



Networks Workshop

29th August 2018

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“Networks” and Countries/Regions

- Networks have grown organically over the years
- There has been no active support from the Trust
- It is a ‘bottom up’ not ‘top down’ development - true to our ethos
- Recent consultation showed that Networks do not wish to become a formal layer of governance, but.....
- There is strong support for improved communication between the Trust and U3A Groupings - and vice versa

Networks and Countries/Regions

- Regions are a formal layer of U3A governance. 9 Regions and 3 countries elect a Trustee to sit on the Trust's Board (NEC).
- Regions vary in both size and membership.
- Scotland and Wales are a large geographic region but with a relatively small number of U3As and members.
- The South East, South West and East of England have both a large geographic area and a large number of U3As and membership.
- London and Northern Ireland are relatively compact in both terms of geography, number of U3As and membership.
- Depending on local circumstances, Networks or Regional Committees are the forum where groupings of U3As meet and share common interests.

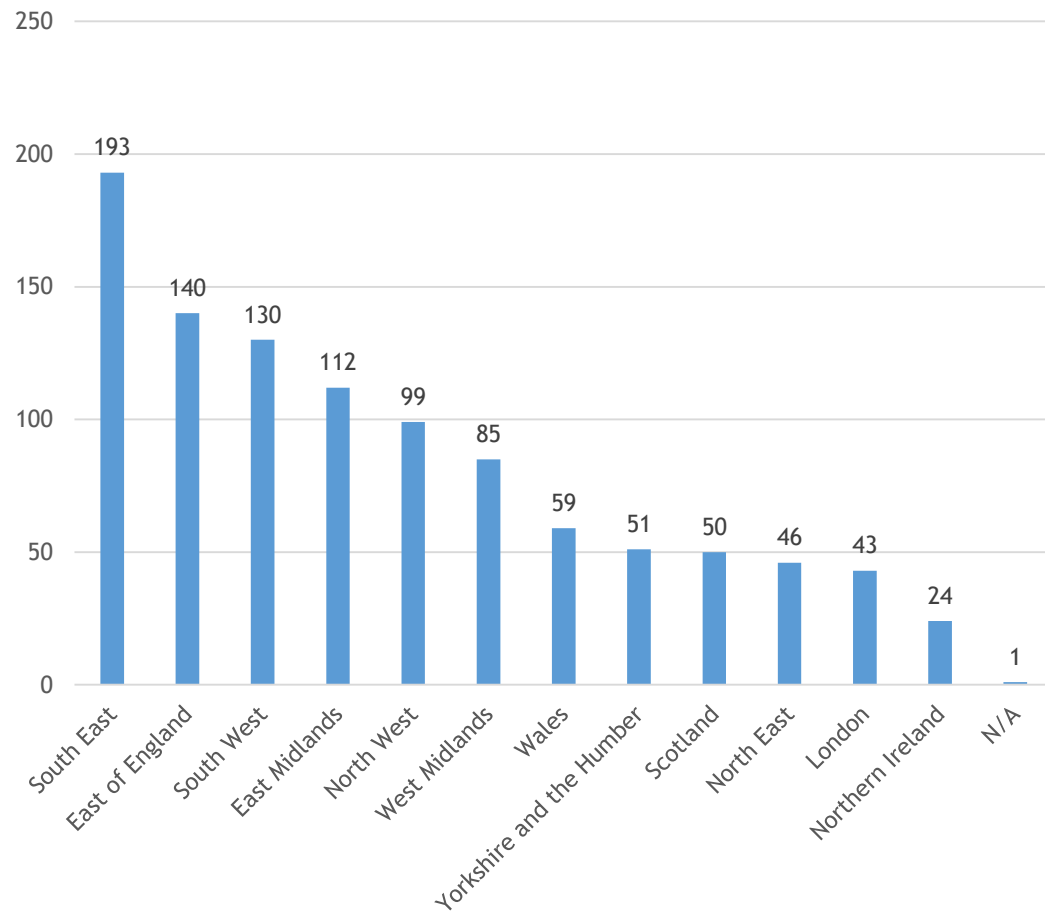
Regions and Countries



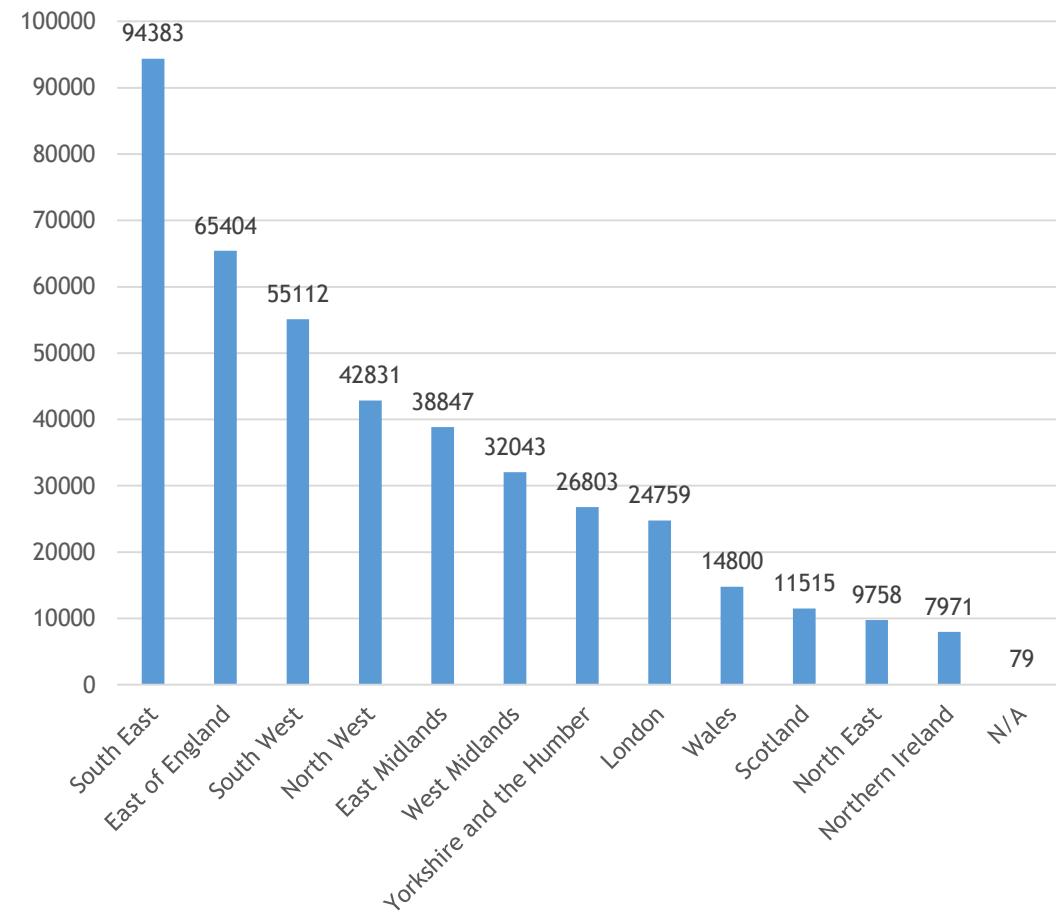
The Trust's regional structure as constituted in 2008

Size of the Regions

U3As per Region (total 1,033)



Members per region (total 424,305)



What do we know about U3A Groupings?

- A recent Questionnaire provided details of their membership, size and extent
- It is estimated that two thirds of all U3As are be members of Networks
- Membership of a Network is voluntary
- Networks are not respecters of boundaries! They are formed by neighbouring U3As on the basis of what makes sense to them - not the Region where they reside
- They are self-funded - either by a small fee based on Network membership or in relation to the number of members in each Network participant. Another option is for each member to take it in turns to host and fund a meeting
