations generated across the network has likely declined somewhat, even as the share of members who collaborate at least once a year has increased (Section 3.5). Without new active members, the decline would have been much steeper.

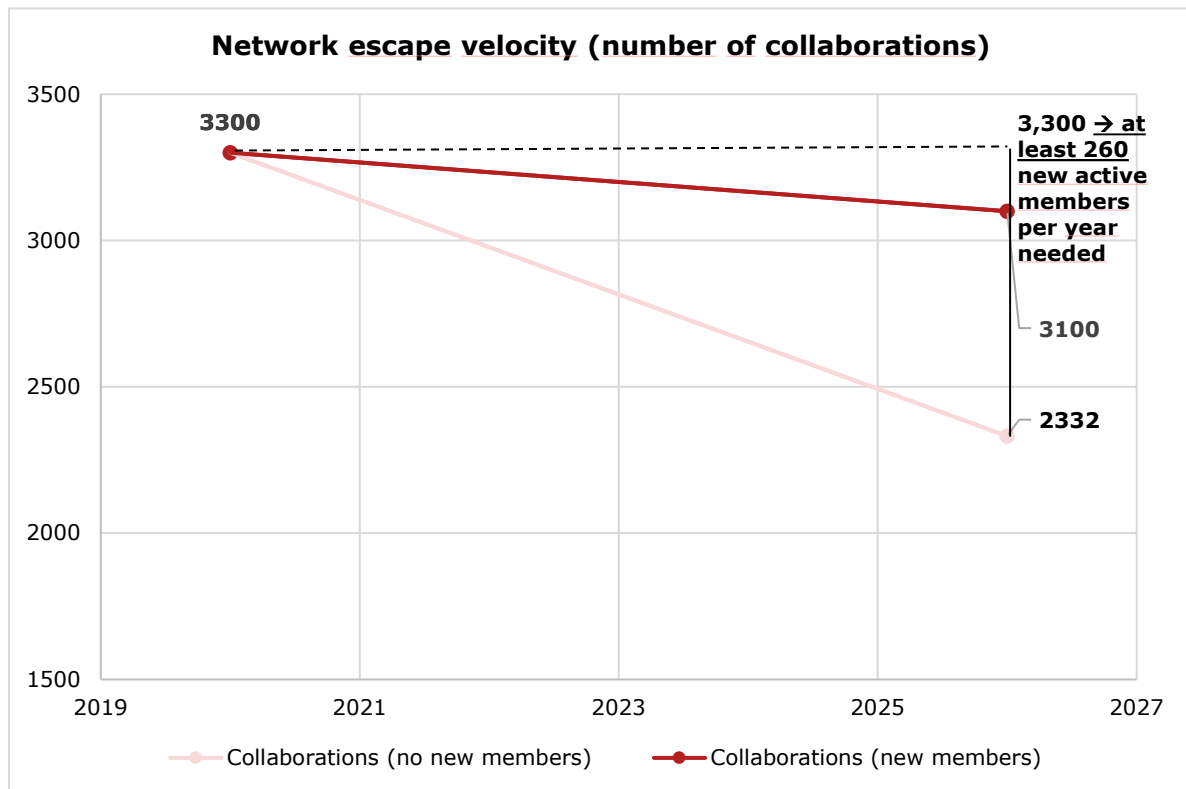


FIGURE 42. ILLUSTRATION OF NETWORK ESCAPE VELOCITY FOR COLLABORATIONS

4.4.3. Weak and close ties

Chapters 2.2.3 and 3.3 discussed the characteristics of individual networks within BAN and the number of surface-level and regular connections that members maintain. On average, longer-standing members have accumulated more weak ties (surface-level contacts), while newer members form more close ties (regular contacts) per year. This difference has implications for the network's connective tissue.

For **surface-level** connections, **no additional new members per year** are needed to maintain the current level: members naturally accumulate weak ties over time, and the existing trajectory is self-sustaining (Figure 43, top). This suggests high potential for further professional connectivity within the existing network. For **close-tie connections**, however, we estimate that approximately **211 new active members per year** are needed to maintain the current stock. With 206 actual new active members, BAN is operating almost exactly at threshold (Figure 43, bottom). Without new members, the number of close ties in the network would have declined over time.

4.4.4. Summary and implications

The overall picture is one of a network that is sustaining itself, but with limited margin. BAN is comfortably above the threshold for maintaining its active membership base, essentially at threshold for the formation of close ties, and slightly below threshold for the number of new collaborations.

An important caveat for interpreting these thresholds: the escape velocity figures above refer to active members, i.e., those who engage with the platform at least once in a two-year period. Not every new member who joins BAN becomes an active one. Based on a comparison of total membership and active membership data between 2020 and 2026, we estimate that **approximately 2.6 new members needed to join the network to yield one new active member**. If these shares continue to develop alongside this trajectory, onboarding 159 new members p.a. to maintain activity member escape velocity will require gaining about 413 actual new members p.a. (and accepting that many opt out of the offers early). Table 5 provides a summary, adding the number of “gross” new members needed to reach the respective escape velocity.

A noteworthy finding is that the escape velocity **threshold differs substantially depending on the outcome** being targeted. This is not coincidental but reflects structural differences between newer and longer-standing members and the way certain network assets accumulate over time. Weak ties, for example, grow naturally as members spend more years in the network, which is why no additional intake is needed to sustain them. By contrast, collaborations, the network's most valuable and resource-intensive output, require the highest intake because they depend on active engagement that tends to decline over time. In other words: **the more ambitious the desired outcome, the more new active members are needed to sustain it.**

Indicator	Net Escape velocity (new active members/year)	Gross Escape velocity (new total members/year)	Actual intake (active / total)	Status
Active members	~159	~413	~206 / ~535	Above threshold
New collaborations	~260	~676	~206 / ~535	Below threshold
Regular connections	~211	~549	~206 / ~535	At threshold

TABLE 5. NETWORK ESCAPE VELOCITY STATUS ACROSS KEY INDICATORS

This has a direct strategic implication. The number and profile of new members that BAN needs is not a fixed quantity but a function of the outcomes the network prioritizes. If the primary goal is to maintain the size of the active membership base, the current intake is more than sufficient. If the goal is to sustain the volume of new collaborations, BAN needs either more new members, a better activation rate among incoming ones, or a strategy to re-activate existing members. The question of how many new (or re-activated) members BAN should aim for is therefore inseparable from the question of what the network wants to achieve. **Escape velocity, therefore, depends on strategic choices.**

Two further implications follow. First, even modest increases in the number of new active members could have a disproportionate effect on collaborative output, since this is the threshold BAN is currently falling short of. 83.3% of inactive survey respondents who expressed interest in a reconnection session (Section 4.2) represent a largely untapped reservoir for this purpose. Second, network velocity is not only about inflow. Extending the active lifespan of existing members through the engagement, norm-reinforcing, and communication measures discussed in Sections 5.1 through 5.4 would reduce the attrition rate that drives the need for new intake. The most sustainable path may therefore require the combination of three levers: steady intake, improved activation, and better retention.

