

Building Wikipedia awareness in South Africa & India

Insights, reflections, and recommendations
Communications Department

September 2022

Experiment background

In 2021 - 2022, the Wikimedia Foundation Communications department set out to grow brand awareness for Wikipedia in regions where it is not well known or understood.

This works toward the Foundation's Medium Term commitment to [“Increase brand awareness in markets where brand awareness is below 70%.”](#)

We approached awareness through Communications tools, seeking to reach and inform people about our Movement with locally-relevant stories. These are new expressions of Wikipedia's values that communicate Wikipedia's value and mission authentically for each location.

On the African continent, Wikipedia awareness ranges from 31% to 52% among internet users. In Asia, Wikipedia awareness ranges from 15% to 56% among internet users. This is in sharp contrast to Europe and North America, where Wikipedia awareness ranges from 74% (US) to 80% (Germany) of internet users.

These two awareness campaigns were experiments to help us determine ways we can grow more relevant in these markets, and the project team is pleased to share what was learned.

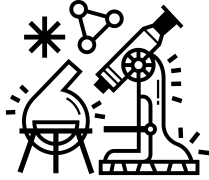


The experiment:

Wikipedia is made possible by people.

*How do we inspire more people to understand and care about **our brand?***

Key principles for these experiments



Test, Learn, Iterate.

These experiments are similar to a communications campaign. They make use of brand strategy, marketing insights, communications channels, and press outreach; but unlike a campaign in that it has a lot more room to fail.

A communications experiment is used to determine new ways brand can exist within a market. Like a start class article.



Be culturally relevant

Sometimes, being an international brand with American roots can lend itself to work that does not resonate. Collaborating with local content creators with relevance allows us to develop authentic and thoughtful content, created by the key audience and for the audience.



Fit in the conversations people are already having

By identifying a set of thought leaders and content creators who are packaging knowledge and providing perspectives on existing knowledge for highly engaged audiences.

