

Re-imagining UNLOCK

Phase 1: Exploration – Identifying the needs and challenges for members of the Wikimedia Movement to innovate in Free Knowledge

Re-imagining UNLOCK is a pan-Movement initiated and led by the team Innovation Engine by Wikimedia Deutschland (WMDE).

UNLOCK Innovation in Free Knowledge

In order for the Wikimedia Movement to stay relevant, to become more diverse, more resilient, and adaptable to societal changes, Movement stakeholders need to find ways to overcome the limitations of Wikimedia projects.

The Movement strategic direction talks about **removing technical and social barriers** to people joining us from all over the world. And at the same time, projects and people also need to **unlock and develop new and innovative ways and culture of promoting, accessing and contributing to Free Knowledge.**

[#MovementStrategy](#)

[#Recommendation9 – Innovate in Free Knowledge](#)

Overview: Exploration

The problem

There are numerous stakeholders within the Wikimedia Movement who are facing different challenges and hurdles with regards to innovation.

How might we design a meaningful “format”^{*} that facilitates innovation within the Movement?

The goal

The goal of the exploration phase was to understand

- who are the stakeholders in the Movement invested in “Innovation in Free Knowledge”
- what innovation means in the global context of Free Knowledge
- what the challenges are that hinder innovation activities
- what the needs of the identified stakeholders are in order to innovate.

^{*}“Format” is considered as a placeholder for the final output that will be created during the Re-imagining UNLOCK process. In this process, we follow a more holistic and systemic ecosystem approach.

Understanding the users

Semi-structured interviews • Survey

The exploration process

1. Preparation & alignment

- Defining goals and research questions
- Identifying the stakeholders and actors in the Wikimedia Movement dealing with “innovation”
- Designing and running information sessions to engage the stakeholders and actors

2. Interviews & survey

- Conducting semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions
- Running survey with open-ended questions

3. Analysis & Synthesis

- Unpacking data
- Affinity mapping
- Formulating insights / problem statements

Prep & alignment: Stakeholders



Stakeholder mapping

Presentation map will give us an overview of the ecosystem of stakeholders involved in "Innovate in Free Knowledge".

Identifying stakeholders and actors:

- We talked to peers @Wikimedia Deutschland
- We scoured [baserow](#) – a collection of MS-implementation activities gathered at the Wikimedia Summit 2022
- We searched through [MS Forum](#)
- We scanned the [list](#) of communities / members of the Movement who prioritized and voted for recommendation 9 during the [Movement Strategy prioritization events](#)
- Stakeholder map version 1: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Innovate_In_FreeKnowledge_STAKEHOLDER_MAP_V1_Final_extended.png
- This stakeholder map is a living document. It will grow throughout the Re-imagining UNLOCK process as we intend to engage closely with Movement stakeholders and actors

Prep & alignment: Information sessions



Information sessions

Presentation and call for involvement

2 Open Innovation Cafés

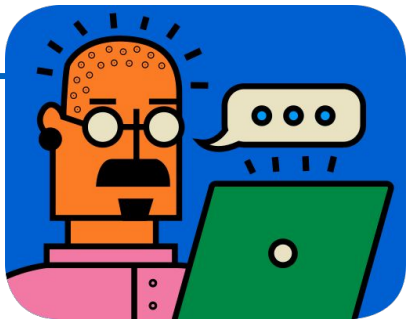
16 Attendees

Open innovation café set up:

- Two online calls – March 7th and 15th, 2023
- An informal set up in which we shared our purpose and goals with the community and and tried to recruit participants for the survey
- Presentation:

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Open_Innovation_Caf%C3%A9_Presentation_March_2023.pdf

Semi-structured interviews



Semi-structured Interviews

9 Interviews

12 Interviewees

Interview set up:

- We asked open-ended questions about their take on innovation and the challenges and problems they face
- We adjusted our questions depending on the role of the interviewees (e.g. user groups, chapters, Wikimedia Foundation)
- Interview questions:
 - Tell us about yourself
 - What does innovation in free knowledge/Rec.#9 mean to you?
 - Have you been working on any projects related to Rec.#9? If yes, could you tell us about it
 - What are the key drivers/motivation for you in the community atm?
 - What do you think are the challenges for individuals/members of the community to innovate?
 - [Chapters] How do you support your community to innovate atm?
 - [Chapters] What are the limitations for facilitating innovation within your chapter?
 - What is missing in your context to empower you to innovate?
 - [Chapters] Do you know of any best practices in other organizations?
 - Is there anything else you would like to add?
 - Is there anyone you think we should talk to for this project?