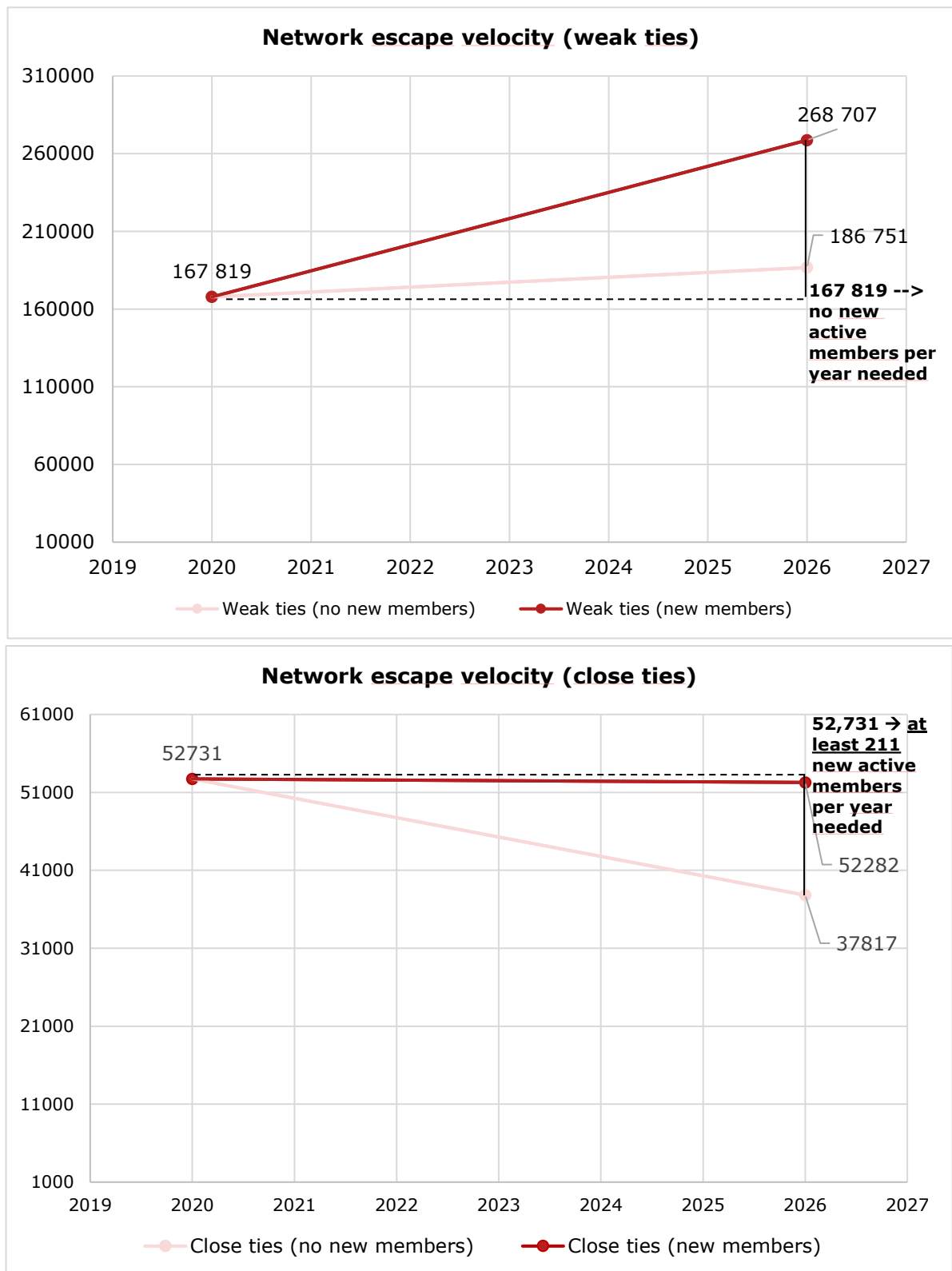


FIGURE 43. ILLUSTRATION OF NETWORK ESCAPE VELOCITY FOR THE NUMBER OF SURFACE LEVEL CONNECTIONS (TOP) AND REGULAR CONNECTIONS (BOTTOM)

5. Recommendations and discussion

Based on 60 interview protocols, over 1,500 qualitative codes, and two survey datasets (n = 551), we find a **healthy, thriving network**. Members collectively invest the equivalent of more than 80 full-time employees per month in the network and its activities. Over 70% have engaged in at least one collaboration in the past year, generating an estimated 850 to 3,100 joint projects and 600 to 1,900 co-developed innovations²⁸. Nearly 90% receive valuable information through BAN, and a quarter attribute a meaningful share of their professional success to their membership. The network spans 79 countries, maintains a strong normative core of trust and reciprocity, and has demonstrated particular value as a **source of civic resilience in times of crisis**.

Despite some observable shifts, such as a decline in high-frequency engagement among long-standing members, a migration of communication to invisible channels, and somewhat lower perceived reciprocity, the results from the current evaluation reveal that **BAN's impact model still operates effectively**. Yearly member engagement is widespread, benefits remain broadly stable, and newer members are joining at higher activity levels than their predecessors, sustaining the network's aggregate vitality.

Still, several findings converge on a challenge that seems to underline any specific design question: the **network's strategic identity is not sufficiently clear to** many of its members. Only 49.6% agree that members generally understand the strategy and purpose of BAN, while a substantial share remains uncertain. This was echoed across all three data collection instruments. In the main survey, even engaged members expressed curiosity about the network's direction (*"I think it would be extremely helpful if there were more transparency about what their current strategy actually is (Anonymous survey response)"*). In the inactive survey, some respondents named a lack of clarity as a barrier to re-engagement (*"I don't understand what role BAN could play in my life (Anonymous survey response)"*). And in the qualitative interviews, several members noted that while they valued their own experience, they had little sense of where the network as a whole was heading.

It is our understanding that a strategic clarification process is already underway. We hope that the findings of this evaluation can inform this process by offering an evidence-based perspective on what BAN has become and what its members need it to be.

One of the most consequential findings of this evaluation is that BAN has evolved beyond its origins as a program-based alumni community. The data in Section 3.3 shows this clearly: fewer members report that their regular contacts come from the same RBSG program they participated in (76.8% vs. 88.0%

²⁸ For a detailed breakdown of these values see chapter 2.4.1

in 2020), while more report new connections that would not have existed without BAN (74.3% vs. 66.0%). Members are not primarily using the network to stay in touch with their original cohort anymore. Instead, BAN is undergoing a shift **from reunion network to discovery network**. Members are now increasingly using it to discover unexpected collaborators across sectors, regions, and professional backgrounds.

This shift has important strategic implications. If BAN is increasingly a discovery network rather than a reunion network, then its value proposition moves from "staying connected with your program peers" toward "finding people you didn't know you needed to know." This reframing could inform how the network is described, how the platform is designed, how offers are communicated, and potentially even how the network is named — moving the narrative from a connection to the past ("alumni") toward collective action and emergent opportunity.

Several questions follow from this that would merit strategic deliberation in the future: What type of network does BAN want to be in the future: an alumni network, an opportunity network, an action network or a support network? Each implies different design choices, communication strategies, and membership models. How should interfaces with the Robert Bosch Stiftung and iac Berlin be clarified? Who can join, contribute, share, benefit? How can BAN's identity and strategy be made clear to its own members, including those at the periphery? Who, beyond the membership base should know about BAN's impact: philanthropists, civil society organizations, media, researchers, policymakers, other membership organizations?

These are not questions this evaluation can answer, but the recommendations that follow are intended to inform them. They highlight design mechanisms that the data identifies as particularly important for BAN's continued health and development.

Structure of the recommendations

Recommendations 1, 2, 3, 4, and 6 emerged directly from the analysis presented in this report. Recommendations 5 and 7 through 9 were developed after the presentation of results to iac Berlin and the Robert Bosch Stiftung in March 2026, informed by subsequent discussion and additional data review.

To support prioritization, we offer the following **indicative assessment of each recommendation's potential impact and implementation effort** (Table 6). This is of course provisional, as our evaluation has provided us with deep insights into the network, but not the related cost-structures, strategic contexts and decision parameters for the implementation of these recommendations. The appropriate sequencing will depend on the strategic direction that BAN and its stakeholders choose to pursue.

We note that several of these recommendations are mutually reinforced. Improving communication design (6) directly supports efforts to re-engage inactive members (7) and make the platform more useful as a portal (4). Clarifying geographic strategy (8) is closely linked to maintaining network velocity (5) and reinforcing norms (2). The prioritization matrix should therefore be read not as a menu of

independent options but as a set of interconnected interventions whose combined effect will be greater than their individual parts.