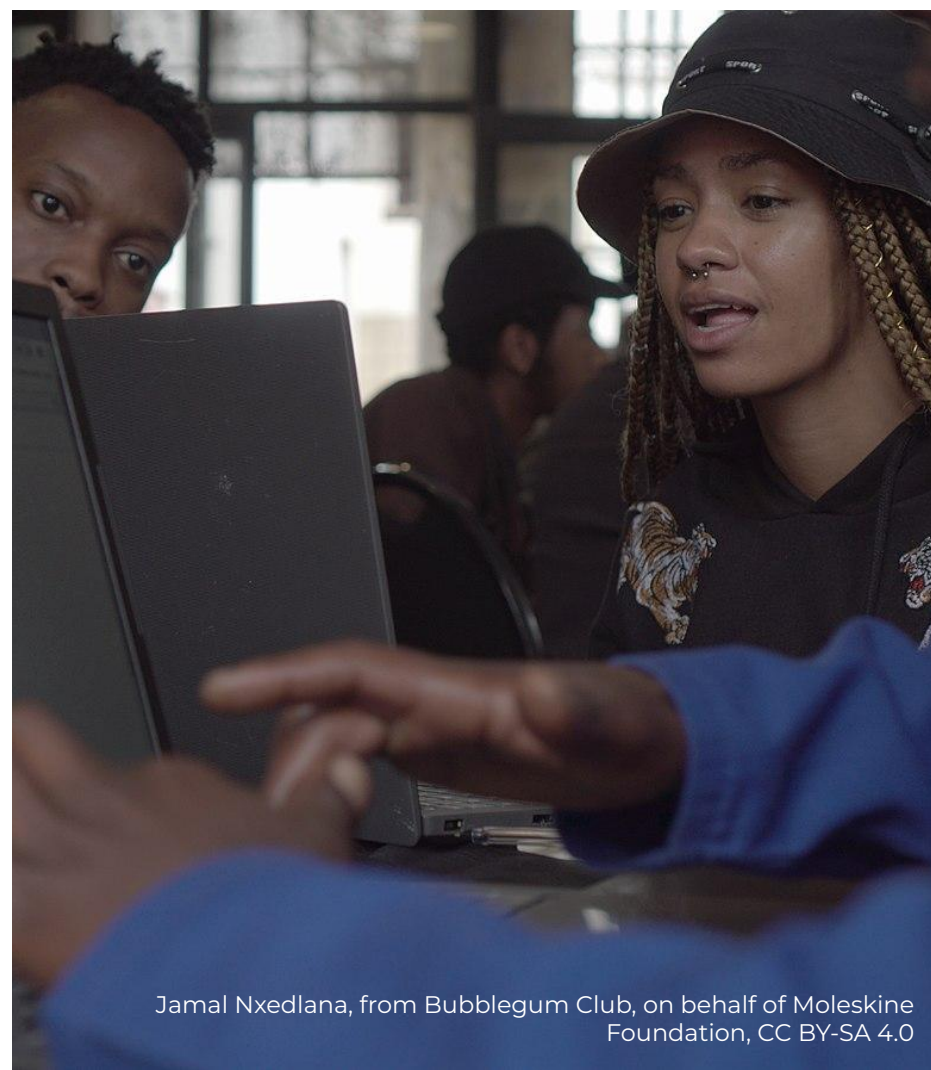


South Africa 2021

The challenge

27 years since the dawn of democracy, a myriad of systemic social, political, and technical barriers prevent young South Africans from accessing and contributing to free knowledge.

Wikipedia, the one place where knowledge is actually open and free, is seen as “just a website” to many.



Jamal Nxedlana, from Bubblegum Club, on behalf of Moleskine Foundation, CC BY-SA 4.0

