

# Minding and Bridging the Gap - Responding to the Gender Gap in the Wikimedia Movement

Early Priorities for 2023/24

Masana Mulaudzi, Senior Manager (Campaigns Programs)

Wikimedia Foundation

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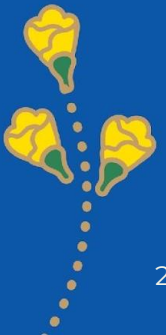
# The Gender Gap in the Wikimedia Movement

## A brief history...

In 2008, first global study found 13% of all editors were female.

In 2011, this figure had fallen to 9%

Sue Gardner, the ED of WMF, reflected that improving diversity was about making Wikipedia "as good as it could be"



# Today...

There have been slight improvements, but not without a long way to go:

Women and other gender identities are significantly underrepresented among the readers, editors and content of Wikipedia.

- On average 67% of Wikipedia readers in a given day are estimated to be men.
- Men make up 80% of active editors.
- 80% of the biographies on Wikipedia are about men.

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# Why is this the case?

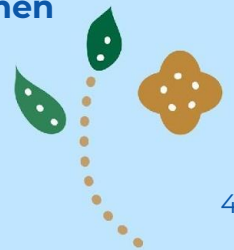
- **Our Movement is a microcosm of the world:**

- Exogenous variables include digital penetration, smart phone access, social reproduction, epistemic injustice, power, patriarchal norms and values.
- Endogenous variables: movement norms and culture, notability, verifiability, neutrality

**We need to make it safe for women and non-binary people to do more than just join our movement. They need to (and already are) shape our movement. To scale this impact requires an ecosystem approach.**

**Many contributors who focus on gender have cultivated innovative practices in collective care, guided and supportive inclusion, intersectional knowledge and feminist praxis. Inviting women and non-binary people to be active shapers of our movement**

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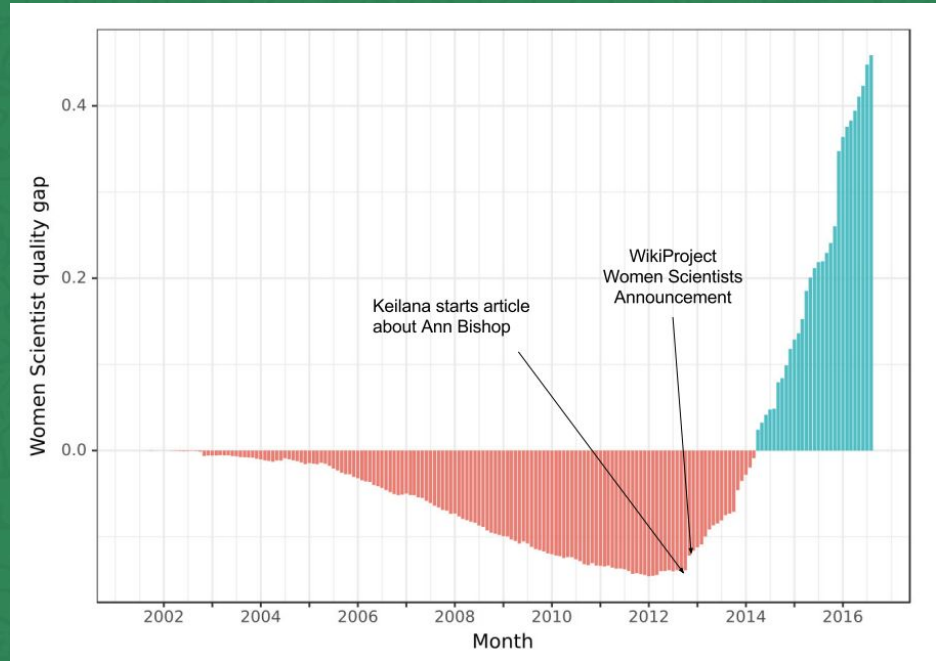
# Gender organizers have had a profound impact on the Projects

For well over a decade, a wide range of organized community efforts (like Women in Red, Art + Feminism, or WikiMujeres) have focused on boosting representation of women and gender-based topics on Wikipedia.

There is a wealth of evidence demonstrating the impact of these efforts, for e.g.:

- Feminist edit-a-thons (Art+Feminism, 500 Women Scientists) have a positive impact on article quality and pageviews
- Impact of Art+Feminism edit-a-thons in 2016 shows that in-person events bring in lots of newcomers while virtual events attract mostly existing editors; also much higher retention (~10x) of newcomers a week later in the edit-a-thons as compared to random newcomers not associated with an edit-a-thon.

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**The “Keilana Effect”:** WikiProject Women Scientists - graph showing how the quality of content about women scientists very quickly went from below-average to substantially above-average after User:Keilana began her work. ([source](#))

Slide courtesy of Ben Vershbow, WMF, 2023



# We're listening & responding to gender organizers in the movement

65% of all General Support and Alliance Funds focused on addressing the gender content gap.

51% had programming to bring contributors with diverse genders

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The priorities we've mapped for 2023/24 build on a [gender diversity mapping](#) exercise conducted by WMF and Rosie Stephenson-Goodknight in 2017, and a subsequent [Gender Equity report](#) released in 2018.

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The report found 6 best practices used by Gender Organizers in their work:

- Hosting in-person events
- Focusing on content creation, namely biographies
- Focusing on intersectional knowledge - moving beyond binaries
- Tracking progress - measurement and metrics
- Recruiting new participants - creating supportive and inclusive communities
- Cultivating partnerships - to support content development
- Communication best practices - 80% of communication was off-Wiki

# Barriers to Entry

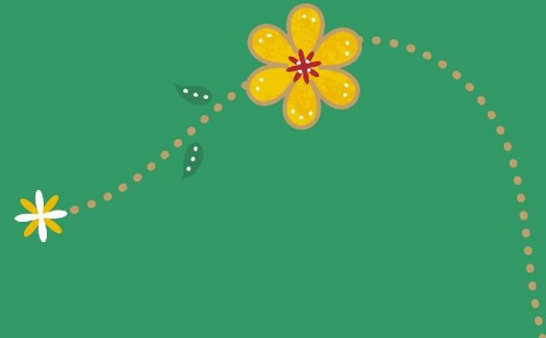
Many of which are persistent in our movement today...

- Systemic bias in policies (notability, reliability and neutrality);
- Implicit bias within the movement;
- Poor community health due to harassment; and
- Non-representative leadership e.g. among affiliates, admins and other governance structures



# Where to from here? How do we do more than mind the gap?

This year, WMF wants to be intentional about the supporting those who are working to make the gender gap a thing of the past. As per our annual plan, our intention is to **“prioritize co-creating a shared agenda for gender organizers across the Movement looking to access targeted capacity building, technical support, and improved coordination with peer contributors and allies.”**



This looks like:

- Building support for more intersectional content e.g. women's health
- Amplifying the successes, needs and priorities of our movement
- Supporting skills and tactical development
- Providing convening support to enable and support our volunteers to pull off strategic in-person meetings e.g. the first ever WikiWomen Summit at Wikimania

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# This is just a start

In 2021, WEF's Global Gender Gap report estimated that it would take 135.6 years to close the gender gap in society at large. But we don't have that much time.

This is notably a lean approach - focus on "Lean Impact" and then scalability.

The WMF Plan to support gender organizers to scale their work needs broader support and engagement from across our movement, partners and allies.

We need you! Join Us.

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