- Networks cannot nominate or second candidates for the Regional Trustee role, resolutions to Trust General Meetings etc. They have no voting rights. But.....?
- Normally meet between 2 and 4 times a year

What do we know about U3A Groupings?

- About half the 70 U3A Groupings are ‘Formal’
 - they have a bank account
 - they have a Constitution
 - they have an elected Committee
 - they arrange events such as Study Days and Quizzes
 - they have a newsletter / website
 - they may be a registered Charity
- The other half are ‘Informal’
 - They do not have the above features
 - They are a loosely knit group of U3As - usually in a small geographic area and a small number of U3As

Network Features

- Opportunity to meet key members of neighbouring U3As and share experiences and discuss new ideas
- Develop solutions to mutual problems
- Participate in Trust funded Network based events e.g. Workshops
- Participate in self-funded Network based events e.g. Study days
- Take a role in setting up / supporting new U3As in conjunction with the Regional Trustee / Office
- Take a role in assisting failing U3As in conjunction with the Regional Trustee / Office.

Network Features

- Organise one-off meetings of specific committee members - Chairs, Treasurers, Webmasters, etc
- Develop and Share Speakers Lists
- Organise Shared Learning Projects (SLPs)
- Establish links with outside organisations such as Universities
- Set up reciprocal Interest Groups.
- Arrange inter-Network competitions
- Produce a Newsletter

Network / Trust Relationship

- The Trust is very supportive of Networks and recognises the important part they play within the movement
- As the number of U3As increase, Networks will play an increasingly important role in maintaining the unity and ethos of the movement
- The Trust provides Networks with help to support Workshops related to the various aspects of running U3As - specifically, funding, admin support and qualified leaders
- Network Chairs / Secretaries can receive National Office mailings. In fact all of you can!