The strategy

Make Wikipedia synonymous with open and free knowledge

Get

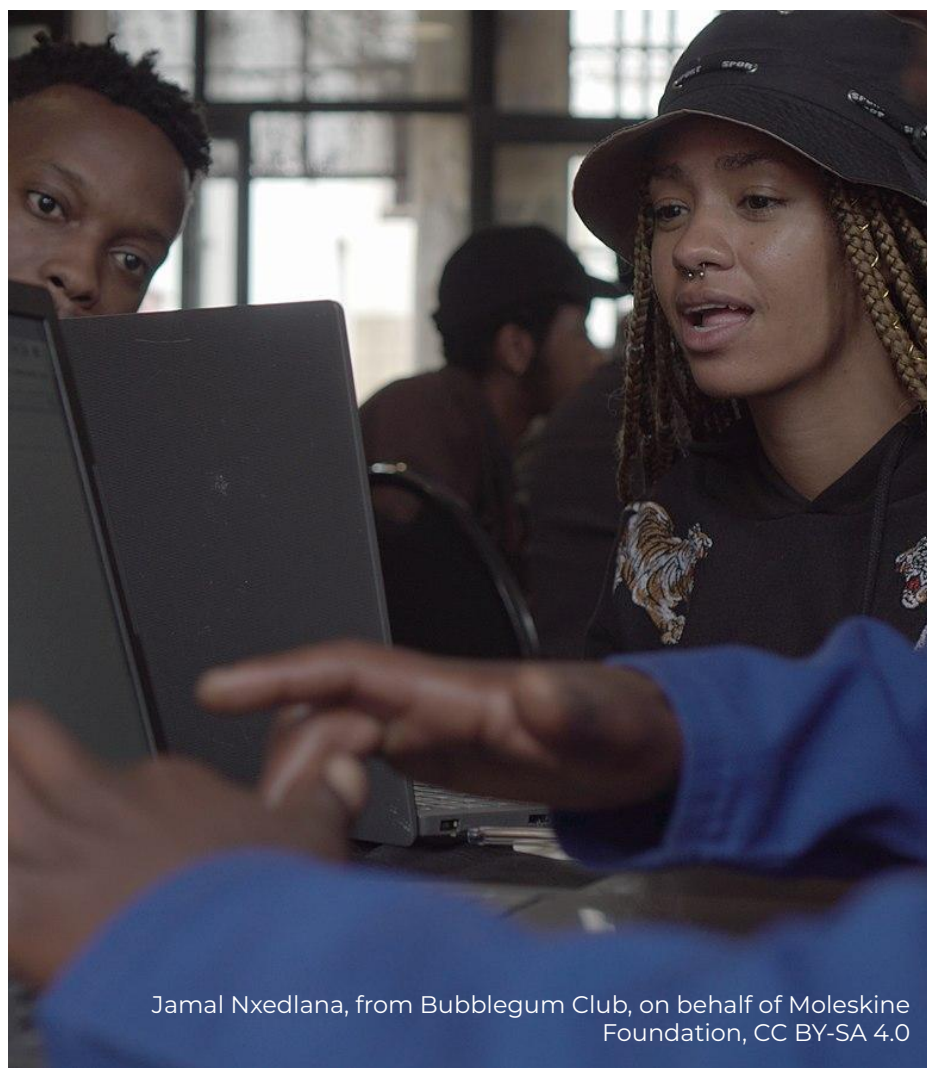
15-34 year old South Africans

To

See Wikipedia as a champion for all knowledge *not just as a website*

By

Celebrating all the ways knowledge can be open and free



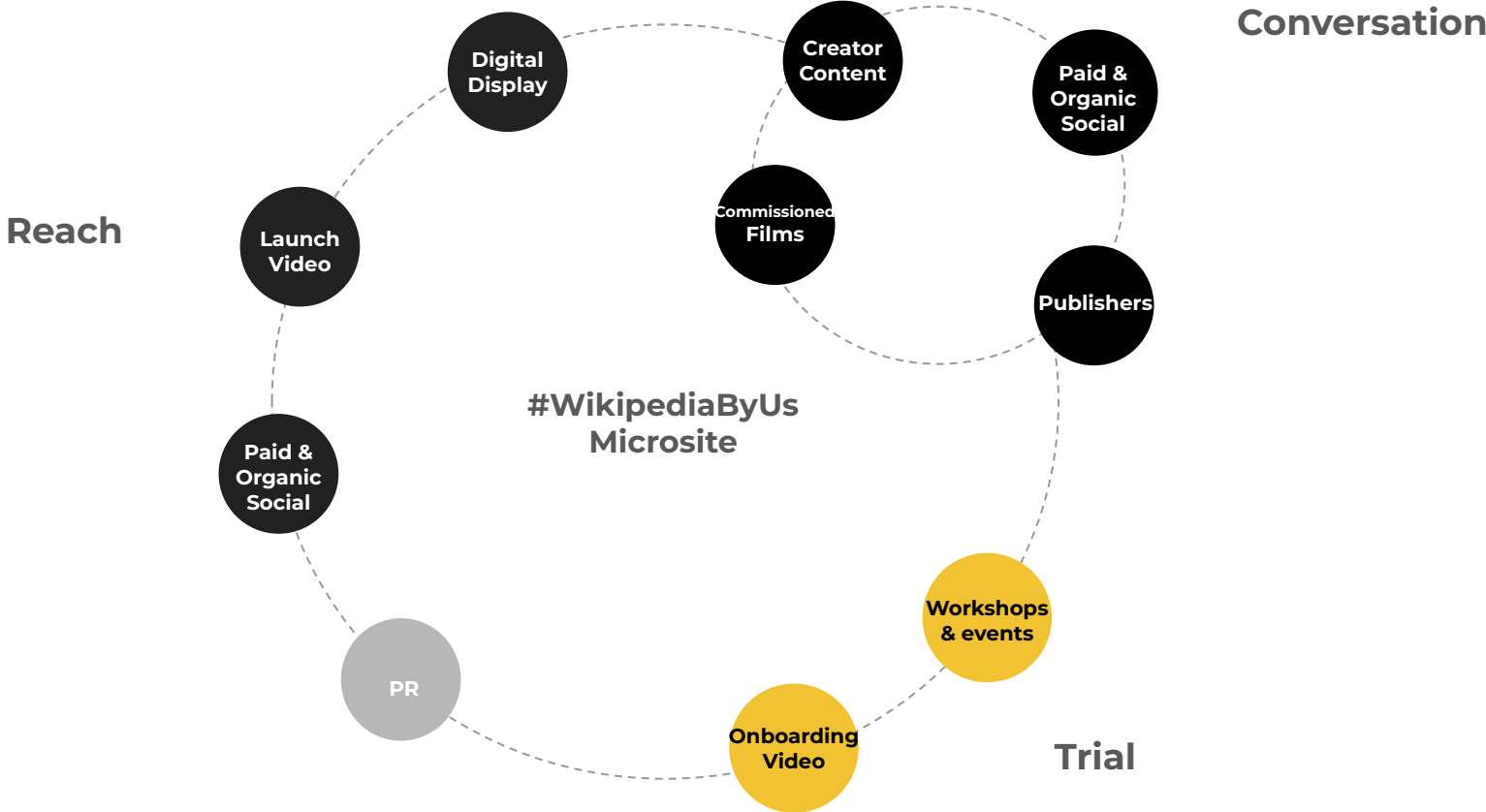
Jamal Nxedlana, from Bubblegum Club, on behalf of Moleskine Foundation, CC BY-SA 4.0

