Putting Institutional Partners at Ease: Becoming a Reliable Guide in an Unfamiliar Landscape

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About WMDC

Wikimedia affiliate that partners with institutions in Washington, DC, Virginia, West Virginia, Maryland and Delaware

Partners include the Smithsonian, National Archives, Georgetown University, United States Department of Agriculture, various embassies and more

Actively cultivates new partners in order to increase participation in Wikimedia projects

About WMDC

Assists institutional partners with 30-40 editing events per year

Half of 2018/19 collaborative events were hosted by new institutional partners

WIKIMEDIA
DC

**WP Shortcut: WP:DCMEET
WikimediaDC.org**

During this session, we will discuss:

How to effectively guide new partners through the planning and implementation process

...with the goal of

ensuring partner 'buy-in' and encouraging long-term engagement

Institutional Partners

Agencies, institutions, organizations, etc. who actively partner or engage with Wikimedia projects and/or affiliates.

GLAMS, universities, scientific organizations, embassies and beyond

Institutional Partnerships

Collaborative projects and programs could include:

Editing events

Content donation initiatives

Providing assistance to Wikipedians-in-Residence

What Makes a Good Institutional Partner?

Partners should be able/willing to:

Commit staff and time

Provide meeting space, wifi and other resources if applicable

Promote the event or partnership to stakeholders

Partners should be able/willing to:

Use open licenses

Provide access to materials

Provide expertise

AND, MOST IMPORTANTLY...

Partners should be willing to learn and accept the benefits of engaging with Wikimedia Projects.

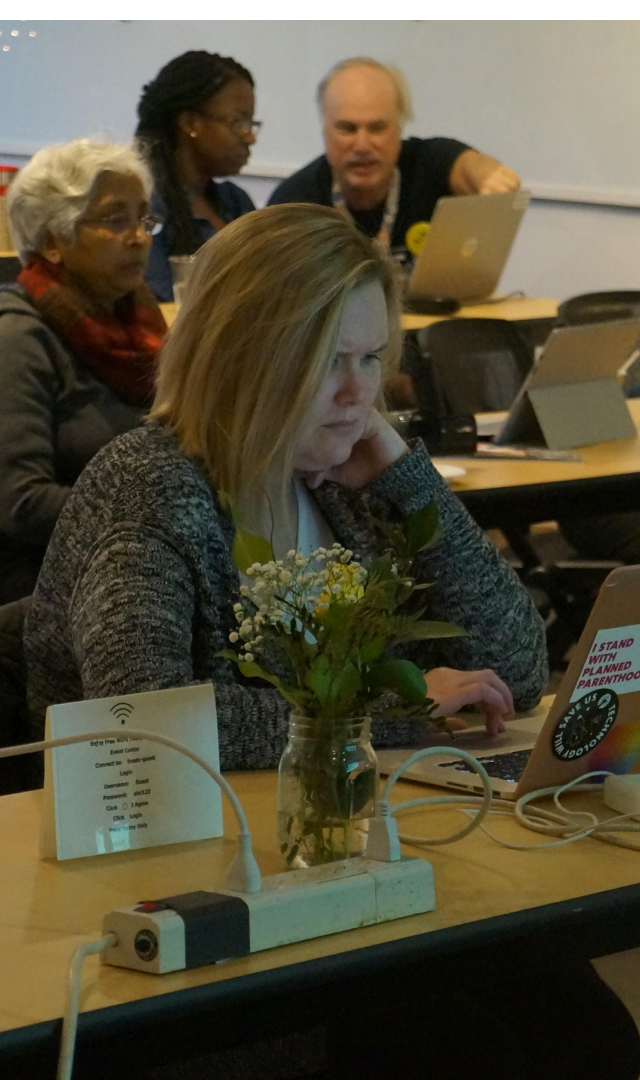|	
Mission fulfillment (education, community engagement, interpretation) **Sharing resources and collections with the world**	**Drive millions of WP page views per day** **Measure impact by monitoring article views**

What Makes a Good Guide?

Transparency

Flexibility

Effective Communication

Availability

**Accessibility of terms
(limit 'tech' speak)**

What Does A Successful Partnership Look Like To You, The Guide?

Example: A collaborative and productive partnership that prompts an institutional partner to actively engage with Wikimedia projects through events and other initiatives.

What Does A Successful Partnership Look Like To Your Partner?

Example: A relationship that helps the partner share accurate information, collections and expertise while staying true to their own mission, vision and goals.

Institutional Partnership Scale

Level 1: Exploratory Participation

Level 2: Collaborative Participation

Level 3: Independent Participation

Level 4: Championing Participation

Institutional Partnership Scale: Wikimedia DC

Level 1: Exploratory Participation

- Partner engages with Wikimedia chapter or group to plan and execute individual, isolated Wikimedia-related activities.

- Partner requires significant hands-on support from Wikimedians in order to successfully execute a Wikimedia-related activity or event.

- Partner hosts isolated Wikimedia-related events or activities which are planned at random or in conjunction with external events, anniversaries, commemorations, or public holidays.

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Level 2: Collaborative Participation

- Partner engages in a sustained, long-term program of Wikimedia-related activities, planned and executed in close collaboration with Wikimedia chapters or groups

- Events are largely planned by outside Wikimedians

- Partner allocates some internal resources to support activities, though may still have limited capacity (staff, time)

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Scenario

A potential partner has contacted your organization about collaborating on an event. How do you introduce them to the unknown while limiting the intimidation factor?