THE NETWORK LINK

- This presentation was given last November to a meeting of delegates from nearly 40 U3A Groupings.
- The meeting voted to set up a "Network Link" and to meet twice a year
- Aim is to improve the communication between the grassroots and the Trust.
- One delegate per network
- The agenda to be set by the delegates not the Trust
- Each meeting votes on the venue of the next one

Network Questionnaire

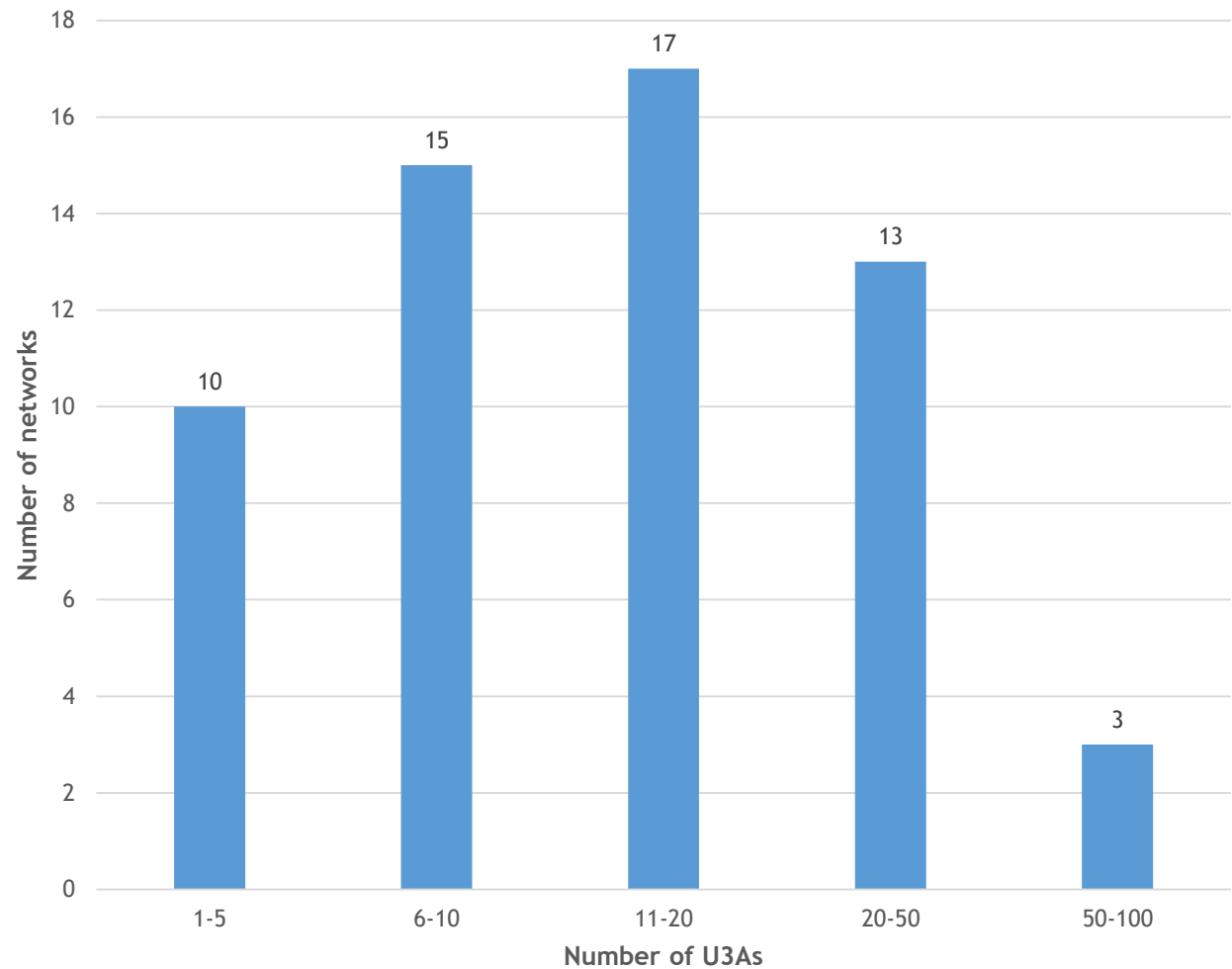
- Following the November meeting, all groupings received a Questionnaire on their structure and activities.
- The results were presented to this May's meeting of the Network Link.
- Just under 60 of the estimated 70 groupings responded.
- What were the results?

How many U3As are there in your network?