Integrated marketing plan

Objective	Get South Africans to see Wikipedia as a champion for all knowledge, not just as a website
Primary KPI	Video views (defined by Facebook as 15 seconds)
Flight dates	September 28 launch, October 1-9, 2021; November 5-14, 2021
Target audience	South Africans aged 18-34 y.o. with special interest in Wikipedia, Art & Film, and/or Social Justice & Equality
Media channels	Primarily Facebook, very limited promotion through Instagram and YouTube
Hashtag	#WikipediaByUs



The campaign ecosystem



Creative Work

Knowledge for us by us

#WikipediaByUs

Just as Wikipedia is a platform to freely exchange information through an open collaboration model, which allows anyone, anywhere, to contribute to the world's largest online encyclopedia, the **#WikipediaByUs** campaign encourages collaborators to engage with their creative discourses as contributors to the South African knowledge ecosystems. At the same time, it urges young South Africans to join Wikipedia's free knowledge movement and help expand the cultural and linguistic representation and understanding of South Africa.



Thabz
At least you're getting dak for vac, ay Yorke?



post production
Strangelove Studios

editor
shelby ncube

online editor
darian simon

producer
bevil schwartz

Some of our storytellers:



BUBBLEGUMCLUB

Results

Our messages reached nearly 1.3 million young South Africans

Results

2.74 million ad **impressions** (= view-throughs, times our ad was visible to users from our target audience)

1.94 million **people reached**

1 million **video views**



Long form editorial video garnered the highest engagement

Results: 22K clicks to the campaign's microsite

The full length video called Forwarded Many Times received **71.5% of all campaign link clicks**, predominantly driven by male audiences

Most of the **organic conversations** took place on Twitter:

- 87% of mentions came from Twitter

- 9% of mentions came from Instagram

- 4% of mentions came from Facebook

- >1% came from blogs/general news



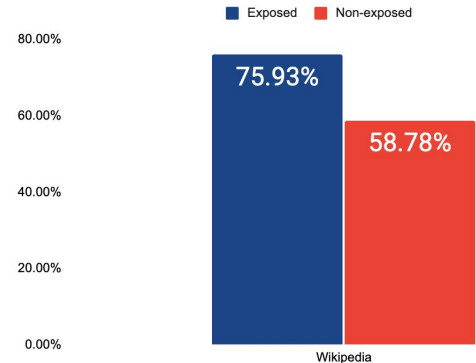
Double digit increase in awareness & strong associations with knowledge among exposed

Results: The word “**knowledge**” was strongly correlated with the key terms “**Wikipedia**” and “**power**” in mentions throughout the campaign.

There was a 958% increase in overall **social media interactions in South Africa** during the #WikipediaByUs campaign.

76% of the exposed group say Wikipedia comes to mind when thinking about **gaining more knowledge on a topic**, compared to 59% of the non-exposed group.

Overall, there was a **lift in awareness and perception** for the exposed group and a **lift in likeliness for a person to visit Wikipedia** to gain more knowledge on a topic.