Recommendation	Potential impact	Implementation effort
1. Strengthen governance roles	Medium	Low–Medium
2. Reinforce norms, also through physical presence	High	Medium-High
3. Navigate around the iceberg	Medium	Medium
4. Redesign communication for relevance and reach	High	Low-Medium
5. Update boschalumni.net into an opportunity hub	High	High
6. Maintain network velocity	Medium	Medium
7. Build re-entry pathways and revise onboarding	High	Low
8. Strengthen involvement in the Global South	Medium-High	Medium-High
9. Reinvigorate the relationship with the Robert Bosch Stiftung	High	Medium–High

TABLE 6. POTENTIAL AND EFFORT OF RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. STRENGTHEN GOVERNANCE ROLES

Formal governance roles such as Regional Coordinators, Impact Field Hosts, and Cluster Moderators are among **BAN's most important structural assets**. They function as the network's deliberately created hubs (Barabási, 2009): nodes that connect otherwise separate clusters and ensure that information, opportunities, and trust flow across the network's increasingly differentiated substructures. The data confirms their importance: members who hold or have held formal roles report higher levels of interaction, stronger benefits, and greater identification with the network and spent more time with the network and its members. 18.6% of respondents had served as a Regional Coordinator, 14.7% as a jury member, and 7.3% as a Cluster Moderator, while 40.0% expressed interest in taking on such roles in the future.

Regression analyses suggest that members are more likely to consider formal roles when they are already actively engaged, experience the network as accessible, and are relatively newer or younger. This concentration of the **recruitment pool among the most active members** is **both an opportunity and a risk**: drawing from the same group repeatedly can lead to professionalization, stability

and individual growth, but also overload and inequitable distribution. Several members raised this concern in the qualitative data, calling for more equitable rotation of roles and geographic representation (Section 4.3), while others noted that some coordinators appeared underprepared for their responsibilities.

To strengthen this layer, BAN could design **"role careers"** that create pathways for progression over time, from lighter contributions (event hosting, mentoring) to more substantial coordination responsibilities. Term limits or rotation mechanisms, combined with recognition of completed service, could address equity concerns while preserving institutional memory (Plastrik et al 2014). **Investing in role-holder support**, such as dedicated onboarding, peer exchange among coordinators, and (continued) access to light-touch coaching from iac Berlin, could improve both quality and sustainability. **Increasing visibility and recognition** through featuring role-holders on boschalumni.net (e.g., as part or addition to the team section), enabling them to list BAN roles on LinkedIn, or providing completion certificates are low-cost measures that strengthen motivation. Finally, the governance role structure itself should be periodically reviewed as BAN's membership composition evolves, particularly given the growing share of Global South members who are among the network's most active contributors but may be underrepresented in formal roles.

5.2. REINFORCE NORMS, ALSO THROUGH PHYSICAL PRESENCE

Trust, reciprocity, and accessibility form the normative core of the Bosch Alumni Network and are among the evaluation's most consequential findings. Members who experience higher levels of these norms interact more frequently, receive more benefits, report higher social impact, and express stronger future engagement intentions (Section 2.6). Based on this, we argue that these norms are not "soft asset" but a key enabler of nearly every outcome in the impact model. It **should therefore be treated as a strategic priority** and monitored on an ongoing basis as a **key indicator of network health**.

While norms are deeply embedded and co-created in relationships, they can be influenced through deliberate design. Three approaches emerge from the data and the literature:

- **Making desired behavior visible.** Norms spread through observation (Bandura, 1977). When members see others reaching out, collaborating successfully, or offering help, they are more likely to do the same. Curated platform content that highlights successful collaborations, "member spotlight" formats, or short narrative pieces/stories about how a specific connection led to a concrete outcome could reinforce the behaviors that sustain trust and reciprocity. Several survey respondents described such moments as formative for their own engagement: seeing another member's project inspired them to reach out, which led to a collaboration of their own. Making these stories visible could help create a virtuous cycle that the current platform structure, with its emphasis on announcements and opportunities, does not fully support (see also Section 5.5).

- **Lowering the social cost of reaching out.** Accessibility, the norm with the lowest agreement score (57.4%), is the most actionable of the three. Members need to feel that approaching someone they do not know is welcome and normal, not intrusive. Practical mechanisms include warm introductions facilitated by role-holders, "buddy" systems for new members, well-designed group onboarding sessions fostering exchange, or dedicated "office hours" where experienced members make themselves available for informal conversations²⁹.
- **Prioritizing physical encounters.** The single most consistent wish expressed across all three data sources (main survey, inactive survey, and interviews) was for more in-person, local gatherings. Our analyses underscore the validity of this wish: models shows that having met in person is one of the strongest predictors of interaction frequency, perceived benefits, and future engagement (Section 3.3.1), and members from the Global South, who have less access to physical formats, report lower levels of both reciprocity and in-person contact. This is no surprise: Trust, as Putnam (2000) argues, is built through repeated face-to-face interaction more effectively than through any digital channel. Members themselves described this in concrete terms: they want "Stammtische," regional meetups, picnics, casual local formats that can be integrated into daily life without requiring travel to central locations. Several specifically noted that venues like Paretz or Kreisau feel too distant and called for more geographically distributed alternatives.

The practical implication is not necessarily that iac Berlin must organize more events centrally, but rather that it should enable, support, and co-fund member-initiated local formats more systematically. This could mean equipping role holders (e.g. also Regional Coordinators) more often with small event budgets, standardized formats (e.g., a "BAN meet-up kit" with suggested structures, icebreakers, and reporting templates), and lightweight reporting mechanisms that make local gatherings visible to the broader network. This approach would simultaneously reinforce norms through physical interaction, increase the visibility of network activity (Section 5.3), and distribute the organizational burden away from Berlin.

We further recommend that shared values and norms be included in any **future monitoring framework** as a core health indicator for the network, tracked at regular intervals alongside engagement and benefit metrics.

²⁹ The inactive survey reinforces this: 32.1% of inactive respondents wished for greater support from iac Berlin in connecting them with others, and the qualitative data repeatedly mentioned that self-directed exploration of the platform does not work for everyone. Some members seem to need a person, not a portal, to connect.

5.3. NAVIGATE AROUND THE ICEBERG

Chapter 4.1 has shown that communication within BAN is best understood as an iceberg. A small but dedicated group of co-creators centers their activity on *boschalumni.net*, but the vast majority of member interactions (roughly 75%) take place on invisible channels such as messaging services, email, and personal meetings. This reflects members' natural preference for convenient, familiar tools which is unlikely to reverse. A high share of invisible communication does not necessarily have to be a problem as long as critical information, connection opportunities and outcomes leave a visible footprint for other members. However, if left entirely unaddressed, the growing share of invisible communication could lead to loss of content, weaken the network's structure, and limit the ability of *iac Berlin* and other members to learn from, build on, and participate in what is happening across the network.

Targeted efforts to increase visibility could yield tremendous benefits: only when interactions are visible can they be joined, built upon, celebrated, and imitated by others. Several practical approaches follow from the data. The simplest intervention is **inviting members to share back**, by making it easy and appealing for members to bring invisible activity back to the surface. Designing low-effort platform features such as "collaboration of the month," "member spotlight," or a simple prompt to post a photo or short update after an off-platform meeting could create regular touchpoints between invisible activity and the visible network.

A more structural approach would be to **create interfaces between BAN and external platforms** where members are already active. This could include curating or reposting member content from LinkedIn and Facebook creating BAN-branded channels on messaging apps like Signal, WhatsApp, Telegram or WeChat for specific clusters or regions, or experimenting with lightweight cross-posting tools. These channels could extend the reach of BAN and in particular *boschalumni.net* reach into the spaces where much of the network's real activity takes place.

Finally, we recommend **mobilizing the network's bridge-builders** to strengthen ties between visible and invisible channels. Cross-channel communicators, the largest visibility group in the cluster analysis ($n=182$), are natural candidates for connecting invisible and visible parts of the network (Section 4.1). They invest the most time (7.4 hours per month), maintain the largest individual networks (roughly 99 surface connections), and already operate fluently across both official and informal channels. These members, many of whom hold formal roles, could be actively encouraged to tag, mention, or invite observers³⁰ and other less visible members into platform conversations. A recognition or reward strategy could further incentivize this bridging behavior, for example by highlighting members who consistently connect with others or surface relevant activity from off-platform spaces.

³⁰ Results have shown that only 22.1% of the respondents in this group have stated that they get updated about relevant opportunities by other members

In conclusion, invisible communication is not inherently a problem for the network. It only becomes one if members' connections and individual networks disappear beneath the surface entirely, and if iac Berlin, the Robert Bosch Stiftung, and fellow members lose the ability to learn from and contribute to what is happening.

