1º GLOBAL

WIKI ADVOCACY MEET UP

Strenghthening the Wikimedia Voice in Public Policy

WikiAdvocacy Meet-Up 2024:

The main results.

Learning patterns for future organisers

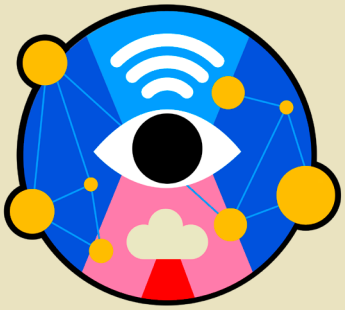
WIKIMEDIA CHILE

Written by:
Patricia Díaz Rubio and Felipe Osorio

Layout by:
Cristóbal Montecinos

CC BY SA

WIKIMEDIA CHILE



WIKI ADVOCACY MEET UP

Strenghthening the Wikimedia Voice in Public Policy

0. Índice

I. Introduction 4

II. Context and Methodology 5
1). General context of the WikiAdvocacy Meeting: 5
2). Methodology: 6
3). Characterizing the attendants: 7

III. What did we learn from this event? 8
1). Wikimedia Movement's major interests and concerns: what do advocates care about? 8
2). Wikimedia Movement's need: what do advocates are looking for? 9
3). Common wording for the Wikimedia model? Other challenges for the WikiAdvocacy 12

IV. Next steps: where do we go from here? 13
1). Communications: 13
2). Documentation / systematisation: 14
3). Next meeting: 14
4). Wikimedia Chile proposals: some ideas to address the needs 15

V. ANEXES: GENERAL EVENT EVALUATION 18

I. Introduction

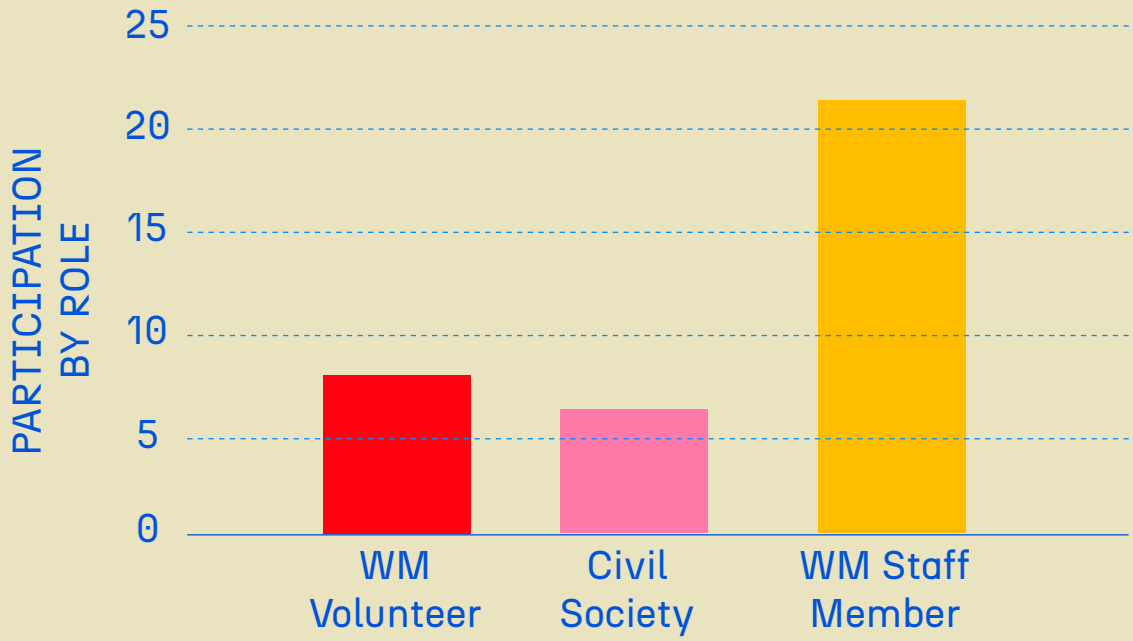
In May 2024, Wikimedia Chile hosted the first WikiAdvocacy Meeting. In this event, representatives from more than 20 countries, including members of the Wikimedia movement and Latin American civil society activists, gathered to concretely discuss and work on how to exchange experiences regarding the main challenges of promoting free knowledge within the digital environments; identify global trends in Internet governance that could affect the sustainability of the Wikimedia model; and pave the way for strengthening a network of Wikimedians and activists involved in advocacy and in defending free knowledge in decision-making spaces, with an emphasis on the inclusion of the Global South.