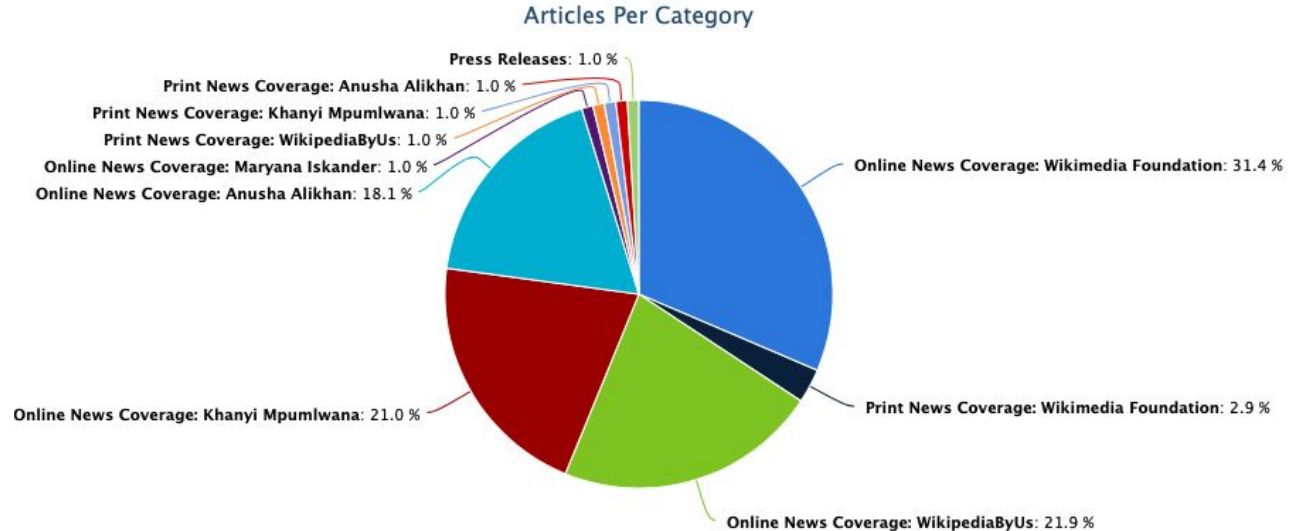
Q5: Which website(s) or app(s) from the list comes to mind when you think about gaining more knowledge on a topic?



Our media messages reached nearly 2,3 million young South Africans

Results

- The total audience reach is **2 337 954**, with the primary audiences being youth, women, and men from the age of 18 to 45.
- Coverage in 24 print and online news outlets covering the press release, and thought leadership pieces
- Coverage in 8 broadcast media outlets including university radio stations



Learnings

What we learned

About driving conversation

While we reached over 3 million young people, the campaign struggled to drive conversation receiving only 500 or so mentions on social media. The growth of social movements is driven by critical discourse, dialogue and conversation around relevant topics. Social media presents an opportunity to drive conversation with our audiences.

We also received a neutral sentiment from media which also shows the media in South Africa are still learning about our work i

Recommendation: In future campaigns should use social media not just as a reach platform, but a dialogue tool.



What we learned

About working with influencers

In order to increase engagement with young South Africans, we collaborated with content creators that our audience follows on social media platforms. By empowering these influential creators to build their own creative discourses around the South African knowledge ecosystem, we ensured both the authenticity of our message, as well as its resonance with our audience.

Recommendation: Reach and engage our audiences in a more authentic and impactful way through the people that they look up to and identify with.



India 2022

The largest audience in India has the lowest Wikipedia awareness

In India, even though awareness and consideration among young adults aged 25 to 34 years old are close to the country's average (at 32% and 28% respectively), when it comes to the 18-24 age group the same metrics present the lowest values (26% and 20% respectively) compared to all other age groups.