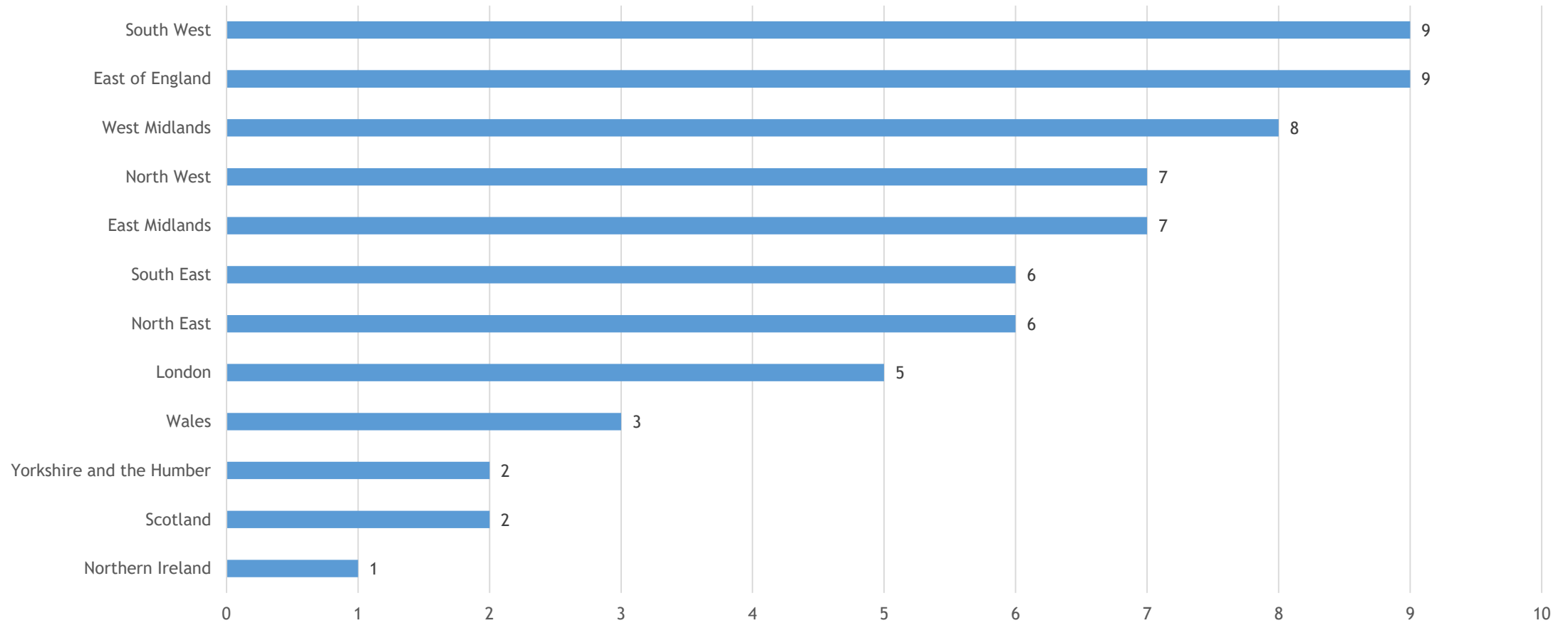
Average: 15-16

Smallest: 3 (BOB)

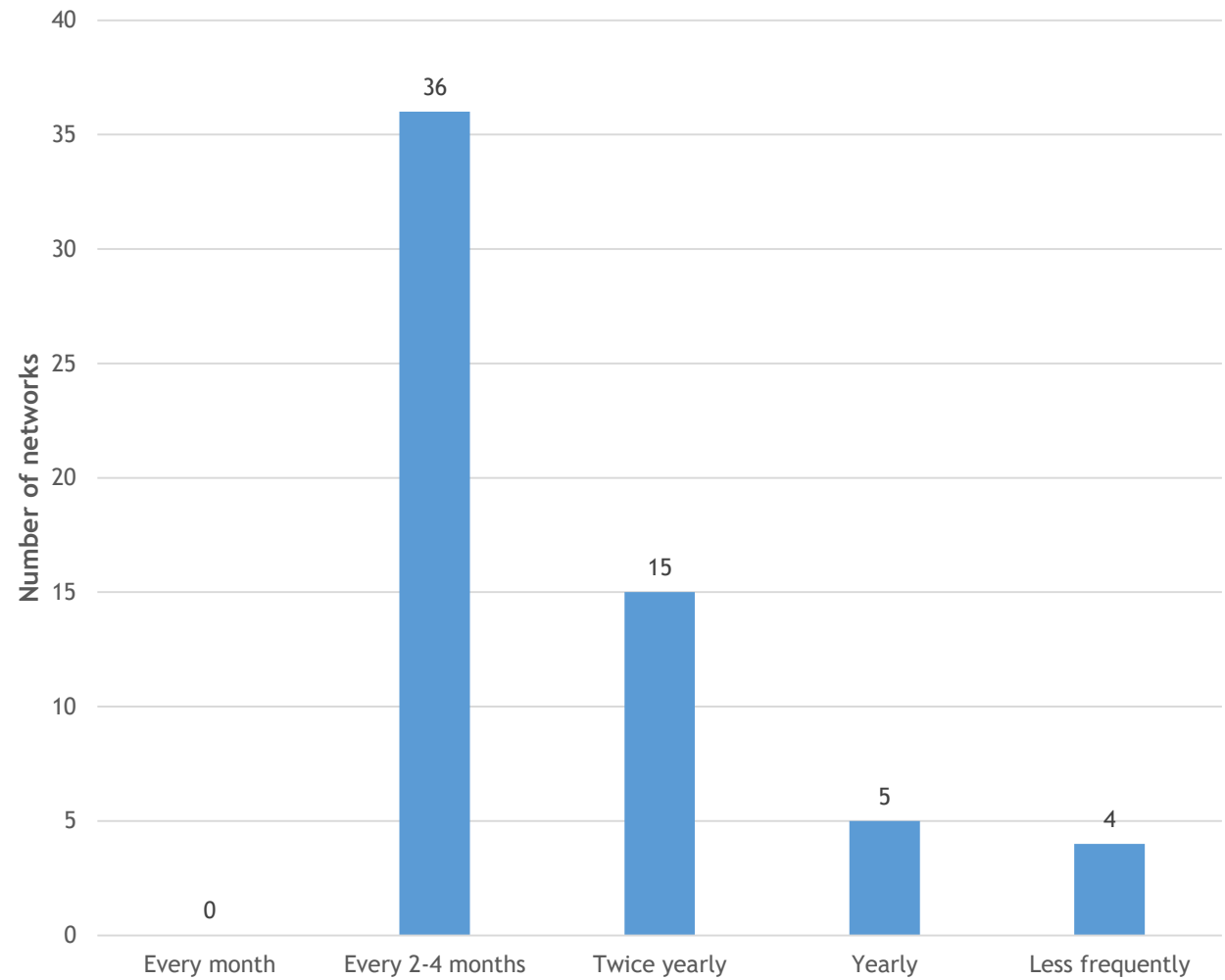
Largest: 100 (North West Region)