5.4. REDESIGN COMMUNICATION FOR RELEVANCE AND REACH

The evaluation reveals a consistent pattern across multiple data sources: BAN's communication channels are **not reaching all members effectively**. Emails and the weekly digest have become important touchpoints for high-frequency engagement, with readership rising from 53% to 60% between evaluations, while frequent logins to boschalumni.net dropped from 39% to 29% (Section 3.2). More members rely on curated content pushed to them rather than actively browsing the platform. This places enormous weight on the quality of outbound communication: if emails are increasingly where members' journeys in the network begin, it needs to function as an effective gateway rather than a comprehensive archive.

The qualitative data suggests that the **current formats of outbound mailings fall short** of this function for at least some members. Multiple respondents described emails as too long, difficult to scan, and unclear in their relevance. One characterized it as a "Bleiwüste" (wall of text). Others noted that subject lines signaling generic platform activity (in the frequently used style of "Person X created a post in Cluster Y" mails) fail to draw attention to the actual context. Among inactive members, communication design emerged as one of the most frequently mentioned barriers to re-engagement. This is particularly consequential because inactive members and many observers are largely unreachable through standard channels: they do not log in and do not browse the platform.

Three directions follow from our analysis. First, **experimenting with formats and frequency**: shorter, more targeted newsletters with scannable layouts, tested through low-cost A/B experiments with subsets of the membership³¹. Second, **diversifying channels beyond email and boschalumni.net**: periodic use of WhatsApp, Signal, LinkedIn, email, or mail for targeted re-engagement campaigns or personal invitations from role-holders could reach members who have disappeared from BAN's standard communication systems.

Third, **improving the signal-to-noise ratio of platform notifications**: even modest personalization, such as highlighting opportunities in a member's thematic cluster or geographic region, could increase the perceived value of each visit and reduce the drift toward inactivity.

³¹ Some members suggested thematic or cluster-specific digests that filter content by professional relevance. While the platform already provides a number of such options, it seems not all members seem to understand or be able to use them, or there are some shortcomings on side of posters (e.g., posting in unfit categories), or the categories miss some important aspect (e.g., seniority, geography).

5.5. UPDATE BOSCHALUMNI.NET INTO AN OPPORTUNITY HUB

The evaluation has established that boschalumni.net functions less as a social network and more as a social portal: a space where connections and collaborations are initiated but rarely where they unfold (Section 2.2.2). Rather than fighting this reality, the platform's design could lean into it. The concept of an **opportunity hub** captures what boschalumni.net could become: a space explicitly structured around three functions that the data identifies as most valuable to members: (1) being inspired by what others in the network are doing, (2) finding and offering help and thereby form connections, and (3) and seizing opportunities to act and collaborate. Figure 44 playfully illustrates the potential character of boschalumni.net as an opportunity hub where people can very easily observe (or bring back) success stories from other members and be inspired by them, seek out or offer help in a concise environment and eventually embark on their journey via calls, collaborations or learning opportunities.



FIGURE 44. SCHEMATIC ILLUSTRATION OF BOSCHALUMNI.NET AS AN OPPORTUNITY HUBB,

Taking this direction, five actions have been identified.

- **Strengthening the visibility of collaboration.** The first layer of an opportunity hub is inspiration. Qualitative data has shown that some members have been very happy with their exchanges but wished for clearer ways for those exchanges to leave a mark on the platform. Templates such as "collaboration of the week," short narrative formats spotlighting projects that were "born in the network," or member-produced podcasts and videos could make successful

collaborations visible and replicable. This directly supports the norm-reinforcing function discussed in Section 5.2: when members see how others collaborate, they are more likely to initiate collaborations themselves.

- **Adding an "ask/offer" layer.** In its current form, boschalumni.net is missing a mid-layer between undirected communication (the general feed) and fully formed opportunities (calls, grants, events). Adding a structured "help" or "ask/offer" space would create low-barrier entry points for collaboration: members could post requests for advice, seek a project partner for a grant application, look for mentoring, or signal their own availability to help others. This layer corresponds to the second function of an opportunity hub and addresses a gap that both evaluations have identified: members who want to contribute but do not know where/with whom to start, and members who need something specific but cannot find it through browsing alone.
- **Addressing usability.** Beyond structural changes, members flagged practical issues that affect their day-to-day experience. Website speed and mobile friendliness were mentioned repeatedly and should be treated as baseline requirements.
- **Cleaning up the platform.** Some members expressed frustration with seemingly empty or dormant spaces within their cluster. The current number of subgroups may overstretch the network's structure and lead to a loss of critical mass in some areas. When a member visits their cluster page and finds little recent activity, the signal is discouraging, regardless of how vibrant the network may be elsewhere or on invisible channels. Consolidating or archiving underused sections, removing unstructured information repositories that see little traffic (e.g., resource library or projects), and reposting relevant content into thinly populated subgroups could substantially tighten the experience and create a greater sense of vibrancy.
- **Designing for different user types.** Both evaluations have shown that BAN's membership comprises distinct user types with very different behaviors and expectations (Section 4.1). While tailoring the platform to each persona would be labor-intensive, even small adjustments, such as surfacing different content for frequent visitors than for occasional ones, or distinguishing between the needs of co-creators who want to post and observers who want to scan, could make the platform feel more relevant to a wider range of members. The opportunity hub concept is inherently compatible with this: its three-layer structure (inspire, help, act) offers natural entry points for different user types at different levels of engagement.

5.6. MAINTAIN NETWORK VELOCITY THROUGH INFLOW, RE-ACTIVATION AND RETENTION

The Bosch Alumni Network has grown from approximately 6,800 to more than 9,000 members since it's the last evaluation. Yet, activity, particularly high-frequency engagement, has not scaled in a similar

way. In absolute numbers, there are more active members than in the last evaluation (4,471 vs. 4,185), but the pool of inactive members has grown much faster. The ratio of total to active members is declining over time (Annex D), and the escape velocity analysis (Section 4.4) shows that while BAN comfortably sustains its active membership base, it falls slightly below the threshold needed to maintain its current volume of new collaborations. So far, this development is not dramatic, but it warrants regular monitoring and proactive countermeasures.

The analysis in Section 4.4 also revealed that approximately 2.6 new members need to join BAN to yield one new active member. This conversion rate points to a significant efficiency gap: the majority of incoming members do not become ongoing active participants under the current onboarding and engagement framework. Improving this ratio, even modestly, would be one of the most leveraged interventions available, as it increases the effective intake without requiring additional recruitment.

Three levers are available to maintain network velocity. First, **sustaining the inflow of new members** through the partner pipelines that have replaced the original RBSG program-based recruitment. As direct program recruitment has ceased, the quality and reach of the strategic partners become critical. Targeted outreach to professional communities in fields where BAN is already strong (civil society, education, social innovation) and in regions where membership is growing (particularly Africa, see Section 5.8) could complement existing channels. Second, **re-activating inactive members**, who represent a substantial and largely untapped resource. The inactive survey (Section 4.2) showed that 83.3% of respondents expressed interest in a reconnection session, and many indicated willingness not just to attend but to contribute. The re-entry pathways discussed in Section 5.7, combined with the communication improvements in Section 5.4, could convert a meaningful share of the roughly 5,500 inactive members into occasional or regular participants. Third, **reducing outflow by extending the active lifespan of existing members**. The engagement, norm-reinforcing, and governance measures discussed in Sections 5.1 through 5.4 all serve this purpose: members who experience trust, hold meaningful roles, receive relevant communication, and encounter visible success stories are less likely to drift into inactivity. Retention is not a passive outcome but an active design task.

Taken together, the most sustainable path to maintaining escape velocity is not an ever-faster treadmill of recruitment but a balanced strategy across all three levers: steady intake, improved activation, and better retention. We recommend that iac Berlin establish a small set of velocity indicators, drawing on the metrics developed in Section 4.4, and track them at regular intervals to detect early signs of decline before they affect network output.

5.7. BUILD RE-ENTRY PATHWAYS AND REVISE ONBOARDING

The inactive survey itself is one of the most instructive findings of this evaluation. Of 138 inactive respondents (members who had not engaged with BAN for at least two years) 83.3% expressed interest in a reconnection session. The demand for re-engagement clearly exists; what is missing is a path leading to it. The escape velocity analysis (Section 4.4) underscores the strategic value of this group: since approximately 2.6 new members need to join the network to yield one new active member, re-

activating a single inactive member who is already familiar with BAN is considerably more efficient than recruiting new ones from scratch.

