Partnerships & Outreach

Annual Report 2020 | Wikimedia CH

Introduction & Strategy

Our Partnerships & Outreach efforts focus on international and national public relations, whereby we use our influence and expertise to promote issues around free knowledge. In Switzerland and at the European level, we are seen as a trusted partner when it comes to topics related to the digital world.

Despite a challenging year for in-person relationship-building, we maintained strong contact with partners and potential partners and saw more requests for support and partnership than in previous years. This demonstrates how we are increasingly becoming known as a key player in digital and knowledge topics.

Our outreach work at the national level focused on the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on Switzerland and the digital tools to help combat it. We joined forces with the Alliance Digitale, an association of civil society organisations that advocate digital change for the benefit of society as a whole. Meanwhile, a new focus on climate change is opening up a wealth of potential new partnerships and projects, which we will continue to explore going forward. What's more, we leveraged the upcoming 20th anniversary of Wikipedia as a reason to reach out to past, present and potential stakeholders. Thanks to these efforts, we are well on our way in planning key events in 2021.

Supporting our goal of remaining top-of-mind among stakeholders is our new multichannel communications strategy. While Communications is not an official strategic direction, it supports all our programmatic activities by engaging stakeholders, partners and members through our website, social media, a monthly newsletter, press outreach and partnerships. The newsletter, in particular, has been key to staying top of mind and sharing our activities. It has been completely revamped and now goes out to nearly 20,000 recipients and garners an open rate of over 40% – well above the

industry average. By focusing on professionalising our communications and outreach, we are poised to better explain who we are, what we stand for and why volunteers and partners might want to join our community.
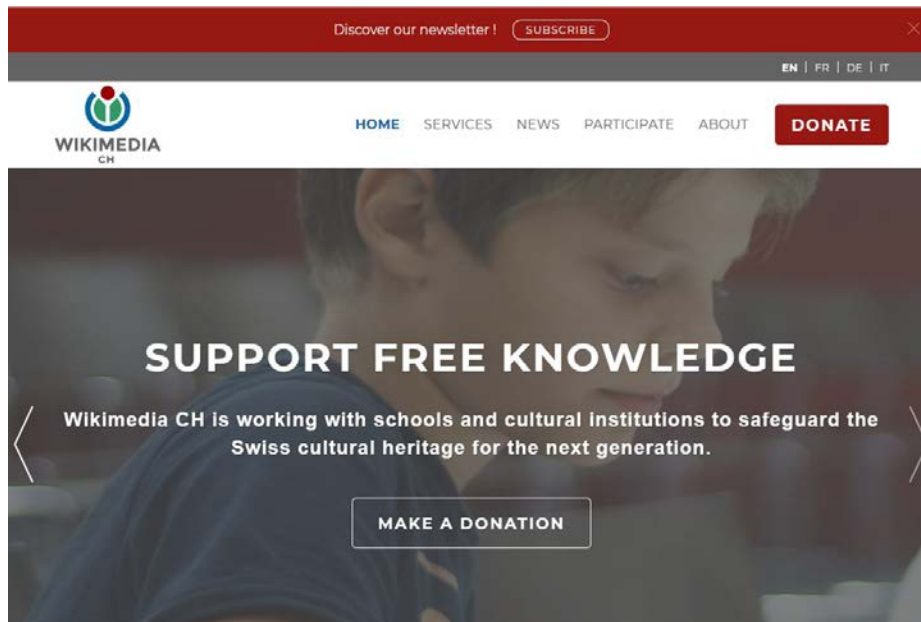
A screenshot of the Wikimedia CH website (2 - see photo credits at the end of the page)

Another area of focus in 2020 was fundraising. A new Fundraising and Grant Manager joined our team in August and spent the remaining months working on developing and maintaining relationships with key stakeholders, including the development of a new donor approach and two fundraising campaigns. On top of that, the further development of our online fundraising tools helped keep our efforts on track: despite the pandemic and thanks to the generosity of our donors, total funds raised grew compared to past years. This is a clear sign that our donors and society in general highly value our work around free and reliable knowledge, especially in a year marked by misinformation around the pandemic and other global topics.

International Outreach

Collaboration with other chapters and organisations continued to be a priority in 2020. While the pandemic slowed down some of these activities, we still saw close cooperation with other chapters on projects across all strategic impact areas.

Despite the cancellation of 2020's German-speaking and French-speaking WikiCons, we continued our collaboration with neighbouring chapters to implement our programmatic activities. As mentioned in the other programme sections, we supported or led several international initiatives, including itWikiCon and IMD2020. We also worked closely with other

chapters on work concerning the 2030 Strategy as well as the organisation of various strategy groups.

We continued to be one of the driving actors for WikiFranca, the partnership between francophone Wikimedia chapters and affiliated working groups. While we had supported the initiative financially in the past, all partners agreed that it would be more effective to establish a more formal association to better support French-speaking countries. We have the opportunity to take on an even greater role, as the association might likely be based in Switzerland with an antenna in Côte d'Ivoire. As discussions continue and plans for the future of the partnership solidify, we will see our involvement expand.

