



PRESS RELEASE | Immediate Release March 2023

Wikipedia Communities Launch Campaign to Unlock Africa's Environmental Knowledge

Africa Environment WikiFocus launched on 3rd March on Wangari Maathai Day. The global drive concentrates the attention of Wikipedians and climate experts on improving and adding citable researched content to Wikipedia to improve the coverage and understanding of climate, the environment, and the threats facing the continent and its people from climate change.

Cape Town, South Africa, immediate release — Wiki In Africa (www.wikiinafrica.org) and their organising partner, Wikimedia Usergroup Côte d'Ivoire, have launched the Africa Environment WikiFocus to improve the coverage and understanding of climate and environment-related topics on Wikipedia, particularly in Africa. The month-long WikiFocus encourages Wikimedia and climate activists across the continent (and beyond) to add factual data and researched content about all facets of Africa's climate.

The [Afrobarometer report](#) (2019) found that only 28% of Africans (in the 34 countries surveyed) were aware of climate change as a concept. This worrying lack of knowledge is partly due to a pervasive lack of visibility of relevant information about Climate, Weather, and Climate Change, especially from the media, across Africa. Wikipedia is one of the few media platforms that people across Africa can access for free.

Africa is one of the regions most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. Africa is responsible for only around 4% of global greenhouse gas emissions. Still, it will be disproportionately affected by climate change. Climate change will significantly impact Africa, reports the United Nations. Expected impacts include increased frequency and severity of droughts, floods, and other extreme weather events that can damage crops



PRESS RELEASE | Immediate Release March 2023

and infrastructure and cause food shortages. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has released estimates that climate change could reduce crop yields in Africa by up to 30% by 2050.

The Africa Environment WikiFocus will incorporate up-to-date factual data and research, some supplied explicitly by the African Union and organisations active in the climate and environmental sector. It will also raise awareness of these challenges by improving the coverage of climate and environment-related topics on Wikipedia. The initiative brings together climate experts, environmental organisations, and Wikipedians to create high-quality, well-researched articles that are freely accessible to a broad audience.

Seventeen volunteer Wikimedia communities across Anglophone and Francophone Africa will host in-person editing events in March and April. Additional online training sessions ([watch this one on youtube](#)) will share the knowledge required to add content to Wikipedia.

Africa's Wikimedia communities have provided other ways to participate through focused alignment with several existing Wiki In Africa initiatives. The live monthly [WikiAfrica Hour](#) was the platform for the launch event. [Watch the launch on YouTube](#). The [Wiki Loves Women](#) annual Tell Us About Her image description drive concentrates on images of [Women on the Frontline of Climate](#).

This year, Africa's most substantial annual photo contest, [Wiki Loves Africa](#), calls for the entry of images, video, audio, diagrams, and photo essays that depict Climate & Weather. The intentional alignment by Wiki in Africa between the two projects - Wiki Loves Africa and the Africa Environment WikiFocus – has seen the addition of two prizes to the Wiki Loves Africa prize categories. The Africa Environment WikiFocus has

[Lire ce communiqué de presse en français.](#)



PRESS RELEASE | Immediate Release March 2023

sponsored two Wiki Loves Africa media categories for the best representation of the impact of climate change: the **best video** and the **best photo essay**.

The WikiFocus is a project created and developed by [Wiki In Africa](#) (WIA) and [Wikimedia Community User Group Côte d'Ivoire](#) (WMUG IC) as an integral part of the [African Knowledge Initiative](#) (AKI) series of campaigns.

The African Knowledge Initiative is supported by the [African Union](#), [Wikimedia Foundation](#), and [Africa No Filter](#). The Africa Environment WikiFocus is a content creation and contribution WikiFocus that launched on the African Union's Wangari Maathai Day (3rd of March).