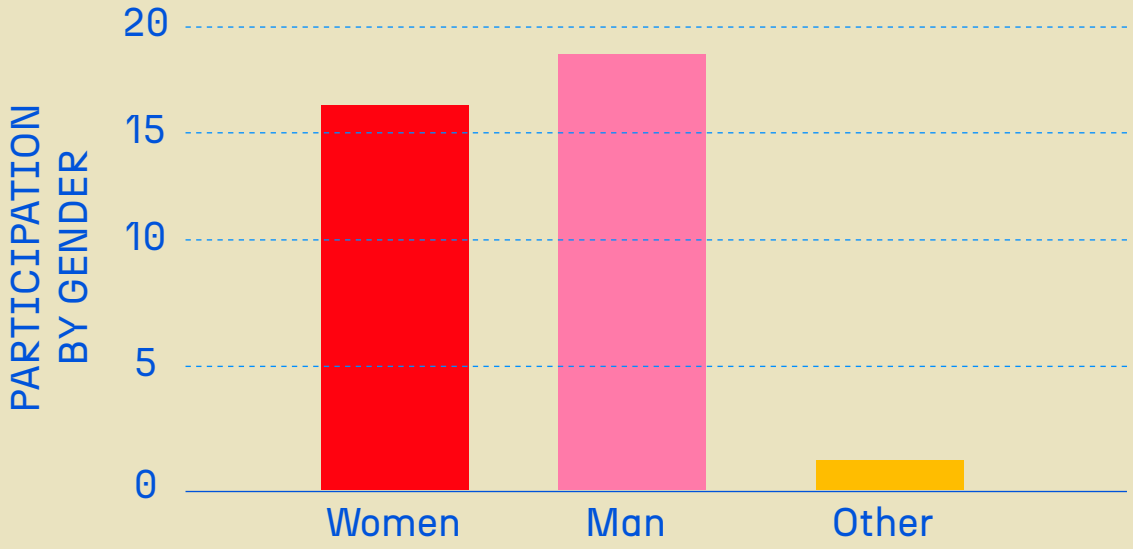
As organizers, we wanted to summarize the main results of this meeting by creating this document that includes the recorded discussions of different activities as the results of the event's evaluation survey that participants filled out after the meeting. Before that, we will explain the meeting's general context and methodology, and then we will emphasize the analysis of the event's conversations, where we found that the major concern of the participants was the need for capacity building, mostly in (i) legal and technical capacities but also in (ii) communicational aspects.

II. Context and Methodology

1). General context of the WikiAdvocacy Meeting:

The meeting was held in Santiago, Chile, with a group of 36 participants from more than 20 different countries after an open call to applications was announced in late 2023. The main criteria for choosing participants were their experience in the advocacy field and their geographical distribution, as we wanted to ensure a diverse yet prepared group for these discussions. We also wanted to situate the free knowledge advocacy conversation in the Latin American context enhancing a better understanding of the regional perspective on digital rights. To do so, we also invited regional NGO representatives to the event to connect their experience with the Wikimedia movement.





2). Methodology:

The focus of the program designed by Wikimedia Chile, with the support of an external consultant, was to discuss the challenges and opportunities we face when advocating for an open and better digital ecosystem. The program considered a series of collective activities and group dynamics that could: (i) serve as a starting point for creating/strengthening the advocacy group within the Wikimedia movement; (ii) find major difficulties that advocates face in their local work; (iii) create opportunities to improve the current work on advocacy; and (iv) establish a roadmap for the group's future work.

