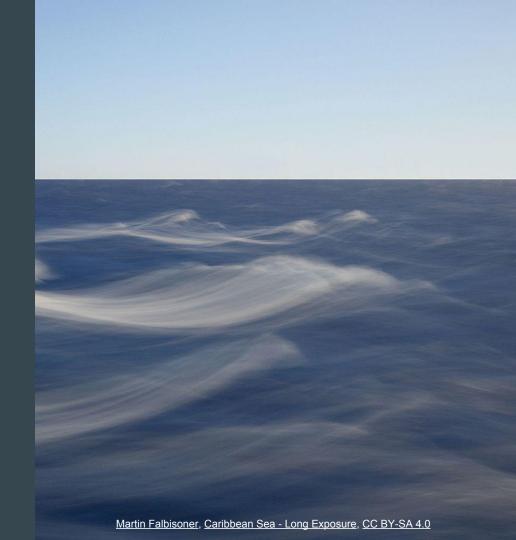# Community and volunteer involvement in partnerships

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A quest for (one of) the holy grail(s) of the Wikimedia movement

Why are we here?

- Many affiliates are already working with partners

- We would like to get more community members or volunteers involved in partnerships - it's an important part of our projects!

- Many do not know how to do this well!

Our Partners

- **GLAMS** - mostly around content.
- **Other non-profit organizations** - around advocacy and the open movement worldwide.
- **Universities -** bringing content and potential editors together.
- **Wikimedia affiliates** - around Wikimedia projects.
- **Companies** - around outreach/ awareness
- and many more!

Who do you want to get involved?

- **Wikimedia communities** - they are the backbone of our projects!

- **Non-Wikimedia volunteers** - they can help us with advocacy or getting connected!

- **None of them** - there are no communities / volunteers around by they have the content!

So how to deal with community/volunteer involvement in partnerships?

Today, you are the experts! We want to learn from you!

(and then share it with the rest of the movement)

3 Groups

1. Getting **Wikimedia communities** involved (Julia)
2. Getting **non-Wikimedia volunteers** involved (Isla)
3. Designing a partnership **without community/volunteer** involvement (John)

- Discuss the best strategies - 30 min.
- Then report back to the group - 20 min. (5 min. each)

Groupwork questions

1. In your experience, what worked well? What did not work well?
2. What are good strategies to to deal with community/volunteer involvement in partnerships?
3. What is needed to make that happen?

Getting Wikimedia community members involved (1)

What worked

- context of our projects is clear, not much explanation needed
- contact community through village pump
- recruit someone well-established from community for the project
- continuous connection to the community
- precondition: establish a healthy community, e.g. through real-life meetups
- volunteers need to feel ownership for a project

What did not work

- Getting much criticism after posting about a project at the village pump
- if staff gets involved, volunteers step back
- delicate balance between staff vs. volunteers: it's important to set clear staff/volunteer tasks
- hard to know what community members find interesting as a partnership
- incentives do not always work
- many people do not want to connect offline
- unclear expectations for volunteers
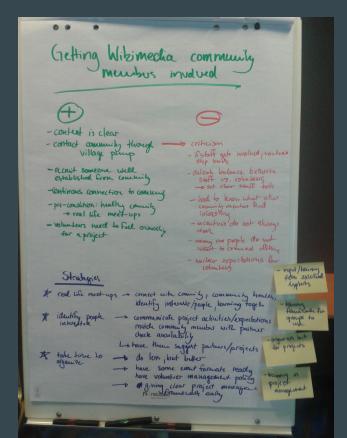
Getting Wikimedia community members involved (2)

Strategies

- organize real-life meetups $\longrightarrow$ connect with community, improve community health, identify interests/people, learn together

- identify interested people $\longrightarrow$ communicate project activities/expectations, match community members with partners, check availability, have community members suggest new partners/projects

- take time to organize $\longrightarrow$ 'do less but better', have some small event formats ready for partners, have a volunteer management policy, provide clear project management framework early on

What's needed

- training framework for groups to use
- organizers kit for projects
- training on project management
- input/training from external experts

