



Exciting multi-country project celebrates Africa's women leaders on Wikipedia

Cape Town, South Africa, 15th January 2016 – [Wiki Loves Women](#) is an exciting knowledge project that will rollout in four countries across sub-Saharan Africa. *Wiki Loves Women* in collaboration with the Goethe-Institut brings together a Wikipedian in Residence, Wikipedia volunteers, Public Institutions, Civil Society Organisations and Gender Equality groups.

Gender inequality is rife across Africa - and although much progress has been made to address these inequalities in the workplace and within society, there remains a systemic bias that disadvantages women by a focus on profiling men, especially with regards to information, news and knowledge, both online and offline.

There are significant numbers of notable women who have shaped Africa's countries and societies, there are innovative business women who help to drive Africa's many economies (both the formal and informal), and there are everyday realities that women and female children must face due to their gender. These stories need to sit alongside the ones of their male counterparts. Very few of these subjects can be found online, far fewer on the world's largest knowledge repositories, such as Wikipedia.

The ***Wiki Loves Women*** project addresses this bias and focuses on bridging two significant gaps on Wikimedia projects – women and Africa – both in terms of content about these subjects and in terms of participation by people from these groups. The project is designed to leverage Wikipedia's role as a global repository for the dissemination of information to achieve accessible and fair online representation of women.

In collaboration with the Goethe-Institut, *Wiki Loves Women* operates in four countries to encourage the contribution of existing researched and verified information from Public Institutions, Civil Society Organisations and Gender-equality groups to Wikipedia. The donated data and content will specifically focus on women's contribution to the political, economic, scientific, cultural and heritage landscape, as well as the current socio-political status of women, in each country. In addition, the project will encourage the activation and support of new and existing editors in the focus countries.

“One of our key interests is to explore future ways of building and sharing knowledge”, says Brigitte Doellgast, Head of the Library and Information Department at the Goethe-Institut Johannesburg. “*Wiki Loves Women* will use the digital space as a means of participation, challenging biased views of the African continent and the contribution of women to its societies.”

Coinciding with the launch of *Wiki Loves Women* is the celebration of 15 years of Wikipedia on the 15th of January 2016. So much has been achieved in the 15 years of Wikipedia's digital life, but there is still so much that needs to be done. For example, even after 15 years of adding information about all sorts of fascinating subjects, content about Africa in general, and African women in particular, is still limited on the world's largest source of knowledge.

WikiAfrica has chosen to celebrate Wikipedia 15 by organising a bilingual (English/French) writing contest to increase the number of biographies on notable African women on Wikipedia. The contest is looking for 15 teams to create 15 articles on Wikipedia about notable leaders, historic and contemporary who have influenced their communities across Africa. The contest will start on the **15th of January 2016 (0:00 UTC)** and will end on the **30th of January 2016 (23:59 UTC)**.

Wiki Loves Women is a 15 month project in the spirit of the [WikiAfrica](#) movement, in collaboration with the [Goethe-Institut](#). It was conceptualised and is being managed by Isla Haddow-Flood and Florence Devouard.



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Useful links:

Wiki Loves Women links

- website: www.wikiloveswomen.org
- Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/WikiLovesWomen>
- Twitter: <https://twitter.com/WikiLovesWomen>
- Meta pages:
 - https://meta.wikimedia.org/wiki/Wiki_Loves_Women/en
 - https://meta.wikimedia.org/wiki/Wiki_Loves_Women/fr

Wiki Loves Women #Wikipedia15 Challenge links:

- https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Projet:Wiki_Loves_Women/Concours_d%27écriture
- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Wiki_Loves_Women/Writing_Contest

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NOTES FOR THE EDITOR:

How people get involved:

Getting involved in the #Wikipedia15 *Wiki Loves Women* Challenge is easy

1. [Register on Wikipedia if you are not already registered](#) ...
2. Look on the competition project page on Wikipedia to start your own, or join an existing team. [Create your team or join an existing team here.](#)
3. If you are starting a new team, choose a notable woman you want to write about - if you don't know where to start, there is [a suggestion list of notable women here.](#) (please feel free to add women who are not listed on this list and should be!)
4. On the 15th January, start writing ...! You have until the 30th January to work together to make the article into one worthy of good article status.
5. Have fun!!

About WikiAfrica

The WikiAfrica project is an international collaboration that redresses the imbalance of factual heritage and cultural knowledge about Africa on Wikipedia by promoting a new approach to knowledge that is fully-inclusive, mainstream and intercultural. Its mission is to assist and support the growth of Wikipedia as a free and open encyclopaedia that provides greater access to Africa's wealth of contemporary and historical realities.

www.wikiafrica.net

About the Goethe-Institut

The Goethe-Institut is the cultural institute of the Federal Republic of Germany with a global reach. We promote knowledge of the German language abroad and foster international cultural cooperation. We convey a comprehensive picture of Germany by providing information on Germany's cultural, social and political life. The Goethe-Institut in Johannesburg regulates the work in the Sub-Saharan countries. Its activities in this region have a special focus on strengthening the pan-African dialogue, and on promoting mobile access to information and education. For more information, visit www.goethe.de/johannesburg.