The main activities of the program were:

a). Day 1:

- Fishbowl: Today's challenges for the movement.
- Sharing Advocacy stories: Learning from our current advocacy strategies.
- Open Space: What must we discuss to face today's challenges?

b). Day 2:

- Backcasting: how do I see the ideal future of the Wikimedia movement?
- Collective initiatives to improve the advocacy work.
- Next steps for the advocacy network.

Wikimedia Chile analyzed the information produced during the group dynamics described above by collecting sticky notes, flip charts, the collective online document, photos, and participants' notes. This information helped us in shaping these conclusions.

3). Characterizing the attendants:

We had three types of participants in the WikiAdvocacy Meeting: Wikimedia volunteers (people coming from different Wikimedia communities), Wikimedia staff members (people working for the movement, including WMF), and Latin American NGO activists. As seen in the interest survey launched before the event, these different affiliations were not necessarily related to different thematic interests regarding the future meeting.

Yet, from the analysis of the post-event survey, we identified that people had different expectations of the meeting depending on the role they play in the open knowledge ecosystem. Some volunteers were more interested in goal or project-oriented activities: they expected to leave the event with networks to work together on specific projects. On the other hand, some staff members were more interested in long-term or strategic-oriented activities. For this group, the main outcome of the WikiAdvocacy Meeting was to strengthen the global advocacy group to keep working on long-term goals, such as defining the role of the Wikimedia model in the current international scenario, the role of the affiliates and the WMF in the advocacy work, among others.

III. What did we learn from this event?

1). Wikimedia Movement's major interests and concerns: what do advocates care about?

Analyzing all the documents produced during the event, we could identify three main areas of interest or concern among the participants:

- Advocacy in general: How to better influence decision-makers to shape a beneficial digital environment for Wikimedia and open knowledge values.
- Explaining the Wikimedia model: How to build a common wording to explain the importance of the Wikimedia model to external stakeholders and to the movement itself.
- The Wikimedia movement infrastructure: how the different actors within the Wikimedia movement interact with each other to build advocacy capacities in a decentralized yet coherent and cohesive way along the movement.

2). Wikimedia Movement's need: what do advocates are looking for?

Analyzing all the documents produced during the event, we could identify three main areas of interest or concern among the participants:

During the activities, we asked people to spontaneously propose different interest topics for the group to discuss. We then created six working groups around those ideas: (i) Capacity building for advocates to address advocacy gaps; (ii) Wikimedia Platforms for Environmental Conversation; (iii) How to Explain the Wikimedia Model?; (iv) Global Wording; (v) Copyright Literacy and Reform; and (vi) Communicating with Different Audiences.

The conversation produced within those groups allowed us to identify two main areas where specific capacity building is needed:

a) Legal/Technical capacities:

For working groups (i) and (v) training around legal and technical issues was a must to eventually develop those topics of interest, especially copyright and especially among advocates who were not lawyers or were not copyright experts. It is important to note that this concern has its specificities depending on the territory. As such, European, Latin-American, and African advocates have different challenges regarding understanding and advocating for copyright reforms.

On the other hand, working group (i) referred to the need to build technical knowledge in areas like Artificial Intelligence (IA) and new digital technologies that can potentially affect the Wikimedia model or people's fundamental rights.

According to these working groups, building legal/technical capacities is key to, first, taking the initiative to approach policymakers and, second, being able to answer the requirement of other stakeholders reaching to Wikimedia as a relevant actor in the discussions about public policy.

Moreover, there was a shared concern about specific capacities for advocates. These capacities could cover both strong and soft skills. It seems that a large number of participants perform their roles by intuition rather than a specific set of skills developed to achieve their chapter's aims. In other words, the people working on advocacy issues bring to WM their professional expertise but they do not necessarily have formal studies or preparation regarding advocacy work.

b) Communicational capacities:

Working groups (i), (iii), and (vi) identified the need to build communicational capacities as a relevant aspect for improving the advocacy work undertaken by the Wikimedia affiliates; they talked about internal communications and external communications capacities.