The barriers and wishes of inactive members form a coherent picture. The top barrier “professional mismatch” (48.6%) fits directly onto the most frequent wish: sector-specific networking (56.5%). Time constraints (44.9%) correspond to the demand for local, low-barrier formats. And the clarity issue aligns with calls for better-designed communication. This suggests that inactivity is not a motivational problem but a structural one. Instead, programming feels too broad to be personally relevant and communication is too far away from personal channel preferences. Crucially, these members are largely unreachable through standard channels: they do not log in, do not read the newsletter, and respond primarily to direct, personal outreach.

Three practical directions follow. First, **investing in communication design**, such as shorter newsletters, clearer subject lines, direct outreach for high-relevance opportunities (see also 5.4), would lower the attention threshold that currently filters out inactive members. This lends itself to low-cost experimentation, including A/B testing of formats and frequency, as well as experiments with new channels that were mentioned by some inactives, such as Signal, WhatsApp and LinkedIn to overcome the communication barrier. For reaching out to more experienced inactive members, reaching out via institutional email addresses of iac Berlin and RBSG team members, or even reaching out via physical mail or phone, might be helpful. The outreach effort in the inactive survey demonstrated relevant potential for such actions.

Second, **shifting from self-service to “curated re-entry”** could help reduce complexity and cost. Dedicated reconnection sessions, guided re-introductions to current formats, and matchmaking with network buddies would address the orientation problem. Several respondents expressed readiness not just to attend but to contribute, which is an underused resource that could be activated through concrete asks rather than general invitations.

These findings also speak to **onboarding of new members**. Like in the 2020 evaluation, the onboarding process was the only element with a notably higher share of negative perceptions in the main survey, and roughly 50% had no strong perception of it at all. Given that newer members are currently BAN's most active segment (Section 3.2) and that only one in 2.6 new members becomes active under the current framework, improving their initial orientation is both an opportunity to sustain higher engagement levels and one of the most efficient ways to increase effective network intake without additional recruitment.

5.8. STRENGTHEN INVOLVEMENT IN THE GLOBAL SOUTH

The composition of the Bosch Alumni Network is seemingly shifting for newer members. Among members who joined after 2020, 26.3% are based in Africa, which is nearly three times the 9.1% share among those who joined before 2020. Members from the Global South now make up **25.7% of survey**

respondents overall. This is **no longer a peripheral segment of the network**; it is becoming a defining part of its future membership³².

Yet, the evaluation reveals a structural asymmetry in access. Members from the Global South maintain more international and geographically dispersed networks than their Northern counterparts, but they are less likely to have met their regular contacts in person (88.4% vs. 96.4% in the Global North). This matters because in-person contact is a strong predictor of interaction frequency, perceived benefits, reported impact, and future engagement across the entire dataset. Members from the Global South also report lower satisfaction with offline offers (likely because of limited availability rather than lower interest) and the data on wishes includes explicit calls for regional coordinators per continent, as well as more equitable geographic distribution of opportunities and grants.

This raises a **strategic question** that goes beyond logistics: does BAN aim to be equally present and accessible across its full geographic membership, or does it accept that Global South members have access to the platform (which they are quite happy with) and online formats but limited access to the in-person interactions that drive some of the deepest network value? Or does it aim for a middle path by prioritizing the formats with the highest impact-per-investment for geographically distant members (e.g., regional in-person events, funded travel to one central event per year) rather than aiming for full parity? Depending on the answer, several measures might follow. Investing in or facilitating the creation of regional in-person formats would disproportionately benefit members who currently lack access to the same frequency of offline interactions but would also be very costly. Hybrid formats for centrally organized events could extend participation to members who cannot travel. Strengthening regional coordination structures would improve contextual understanding and responsiveness. Furthermore, ensuring that grant allocations, role appointments, and event locations are monitored for geographic equity could further promote equality in access.

5.9. REINVIGORATE RELATIONSHIP WITH ROBERT BOSCH STIFTUNG

The Robert Bosch Stiftung remains the foundational actor of the Bosch Alumni Network. It is initiator, primary funder, and the institution whose decades of program-work produced the membership base that gives BAN its distinctive quality. The evaluation confirms that **this relationship continues to generate value in both directions**: RBSG employees who are active in the network report receiving valuable information (80.0%), being referred to important contacts (66.6%), and learning new skills (53.3%). Members, in turn, draw legitimacy and credibility from their association with the Stiftung, and 73.8% express a desire to collaborate with iac Berlin and/or RBSG.

³² While survey results do point toward this conclusion, the higher share of members of the Global South in the survey might also be related to the sampling of the survey population. A large share of existing BAN members (who could be less likely to take part in the survey) have joined before stronger efforts in regions beyond Europe have been made.

At the same time, several findings point to a **gradual loosening of this relationship** that, if left unaddressed, **risks becoming a structural decoupling**. In the qualitative interviews, members noted uncertainty about the Stiftung's ongoing commitment to the network (*"the alumni network also seems quite independent [...] I would like to understand maybe a bit more about the commitment to it"*). The strategic move away from the previous program structure, which historically had served as the primary pipeline for new, deeply socialized members, has changed the composition and entry experience of the membership base. Some interviews provided indications that the Stiftung's awareness of what the network produces and what it could offer back may have diminished over time. This creates a paradox: BAN is generating more collaborative output than ever, but the institution that made it possible may be seeing less of it.

This matters for two reasons. First, sustained **institutional support depends on sustained institutional awareness**. If RBSG's leadership and program staff do not regularly encounter evidence of BAN's value (in terms of knowledge, expertise, connections, and impact), the case for continued investment might become harder to make, even when the underlying value is strong. Second, BAN represents a resource for RBSG that appears to be **substantially underutilized**. The network contains over 9,000 professionals across 140 countries, many of them deeply experienced practitioners in fields directly relevant to RBSG's strategic priorities. The evaluation data suggests that this resource is available and willing but not systematically accessed.

We see four areas where the relationship could be strengthened:

- **Internal onboarding and awareness at RBSG.** Awareness of BAN within the Stiftung appears uneven: some staff are active members, while others have little contact with the network or are only in contact with it through iac Berlin. A structured onboarding for new RBSG employees, introducing **BAN as an institutional resource rather than a legacy obligation**, could help close this gap through orientation sessions, guided platform tours, and introductions to relevant clusters. For existing staff, periodic "BAN briefings" on notable collaborations or emerging expertise relevant to RBSG's current work might maintain visibility and bolster resilience of the network without creating additional workload.
- **Systematic use of BAN expertise** in Stiftung projects. The network contains deep expertise in fields where RBSG is active, yet the evaluation found little evidence that this expertise is systematically drawn upon. A more intentional approach could include consulting members as subject-matter experts during program design, inviting them as reviewers for grant applications, or commissioning short field scans from members with relevant regional or thematic knowledge. Even if facilitated by iac Berlin, the visibility of the network should be provided.
- Continuing targeted use of the network for **recruitment and procurement**. With members from the survey spanning 79 countries, BAN is a natural pool for the Stiftung's own staffing needs and for the consultants, trainers, and evaluators it commissions. Nearly a quarter of

members have already hired or contracted another BAN member, demonstrating that the network functions as a labor market in practice. Routinely circulating relevant vacancies and tenders through BAN channels would improve the RBSG access to pre-vetted, mission-aligned professionals while creating a tangible benefit flow back to members.

- **Visibility of BAN's value to RBSG leadership.** BAN's considerable output (over 80 FTE-equivalents in monthly time investment by members, an estimated 850 to 3,100 collaborative projects, significant contributions to civic resilience) may not be sufficiently visible to the Stiftung's decision-makers, partly due to the iceberg dynamic (Section 4.1). Regular, concise reporting that translates BAN's activity into RBSG's own strategic framework should ensure that investment decisions are informed by evidence. The present evaluation and any future monitoring can serve as a basis for such reporting.

