# WMF's New Global South Strategy

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Wikimania 2013, Hong Kong

(note: this version has more text than the slides presented in Hong Kong,
to convey much that was said aloud but not written.)

# Agenda

- ~~The term "The Global South"~~
- The need
- The challenge
- What's been done? (examples and comments)
- What has been learned?
- So now what, from WMF?

# The Need

- Contributing to Wikipedia is meaningful, empowering, and as important as participating in academic discourse
- When GS editorship is very low, we are missing important voices, with different contexts, knowledge maps, hierarchies and categories
- The paucity of GS editors *necessarily* results in subtle systemic bias
- [[w:Wikipedia:There is a deadline]]

# The Challenge: numbers [1 of 2]

- [Active editors in the GS](): 15.6K of ~75K (21%)
- % of edits originating in the GS: 20%
- % of views in the GS: 25%
  - % of world population in the GS: 81.6%
- Total population reached a month: ~500M, out of 7.1B == ~7%

*Robust! :(*

# The Challenge: numbers [2 of 2]

- [Grants to the GS](#): ~8.5% of grant dollars, avg. grant size: $13,500
- In FY 2012-13, WMF gave $5.4M in grants, to 90 grantees.  $470K were given in GS.
- In FY 2012-13, WMF made 29 grants to 20 different affiliate organizations, totaling US$5.04M. Grants ranged from US$4K to US$1.8M. Only ~US$227K went to five chapters in the Global South.

# The Challenge: factors [1 of 2]

- [Access to the network](#) (IN: 13%, ID: 15%, BR: 50%)
- Access to materials, e.g. secondary literature,
- Language(s) --
  - indigenous vs. colonial: [diglossia](#), prestige
  - language of higher education; encyclopedic prose vocabulary
  - lost causes: language preservationism (a noble cause in itself) is repeatedly conflated with free knowledge.  (Wikisource and Wiktionary are worthwhile in *any* language, though!)
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# The Challenge: factors [2 of 2]

- Spare time, spare money -- Wikipedia is generally a middle-class hobby
- Cultures - volunteerism limited to classic charity in some regions
- Political, legal, financial - limitations on expression, assembly, foreign currency, etc.

# What's been done?  [1 of 5]

- Technology ([language support](#) -- WMF)
  - in some GS languages software limitations account for much of the lag in community development
- "Catalyst" teams' work (WMF -- India, Brazil)
  - India Programs attempted multiple programs in multiple language communities.  Mixed results and significant friction.  Now transitioned to grant-funded [Access to Knowledge](#) (A2K) program by CIS.
  - The Brazil Catalyst team has focused on community facilitation, [Wikipedia Education Program](#) deployment, and [data analytics](#).  It is in the process of [transitioning to a grant to a Brazilian non-profit](#) as well.

# What's been done? [2 of 5]

- Chapters' work (GS, generally with WMF grants)
  - Like Global North chapters: general outreach, editing workshops, Wiki Loves Monuments; partnerships have been significantly harder to secure than in GN
  - challenges of retention, momentum, size and sustained morale of active volunteer group
- Chapters' work (Global North)
  - Offline distribution -- Mali (WMFR and WMCH), D.R. Congo (WMFR)
  - Writing competitions (e.g. WMFR on Bahasa Indonesia Wikipedia)
  - Afripédia (WMFR) -- combined infrastructure purchase with training and offline distribution
  - Challenges of scalability and RoI; some work may seem too interventionist.

- [lettera27's/Africa Centre's WikiAfrica](#) work
  - consultant work with African cultural institutions on content donations
  - Training of "Wikipedians in Residence" (unusually, for *non-Wikipedians*)
  - [Significant content on Africa generated](#)
  - What is the size of the investment?
- Open Society Foundation's work
  - [paid consultants](#) and infrastructure investments, attempting to seed communities, mostly [in cen](#) Asia
  - Good result in revitalizing Kazakh Wikipedia; fate after disengagement still unknown
  - What is the size of the investment?