- Internal communication: how to better communicate with Wikimedia inner community (from volunteers to other staff members) to engage them in the advocacy efforts, as well as to make them more open and flexible to changes the movement may need.
- External communication: how to build communication capacities to engage with external stakeholders like: policymakers, the general public, and potential allies in civil society.

- Policymakers: having documentation of previous advocacy experiences within the movement would help in engaging with policymakers by allowing advocates to learn how others have approached similar issues, their strategies, their narratives, the resources used, etc. Working group (i) proposed having shared guidelines about advocacy and capacitation on best practices to identify how to approach policymakers. Also, some proposed implementing internship programs in which advocates could go and learn from the work done in different Wikimedia affiliates or other organizations. This would allow for building individual capacities and learning from other organizations' work models.

- The general public: how to communicate the Wikimedia model and its values with the general public by making it closer to the general audience. This communication should highlight the features of the Wikimedia model that make it different from other platforms and put emphasis on "why" we do what we do instead of just "what" or "how" we do it. This concern is related to the capacity for fundraising, building communities, and making the Wikimedia model more attractive to the general public —in particular, younger generations.

- Potential allies: how to identify potential usual and unusual allies and approach them to build broader structures of advocates on digital rights in local and international settings by designing specific advocacy strategies.

3). Common wording for the Wikimedia model? Other challenges for the WikiAdvocacy

Working group (iv) identified two general concerns that were not necessarily dependent on capacity building: how to clarify Wikimedia's identity in terms of its model, and how to develop a common language for defining that identity and its approach to external stakeholders. As related as they are, both topics seem particularly pressing in the context of the rapid development of new digital technologies, like IA, that question the current Wikimedia pertinence and validity.

According to this group, this identity construction exercise must be a collaborative one to ensure a common understanding and appropriation of these meanings by all members involved in advocacy efforts.

IV. Next steps: where do we go from here?

The WikiAdvocacy Meeting's last activity was to define the next steps for the group and the efforts that need to be made to create a real advocacy network across the Wikimedia movement. In that context, people gathered around three working groups identifying themselves as necessary to make this network prosper: (i) communications, (ii) documentation/systematization, and (iii) next meetings.

1). Communications:

The group discussed a series of communication channels that could be better used by the community (Diff posts, newsletters, etc.) to serve not as merely a one-directional informational space but to prompt discussions among the community members. The challenge is then to identify strategies (sharing local developments, good practices, and questions regarding communities' new challenges) to keep those spaces and communities alive.

2). Documentation / systematisation:

This group discussed how to better document Wikimedia advocacy initiatives to become a useful tool to other communities and advocates across the movement in an attempt to make the best out of the movement's experiences and resources. The challenge is how to keep the documentation updated, accessible, and understandable for the community but also how to identify which type of information is relevant and useful to others to be shared.

3). Next meeting:

This group discussed future collaboration spaces for the group, including strengthening the current Capacity Building project within the Global Advocacy team but also creating new group gatherings during the year. The challenge here was to identify how to better align with participants' agendas and resources knowing the amount of efforts that regular global gatherings represent for the movement.

