The BCVs’ views of their network
The Blue Circle Voices (BCV) is an International Diabetes Federation (IDF) initiative that aims to represent the interests of people living with, or affected by, diabetes, through a worldwide network of members and other stakeholders. It comprises adults living with all types of diabetes, as well as carers and relatives of people with diabetes, of all ages and from all IDF regions. The BCV network draws upon the experiences of people with diabetes, acts as their global voice and provides them with an opportunity for expression. This network focuses on a variety of issues and challenges that people with diabetes encounter in our world today.

The network was launched in mid-2016. Some 1.5 years later, IDF launched a consultation with its members to better understand BCVs’ opinion of the network, the activities developed so far and their expectations for the future.

This consultation was developed in the form of an online questionnaire, and was open between February 14 to March 5, 2018.

Summary

- The BCV network met the expectations of 75% of its Members.

- Nearly all the members felt well informed. Facebook was mentioned as a communication tool which could be explored further to foster better communication and connection between the members.

- More than 90% of BCVs felt the newsletter to be of some or much interest, with 80% also finding the consultations to be relevant to them.

- Other activities met with similar levels of interest, with strong enthusiasm being shown for external activities (e.g. partners’ events and advisory groups) as well as other initiatives such as IDF events, policy recommendations etc. The Forum was the activity where opinions were the most polarised.

- For the future development of the network, BCVs would like to see improved connection and engagement among its members as well as with other organisations to ensure that the network can gain greater recognition and truly act as the global voice of diabetes. In terms of activities, BCVs were interested to see more work take place on diabetes education and advocacy and would welcome educational initiatives designed to help them be more effective.
Participants’ statistics

Fifty-six BCVs participated in this survey, of which one third had been in the network for more than one year, a further third for less than six months and the last third between six months and one year. Reflecting the network’s overall make-up, BCVs with T1 Diabetes (T1D) accounted for the majority of respondents. The responses by region were broadly in line with the network composition, with the exception of SEA, where none of the respondents participated in the survey.

![Figure 1: Breakdown of respondents by time in the network; n=56](image1)

![Figure 2: Breakdown of respondents by type of diabetes; n=56](image2)

![Figure 3: Breakdown of respondents by region; n=56](image3)

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Communication

Three-quarters of BCVs felt very well informed about the BCV network and its activities, and a further fifth felt somewhat informed.

The vast majority of respondents felt that they received just the right number of emails. One third though felt that communication could be improved. The best way to achieve this was seen to be to set up other types of communication platforms, chief among them being a Facebook page.

Figure 4: How well informed do you feel?; n=55

Figure 5: What would you like to see improved?; n=55
The BCV Newsletter

Two-thirds of BCVs found the newsletter to be of much interest as an activity in which they could participate. Two-thirds of respondents had also read all issues published at the time of the survey and 87% read it with interest.

Figure 6: How much interest do you have in participating in the newsletter?; n=54

Figure 7: How many issues have you read?; n=54

Figure 8: “I read the newsletter with interest”; n=54
BCVs were generally satisfied with the newsletter; most found it easy to read and not too long. They felt that the newsletter allowed them to keep up to date with relevant IDF activities and activities organised by other BCV Members. In terms of improvement, BCVs would like to see more news from IDF and the BCV Members and would also welcome a section dedicated to upcoming activities. Other comments related to improving its design and developing more interactions between the newsletter and the forum – perhaps by way of further discussing some of the activities undertaken by the members of the network.

Figure 9: How much do you agree with the statements?; n=54
The BCV Consultations

More than three-quarters of respondents felt that the BCV Consultations to which they have responded were relevant to them. Of particular interest to several of the respondents was the fact that the survey outcomes provided them with different perspectives and enabled them to think of appropriate strategies to be put to use in their own country. They also valued the fact that their answers may help others (better) understand the challenges of living with diabetes.

Figure 10: Are the consultations you have participated in relevant to you?; n=54

N/A; 7; 13%
No; 5; 9%
Yes; 42; 78%
Other BCV Activities

All activities currently being proposed meet with a lot of interest on the part of the BCVs. Of particular interest is participations in external activities such as events and advisory boards organised by IDF Partners as well as participation in other types of initiatives including IDF events and the development of more locally-focused activities.

Figure 11: How interested are you in other BCV activities? n=54
The types of activities which BCV would like to see developed in future revolve primarily around ensuring better connection between the network’s members and more common action at a global level/more global support for improved outcomes at a local level. Diabetes education was the area where the highest number of BCVs wanted to see new initiatives, ahead of advocacy activities. BCVs were also keen for education opportunities across a range of areas to be developed to support them in their action.

![Diagram](image)

**Figure 12:** What other activities would you like to see developed?  n=54
Opinions on the Forum were more polarised with an equally as high number of people having either never visited it or having visited it just once as had visited it on a more frequent basis. The Forum met with perhaps slightly less enthusiasm than other BCV activities. A smaller number of respondents overall agreed or agreed strongly that the forum corresponded to their needs and was relevant to their situation. Of the respondents to the question, only two-thirds also agreed or agreed strongly that the Forum was user friendly.

![Figure 13: How often do you visit the Forum? n=54](image)

![Figure 14: How much do you agree with the statements? n=54](image)
The Future

Seventy-five per cent of BCVs felt that the network met their expectations overall. Those BCVs for whom the network did not meet expectations regretted the lack of engagement among/interaction between members and the lack of user-friendliness (difficulty in navigating the website, lack of translations etc.). Some BCVs also suggested they would like to better understand IDF’s expectations of the network.

For those, on the other hand, who felt the network met their expectations, the key benefits were the sharing of information and experience and the ability to be provided with a lot of information from a range of perspectives.

For the future, BCVs wish for a stronger, bigger network with more influence, fostering more connection among its members and other global networks. BCVs also hoped that the network’s activities could be more strongly integrated with other IDF activities to ultimately improve the lives of people with diabetes.

Figure 15: Does the network meet your expectations? n=54

Figure 16: What are your expectations for the future of the network? n=54