# What's been done?  [4 of 5]

- [Offline deployments](#) (chapters (see above), [OLPC](#), [Kenya](#) (local volunteers), [RACHEL](#), [Camara](#), [SOS](#))
  - obviously impactful, *when used*.  Takes logistics *and* training in person.  Challenging ROI.
- [Wikipedia Zero](#) (WMF)
  - free (no data cost) access to Wikipedia for (potentially) hundreds of millions of people in the GS
  - a challenge to encourage actual use

# What's been done?  [5 of 5]

- Content Injections -- a sponsor funds a deliberate creation of content by non-Wikimedians to be contributed to the projects
    - Generally: impact is low; quality mediocre; community not happy (e.g. Tamil, Bengali; Arabic)
- Competitions (e.g. The Wikipedia Challenge in Kiswahili and Setswana)
    - successful in engaging students *during* competition. However, seems to be zero retention of editors, i.e. was a failure in the stated goal of seeding an editing community.

# The
# *sine qua non*
# of *most* programs is
# *a core of self-motivating active editors.*

This is related to work such as the Wikipedia Challenges, content injections, paid content, paid training.
This core cannot be greenhouse-grown.

# What has been learned? [2 of 2]

- Single-session, general-audience outreach has negligible impact. (not only in the GS!)
- WMF employees operating "on the ground" too complicated and not effective enough.
- **Sustained** attention to local communities yields actionable plans. (IN/BR)
- Wikipedia Zero is effective, high ROI. Still a challenge to get people to *use* the available resource.
- Our (technologically imperfect) **offline** offering is not enough. Distribution is key.

# So now what?   [1 of 3]

- No WMF contractors on the ground any more; Only partners and grantees.
- *Caution* about active investment where no active community.  (Still possible!)
- Our primary formula: **Growth** happens when **community** *and* **outside resources** come together

# So now what?   [2 of 3]

- New focus countries (list follows) for **proactive WMF engagement**, selected on the basis of: population, internet penetration, **size of active editing community**, language status, openness to collaboration with WMF, and past work.  These are high-potential communities that can benefit from external resources.
- WMF remains eager to **reactively** support initiatives **everywhere** in the world via its various **grants programs**, advice and networking.

# So now what?   [3 of 3]

- The focus areas make for a mixed pilot:
  - some are with chapters, some without;
  - some with very active community, some less;
  - some share a Wikipedia with other countries, some don't.
- We hope to learn much for the larger questions facing the movement.

# The Focus Areas and Languages

- India (English, Indic languages)
- Brazil (Portuguese)
- Philippines (English, Tagalog, Cebuano?)
- Argentina (Spanish)
- Mexico (Spanish)
- Indonesia* (Bahasa, English)
- Turkey* (Turkish)
- Egypt* (Modern Standard Arabic)
- Vietnam* (Vietnamese)

* we hope to be able to engage with the community in these countries; conversations are underway as of August 2013, and we hope they would yield actionable plans.

- **India** -- monitor and support efforts by both grantees: WMIN and CIS.
- **Brazil** -- transition WMF team to Açao Educativa (grantee); work with for community-founded APR-CCL group
- **Mexico** -- with WMMX, focus on educational partnerships; capacity building toward staff
- **Argentina** -- with WMAR, focus on communications, capacity building for partnerships, support creation of strategic plan

# A sketch of next steps  [2 of 2]

- **Turkey --** strategize with community; possibly roll out Wikipedia Education Program
- **Philippines** -- with WMPH, strat. w/ community; solidify core of act. eds. interested in off-wiki work
- **Egypt** -- connect with Arabic-language global initiatives; offline Wikipedia distribution; strategize with community
- **Indonesia** -- with WMID, strategize with community; learn from and build on existing initiatives
- **Vietnam** -- strategize with community; focus on image acquisition?

# Questions?

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