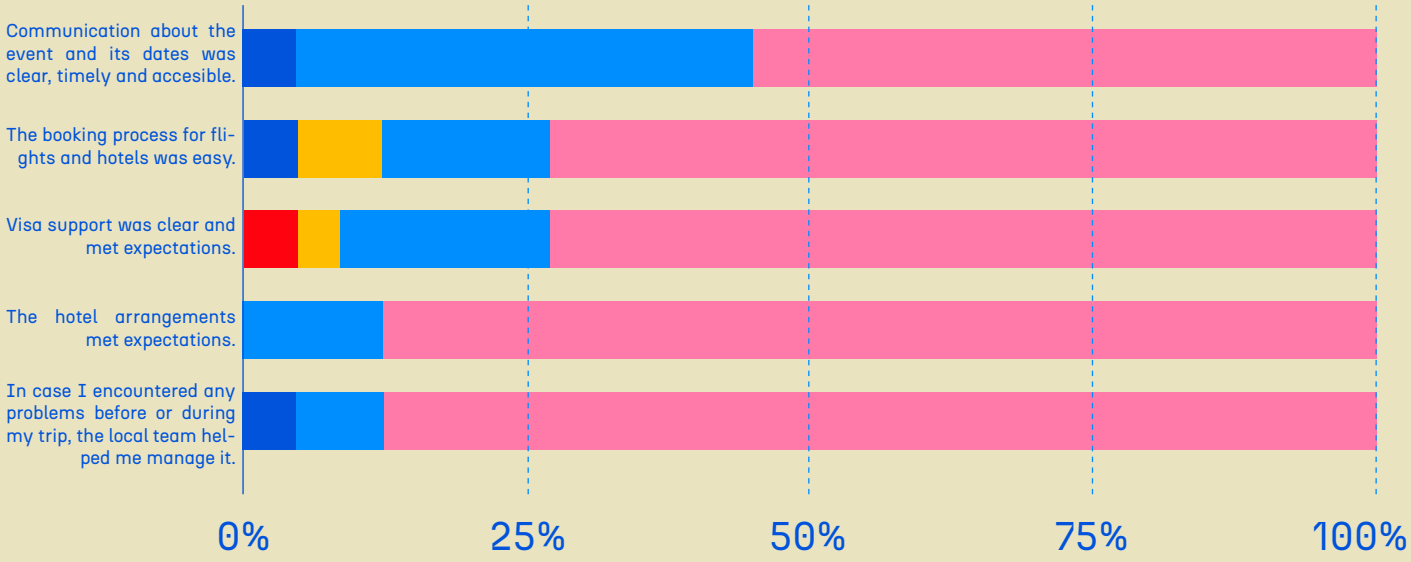
4). Wikimedia Chile proposals: some ideas to address the needs

NETWORK CONCERNS		
	Punctual activities	In-deep activities
Advocacy work	• Stakeholders mapping workshop • General tech trends workshop • Pitching workshops	• Strategic planning for advocacy efforts
Explaining the model	• Discussion sessions about core concepts to share common knowledge (digital commons, open access, copyright licenses, etc.)	• Wording workshop
Wikimedia movement infrastructure	• Regular Global Advocacy Team open calls	• Annual Advocacy network gathering (online or in person)