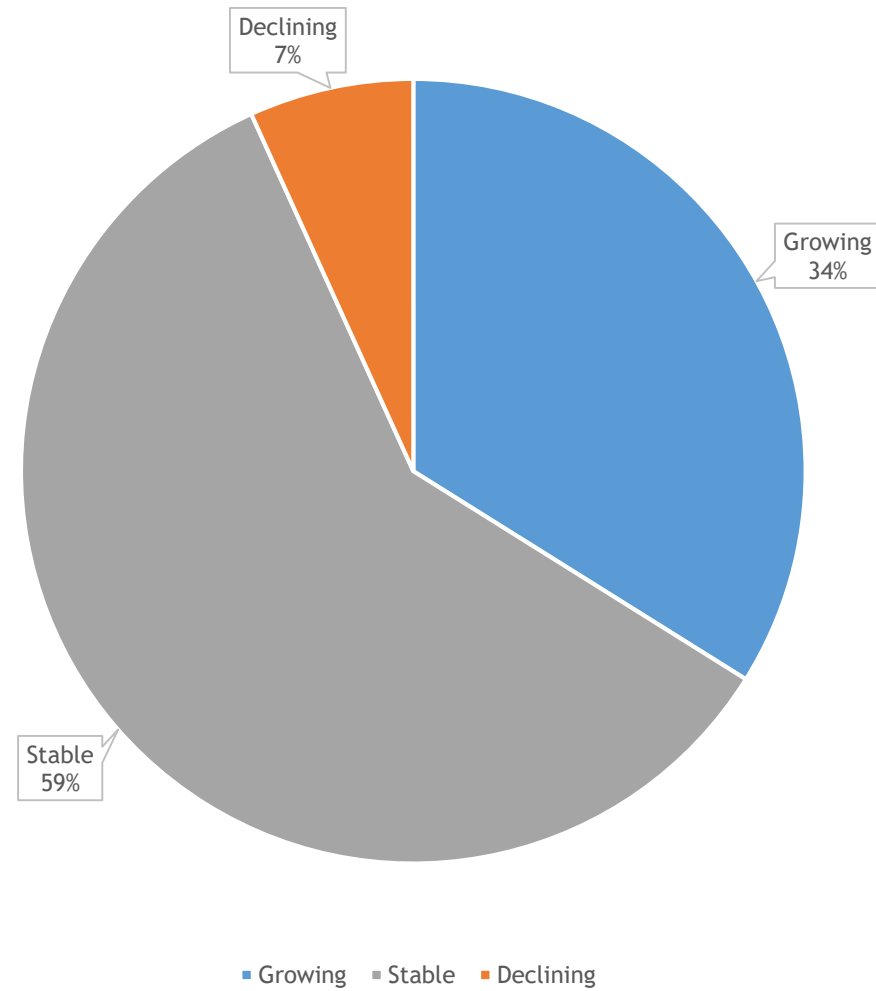
Number of networks operating per region



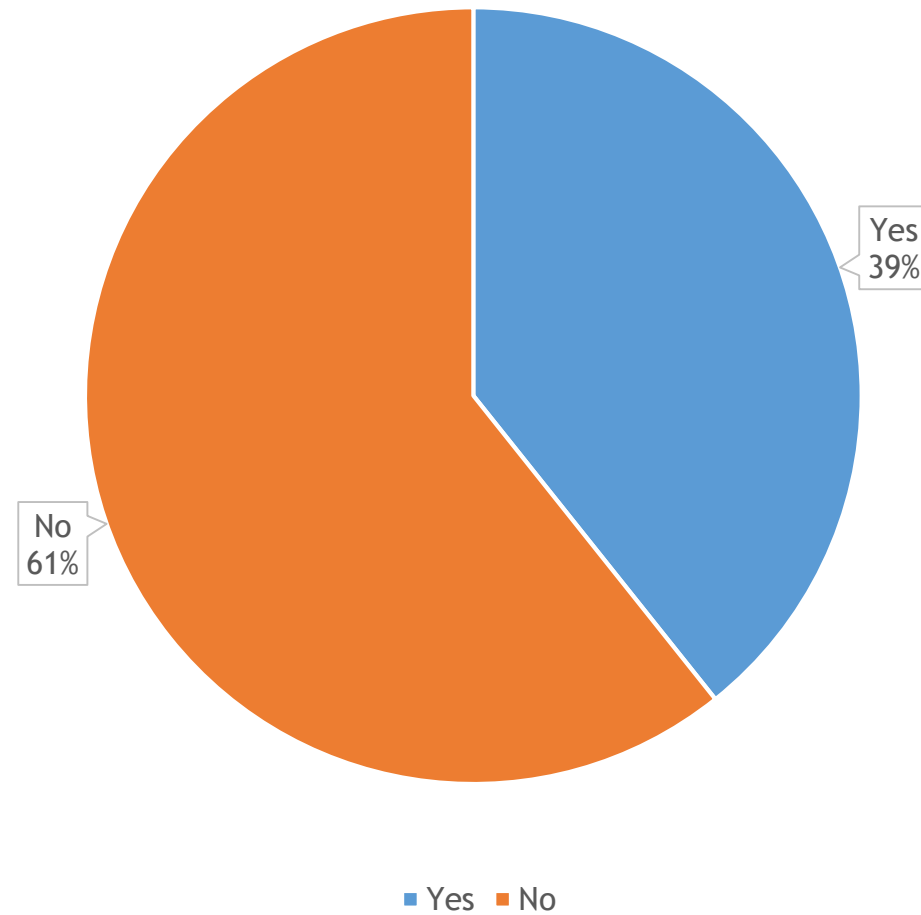