Survey



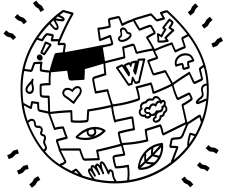
Survey

1 Survey

31 Survey responses

Survey set up:

- The survey included open-ended questions that allowed participants to elaborate on the challenges and problems they face in their own words
- Survey questions:
 - How are you associated with the Wikimedia Movement?
 - Are you actively contributing to Wikimedia projects? Which ones?
 - Which country do you reside in? / What country are you active in?
 - What does innovation in free knowledge/Rec.#9 mean to you?
 - Have you been working on any projects related to Rec.#9? If yes, please elaborate
 - From your view, what are the challenges for members of the Wikimedia Movement to innovate?
 - What type of support is currently missing for members of the Wikimedia Movement to innovate?
 - Please use this box for any additional questions and comments you would like us to hear
- We applied LimeSurvey as the tool.



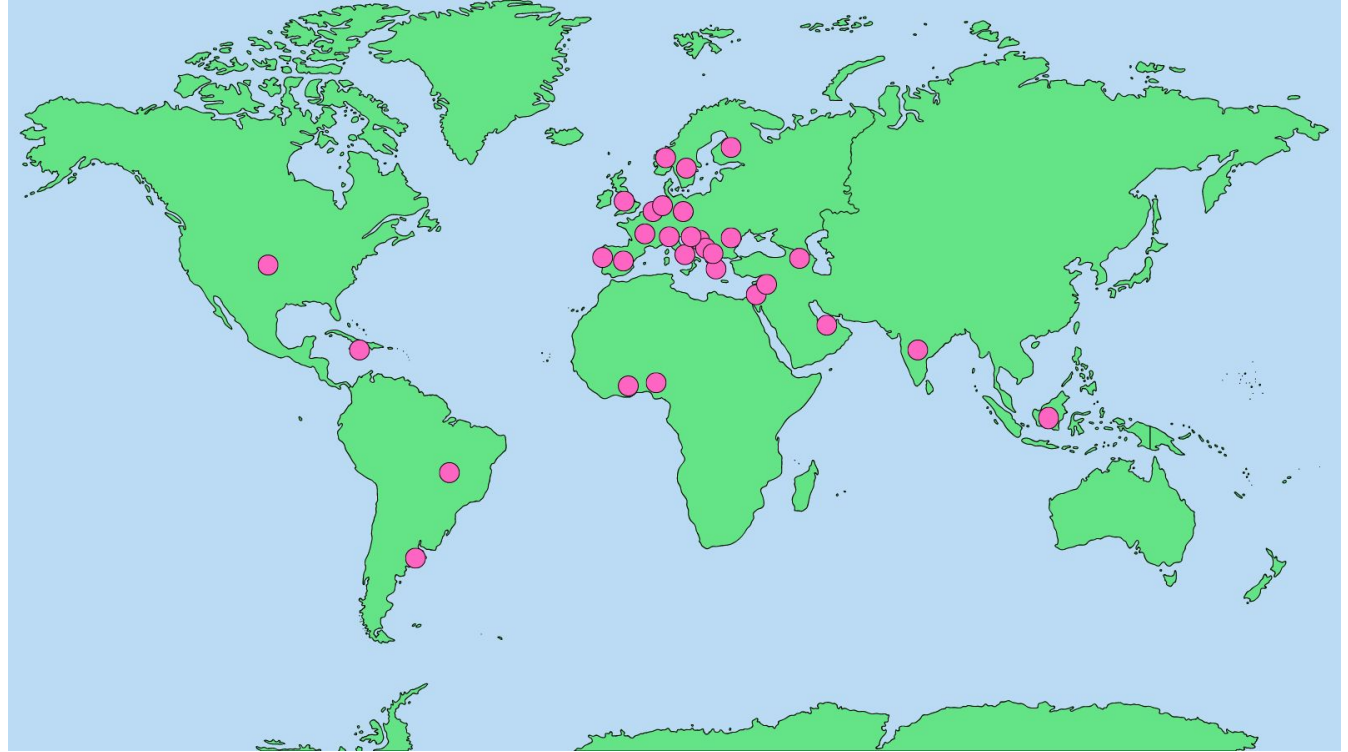
68

**Stakeholders
contacted**

59

**Persons
reached**

(through
interviews,
information
sessions and
survey)



