

CEE Youth Meeting Prague, 2023

First in-person meeting of the CEE Youth Group (24 and 25 November 2023)



Meeting Prague, 2023

Report written by the organisers of the meeting
(Barbara Klen, Klára Joklová, Lucie Schubert, and Toni Ristovski)

Background

CEE Youth Group is an initiative of the Wikimedia CEE Hub to informally connect young people (younger than 26 years old) from Central and Eastern Europe across the region to support capacity building in this area. The group was established in May 2023 and it is organised by the CEE Hub coordinator Barbara Klen and Steering Committee (SC) member Klára Joklová.

In December 2023, CEE Youth Group had 25 members from 14 different countries.

Participants

The Prague Meeting was attended by 15 participants from 8 different countries, of which 4 were female participants. Four organisers were present during the meeting, 2 staff members of the CEE Hub and 2 staff members of the Wikimedia Czech Republic.

Programme

Friday, 24th of November

16:30-17:00 - After all participants gathered at the hostel Czech Inn around 17:00 CET, they were divided into 3 groups. Each group received the same instructions to fulfil certain tasks with the end goal to find the restaurant using the app Actionbound.

17:15-19:00 - Playing the game/hunt.

19:00-21:00 - From 19:00 CET, all of the participants and supporting members of the group (organisers) had dinner together.

After the dinner, some Youth group members went sightseeing while others went to the hostel.

Saturday, 25th of November

09:00-09:15 - Getting together

Getting together at the lobby (Czech Inn) and moving to the office space (WMCZ) - *short walk to the office.*

09:15-09:30 - Coffee and name tags

Meeting at the venue, everyone gets their warm drink (coffee, tea) and makes his/her name. Last preparation for the meeting.

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09:30-09:40 - Start and introduction

Barbara Klen welcomes everyone and asks every participant to say his/her name and country of origin.

09:40-09:50 - Energiser

Klára Joklová facilitated this segment, asking everyone to write down one thing that others would not have guessed about, i.e. things that they know, experience that they had, personal information, etc.

Afterwards, everyone draws one piece of paper and needs to find the “real” owner of that piece of paper. This took more than the initially planned 10 minutes, but it was an interesting activity and a productive way to connect better with group members.

09:50-10:15 - Inner work, ground rules & friendly space policy

Klára Joklová explained to the group ground rules of the day, along with the friendly space policy, which was especially important for those attending their first international event ever.

Afterwards, every participant got one sheet of paper where they needed to write down answers to the following questions:

- What do you need to feel safe in a group of people?
- What makes you comfortable during work/conversation?
- What quality do you appreciate in your discussion partner?
- What helps you to be heard in a group?

10:15-10:25 - Debriefing of the game

During this segment, Lucie Schubert explained what was achieved during the hunt/game that participants played during last evening.

10:25-10:35 - Explanation of the Goals for 2024

CEE Hub staff members, Barbara Klen and Toni Ristovski, explained in short the CEE Youth Group Goals for the following year, which were proposed in the grant proposal for Year 2 of the Wikimedia CEE Hub under the name “Stronger CEE Hub”. At the time of the Prague Meeting, the CEE Hub grant proposal was under review and CEE Hub staff members could not confirm which of the proposed CEE Youth Group related activities would be approved.¹

Proposed CEE Youth Group related activities which could be supported by the CEE Hub staff members in 2024 are:

¹ The CEE Hub received feedback from the Wikimedia Foundation about its grant proposal in December 2023. The CEE Hub got less funds compared to what was asked thus, during the first half of January 2024, the CEE Hub will have a clear image about precise support which will be available for the CEE Youth Group during the 2024.

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- 6 bi-monthly online meetings of the CEE Youth Group
- 1 hybrid/offline working meeting of the CEE Youth Group (similar to the Prague Meeting)
- 1 Diff Blog post about the work of the group
- 1 joint project application written (e.g. Internship program developed, the CEE Youth Camp, Youth competition)
- 4-6 updates of the CEE Youth Group related Meta page
- CEE Youth Wikimania program created
- Min. 10 CEE communities represented
- Min. 2 learning sessions organised (soft skills development)

GOALS FOR 2024

10:35-11:25 - Working groups

The goal of this session was finetuning the focus of the group for 2024. Participants were invited to brainstorm in smaller groups on the following four topics:

- Youth related contests (online activities) run by Toni Ristovski
- Joint project: project application writing run by Barbara Klen
- Soft skills run by Klára Joklová
- Internships run by Lucie Schubert

Participants could change groups during the session. The proposed topic for the soft skills development did not attract any participants but we managed to touch upon this topic in groups for project application writing and internships. This session was designed as brainstorming of participants of smaller groups while team leaders were writing down all collected ideas on flip chart papers.

Youth related contests (online activities)

In this group, a small number of participants discussed that online editing contests should be open for everyone. They did not support the idea of organising separate editing contests exclusively for young people. Majority of participants agreed that instead of separate editing contests, the creation of more youth related content on various Wikipedia language editions should be encouraged. Here it was mentioned that the regional *CEE Spring* contest could play a vital role in creating youth content in more languages from the CEE Region. Although not specific only to the topic, it was mentioned that there should be a connection between online and offline activities, such as taking photos outside. The group also discussed how there should be more focus on “smaller” Wikimedia projects and how it could be a good idea to have challenges with separate tasks of fixing something, having small and/or medium edits, without needing to write a whole article during the process. This ‘lighter’ approach would enable young people who just started editing Wikipedia to assimilate to the movement better while having to take one step at the time and without feeling overwhelmed.