	Awareness - 31%
13 - 17 yrs	32%
18 - 24 yrs	26%
25 - 34 yrs	32%
35 - 44 yrs	32%

Source: Growth Market Research, 2020



Adam Jones from Kelowna, BC, Canada, CC BY-SA 2.0

Wikipedia is not meeting knowledge needs



NOT FOR PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

Our research indicates that Indian adults' knowledge journeys are driven by a desire to advance themselves. 18 - 24-year-olds in India mostly seek information or knowledge for personal development (57%) and only 44% come to wikipedia to satisfy this need.

	18 - 24	25 - 34	35 - 44
Personal Development	44%	57%	52%



NOT A RELEVANT & COMPREHENSIVE SOURCE

	18 - 24	25 - 34	35 - 44
Is comprehensive	19%	28%	33%
Has content that's relevant to me	26%	35%	36%
Is a trustworthy source	41%	47%	44%
Helps the world	43%	45%	46%

Source: Growth Market Research, 2020

The strategy

GET

GenZ adults aged 18-24

WHO

read Wikipedia

TO

see Wikipedia as relevant

BY

showing them how often they call on us to know
and do more



The Campaign

Integrated marketing plan

Objective Get young Indians to see Wikipedia as a relevant source of information in their everyday lives

Primary KPI Reach & impressions

Flight dates 5 - 31 May 2022

Target audience Indians aged 18-25 y.o.

Media channel Instagram - both promoted & organic posts

Influencer marketing 9 influencers from different backgrounds created and shared original content related to their personal areas of interest and expertise and the use of Wikipedia as a source of knowledge for a variety of topics.

Hashtag #KnowWithWiki



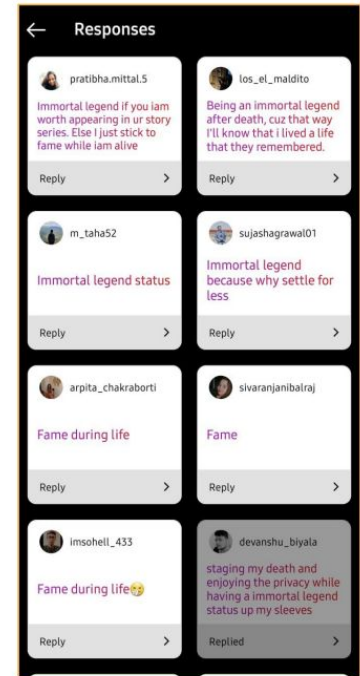
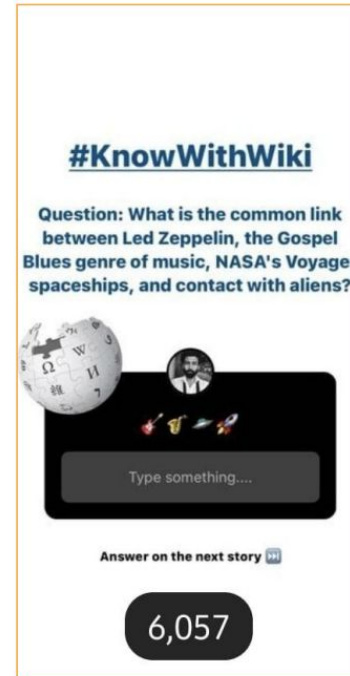
The influencers' campaign

Strategy:

- **9 influencers** from a variety of genres (e.g. comics, sustainability, gender equality, music)
- 3.5 million followers reach
- **27 content pieces** created
- Platform: **Instagram**
[N.B. As of January 2022, India had a total of 230.25 million Instagram users, the largest Instagram audience in the world.]


Approach for content creation:

- Each of the creators shared content pieces with a distinct visual style around the theme of #KnowWithWiki.
- The uploaded videos related to each influencer's personal areas of interest and expertise.
- Every content piece incorporated a narrative that was linked to the influencer and crafted with inputs from both the Wikipedia brand and the creator.



Creative Approach

KNOW YOUR WORLD BETTER



#KnowWithWiki reminds a new generation of internet goers that Wikipedia is here to help them understand their world better.

Various topics are presented through **60 second long story sessions**; where young people talk to the camera and introduce their audience to “fast facts” about their chosen subject matter.