Getting Wikimedia community members involved (3)

Getting non-Wiki volunteers involved (1)

What worked:

- passion for a subject (Mexico: musician students)
- personal connection (Library project: edit-a-thon for librarians)
- activating groups step-by-step and not going too formal too soon (Nigeria: Wiki loves Women)
- getting external recognition through awards (library project: permanent Wikimedia lab)
- maximising the in-kind use of the resources (facilities, event space, networks, etc.) of your partners to assist with the project (Goethe Institutes)

What did not work:

- much energy is needed to explain our projects, values and ways of working together to new volunteers
- investing too much time into formulating common goals (Armenia: GLAMs)
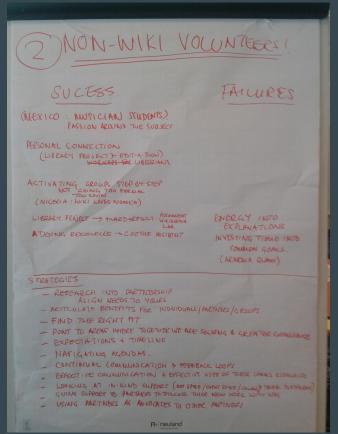
Getting non-Wiki volunteers involved (2)

Strategies

- conduct some research into the partnership: align their needs to yours
- articulate benefits for individuals/partners/groups
- find the right fit
- point to areas where together we are solving a greater challenge
- have clear expectations and timeline
- navigate different agendas
- ensure continual communication and feedback loops
- investigate effective communication and effective use of their communication resources
- look at in-kind support (space/event space/communication)
- give support to partners to discuss their new work
- use partners as advocates for other partners

Needs

- designing an immersion course
  → result: giving out certificates
- having a project plan
  → agreed upon expectations, feedback loops, reports, setting realistic goals, starting small
- communicate successes and package your profile
- food and drink

Getting non-Wiki volunteers involved (3)

Working without volunteers (1)

What worked

- work with staff members who are skilled and experiences
- create standardized actions
- conduct good planning, enabling faster work among less people
- enable volunteers to add to the project if they want/can
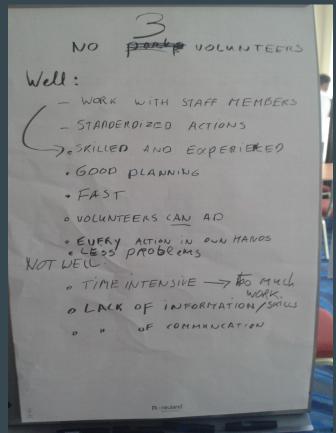- every action is in your own hands, which can create less of a problem
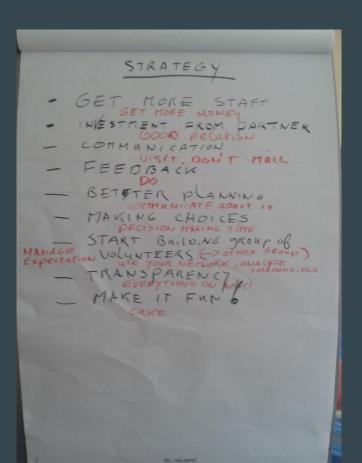
What did not work

- it's very time intensive and can easily become too much work
- there is a lack of information and/or skills
- there is a lack of communication

Working without volunteers (2)

Strategie		Need
- get more staff	⟶	get more money
- get investment from partners	⟶	establish good relations with partners
- good communication	⟶	visit, don't just email!
- learn from feedback	⟶	give proper feedback
- better planning	⟶	clearly communicate about it
- make good choices	⟶	take time to make decisions
- start building a group of volunteers	⟶	manage expectations of volunteers, use your network, analyze surroundings
- be transparent	⟶	everything should be on-wiki
- make it fun!	⟶	cake!

Working without volunteers (3)

What's next?

- We will share what we learned on Meta: leave us your username if you would like to get pinged

- If you are looking for more resources around partnerships, visit Meta: https://meta.wikimedia.org/wiki/Partnerships_%26_Resource_Development