Creating Priorities from the "Improving the Core Contributor Experience" Report

This document aims to summarize and prioritize the key findings from the "Improving the Core Contributor Experience" report. By focusing on the most critical areas identified through survey feedback, our goal is to enhance the overall experience for Core Contributors and streamline existing processes. The aim is to address concerns related to transparency, coordination, and refining guidance for new contributors. This prioritization is driven by numerous comments emphasizing the need for better support, and a stronger focus on community impact and coordination.

The document covers the following priorities:

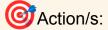## 1.Improve the Core Contributor Onboarding Experience

🎯Actions:

- Address the fact that the Core Contributor onboarding feels high-level and lacks depth.
- Create a comprehensive "handbook" for Core Contributors, to be used during onboarding and throughout their tenure. This guide should include onboarding procedures, processes, tools, role-specific information / links, communication expectations, contact persons for each role category, and more. Move existing information to a new Wiki space and expand on it there.

  The handbook will serve as a detailed reference for daily situations, while the onboarding course will cover introductory information. To prevent duplication, the onboarding course should link to relevant sections of the handbook for more details. Here's an Example Handbook.

🙇🏽‍♀️Reason/s:

- 32% of respondents find the onboarding experience lacking, indicating a need for clearer and more accessible information.
- A few Core Contributors suggested creating a comprehensive "source of truth" document, such as a handbook or cheat sheet, that covers all Core Contributor processes from onboarding to post-onboarding. This document should ideally include details on processes and tools used for coordinating work among contributors.

2. Clarify Core Contributor Sprints

🎯Action/s:

- Provide detailed explanations and resources on how Core Contributor Sprints operate.
- Possibly allow flexibility in sprint lengths to accommodate different group needs. However this also brings more complexity.

🙇🏽‍♀️Reason/s:

- 71.5% of respondents have a limited understanding of sprints, indicating a gap in clarity.
- 62.9% prefer 2-week sprints, but the project's scale may benefit from more flexibility.

3. Improve Collaboration and Communication

🎯Action/s:

- Explore ways to enhance collaboration among Core Contributors. Consider improving existing channels.
- Ensure each working group uploads relevant meeting recordings for full transparency.
- Review the current list of active working groups and ensure all the working groups that Core Contributors participate in are mentioned and defined - view the survey data.
- Ensure that Working Group names are self-explanatory and consistent across all tools (e.g., Working Group Calendar, Wiki). For example, use "Contributor Coordination Working Group" consistently.
- Evaluate and possibly consolidate communication tools to reduce complexity and reliance on synchronous communication. The top 5 communication tools are the Discussion Forum, Slack, GitHub, Atlassian Wiki, and the Open edX Blog, with the Discussion Forum being the most preferred. To improve communication, we could use the Forum more for announcements like Product Proposal Requests and reviews,

which are often missed in Slack, particularly across different time zones (importantly, open source projects thrive on public conversations). We should also define clear roles for the Forum and Slack to minimize confusion. Keep in mind that preferences will vary by role; for instance, engineers may prioritize GitHub, while translators might rank it lower.
- To enhance communication, transparency, and collaboration within the community, a comprehensive yet less frequent newsletter could be highly effective. This newsletter should provide a snapshot of essential information, minimizing the need for members to search across forums, Slack, and Wiki. By focusing on valuable content and using a Newsletter Discourse plugin for newsletter functionality, we can streamline information distribution. The newsletter should feature TL;DR summaries, links to project roadmaps, relevant blogs, release updates, open forum posts needing input, categorized PRs, and involvement opportunities. Content should be tailored based on the Listaflow community feedback to ensure relevance. Distributing the newsletter through Slack and email notifications, with forum comments for contextual feedback, will enhance its reach and effectiveness. This approach aims to improve communication by making updates more accessible and transparent, thereby fostering better engagement and collaboration.
- Make it easier to find ways to get involved or locate work opportunities.

🤷🏽‍♀️Reason/s:
- 77.1% want more collaboration, showing a strong demand for improved networking and cooperative work.
- 45.7% mentioned Working Groups that aren't all covered in the Active Working Groups list.
- 78.9% suggest merging communication tools, and 60% find Slack's synchronous nature problematic.
- 82.8% of respondents would like AI to assist with meeting transcripts and summaries.
- Core contributors are unsure what the Contributor Coordination Working Group is or whether it's necessary.
- There's a lack of clarity on how to get involved or find work, leading to a sense of competition or difficulty in being noticed, particularly for UX/UI tasks.

5. Improve Fulfilling Commitments and Planning Processes

🎯Action/s:
- Implement better planning tools or processes, and consider options for more asynchronous planning methods.

- Consider whether it's important to see if community members are fulfilling the hours they've committed to the program.

🤷🏽‍♀️Reason/s:
- 65.7% want improved planning to increase productivity and coordination.
- 48.57% of the community report averaging 11 - 20 hours of Core Contributor time per month. Contributors questioned levels of commitment as well as the lack of impact metrics on individual member contributions.

4. Improve Review Processes

🎯Action/s:
- Address the review bottlenecks by improving processes for finding reviewers and managing review pace.
- [Doing] Consider setting up a maintainer program .

🤷🏽‍♀️Reason/s:
- 68.5% face difficulties in getting reviews or approvals - often due to finding reviewers or a slow review pace.

6. Improve Core Contributor Reporting

🎯Action/s:
- Streamline the Listaflow questionnaire based on the results of the survey.
- Consider merging and simplifying the Contributors Meetup Async Update and the Core Contributor Check-in into one report to make it more efficient and relevant.
- Consider including this information in a newsletter that perhaps is sent out less frequently (ie. once a month).
- Send questionnaire reminders more effectively. Ensure its purpose and value are clear.

🤷🏽‍♀️Reason/s:

- 68.6% think the Contributors Meetup Async Update and the Core Contributor Check-in should be merged into one report.
- 62.9% think the questionnaire reminder needs to be more broadly-to-clearly announced.
- 51.4% think the update and check-in should be converted into a newsletter format.
- Issues with the questionnaire's length and perceived value were highlighted by responses. Mixed responses on its usefulness, with some finding it valuable and others seeing it as burdensome.
- Contributors suggested reducing lengthy updates by summarizing key points and avoiding unnecessary details, and including links to the roadmap, open posts, current projects, and PRs needing review.

Next steps

Cassie Zamparini will coordinate a summit to call for proposals aimed at addressing the Core Contributor experience, based on the findings outlined in the report and the priorities document.