Taken together, these measures aim to shift the RBSG's relationship with BAN from distant patronage toward active partnership. The network was designed to extend the Stiftung's impact beyond the duration of individual programs and our data confirms that it does so, on a considerable scale. The question is whether RBSG is positioned to fully benefit from what it has built.

5.10. CONCLUSION

The second evaluation of the Bosch Alumni Network has illustrated that **the network is in a healthy state**. Members are overall very satisfied with network offers, they collectively invest the equivalent of more than 80 full-time employees per month, and they attribute a significant share of their own professional success to BAN. The network has grown to more than 90,000 members and has successfully transitioned from a primarily program-based alumni community to a broader opportunity and discovery network.

While yearly network output remains very consistent over time, more frequent member engagement has declined across the network, and a few outputs such as the number of collaborations have seemingly plateaued. We have discussed how a constant influx of new active members or the re-activation and retention of existing ones is needed to maintain the network's current level of productivity. We have also examined the implications of the invisible parts of BAN and how the network can navigate around the iceberg of off-platform communication without losing the ability to learn, connect, and build on what its members are doing. Nine areas have been identified that could re-energize the network, address these developments, and clarify its relationship with the Robert Bosch Stiftung.

Several of these recommendations are mutually reinforcing. **Redesigning communication** (5.4) directly supports **re-engagement of inactive members** (5.7) and makes the platform more useful as a **portal** (5.5). Strengthening **governance roles** (5.1) improves the network's capacity to **reinforce norms** (5.2) and **navigate around the iceberg** (5.3). Clarifying the **geographic strategy** (5.8) is closely linked to **maintaining network velocity** (5.6) and ensuring equitable access to the physical

encounters that build trust. We therefore recommend that iac Berlin and the Robert Bosch Stiftung approach these recommendations not as a menu of independent options but as an interconnected set of interventions whose combined effect will be greater than their individual parts.

Beyond the results of this evaluation, several questions merit further investigation. First, **developing a lean, ongoing monitoring framework** for network health, building on the CORE scale (trust, reciprocity, accessibility) and the engagement and visibility indicators established in this evaluation, would allow BAN to track its most important vital signs between full evaluations. Second, a **deeper analysis of the relationship between RBSG and BAN** and opportunities from the Stiftung's perspective, which this evaluation could only capture indirectly through member perceptions and a limited number of RBSG interviews, could inform the strategic alignment between the two entities. Third, **experimental approaches** to some of the recommendations presented here, such as A/B testing of communication formats, piloting the ask/offer layer, or trialing role career pathways, could generate rapid, evidence-based learning about what works in practice.

May the next five years bring even more BAN impact. The world could use it.

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Annex

A. MATERIAL FROM THE QUALITATIVE SURVEY

A.1 Interview guideline

Topic / Main Question	Possible follow-up/sub-questions
<p>(1) Introduction – person and initial contact with the Bosch Alumni Network:</p> <p><i>Could you please tell us a little bit about your activities (e.g. work, volunteering) and how you came to the Bosch Alumni Network in the course of this?</i></p> <p>[possibly briefly bring in previous knowledge/interest]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key points of your work: sector (organization), expertise, region, type of employment, position • How long have you been working in the sector/field • What effect of one's own work is intended? • How and when did you come to the network? (Program vs. Program) • Already a member of another alumni association? • How was the onboarding process?

<p>(2) Description and perception of the BAN:</p> <p><i>How would you describe the Bosch Alumni Network from your point of view and according to your own perception?</i></p>	<p>Depending on the situation / answer:</p> <p>➔ Jump to Motivation (7) or Impact (8)</p> <p>➔ Or continue at Activity (3)</p>
<p>(3) Activity in the Bosch Alumni Network:</p> <p><i>Can you tell us if you have already participated in or organized activities in the network?</i></p> <p><i>Go through:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Online - Offline - Off-the grid 	<p><i>How many people in the Bosch Alumni Network are you in contact with? (at least 1-2x a year)</i></p> <p><u>3.1 ONLINE Platform</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How often do you visit the platform? To do what? • Who have you contacted through the platform/network so far? Please name a few exemplary "encounters". • Are these contacts from a former program or also new ones? • Have they participated in member-led online events, webinars, workshops, etc. <p>Depending on the situation / answer:</p> <p>➔ Jump to temporal category (5)</p> <p>➔ Or continue at offline (3.2)</p>
	<p><u>3.2 OFFLINE</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How often and in which BAN events do you participate? • What experiences do you have with other offers (using space at iac Berlin, ...)? <p>What other network offers/formats are you aware of that you do not use yourself? (Possibly ask why no participation in certain offers)</p>
	<p><u>3.3 "Off-grid" (online or offline)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are you in contact with other BAN members on other channels offline or online? (e.g. WhatsApp, emails, meetings, ...?) • If so: how much of your communication runs through the "official" channels, how much "off the grid"?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If there are multiple channels, how do you decide which channel to use to communicate? • Does your use of the channels change over time? (e.g. communication starts on platform and then moves to private channels?) • Has the use of the channels generally changed over time? If not mentioned yet : Are you still active on the platform at all • What are use cases, or why and what specifically is the exchange with members?
<p>(4) Roles in the network <i>Formal, Informal, Change</i></p>	<p><u>4.1 ROLE IN THE BAN</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How would you describe your role in the network? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formal (e.g. Regional Coordinator, Cluster host,...) • Informal (bridge builder, passive user,...) • Do you organize independently in the network or do you rather participate? (active vs. passive use) • Have the possibilities of participation changed in your perception in recent years? • [If active roles]: What were/are your motivations to take on these role(s)? Were their expectations met? [Follow-up questions in topic 7]
<p>(5) Temporal Category <i>Has your use of the network remained the same since you became a member or have there been any changes?</i></p>	<p><u>5.1 Activity over time</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How has the BAN itself changed over time? (e.g. miscellaneous, (de-)centralized, (ir)relevant) • Have there been any particular positive or negative changes since you first came into contact with them (e.g. size, culture, accessibility, interaction possibilities)? • Have you been using the network continuously since then or were there phases when you didn't use the network at all? Why?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If so (and still active), what motivated them to become active again? • Has the intensity or type of use changed over time? If so, how? (e.g. during COVID, during personal changes,...) • [If not anymore/less]: Was there a specific reason for this? (e.g. lost access data, no more time, all contacts tracked off-the-grid, no longer relevant,...)
<p>(6) Structure-independent network:</p> <p><i>[if relevant and not already covered in detail in 3.3]:</i> <i>Are you in exchange with your contact persons mainly at the events mentioned and on the platform or also directly, away from the moderated "infrastructure"?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If offside: how many people are you in contact with "off-grid"? • How often and on which channels? • Have contact channels changed since the beginning of your membership? • Peer-to-peer consulting? • If there are multiple channels, how do you decide which channel to use to communicate? • Does your use of the channels change over time? (e.g. communication starts on platform and then moves to private channels?) • Has the use of the channels generally changed over time?
<p>(7) Motivation:</p> <p><i>[If active and not yet sufficiently elaborated:] What is your motivation to be part of the Bosch Alumni Network?</i></p> <p><i>[If inactive:] What has prevented you from getting involved in the BAN so far?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ev.: Has this motivation to participate changed over time? Did you perhaps have different expectations in the past than you do now? • How strongly do you feel connected to the network? How much to the people with whom they cooperate? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Follow-up question: If they were to imagine their affiliation on the basis of concentric circles (curators, co-creators, contributors, observers, periphery). Where would you place yourself?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do they have a perception of who is still active in the network, apart from the people they work with? • [If inactive:] What has prevented you from getting involved in the BAN so far? • [If inactive:] Is there anything that could motivate you to be active in the BAN?
<p>(8) Benefits of the BAN / Meeting expectations:</p> <p><i>[In case little has been said about this:]</i> <i>How have you benefited from your membership in the Bosch Alumni Network so far?</i> <i>We are particularly interested in concrete examples, anecdotes, "memorable moments".</i></p> <p><i>[If you've already said something about this:]</i> <i>When you think about your work and its impact on society, how have you benefited from being a member of the Bosch Alumni Network so far?</i></p> <p><i>We are interested in concrete examples, anecdotes, memories.</i></p> <p><i>[Ev.] How did this manifest itself? How would you quantify or monetize that?</i></p> <p><i>USP!</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • [If you haven't already asked at the beginning:] When you think about your work and its impact on society, how have you benefited from being a member of the Bosch Alumni Network so far? • What is the "USP" of the BAN? If someone asks you, "Why should I participate?" how do you answer that question? <p>[Where appropriate] How have collaborations developed in the long term? What has been the success so far and what has been implemented?</p> <p>[Where appropriate] Is there some kind of subgroup within the network where you mostly exchange ideas? If so, do you sometimes leave them?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did the network also have unintended side effects on you? If so, which ones? • Have the effects of the network on you changed over time? If so, how? • What proportion of your professional success do you attribute to your BAN membership? • If you think about other members: For which members does the BAN have the most effect?

