

WIKIMEDIA CH

# Community

Annual Report 2019 | Wikimedia CH



# Introduction & Strategy

Wikimedia CH implemented a new strategy for Program Community in 2019. The strategy divides activities into four areas: community building, community health, recruitment and international collaboration. We stressed the first two this year because we were witnessing a decline in volunteers. We wanted to ensure that we retained the institutional knowledge of our experienced members as well as the enthusiasm of both new and longtime members.

To show our appreciation, we honored members with awards ceremonies and networking opportunities, but most of all, we delivered events centered on community needs and interests. Wikimedia CH demonstrated our commitment to partners' and volunteers' betterment – as they define it, not as we define it – by listening, collaborating and then producing events that furthered our strategic goals. We explicitly described how events and activities were interconnected so that we imbued a broader purpose that resonated with volunteers. The very act of describing our programmatic purpose also kept our strategy top of mind so that we could deliver a coherent Community Program.

In 2020, we intend to emphasize recruitment after having focused on retention in 2019. Program Community will coordinate with Programs GLAM and Education to ensure success because many new volunteers will emerge from special interests. Few will join Wikimedia CH because of a deep-rooted need to support open knowledge but will, instead, pair their passion for a certain topic, such as fine art, with the desire to share it. So, all three of our chapter's programmatic pillars must help with recruitment.

Relationships that we fostered in 2019 will continue into 2020 and beyond. It is essential to the health of our chapter and the Wikimedia Movement that we build reputable, long-term partnerships that cultivate institutional knowledge and recognition in national and international arenas. It is the only way that we can speak loudly enough to sustain and expand free, unbiased digital knowledge and inspire change when needed.

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# Community Building

Through community building, we aim to strengthen the engagement of new volunteers. [Noircir Wikipedia](#) exemplifies our 2019 community-building efforts. The group seeks to add more Wikipedia information about people and cultural elements from Africa and of African descent. Throughout 2019, they held 10 workshops in Geneva and Paris. Along with the two founders, a

core of three Genevan Wikipedians attended most of the local workshops, and eight new people were trained as contributors. Combined, they created more than 100 articles, edited more than 600 articles and made more than 7,000 edits.

While we had not planned on supporting the group, we quickly realized that the volunteers were passionate, productive and deserving of our support. Their burgeoning interest aligned with our chapter's strategy and that of the Wikimedia Movement, and we plan to continue supporting the group in 2020.

We also fostered our community's interests with activities that make and share photos of Swiss culture and heritage. In September, Wikimedia CH participated in the [Wiki Loves Monuments](#) photo contest. Wikimedia gained 1,799 new photos; go to the [finalists' web page](#) to see examples of the beautiful images the volunteers created. We honored Switzerland's winners at our chapter's New Year's Brunch in January 2020. Moreover, we continued to support photographers with a program whereby we buy and lend out photo equipment to retain existing or acquire new volunteers. This program produced 18,000 new photos during 2019, and currently, it remains [our most productive program](#).



Image by photographer Alessandro Marchetti, who was supported by Wikimedia CH. (#3 - Photo credits at the end of the page.)

Along with Noircir Wikipedia, we offered other series that allowed community members to coalesce around topics of interest. Another example is the [series of edit-a-thons](#) at the City Library in Geneva, which celebrates and builds community for the city and surrounding areas. One edit-a-thon was about Lake Geneva's boats and navigation. It was such a success that the librarians practically closed the library on our participants. So, a follow-up event in February focused on Lake Lemman boats and navigation. These events demonstrate how our structured series can spawn further community engagement.

Community building is about making new volunteers feel welcome. In addition to supporting the topics that interest them, another way we welcome them is by helping to enhance their proficiency. Skills development illustrates how Programs GLAM, Education and Community are all aligned with the Wikimedia Movement's recommendations. With the [GLAMwikiCH Day](#), [Wikidata workshop in Lausanne](#), [Wikidata Zurich Training 2019](#)

and other activities we have already described, we built our community in 2019.

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# Community Health

We stressed both community building and community health in 2019. While community building focused on engaging new volunteers, our community health efforts underscored the value of our longtime members. We honored experienced, committed volunteers and their significant contributions with awards and thank-you events.



Also, we used a similar approach to what we used for new members by supporting ongoing series that interested our longtime volunteers, provided thematic coherence and aligned with our strategy. One example is a group from Switzerland's Italian-speaking region. The longstanding [Insubria](#) group held a series of tours and edit-a-thons called [In the Steps of Carlo Amoretti](#), mixing activities on Wikidata, Wikipedia, Wikivoyage and OpenStreetMap. Also, [Les sans pagEs](#) held dozens of events in 2019 to increase women's presence on Wikipedia. They included 26 weekly meetups at the University of Geneva, with approximately 100 articles improved on French Wikipedia. Interest in one activity inspired follow-on activities that built community. For example, a series on improving Wikimedia information about women in fine arts led to another series about women in music.

Our community health also benefited greatly by the addition of Outreach & Communication Manager Kerstin Sonnekalb to our chapter's roster. In a multilingual country such as Switzerland, good member management is crucial so that we can respect and engage the various linguistic communities and cultural interests that crisscross our country and spread across our borders. Among other things, Kerstin has increased outreach via social media and transformed the press mailing list into an operational tool that can target specific linguistic groups, localities and more. It may be considered basic work, but that is what makes it fundamental to our success.