Synthesis

Unpacking data • Affinity mapping • Insight statements

Insight

Those who are new might not know how to meaningfully get involved

Quotes

“New people go in the community unaware of how the community works”

“People don't know how to edit, to contribute to Wikimedia projects; if they know, their articles on Wikipedia get deleted because of the sources they used that are not recognized by the admins. Some people get blocked by admins because they don't seem to be "credible users"”

Insight

There is need for creating a more welcoming (tech, cultural etc.) atmosphere for newcomers

How might we encourage more ppl to join the movement

Quotes

“How can you connect new people with Wikimedia communities and grow”

“To make it easier for people to participate in the free knowledge ecosystem”

Insight

There is a disconnect between those in the movement and the outside world and other movements

Quotes

“Connection or partnership that facilitates the reuse of Wikimedia projects in other context”

“Lack of connection to the global movement”

Insight

There is a avoidance to be political

Quotes

“If you are too much an activist that’s a problem.
How can we leverage the passion from activism?
to help state the facts and keep the emotions out”

Insight

How might we keep volunteers motivated to be part of the movement?

Quotes

“Improve the sense of making edits that are meaningful, not just create little fixes; It demotivates; This is true for individual and institutional contributors”

“Volunteers are interested in prizes when joining the competitions, Make them know more about the movement; that they can get something from it”

Insight

How might we incentivise technically skilled ppl to be part of the movement/stay in the movement?

Quotes

“Sometimes the movement is very hobbyist technically speaking (creating the tools) and enthusiasm driven. [We need] room for more resources to make them more professionalized!”

“Tech people are not motivated by volunteerism”

Insight

There is a gap between having innovative idea and the technical skills needed to realise them

Quotes

“No support structure for people with ideas but no tech skills”

“Something that connects those people with ideas and Movement experiences with people with tech skills and no Movement experiences”

Insight

There is a perceived lack of training opportunities available to Movement members

Quotes

“Training on new innovations is missing”

“Training support is missing”

Insight

How might the Movement stay on top of technological advancements?

Quotes

“Trying to deal with the growing AI challenges or making use of them”

“Staying abreast of technological progress can be a challenge for members of the Wikimedia Movement, particularly volunteers who may have limited time and resources to devote”

Insight

Financial resources are not accessible for everyone within the movement

Quotes

“Mostly larger financial support is missing (excl. rapid grants et al) to underrepresented communities and user groups”

“easy compensation system for research and experimental work”

Insight

There is a gap between having innovative idea and the resources needed to realise them

Quotes

“Support for modern technology from the movement in general”

“Financial, organizational, structural and legal support for working cross border is missing”

Insight

There is a lot of potential for innovation within WM that many might not be aware of

Quotes

“I think it is important to support new ideas (and understanding that this implies risks) but it is also important to support the reuse of ideas (with of course proper attribution). we have problems to learn from good ideas.”

“People only know Wikipedia or Wikidata, but they don't know about other Wikimedia projects that they can also contribute to”

Insight

Many things have been done already but there is a lot of room for making things accessible and adaptive to the needs of those underrepresented

Quotes

“We are at the saturation point, how can we reach to people outside and make them feel welcomed , even if they only want to get involved, edit, etc.”

“Wikimedia has reached its peak, can now only continue to grow by taking into account the realities of those still underrepresented (especially those in the Global South)”

Insight

There seems to be a one-size-fits-all approach that does not consider context-specific needs

Quotes

“Understand the real needs of each community and prioritize which tools could impact the greatest number of volunteers”

“No lack of enthusiasm, but lack of resources for sustainable innovation. Often information is not accessible in local language such as tech codes, documentations etc, also difficult because high level of jargon (in English), the way information is organized”

Insight

There is a strong desire to keep things how they were "the wiki way" and not change

Quotes

“The rigid conventions of contributing, leaving little space for doing differently, thinking outside the box”

“General inertia among older users”

Insight

When there is no urgency, there is no incentive to change

Quotes

“Lack of deadlines and pressure from time”

“If there are no incentives for change (and I don't mean monetary incentives only, it could be things such as a change in a given situation), then it's very hard for things to be made differently”

Insight

There seems to be no culture of embracing failure and experimentation.

Quotes

“Willingness to talk about failures and learn from it is missing”

“Fear of breaking something that somewhat worked so far”

“When people want to innovate, are they met with support or scepticism from their fellow Wikimedians?”