How frequently
does the network
meet?



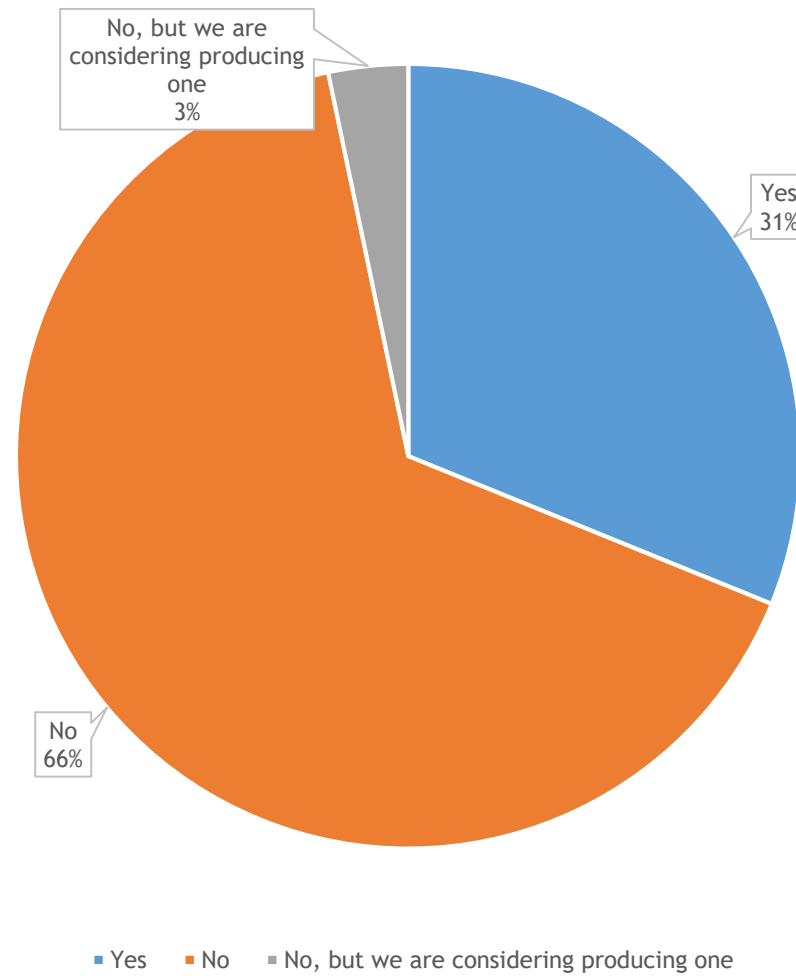
How would you describe the membership of your network?