How to participate

There are many ways to do your part and get involved:

1. [Watch the WikiAfrica Hour launch](#) to hear from Africa's experts in climate and environment
2. Learn how to contribute content about Environment and Climate to Wikipedia:
 - Attend a local event – [find out what events are happening near you](#)
 - Attend the online training sessions held by Wikipedia experts – [watch this page for details](#)
3. Add factual content about the [Environment and Climate](#) to the Wikimedia projects:
 - Find out how to contribute [as an individual](#).
 - Learn how to contribute to Wikipedia, WikiData, Wikiquote, and other sister projects: [access our How To page](#).
 - Create or improve a Wikipedia article about climate: [get started using our article lists](#).
 - [Translate a Wikipedia article related to Climate and Environment](#) into your language
 - Create and collaborate on a Climate WikiProject in your language: [access our How To page](#).
 - Add the climate-related statistics and data to WikiData : [access our resource page](#).
 - Approach local climate or environment academic or activist organisations to partner with the project and add their data or validate local data: [access our partner page](#).
4. Enter your incredible photos, video, or photo essay that capture [climate or weather to Wiki Loves Africa](#).



PRESS RELEASE | Immediate Release March 2023

5. [Add descriptions to images of Women on the Frontline of Climate on Wikimedia Commons](#) to make the photos more useful on Wikipedia.

6. Let others know about your contributions to the Africa Environment WikiFocus on social media using #WikiAfrica #AfricaEnvironmentWikiFocus, and tag @WikiAfrica in your posts.

###

Media release by Wiki In Africa

For media queries contact

English: Isla Haddow-Flood
Cell: +27 76 077 3135
Email: [isla @ wikiinafrica.org](mailto:isla@wikiinafrica.org)

French: Florence Devouard
Cell: +33 645 60 62 77
Email: [fdevouard @ anthere.org](mailto:fdevouard@anthere.org)

NOTES FOR THE EDITOR:

About Wiki In Africa

Wiki In Africa is a registered non-profit organisation based in South Africa and works across the continent and beyond. Its mission is to decolonising knowledge and the internet by facilitating global access for all to open knowledge that reflects and represents the diverse cultures, peoples, biodiversities, and histories of the African continent and other previously marginalised and disenfranchised communities with the same depth and breadth as other knowledges.

It combats the content and contribution gap that perpetuates the digital divide that plagues Africa by creating engaging and fun opportunities that progress skills acquisition, leadership development, and community building. During 2023 its focus programs include [Wiki Loves Africa](#), [Wiki Loves Women](#), Africa Environment WikiFocus, [WikiFundj](#), [WikiChallenge African Schools](#), and [WikiAfrica Hour](#).

www.wikiinafrica.org

About African Knowledge Initiative (AKI)

The Africa Knowledge Initiative (AKI) is a collaboration of the Wikimedia Foundation, African Union, and Africa No Filter. AKI is designed to add factual knowledge about Africa to the Wikipedia projects through

[Lire ce communiqué de presse en français.](#)



PRESS RELEASE | Immediate Release March 2023

subject-focused drives that create visibility, decentralised access, and opportunities for training and contribution. Its goal is to inspire and support a new generation of African Knowledge activists through high-profile contribution campaigns.

Africa Knowledge Initiative (AKI) is a series of campaigns on the Wikimedia projects that pivots on three African Union Holidays (Africa Youth Day: 1st November 2022, Environment (Wangari Maathai) Day: 3rd March 2023, Africa Day: 25th May 2023). Each focus campaign is facilitated and activated by Wikimedia implementing partners. **Wiki In Africa** and **Wikimedia Usergroup Côte d'Ivoire** have been tasked with the Africa Environment WikiFocus.

About the Wikimedia Foundation

The Wikimedia Foundation is the nonprofit organisation that operates Wikipedia and other Wikimedia free knowledge projects. Its vision is a world in which every single human can freely share in the sum of all knowledge. We believe that everyone has the potential to contribute something to our shared knowledge and that everyone should be able to access that knowledge freely. We host Wikipedia and the Wikimedia projects, build software experiences for reading, contributing, and sharing Wikimedia content, support the volunteer communities and partners who make Wikimedia possible, and advocate for policies that enable Wikimedia and free knowledge to thrive.

www.wikimediafoundation.org