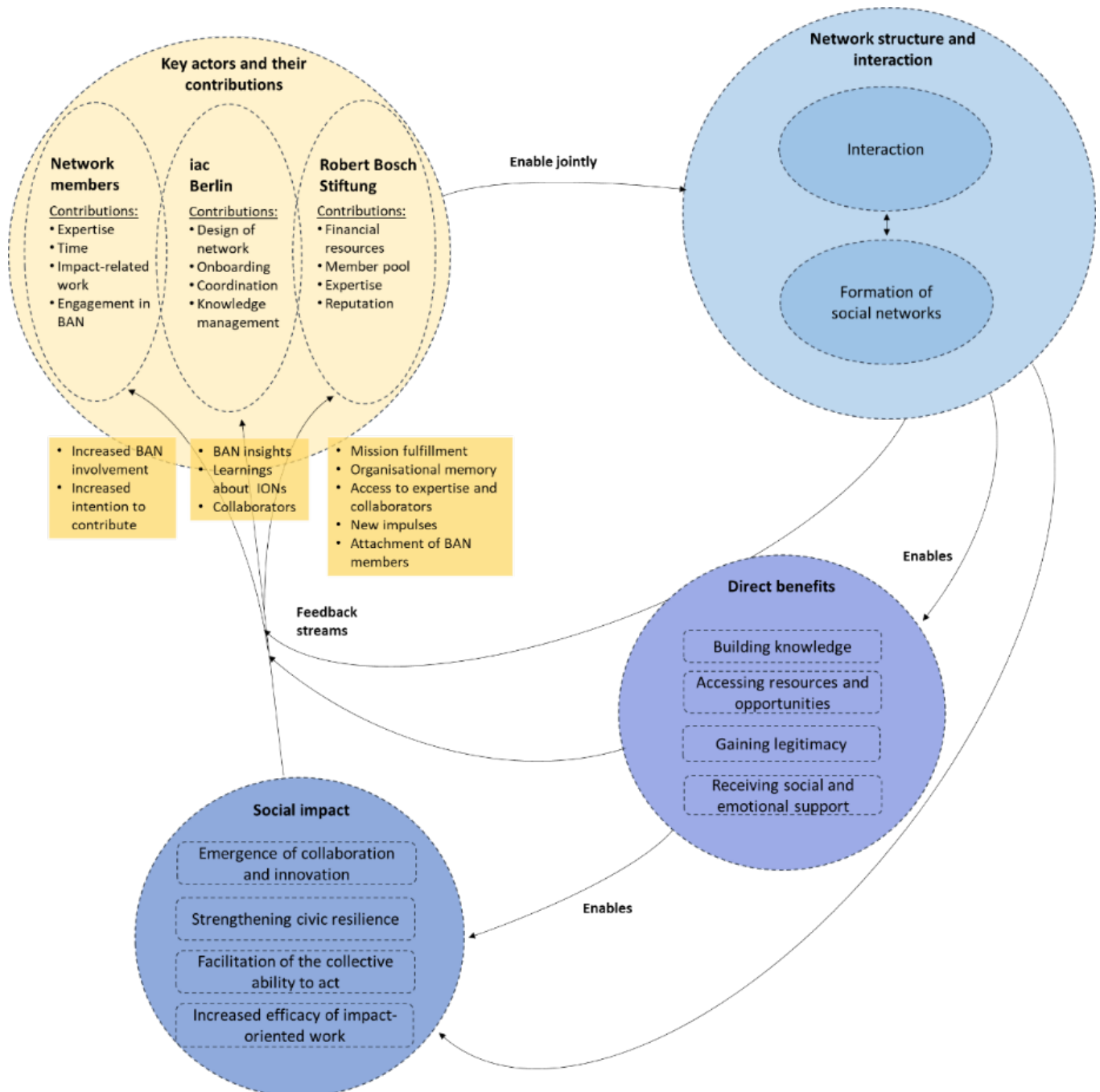
<p>(9) Community, identity, and belonging:</p> <p><i>Is the Bosch Alumni Network a community for you and if so, to what extent? What holds the network "together" in your eyes?</i></p> <p><i>Has that changed over time?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In your opinion, what norms and values characterize the interaction in the network? • What interactions have led to the emergence of new social networks or contacts? • [If long-term perspective] Has that changed over time?
<p>(10) Needs of BAN, community, change:</p> <p><i>When you think back to your previous membership: How satisfied are you with it in general and with the offers and formats in particular?</i></p> <p>Going through formats individually</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What should be retained in the network, by its members and/or organizers in any case? • What could be implemented even better for you? <p>[if not asked at the beginning:] How did you perceive the onboarding process?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is your opinion on the following elements of the BAN? Are they useful, do they need a change? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • boschalumni.net and its functionalities • Activities and digests by Bosch alumni-net • Bosch Alumni Fori (BAF) • Impact Fields • Cluster and Cluster Moderators • Regional Coordinators and Regional Activity Grants • Academy • Call for Ideas • Call for Learning Format – Resulting Projects • Learning exchange grants • Call for Alumni groups • Are there other elements that are important to you that I have not mentioned? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are there initiatives, people, offers, types of communication, etc. that should be added to the network? • Is there anything that the BAN should learn from other networks and communities?

(11) View	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Finally, a look into the future: What does the ideal BAN look like for you in 2030? What does it do to appear relevant and have a real, positive impact on the world?

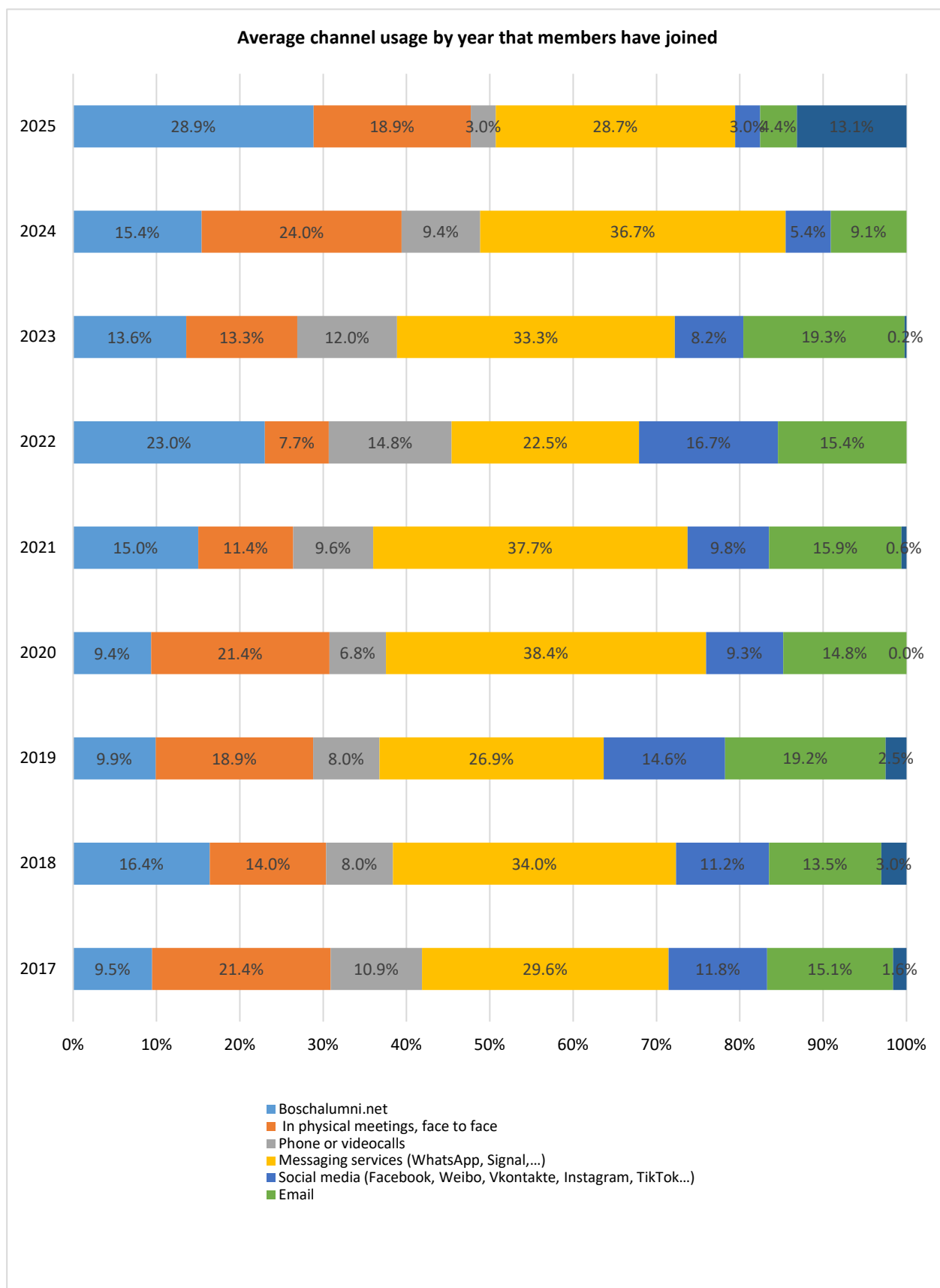
A.2 Sample of the interview partners (along the sampling criteria)