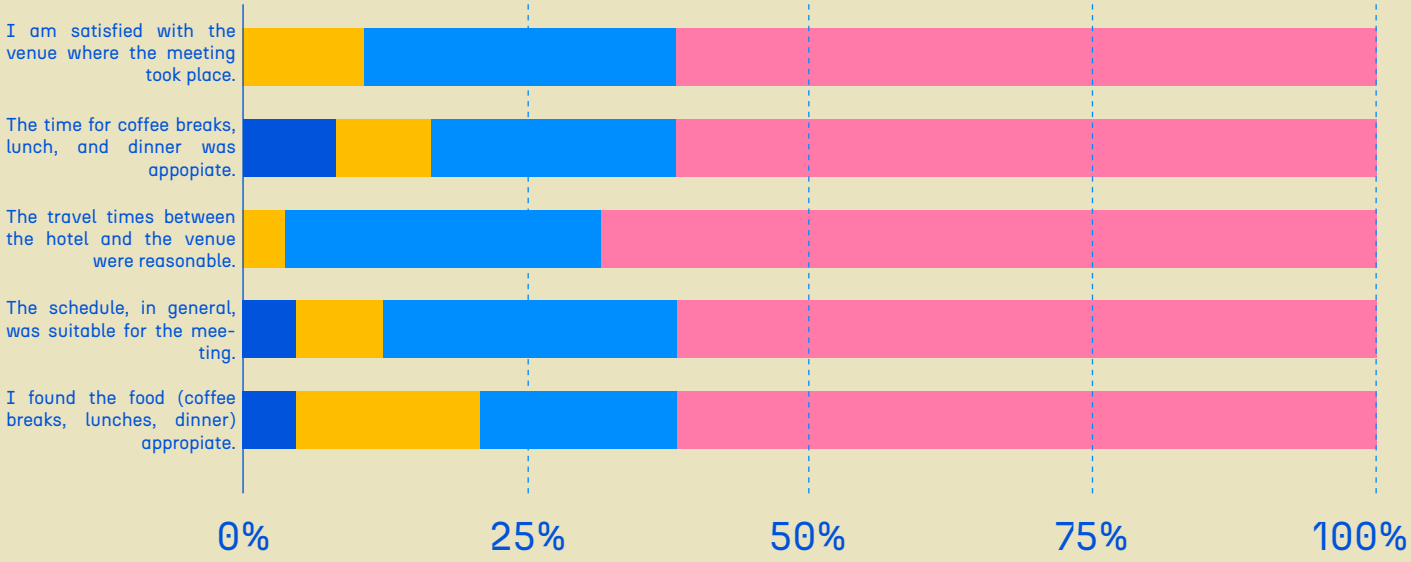
CAPACITY BUILDING

	Specific workshops	Longer training sessions
Legal / Tech training	• Copyright basics • Platform Regulation basics • Fundamental rights in the cyberspace (freedom of expression, privacy, etc.) • Artificial intelligence basics • Content moderation technologies/regulation	• Drafting legal opinions • Drafting *Amicus Curiae*
Communications	• Media training • Policy brief construccion • Narrative/arguments construction	