Planning Overview

Stage 1: **Plan Collaboratively**

Stage 2: **Implement**

Stage 3: **Present Results and Metrics**
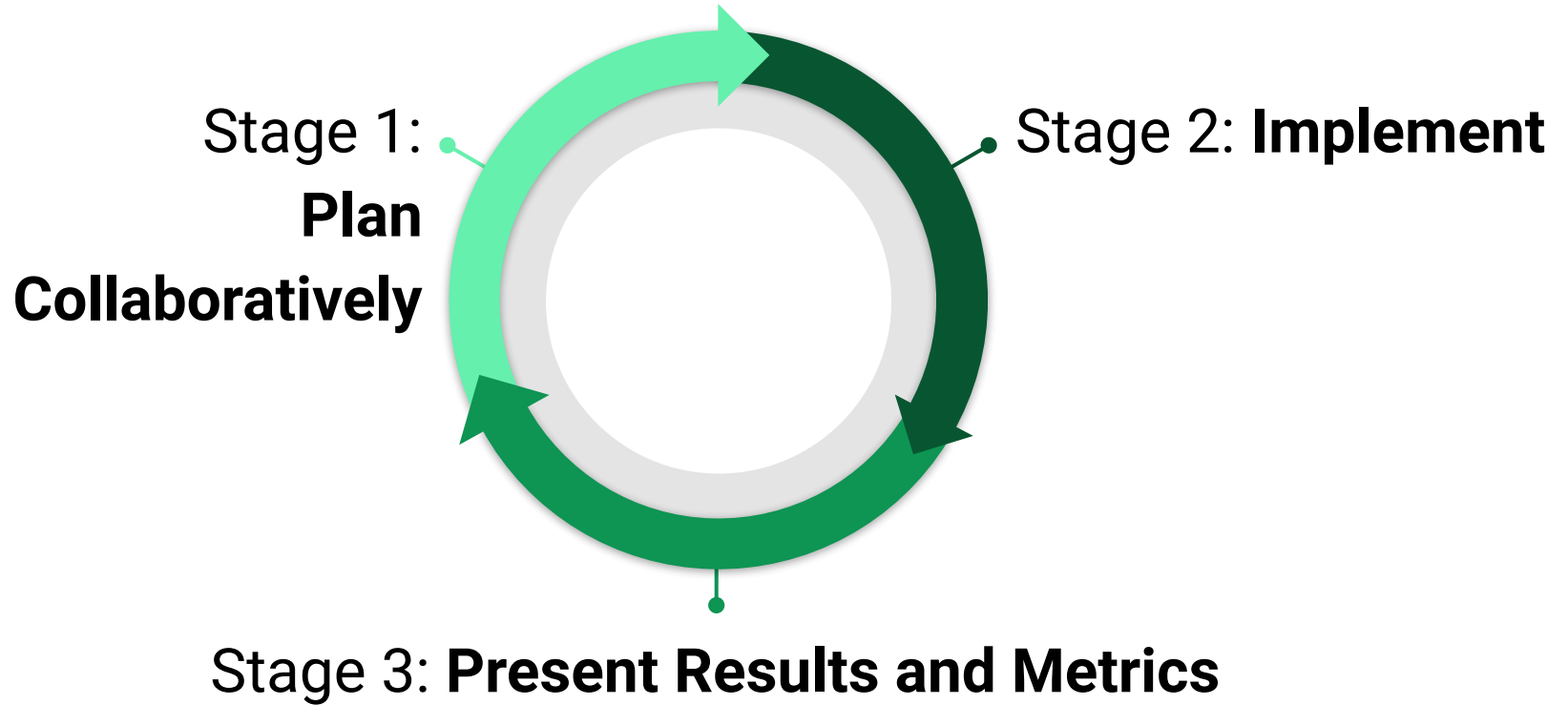
STAGE 1

Plan Collaboratively

Steps

Choose theme

Choose date/time/venue

Launch registration

Publish event page or dashboard event

Create work list

Compile source material

Potential Opportunities/Challenges

Partner is unfamiliar with Wikimedia projects

Leadership is enthusiastic, but organizational staff is not helpful or engaged (vice versa)

Questionable capacity

First steps toward a mutually beneficial and transparent partnership

Gauge the partner's previous experiences with Wikimedia projects

Determine capacity and be flexible

Find your 'pre-Wikimedia self'. What would YOU want to know?

Explain your role as a guide

Share your organizational goals and be transparent (share successes and failures)

LISTEN to their goals (content development? constituent engagement?)

Find intersections, mission alignment

Review each step/Distribution of duties. Follow-up in writing

Provide the framework, but let them operate within their own comfort zone

Leave the Wikimedia bubble

Stage 2: Implementation

Maintain the thread of accessibility

When answering partner/attendee questions, avoid explanations that cause additional confusion

Share and demonstrate tools that will help the partner track impact.

Demonstrate the value or their contributions in real time

Stage 3: Follow-up

Share metrics

Address issues/concerns - ADAPT

Explore upcoming themes, exhibitions, initiatives

Plan to plan

Work the circle

Tips for
Sustaining Existing Partnerships

Use an MOU or partnership agreement if applicable

Maintain open lines of communication

Monitor changes in staff

Stay up-to-date on priority shifts, acquisitions, exhibits

Share news of new partners or successes

Make connections and introductions

Think

BIG and

Small

All Partners Have Value

Questions?