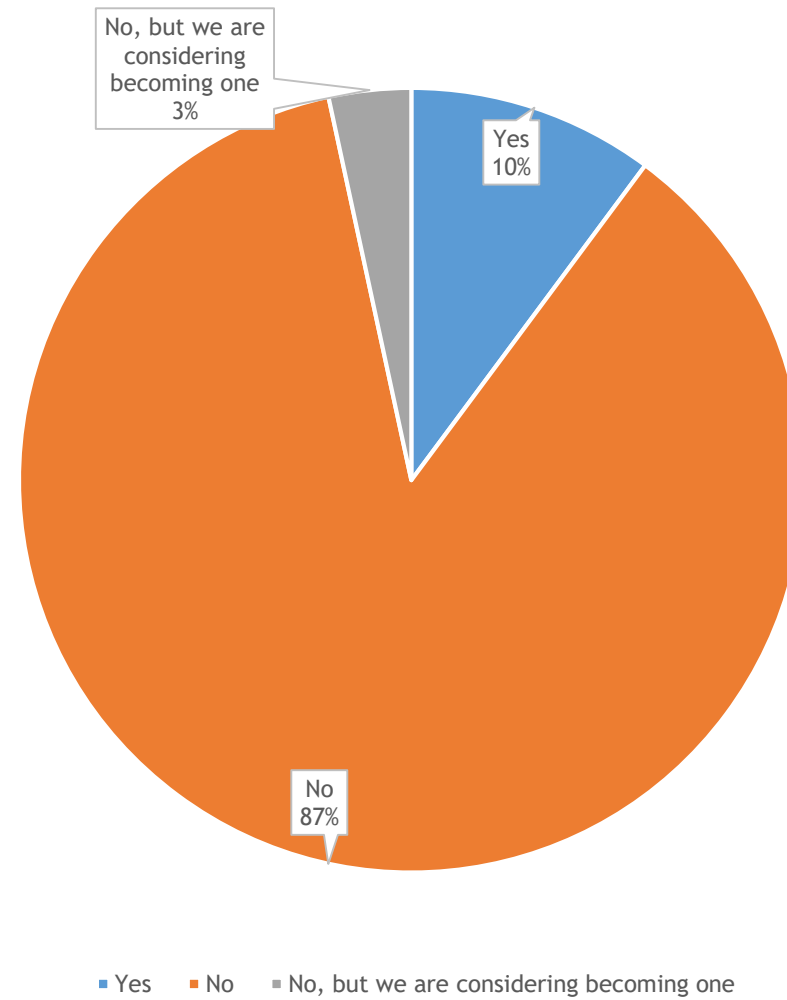
Does your network
have a website?



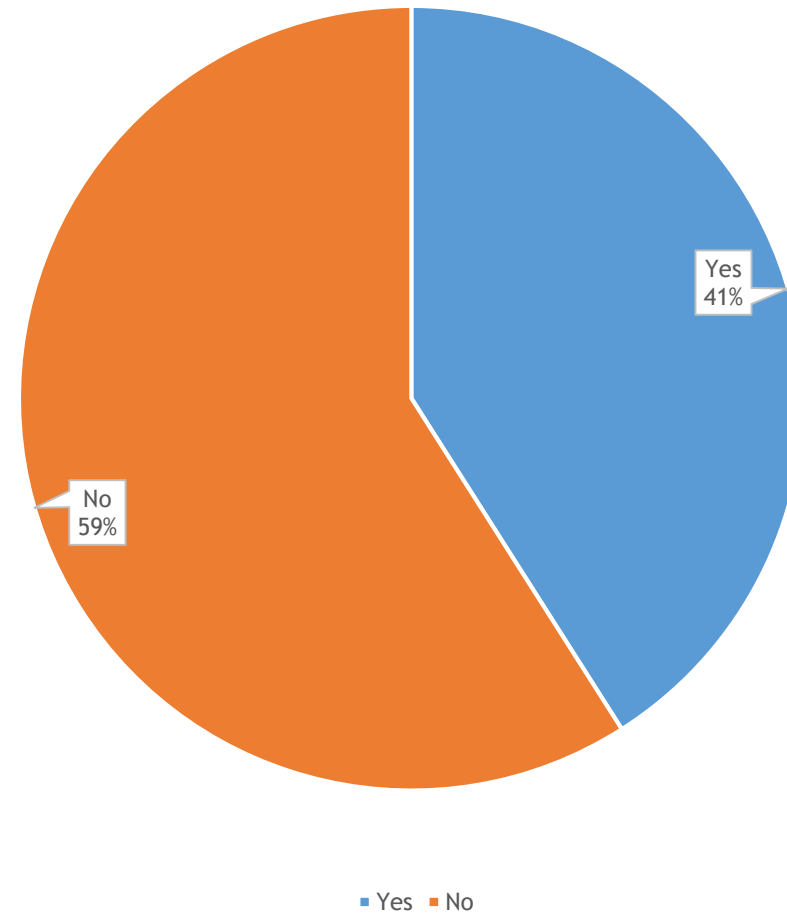
Does your network
have a constitution?