Insight

The current structure and governance model of Wikimedia sometimes stands in the way of innovation initiatives

Quotes

“Disconnect between chapters and community: the Foundation and chapters get the money, they create programs and others but these programs are not serving the community”

“Capacity to scale: in order to innovate you need to be recognized by the global movement. You can start locally but then you need to expand. Expanding is difficult”

Insight

People in the community tend to work in their bubbles and not beyond

Quotes

“Too much silo thinking”

“Crossborder activities are fundamental for innovative co-creation of knowledge but we have focused too much on national organisations as a movement to achieve this.”

Insight

There is a lack of knowledge on how to get started with innovation processes

Quotes

“Documentation, guidance, is missing”

“Encouraging participation in the innovation process is essential for innovation to occur, but this can be difficult”

**Concluding the
exploration
phase**

Bonus learnings

Things we would do again:

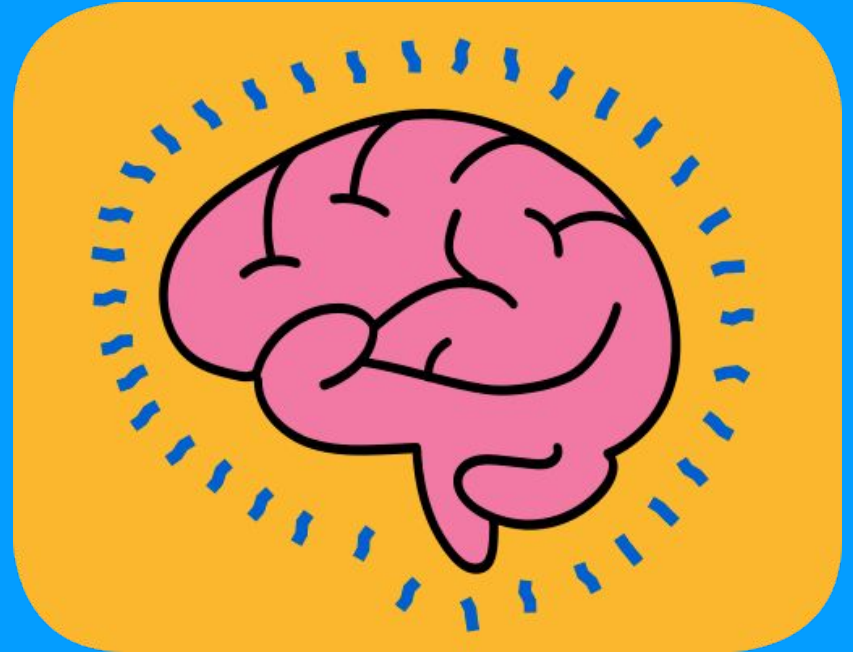
- Offering different ways of engagement that require minimal effort
- Keeping an open mind and fighting your bias
- Using every opportunity as a learning opportunity
- Keep number of interview questions small
- Being visible and engaging with stakeholders directly

Things we would do differently:

- Offering survey in several languages or possibility of answering in mother tongue

Things we could use help with:

- How to reach people on Meta?



What's next?

- Expand our stakeholder map
- Work out How-Might-We-questions based on the the insights statements
- Kick-start phase 2: Ideation & Prototyping that will focus on the development of ideas and on testing possible solutions to the challenges in innovating that were previously defined



Stay involved!

[#Meta: Re-imagining UNLOCK](#)

[#Blog: wikimedia.de/unlock](#)

Annex

More detailed information about the entire Re-imagining UNLOCK process

Towards Wikimedia 2030

Purpose – Why are we doing this:

In order for the Wikimedia Movement to stay relevant, to become more diverse, more resilient, and adaptable to societal changes, Movement stakeholders need to find ways to overcome the limitations of Wikimedia projects. The Movement strategic direction talks about removing technical and social barriers to people joining us from all over the world. But removing barriers will not be enough, projects and people also need to develop new and innovative ways and culture of promoting, accessing and contributing to Free Knowledge.



**We are setting out
on an explorative
journey to build a
new “format” that
will foster
innovation.**



Format for innovative ideas

Outcomes – What we want to achieve:

This format should encourage members of the Movement to experiment with and create new ideas on free knowledge.

It will be a space where we can think about and build specific tools, technologies and projects.

#MovementStrategy

#recommendation #9



Format for transformation

Outcomes – What we want to achieve:

We also want this to be a space for transformation and learning that goes beyond the creation of new gadgets. We want to create an environment that strengthens the movement's capacity to be creative and inventive.

It should equip people with toolsets, methods, but also with the right mindsets that will help us be more agile and resilient to change, but also simply capable of transformation.

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#recommendation #9



Re-imagining UNLOCK

Process – What needs to be done:

