

## **Wiki Loves Africa 2022 Organizers interview report**

For the purpose of feedback on Wiki Loves Africa 2022, theme *Home and Habitat*, and improvement on Wiki Loves Africa 2023 themed *Climate and Weather*, the organizers of Wiki Loves Africa international contest interviewed some local organizers of Wiki Loves Africa 2022. This is the first of its kind, as previous years' Wiki Loves Africa organizers were only asked to fill surveys.

For 2022, the Wiki Loves Africa international team thought the interview would yield better results in terms of having the organizers express themselves better through live virtual calls.

### **Interviews set up**

A total of twenty-seven Wiki Loves Africa 2022 local organizers were invited through their personal email addresses for the interview. Follow-up reminders were sent subsequently. In the end, seventeen of the twenty-seven local organizers successfully booked their schedules for the interview, but only a total of six local organizers bordering user groups to chapters showed up to be interviewed about what went well in the Wiki Loves Africa 2022, and what could be improved on for Wiki Loves Africa 2023. Templates of the invitation email are available [here](#).

The interviews were conducted on Google meet, and were recorded, but can only be accessed by the Wiki In Africa team. Three of the six interviews were conducted in English language, while the other three were conducted in French language, the respective languages spoken by the local organizers.

The interviews were slated to last between forty-five minutes to one hour, though two lingered beyond one hour, but did not exceed one hour thirty minutes.

The line of questions asked during the interviews were aimed at understanding the following contexts:

- Personal involvement
- Local organizing
- Local impact
- International team support
- International contest feedback
- Wiki Loves Africa 2023 competition
- Future dreams for Wiki Loves Africa beyond 2023

You can view the template of the local organizers' interview questions in detail [here](#).

### **Outcome and lessons**

### **Personal involvement**

On personal involvement with Wiki Loves Africa, three of the six local organizers were first timers in organizing Wiki Loves Africa, while the rest were returning organizers and past participants.

### **Local organizing**

Local organizing posed some challenges to the organizers, as some had difficulty in getting enough hands on the team.

*“Due to time constraints, it was not easy to get enough people to join the organizing team because of their other engagements.”*

Some organizers had a team of two, some had a team of three, and some had a team of five, mostly all-male teams. Local partnerships were in abundance, ranging from partnering with photography groups, to radio stations, etc. Each organizer was also able to have at least one event, which varied between physical and online events. The challenges of the African woman like house chores, babysitting, etc. got a better part of some local organizers who tried to get women on the team. The organizers were able to engage young participants, mostly university students, to submit entries towards the Wiki Loves Africa 2022 theme of *Home and Habitat*.

### **Local impact**

The organizers mostly made use of social media while communicating about the campaign. This yielded good results in attracting participants locally. The Zimbabwean local Wiki Loves Africa activities caught the attention of the local press, The Herald (See link <https://www.herald.co.zw/media-content-competition-launched/>).

*“We also had two articles in our local newspaper **The Herald**, about the local Wiki Loves Africa 2022 activities in our country.”*

A good number of the organizers had planned for physical training sessions, but were forced to have online training sessions in order to make the campaign more inclusive for their participants scattered across their respective countries.

The local organizers were most proud of the local partnerships they were able to establish, which also helped to rake in a good number of entries for the local competitions generally.

*“We partnered with a local association of photographers, and also with a library in the Southern region.”*

When this interview was conducted, a good number of the organizers already submitted their Rapid Grants reports.

### **International team support**

The local organizers gave kudos to the Wiki Loves Africa International team for organizing a successful Wiki Loves Africa 2022 under the *Home and Habitat* theme. The local organizers

testified that the Office Hours and training webinars initiated by the international team were found to be helpful, and provide a softlanding to the first time local organizers of the Wiki Loves Africa in terms of applying for Rapid Grants, and getting the local campaign off the ground. A good number of the local organizers also testified they continued to get support from the international team all through the campaign until the end, navigating through the campaign, up to walking them through Montage for the local jury process.

*“We benefited a lot from the International team. The office hours were very educative, especially for newcomers and first-time local organizers. We learnt a lot from the written communications that were sent out from time to time.”*

However, some of the local organizers feel the international team could improve on interpretation of the theme in the future. Some of the local organizers who are francophones also would like to see improvement on French language communications around the campaign at the international level.

### **International contest feedback**

According to the local organizers, the internal contest performed well for 2022 with over 16,000 entries submitted by over 1000 participants. In terms of the prizes and the amounts, although the local organizers wished there were more prize categories, they commended the international team for increasing the respective prize categories for Wiki Loves Africa 2022 International prizes.

*“I believe the amounts allocated to each prize was awesome, but perhaps more prize categories should be added. Africa is big, and could use more prize categories.”*

They also emphasized on the importance of continuing the Wiki Loves Africa project, as it is one of the few narrative changing mechanisms the African continent could boast. They also mentioned how important it is that the contest continues to provide media files that help to better illustrate Wikipedia articles about Africa.

### **2023 competition**

The local organizers expressed their joy about the *Climate and Weather* theme for the Wiki Loves Africa 2023. They went ahead to point out that it is a very relevant theme owing to the recent effects of climate change being felt across Africa.

*“The theme is very relevant, especially with the effects of climate change in Africa lately. However, It would be great to know the schedule for each competition in advance. For instance, by the end of 2022, let the timeline of 2023 activities be announced.”*

They further declared their interests in organizing Wiki Loves Africa 2023 should they receive the grants to do so.

### **Future dreams for WLA beyond 2023**

For the dream beyond 2023, the local organizers hope to see a local Wiki Loves Africa contest in all the countries across the Africa continent, which could increase the number of entries and participants. To achieve this they recommended the international team widens its communication nets, especially outside the Wikimedia movement.

*“It’s very important to continue the Wiki Loves Africa campaign, because it gives the opportunity for Africans to show the world what Africa really is.”*

## **About the interview process**

### **What worked well**

The interviews were swift due to the line of questions structured to be answered. Each interview session usually starts with an exchange of pleasantries to help the local organizers feel at ease. The local organizers loved the list of questions they had to answer. This was evident as they were willing to go on and while responding to most questions if not for the intervention of Ceslause who reminded them of the time allotted for each interview session.

The local organizers also expressed their preference of the interview compared to the surveys, as it affords them the opportunity to better express themselves while answering the interview questions. It is recommended to be the feedback collection process for local organizers of Wiki Loves Africa.

### **What didn’t work well**

The availability schedules for the twenty-seven local organizers invited was a great challenge due to their respective off-wiki engagements. Another factor believed to be an issue was the WikiIndaba 2022. The invitations and calendar schedule proposals were sent just a week or two to the WikiIndaba 2022 conference.. Since the Wiki Loves Africa local organizers are Africans, most of them were busy preparing for the WikiIndaba 2022 conference, hence couldn’t confirm their availability schedules for the interview.

The Otter.ai transcription platform operated by Wiki In Africa is only able to transcribe English language communications

### **Wiki Loves Africa 2023 local organizers interview lessons**

It is highly recommended to use the one-on-one interview format to collect feedback from Wiki Loves Africa 2023 local organizers. However, instead of targeting all the local organizers, it might be better to just tactically target a dozen of the local organizers, cutting across Anglophone, Lusophone and Francophone Africa, and also taking note to include user groups, chapters and organized groups.

Targeting a post Wiki Loves Africa contest period where there are no conferences in sight would be great for the availability schedules of the Wiki Loves Africa local organizers for the interview sessions.

It would also be great to have a transcription tool that transcribes beyond English language handy for the interviews.