KNOW YOUR
WORLD BETTER



#KNOWWITHWIKI

KNOW YOUR
WORLD BETTER



#KNOWWITHWIKI

KNOW YOUR
WORLD BETTER



#KNOWWITHWIKI

KNOW YOUR
WORLD BETTER



#KNOWWITHWIKI

KNOW YOUR
WORLD BETTER



#KNOWWITHWIKI

Campaign
summary video

Know your **housefly** better



“Houseflies are often seen cleaning their legs by rubbing them together, enabling the chemoreceptors to taste afresh whatever they walk on next.”^[11]

Know your **endometriosis** better



“Endometriosis is a disease of the female reproductive system in which cells similar to those in the endometrium, the layer of tissue that normally covers the inside of the uterus, grow outside the uterus”

Know your **music history** better



“Blind Willie Johnson (January 25, 1897 – September 18, 1945) was an American gospel blues singer, guitarist and evangelist. ...His "chest voice" singing, slide guitar skills, and originality has influenced generations of musicians.”

Know your **spinal cord** better



“Usually, victims of spinal cord injuries will suffer loss of feeling in certain parts of their body. More severe injuries may result in paraplegia, tetraplegia (also known as quadriplegia), or full body paralysis below the site of injury to the spinal cord.”

Know your **climate change** better



“However, the modern observed rise in temperature and CO2 concentrations has been so rapid that even abrupt geophysical events in Earth's history do not approach current rates.”^[40]

Know your **romantic relationships** better



“When a serious relationship ends badly, these partners suffer from complex emotional stresses of detachment. This, in combination with the need to move forward, leads previous partners to have uncommitted relations called rebounds.”

Results in India

We reached nearly 28 million young people

Results: 143 million impressions (= view-throughs, times our videos were visible to users from our target audience)

26 million people reached through the campaign

1.97 million reached organically, through the influencers' posts

24.1K people reached organically, through Wikipedia's and the WMF's posts



Youth influencers on social media drove high engagement

Campaign results

204K clicks to the link of the ads of which 199K of clicks came from unique users

Influencers' campaign results

2.4 million engagements, such as views, likes, comments in Posts, replies in Stories, shares and/or saves

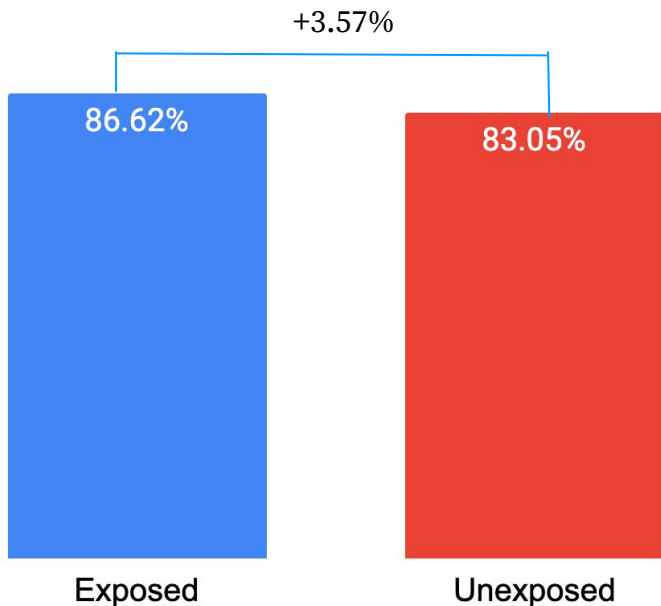
Organic posts' results

8.5% engagement with new and existing followers, achieved from the likes, shares, comments, and saves