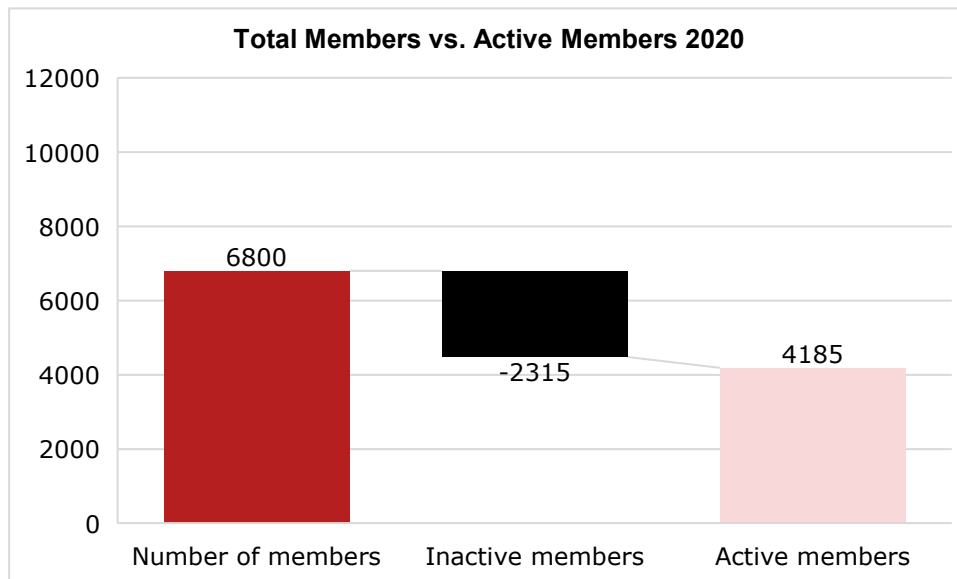
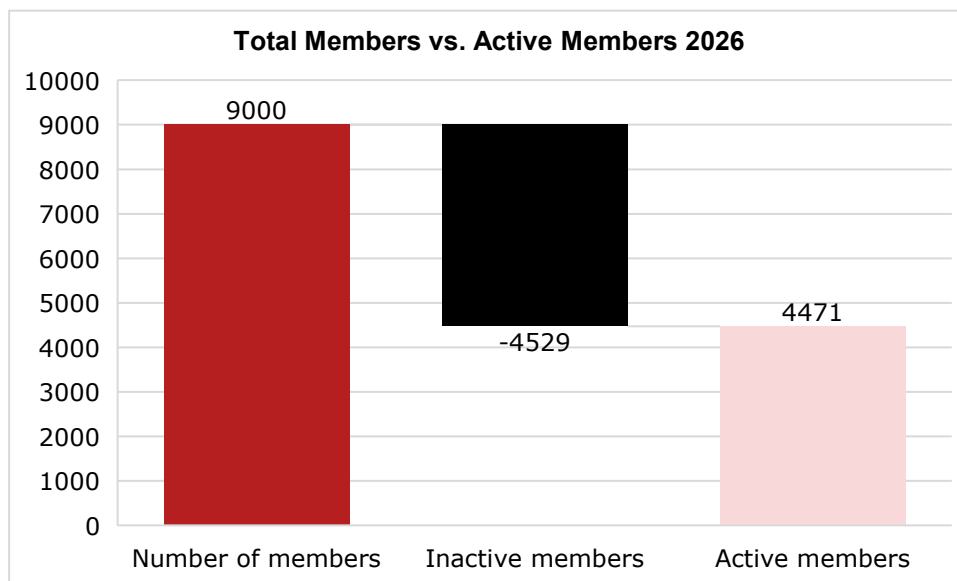
Interview partner	Activity in BAN	Field of work	Seniority	Gender	Region of impact
IP1	Active	Social innovation	Freelance / Self employed	Female	Germany
IP2	Active	Journalist / media	Freelance / Self employed	Male	Ghana
IP3	Occasionally active	Governance	Employee	Female	Belgium
IP4	Occasionally active	Inequality	Employee	Male	Germany
IP5	Rather inactive	Migration	Employee	Female	Germany
IP6	Occasionally active	Ukraine	Management	Male	Germany
IP7	Active	Media	Management	Male	USA/Germany
IP8	Rather inactive	Women	Management	Female	Spain
IP9	Rather inactive	Journalism	Self employed	Female	USA
IP10	Occasionally active	Social Innovation	Management	Female	Germany
IP11	Active	Animals	Management	Male	India
IP12	Active	Culture	Freelance / Self employed	Male	Africa
IP13	Rather inactive	Water	Management	Male	Hungary
IP14	Active	Culture	Management	Female	Poland
IP15	Occasionally active	Networking	Retired	Female	Germany
IP16	Active	Agriculture	Founder	Male	Cameroon
IP17	Active	Education	Employee	Female	France
IP18	Active	Social Innovation	Freelance / Self employed	Female	India
IP19	Occasionally active	Human right	Employee	Female	Sweden
IP20	Rather inactive	Education	Founder	Female	Bosnia
IP21	Active	Media	Management	Female	India/Germany
IP22	Active	Diplomacy	Freelance / Self employed	Male	Kongo
IP23	Active	Culture	Management	Female	Italy
IP24	Active	Peace	Management	Female	Germany/MENA
IP25	Occasionally active	Sustainability	Management	Male	Portugal
IP26	Active	Networking	Employee	Female	Germany

B. THE 2020 IMPACT MODEL OF THE BOSCH ALUMNI NETWORK



C. COMPARISON OF CHANNEL USAGE BY THE YEAR THAT MEMBERS JOINED THE NETWORK



D. NUMBER OF TOTAL MEMBERS VERSUS ACTIVE MEMBERS IN 2020 AND IN 2025

E. NEGATIVE VIEWS ON ONBOARDING BY THE YEAR THAT MEMBERS HAVE JOINED THE NETWORK

		Frequency	Valid percentage
	2017	14	31,8
	2018	6	13,6
	2019	4	9,1
	2020	4	9,1
	2021	3	6,8
	2022	3	6,8
	2023	4	9,1
	2024	5	11,4
	2025	1	2,3
	Gesamt	44	

While these numbers are small, they show that newer members are slightly overrepresented when considering that they take up a smaller share of the general sample population.

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