WHY YOUTH IS IMPORTANT FOR WIKIMEDIA?

THEY ARE THE FUTURE OF THE MOVEMENT

By taking care and investing towards the empowerment of the young Wikimedian segment, a community is taking a big step towards its future. Given that the number of editors in many communities is declining, a phenomenon also observed with the decreasing number of active members in some affiliates, it's important to give more importance and emphasis towards recruiting young people to the movement as their young age ensures a stable enthusiasm for the Wikimedia ideals and mission, long-term stability for the community and openness to new minds that can help the movement improve. Meanwhile, the Foundation research that went public in the Youth Conference 2025 in Prague shows that while the readership from youth is growing, fewer young people edit Wikimedia projects, while only a fraction of them are organisers or administrators in their community, which makes the outreach focused to them much more important.

THEY ARE CRUCIAL FOR A MORE INCLUSIVE MOVEMENT

It has been observed that in various communities, younger members are often underrepresented in community and governance procedures. Their young age and limited experience are often cited as reasons for excluding them from decision-making. The presence of young people in administrative and governance bodies of the movement contributes towards a more inclusive movement, as their presence there gives them the ability to better bargain to decrease discrimination and increase intergenerational collaboration, while also bargaining for a stronger position of youth in the community or affiliate and ensuring in the positive growth of the affiliate as the young people are often more open-minded and innovative than older members.

THEY ARE IMPORTANT, IN ORDER TO CHANGE PERCEPTIONS ABOUT WIKIMEDIA

An underestimated reason is to change youth's perceptions about Wikimedia. Though youth is the future, there are also practical problems to recruit them. It's not only technical issues that affect their ability to edit, particularly true in Asia and Africa where most editors are from mobile phone, but also because even in youth there are some bad perceptions about Wikimedia. Wikimedia is often frowned upon, because many people don't see a tangible career benefit from being engaged with Wikimedia, while actually there is. The volunteering activities through Wikimedia have been proven to be very useful for young people to gain skills that can be helpful for them in the future. Meanwhile, increased attention to university and school students allows the young people to become ambassadors of the movement in their institution, helping to organise events in their educational institution and help counter the widespread perception that Wikimedia is unreliable to use, as this perception is often passing from educators to young students, the very audience and demographic that is the future of the movement and we need to work about it.

WHAT CAN I DO TO SUPPORT THE GROWTH OF WIKIYOUTH IN LOCAL LEVEL

There are many ways that you can help the local WikiYouth in your community, helping them to elevate their place and relevance in the movement:

- By organising mentoring networks, led by experienced youth with support from older Wikimedians if needed.
- By organising trainings to increase the capacity and expertise of young editors and Wikimedians.
- By organising them into formal or informal groups in national or regional level, in order to provide capacity building and knowledge sharing with support from experienced members of the community, that act as mentors and also work by themselves to raise the position of youth in Wikimedia.
- Training and educating the older members to hear and respect the youth members of the community, fostering a climate of inclusivity and respect.

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