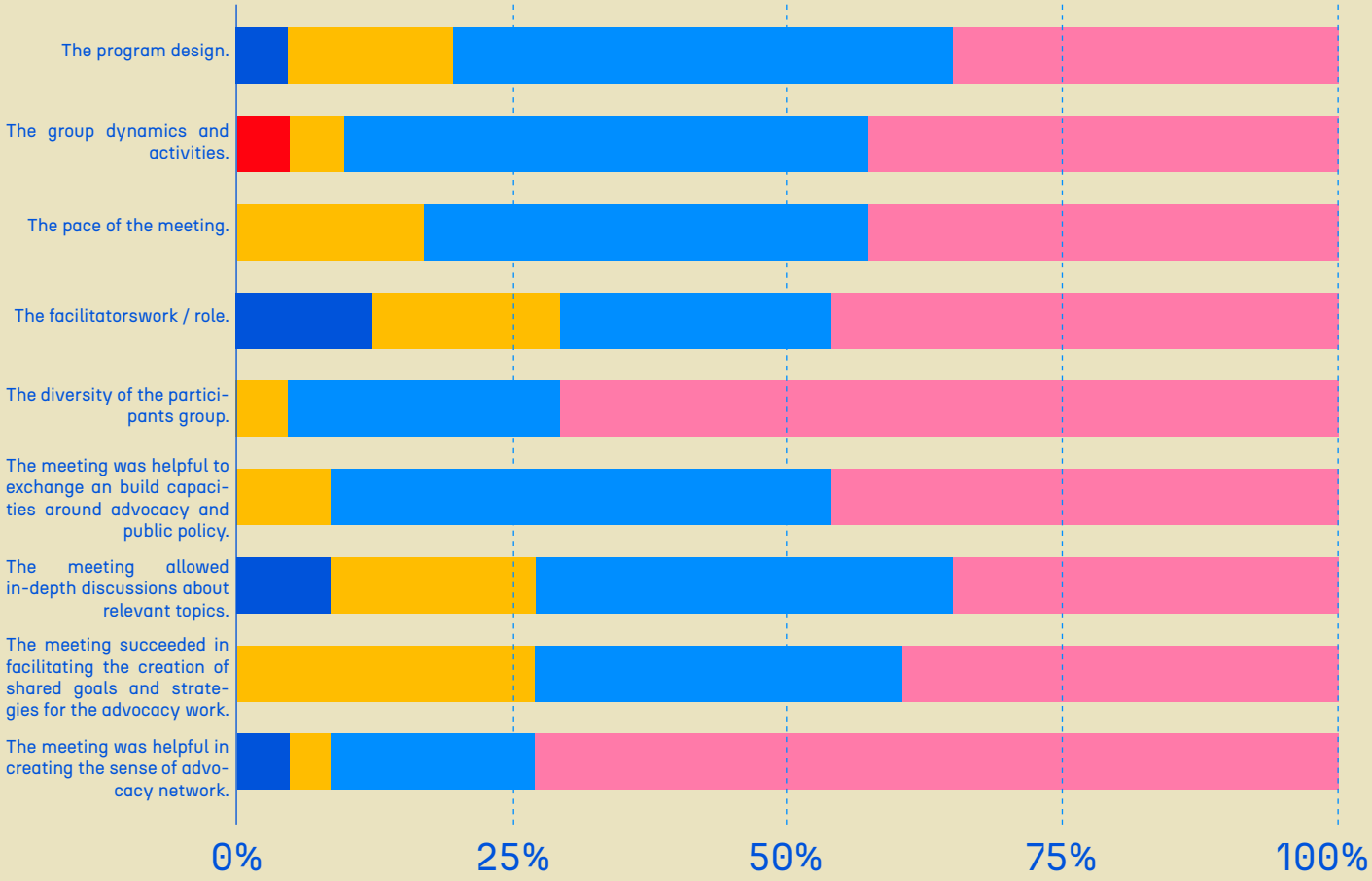
V. ANEXES: GENERAL EVENT EVALUATION



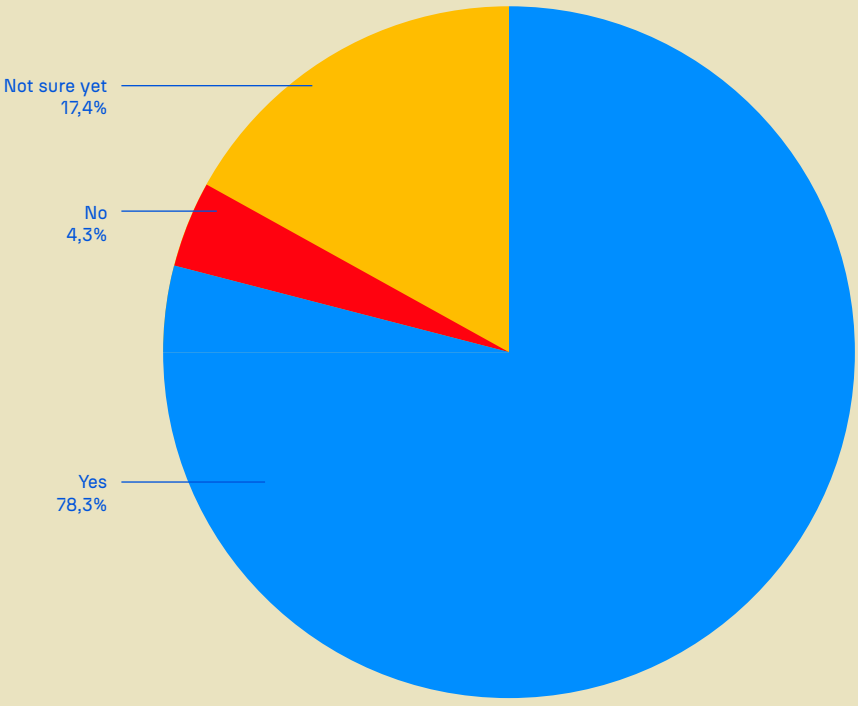
Travel, acomodation and previous logistics.



Venue, Schedules and Meals



About the meeting



Did the meeting fulfilled your expectations?