Joint project: project application writing

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This group was the largest formed group during the session. Participants were discussing many topics, such as working with young people and universities, including national minorities and refugees (as well as diaspora), using social media to promote Wiki related work, creating a joint project as CEE Youth Camp, connection between Wiki Clubs, collaborating with schools, research about Wikimedia contributions for young people, newcomers onboarding & support group, and online exchange.

From all that was discussed, seven distinct topics were selected: Youth Camp, edit-a-thon(s), CEE Spring youth editions (inclusion of the famous young people), youth social networks, work in schools, online exchange/support group, and Youth Wikimedian of the year, locally and globally (celebrating young Wikimedians from the region).

Internships

Although small in size, this group had a thorough discussion with many ideas, which included a discussion about soft skills in the end too. The topic of internships was divided into several sub segments such as competences, funding, alternatives, areas, time, and good practice examples. Under competences the participants discussed WM soft skills, governance, fundraising, project management, management skills, tech skills, and presentation skills and HR. When talking about practical implementation i.e. finances and funding they brainstormed about costs that would be covered and who would cover that and also about community involvement in covering costs. Under alternatives, Erasmus, group internships, and local internships in partner institutions were mentioned. Under 'area' the group discussed knowledge transfer from community to community, GLAM, project based internships, and starting of the collaboration through internships, and under 'time' they discussed offline/online, duration of the internship (3-4 weeks), and balance of time frame. As good practice examples they mentioned Wikimedia Deutschland (Wikimedia Germany), WMF - mentoring dashboard, Wiki Edu - dashboard, and Let's Connect.

11:25-11:35 - Break

After this extensive brainstorming session, we had a break.

11:35-12:05 - Presenting the ideas and voting

After a short break, team leaders briefly presented ideas that the participants of their groups came up with so everyone could hear what was discussed by all three groups.

Following the presentation by the team leaders, all participants were asked to vote with sticker points (everyone got 4 votes to share). The goal of this exercise was to see which out of 14 final ideas participants want to work on during 2024.

The following ideas received the most votes:

1. Internships (13)
2. Youth Camp (11)

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3. Youth social networks and Youth Wikimedian Of The Year (each 10 votes)

CONNECTING CEE YOUTH GROUP GOALS AND LOCAL CONTEXT

12:05-12:15 - Rock, Paper, Scissors (Tournament)

This fun and loud energiser is based on the well-known “Rock, Paper, Scissors” game.

12:15-13:00 - Connecting CEE Youth Group goals and local context

During this session and based on the previous brainstorming session, we asked the whole groups following questions:

- With the inspiration from previous brainstorming sessions - is there any activity that could work better on your local level?
- How to start with it?
- What else could you do in your community?

We agree that many of the mentioned ideas during the brainstorming sessions were global initiatives, so they cannot be done in the local context, although some of the activities which received a less votes can be done in the local communities depending on the desire and choice of that community.

13:00-13:45 - Lunch

During the lunch, Jan Beránek started to shoot videos of the young participants and to take images of them, along with the organisers, so that each participant could have a nice image on the Wikimedia Commons after the event.

WIKIMANIA 2024 CEE YOUTH SESSIONS

13:45-14:00 - Wikimania Intro

This session about Wikimania was subsequently divided into six different topics.

First there was a brief **Introduction for Wikimania**, during which Toni Ristovski presented what the meaning of Wikimania is i.e. how it is the largest conference in a Wikimedia movement dedicated to everyone: editors, event organisers, researchers, employees and even general public.

14:00-14:15 - Individual work

Second topic was **Individual work**, where participants wrote on post-its papers what they as young participants would like to see during the upcoming Wikimania, what they would like to learn, and what makes them feel welcome. They were asked to write each idea on a different post-it paper, to enable clustering of ideas afterwards.

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14:15-14:45 - Vision Board

After all participants finished with writing their ideas, they were asked to stick their ideas, one by one, on the wall, while also explaining what they wrote in front of other participants.

Barbara Klen **clustered ideas** in the following groups: content/programmes, movement, collaboration, motivation, people, skills, venue, atmosphere, tech/tools and extra activities. Most of the ideas were about people at Wikimania and about the content of the conference.

14:45-15:30 - Picking & main discussion

After having all ideas presented on the wall and clustered into several groups, the whole group started discussing ideas.

15:30-15:50 - Break

After this extensive Wikimania session, we had a break.

15:30-16:40 - Group work

In this session, **participants were divided into three groups** and they had a task to select which of those ideas they liked the most and what they wanted to continue working on. The goal was to have something concrete to share with the organisers of the Wikimania next year and to have something to present as a group during Wikimania 2024.

Although each group followed a different process and way of working, in the end they presented quite similar ideas, such as scavenger hunts, meeting people through speed dating, board games, silent room, national traditional food evening, social event, filming reels, etc.

16:40-17:10 - Presentations

At the end, groups presented their work in front of everyone.

CEE YOUTH GROUP DEFINITIONS

17:10-17:45 - Youth Group definition

In the latest working session of the day, we discussed rules of the group, roles in the group, regularity of the meetings, UCoC concrete implementation, etc.

It was agreed that the CEE Hub should announce dates of online meetings a lot earlier (ideally 1 month) and that voting about date/time should take place before scheduling meetings.

Group meetings should continue to take place bi-monthly while some sub-groups can (if they want) meet more often.

About the roles, everyone agreed that some of the group members naturally become specialised for some

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matter, such as Jan for communication, Caner for visual identity, etc.

It was mentioned that the group needs to revise conditions of the memberships, especially with those who will turn 26 years.

It was agreed that Telegram is sufficient for communication, although Nikos offered to create Instagram for the group. He will send additional materials regarding this after the meeting.

CLOSING SESSION

17:45-18:10 - Feedback to the meeting

At the end, Klára asked everyone to say a few words and to contemplate how they spent their day and to also share what they gained from this meeting.