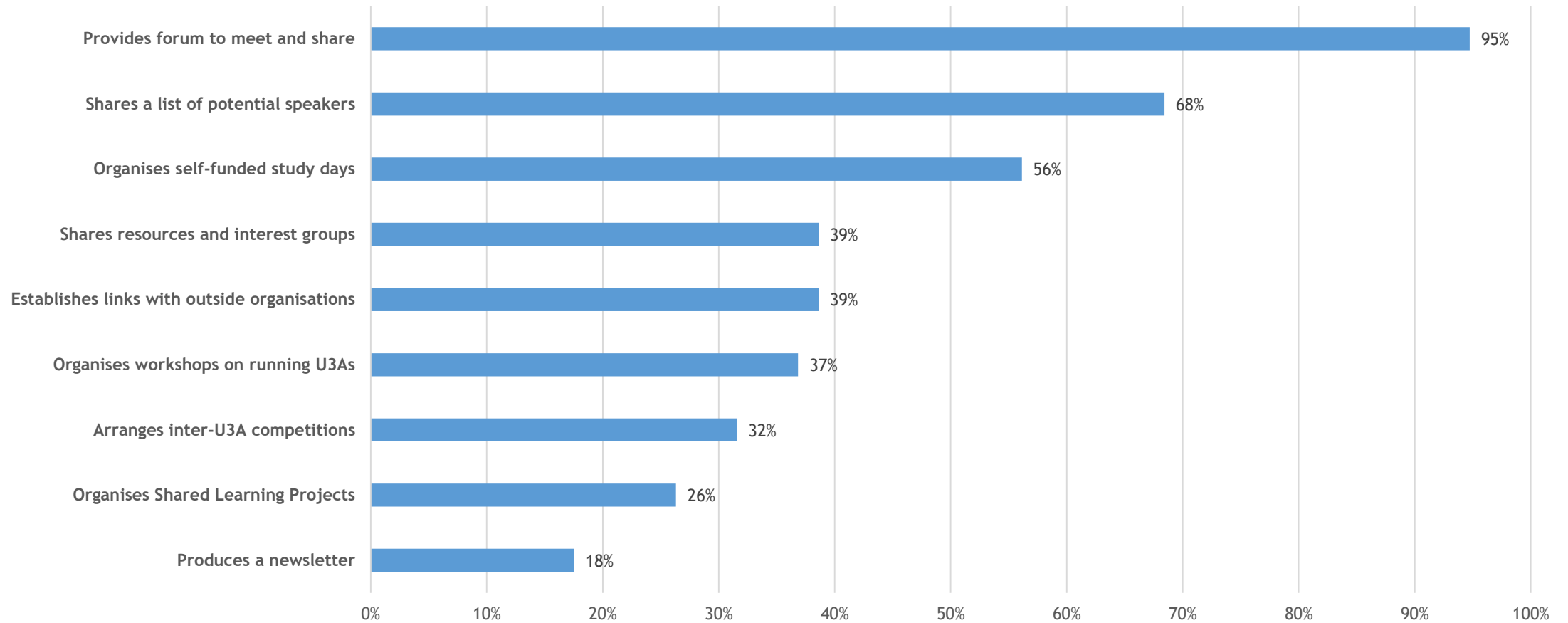
Is the network a registered charity?



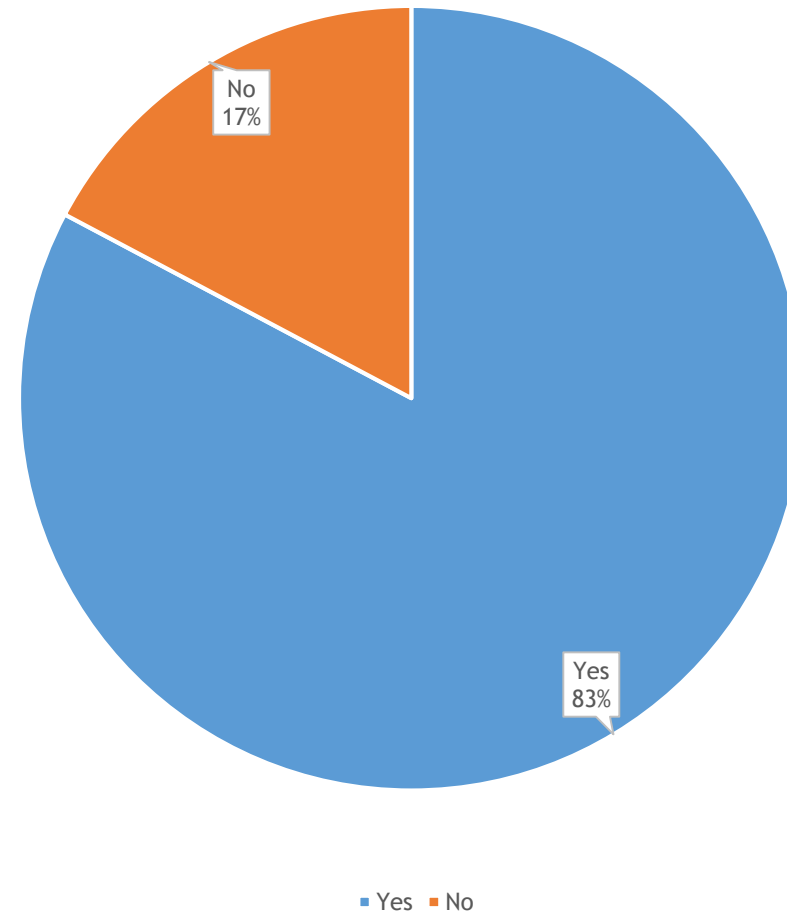
Does the network
have a bank
account?



What does the network do?



Is the network interested in attending biennial Network Link meetings?



Is the network interested in joining a private online group to facilitate inter-network communication?