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# Community Recruitment

Our emphasis in 2020 will be on community recruitment, but we recruited new members in 2019, as well. [Women for Wikipedia](#) is an editing campaign dedicated to expanding the breadth and accuracy of Wikipedia's information about notable Swiss women.

In 2019, it included two edit-a-thons. The later event ended up being one of the largest in Switzerland, resulting in dozens of new biographies on women. It was hosted at the headquarters of Swiss Television and Radio (SRF for Schweizer Radio und Fernsehen) in Zurich but also involved SRF branches in Berlin, London, Washington, Johannesburg, Buenos Aires, Ontario and Moscow. The events contributed to international collaboration while furthering our objective of recruiting new volunteers; a handful of experienced Wikipedians supported new authors, all of them journalists.



TV interview with Patrizia Laeri, organizer of the Women for Wikipedia edit-a-thons. (#6 - Photo credits at the end of the page.)

Our recruitment activities often focused on partnering with like-minded groups so that we could cross-pollinate our communities. For example, [Castles Dossier](#) is a collaboration with [OpenStreetMap](#), an organization that has many volunteers who are also Wikimedia CH members or involved in other Wiki projects. Our chapter defined a memorandum of understanding

with OpenStreetMap to establish a long-term partnership, of which the Castles Dossier project is a part. The project creates better representations of Swiss castles and palaces on Wikipedia by supplementing the Wiki content with geographic information from OpenStreetMap, and vice versa. The groups' members benefit from networking opportunities, too.

Like-minded groups also collaborated to support [Art+Feminism](#), a nonprofit with a worldwide focus that addresses the inequality of gender in the arts on Wikipedia. Wikimedia CH helped to spread the word about Art+Feminism, and two community groups participated in their 2019 campaign, [Who Writes His\\_tory?](#) and Les sans PagEs.



An Art+Feminism edit-a-thon at the Museum of Art and Archeology in Geneva.  
(#7 - Photo credits at the end of the page.)

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# International Collaboration

International collaborations are central to how the Swiss people operate, and Wikimedia CH is no exception. Switzerland's linguistic regions extend into Italy, France, Germany and Austria. Plus, a full [25% of the population are immigrants](#) (2 million out of

8 million people) – 15% hail from Italy, 14% from Germany and 12% from Portugal. We routinely involve the chapters of border countries in our events and, in turn, publicize those chapters' events and help our members attend them. In 2019, Wikimedia CH supported the WikiCons for the French-, German- and Italian-speaking communities. We publicized and gave grants for our members to attend, several of whom also served as speakers. We also collaborated closely on various events to share costs and make our work more sustainable. For example, we worked with Wikipedia Germany to offer the first-of-its-kind Wikidata Zurich Training 2019.

In addition to conventions outside the country, Wikimedia CH hosted the third-annual [Volunteer Supporters Network Meeting](#) in November. Members of the chapters from Austria, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Poland, Spain and Serbia joined us in Switzerland. Experts in community support discussed topics such as new editor retention and chapter–community relations.



Volunteer Supporters Network Meeting. (#9 - Photo credits at the end of the page.)



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**1. Münsterbrücke and Fraumünster at twilight.**

[Münsterbrücke](#) is a pedestrian and road bridge over the [Limmat](#) in the city of [Zurich](#). [Fraumünster](#) is a church in Zurich which was built on the remains of a former abbey for aristocratic women which was founded in 853. Photo by VolleySteff - Own work, CC BY-SA 4.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=82183193>.

**2. [Grossmünster](#)**, a Romanesque-style Protestant church in [Zurich](#) and one of the four major churches in the city. Photo by Sandro332 - Own work, CC BY-SA 4.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=81871175>.

**3. Image by photographer Alessandro Marchetti**, who was supported by Wikimedia CH. This photo is of a League election rally for the May 2019 municipal and European elections. This rally is in front of the Basilica of Montecatini Terme. Photo by Alexmar983 - Own work, CC BY-SA 4.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=78697315>.

**4. Celebrating New Year's brunch 2019 in [Chiasso](#).** Photo by Ilario - Own work, CC BY-SA 4.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=75866890>.

5. **Hallwyl Castle**, one of the most important moated castles in Switzerland. Photo by TarErunamo - Own work, CC BY-SA 4.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=82625678>.

6. **TV interview with Patrizia Laeri**, organizer of the **Women for Wikipedia** edit-a-thons. Photo by Kerstin Sonnekalb (WMCH) - Own work, CC BY-SA 4.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=83828793>.

7. **An Art+Feminism edit-a-thon** at the Museum of Art and Archeology in Geneva, March 2019, with **Les sans pagEs** and Wikimedia CH. Photo by Nattes à chat - Own work, CC BY-SA 4.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=77640105>.

8. **Lago di Luzzone**, a reservoir in **Ticino**, as seen from the ridge below the mountain **Piz Terri**. Photo by Dani Michel - Own work, CC BY-SA 3.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=40545050>.

9. **Volunteer Supporters Network Meeting**. Switzerland hosted this third-annual international gathering of Wikimedians who are experts in community support. Photo by Kerstin Sonnekalb (WMCH) - Own work, CC BY-SA 4.0,

<https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=84104939>.

10. **Pfäffikersee by night.** [Pfäffikersee](#) (or Lake Pfäffikon) is a lake in the [canton of Zurich](#). The lake was created in the last ice age when a moraine blocked off the ability for the lake to empty north towards Winterthur. Photo by Lriese 1 - Own work, CC BY-SA 4.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=49061475>.