The logo of the collaborative group WikiFranca (4)

As mentioned in the GLAM section, we signed a call to action urging WIPO to set a global standard to protect cultural heritage institutions from the effects of climate change and natural disasters. Considering the pandemic and its devastating impact on GLAM institutions, an international response is critical.

National Outreach

Our national outreach activities aim to make an impact on Swiss policies that affect open and free knowledge.

In 2020, we continued our work with Parldigi, the Swiss Parliamentary Group on Digital Sustainability, focusing on the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, which exposed many vulnerabilities and gaps in Switzerland's digital transformation. We contributed to developing a call-to-action letter, which suggested necessary measures to take, including the need for digital tools to both mitigate the current pandemic and help prevent new outbreaks. As such, we supported Parldigi on their statement endorsing the SwissCovid app, a COVID-19 tracing

app adopted by the Federal Office of Public Health to combat the pandemic, as well as the virtual open hearing about the app, by sharing Parldigi's position through our communications channels.

Through Parldigi, we were introduced to and subsequently joined the Alliance Digitale, an association of civil society organisations that advocate digital change for the benefit of society. A key initiative of the Alliance is SwissCovid App Facts, a website where readers can get answers to the most common questions about the app and ask questions that haven't already been answered. As an alliance member, we supported an awareness campaign for the app through our communications channels.

We also supported DINAcon, a conference on digital sustainability that is usually held in Bern but ended up being a virtual event in 2020. Muriel Staub, the president of our chapter, and Diego Hättenschwiler, a long-time Wikipedian, hosted a workshop entitled "Wikipedia: Global knowledge also in the global south?" We also supported the event by encouraging community members to attend and contribute.

Last, we attended an event organised by Swiss Ladies Drive, the largest organiser of events for entrepreneurs, networkers and career women in Switzerland. We're exploring similar events for women in digital and tech, where there might be opportunities to join a speakers' panel or be a keynote speaker.

Collaboration with Like-Minded Organizations

Building partnerships with like-minded organisations allows Wikimedia CH to make a greater impact by amplifying our message to new, sympathetic audiences. As such, we aim to collaborate with other advocates of free knowledge in Switzerland. In 2020, we saw an increased demand for support from our partners, which shows both the need for collaboration and the fact that we are building our reputation as a key player in this space.

Meanwhile, we increasingly see climate change as an area where Wikimedia can help make a difference. In Switzerland and abroad, organisations focusing on the environment abound but often struggle to share their important messages. We have therefore started initial discussions with Swiss-based environmental organisations to see how we might use Wikimedia projects to support their missions. For example, we are exploring a collaboration with the European Forum on Urban Forestry on how to use digital tools like OpenStreetMap to protect and encourage investment in urban green spaces. The project would include mapping urban forests on OpenStreetMap and using our communications channels for an awareness campaign.

We also continued our support of Kiwix, an offline reader for online content like Wikipedia. The year 2020 was big for the project: the Android app hit one million installs, Kiwix was named a Falling Walls winner in the Digital Education category for "breaking the wall of connectivity", and the source code is now included in the GitHub Arctic Code Vault. The project also released an updated version of Wikipedia in English.

A screenshot of Kiwix for Android (7)

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Join us in supporting access to free and unbiased knowledge. Besides being an active member in Wikimedia CH, or a contributor to Wikipedia and its sister projects, you can give tax-deductible financial support. Wikimedia CH is an independent non-profit. Your donations directly support some of the most popular collaborative reference projects in the world.

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2. A screenshot of the Wikimedia CH website. Photo by Ilario - Own work, CC BY-SA 4.0, https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=92527623.

3. Morning rainbow in Parc Adula at the Motterascio hut, below Lago di Luzzone. Photo by Martingarten - Own work, CC BY-SA 3.0,

https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=40453095.

4. The logo of the collaborative group WikiFranca. Writing quills. The five colours of Francophonie. In 2020, Wikimedia CH continued to be one of the driving actors for the group. Photo by Flappiefh - Own work, CC BY-SA 3.0, https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=28929155.

5. The 22 cantonal coats of arms in the stained-glass dome of the Federal Palace of Switzerland (ca. 1900). Photo by Peter Mosimann, parlament.ch - File:Federalpalace-dome.jpg, Copyrighted free use, https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=15347342.

6. Aerial view of the EPFL, which forms a large campus with the University of Lausanne (UNIL) at the shores of Lake Geneva. Photo by Mediacom EPFL - Own work, CC BY-SA 4.0, https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=63269742.

7. A screenshot of Kiwix or Android. Kiwix is an offline reader for online content like Wikipedia, and in 2020, Wikimedia CH continued its support for the app. Photo by Kelson - Own work, CC BY-SA 4.0, https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=46003894.

8. 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 Liese 1 - Own work, CC BY-SA 4.0, https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=49061475.

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