

# 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 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 → connect with community, improve community health, identify interests/people, learn together
- identify interested people → communicate project activities/expectations, match community members with partners, check availability, have community members suggest new partners/projects
- take time to organize → '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 Wikimedia community members involved



- context is clear
- contact community through village pump
- recruit someone well established from community
- continuous connection to community
- pre-condition: healthy community
  - real life meet-ups
- volunteers need to feel ownership for a project



- criticism
  - if staff acts involved, volunteers stop badly
  - delicate balance between staff vs. volunteers
    - set clear staff tasks
  - need to know what other community members find interesting
  - inactives do not always work
  - many ext people do not want to commit offline
  - unclear expectations for volunteers

### Strategies

- \* real life meet-ups → connect with community, community health, identify interests/people, learning together
- \* identify people interested → communicate project activities/expectations, match community members with partners, check availability
  - ↳ have them suggest partners/projects
- \* take time to organize → do less, but better
  - have some exact formats ready
  - have volunteer management policy
  - giving clear project management

- input/training from external experts

- training foundations for groups to use

- organize list for projects

- training on project management

# 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)

## ② NON-WIKI VOLUNTEERS!

### SUCCESS

(MEXICO: MUSICALIAN STUDENTS)  
PASSION AROUND THE SUBJECT

PERSONAL CONNECTION  
(LIBRARY PROJECT + EDIT-A-TION)  
~~WORKS FOR LIBRARIANS!~~

ACTIVATING GROUPS STEP-BY-STEP  
NOT GOING TOO FORMAL  
TOO SOON  
(NIGERIA: WIKI LOVES WOMEN)

LIBRARY PROJECT → AWARD RESULT <sup>PERMANENT WIKIMEDIA LAB.</sup>

ADDING RESOURCES → COLLECTIVE INSTINCT?

### FAILURES

ENERGY INTO EXPLANATIONS

INVESTING TIME INTO COMMON GOALS.  
(ACHIEVING GOALS)

### STRATEGIES

- RESEARCH INTO PARTNERSHIP  
ALIGN NEEDS TO YOURS
- ARTICULATE BENEFITS FOR INDIVIDUAL/PARTNER/GROUPS
- FIND THE RIGHT FIT
- POINT TO AREAS WHERE TOGETHER WE ARE SOLVING A GREATER CHALLENGE
- EXPECTATIONS + TIME LINE
- NAVIGATING AGENDAS.
- CONTINUAL COMMUNICATION + FEEDBACK LOOPS
- EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATIONS + EFFECTIVE USES OF THEIR OWN RESOURCES
- LOOKING AT IN-KIND SUPPORT (WHEN SPACE/EVENT SPACE/COURSES) THIRD PARTIES
- GIVING SUPPORT TO PARTNERS TO DISCUSS THEIR NEW WORK WITH WIKI
- USING PARTNERS AS ADVOCATES TO OTHER PARTNERS!

### NEEDS:

- ① DESIGNING AN IMMERSION COURSE  
RESULT: CERTIFICATE
- ② PROJECT PLAN - AGREED EXPECTATIONS  
- FEEDBACK LOOPS, REPORTS  
- REALISTIC GOALS - START SMALL
- ③ COMMUNICATE SUCCESS / PACKAGE YOUR PROFILE
- ④ FOOD / DRINK /

# Working without volunteers (1)

## What worked

- work with staff members who are skilled and experienced
- 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

- get more staff
- get investment from partners
- good communication
- learn from feedback
- better planning
- make good choices
- start building a group of volunteers
  
- be transparent
- make it fun!



## Need

- get more money
- establish good relations with partners
- visit, don't just email!
- give proper feedback
- clearly communicate about it
- take time to make decisions
- manage expectations of volunteers, use your network, analyze surroundings
- everything should be on-wiki
- cake!



# Working without volunteers (3)

NO ~~WORK~~ <sup>3</sup> VOLUNTEERS

Well:

- WORK WITH STAFF MEMBERS
- STANDARDIZED ACTIONS
- SKILLED AND EXPERIENCED
  - GOOD PLANNING
  - FAST
  - VOLUNTEERS CAN ADD
  - EVERY ACTION IN OWN HANDS
  - LESS PROBLEMS

NOT WELL:

- TIME INTENSIVE → <sup>WORK</sup> TOO MUCH
- LACK OF INFORMATION/SKILLS
- " OF COMMUNICATION

STRATEGY

- GET MORE STAFF  
<sup>GET MORE MONEY</sup>
- INVESTMENT FROM PARTNER  
<sup>GOOD RELATION</sup>
- COMMUNICATION  
<sup>VISIT, DON'T MAIL</sup>
- FEEDBACK  
<sup>DO</sup>
- BETTER PLANNING  
<sup>COMMUNICATE ABOUT IT</sup>
- MAKING CHOICES  
<sup>DECISION MAKING TIME</sup>
- START BUILDING GROUP OF  
VOLUNTEERS (→ OTHER GROUP)  
<sup>MANAGE EXPECTATION USE YOUR NETWORK, ANALYZE SURROUNDINGS</sup>
- TRANSPARENCY  
<sup>EVERYTHING ON TABLE</sup>
- MAKE IT FUN  
<sup>LAKE</sup>



# 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](https://meta.wikimedia.org/wiki/Partnerships_%26_Resource_Development)