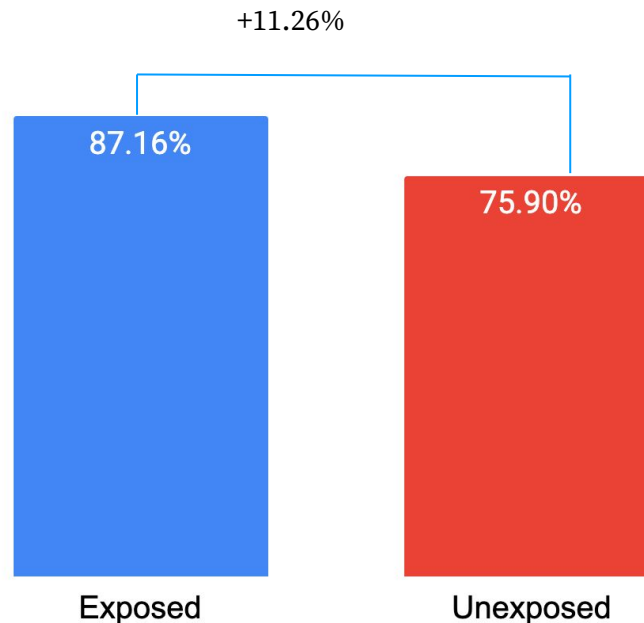


Aided Awareness increased by nearly 4% & audiences' propensity to use WP in the future improved

Awareness



Propensity to use



Base: All respondents
Q: Which website(s) or app(s) from the list comes to mind when you think about gaining more knowledge on a topic?

Base: All respondents
Q: How likely would you use Wikipedia when you need answers to your questions or need for information and knowledge online?

The campaign increased usage among exposed young people

Active readership



+12%

Pageviews growth
in the Wikipedia
articles of focus

Brand advocacy



70/59

**(exposed/not
exposed)**

NPS improved
when exposed
to campaign

Campaign sentiment



73%

Highly positive
sentiment to the
campaign by the
audience.



Our media message reached over 125 million people

Results: Our [press release](#) reached an audience of about **13.98 million online readers**

65 million Indians read interviews in the press which included in-depth knowledge about the [campaign](#) and the [movement](#)

Our BoT member, Raju Narisetti's interview with India's leading news agency, [ANI](#) garnered an **additional reach of 45 million readers**

Collaboration with Mad Over Marketing, an online platform for marketing campaigns, posted a [recap](#) of our campaign on their instagram handle with **1.1M followers**.



Learnings

What we learned

About young people in India.

As our data has shown, young people in India have the greatest potential to participate in knowledge creation, however their awareness about Wikipedia is low. This is an engaged audience that is interrogating the status quo and thinking about the world around them in interesting ways. This generation is hungry to improve narratives around their social identities, gender identities, perspectives of their youth and their country. The future of the Wikimedia movement in India sits with them!

Recommendation: Work across movement to help to activate their interest and participation in the movement.

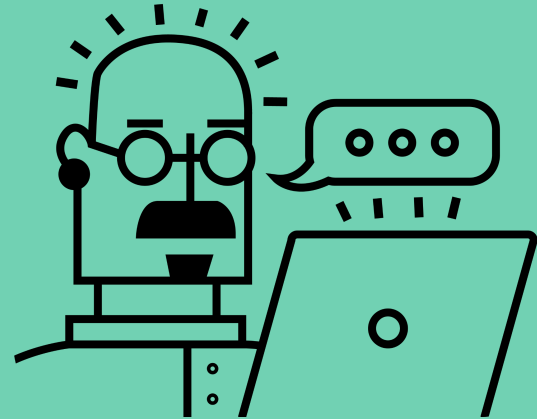


What we learned

About press in India

- Indian mainstream media is aware of Wikipedia and wants to do deeper stories around topics related to disinformation & online bias, fundraising, languages, etc., rather than generic stories to promote the platform or a campaign.
- Stories highlighting the work of the Wikimedia community and the Foundation and their impact in India were of interest to many publications.
- We feel that there is still potential in regional/vernacular press to promote basic understanding of Wikipedia and how it invites readers and users representing different regions and languages.

Recommendation: Consistently engage with the Indian media to educate and build informative stories about the movement, the Wikipedia model of community-led processes and role of the Foundation vis-a-vis its platforms and community.





Rea leboga

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धन्यवाद

Thank you

Discussion

What can we do to reach new audiences?

How can we communicate our values and our mission?

What creative stories and messages do you find inspiring?

Who can we learn from?

How can the Wikimedia Foundation support your outreach?