

WMCON 2015 REPORT FOR THE MEMBERS OF WIKIMEDIA GHANA USER GROUP.

Prepared By User:Flixtey

Overview

The Wikimedia Conference is an annual conference focused on discussing and addressing issues within the Wikimedia movement affiliates (Chapters, Thematic and User groups). I was humbled to represent my community at this highly educative yet amusing conference. I generally think the WMCON 15 was a complete success and very well thought through. Every detail of the organisation was on point and actually appealed to my expectations for the conference. It was clear that this conference's focus was to gather community (affiliates) representatives to discuss problems, challenges, and learning points with the aim of addressing these problems learning from other affiliates success and discuss what support could emerge. A very big thank you to the host team, WMDE for making this entirely possible.

The highlight of the entire conference to me is that the WMF is willing to support its affiliates and is undergoing a metamorphosis to meet the spontaneous needs of its entities. This was shown in the priority to collect feedbacks and the changes happening in the foundation (new roles, etc.)

Pre-conference (Learning Day)

The preconference workshop held from the 13th - 14th May, 2015 (Wednesday and Thursday).

The aim of the preconference workshop was to gain a basic shared understanding of program evaluation, learning the common language of evaluation, discuss different sources of data, increase skills in using tools, and share experiences amongst program leaders. This bit of the conference was focused on maximising the potentials or empowering program leaders to do more.

It was an insightful opportunity to learn a few data collection or reporting tools, discussing our fears and hopes for the grant process, creating logic models for our projects, survey design and adequate reporting and storytelling techniques. This session was particularly important to me because of my activities on projects and community work, it was highly useful and encouraged project leaders to share detail insights with their communities to ensure successful projects.

Other details of the session including resources and feedbacks may be found on the links below;

- [Feedback and resources](#)
- [Virtual meet-up to present and discuss the findings of the reports](#)

Conference Days (15th - 17th May, 2015)

Kindly note that my report may be skewed towards a particular topic due to the wide array of sessions that were available and my choices of which sessions i visited since most were held simultaneously.

On the Friday i attended the introduction for newcomers. This session highlighted on all the various entities that work to make the Wikimedia Movement. Their roles and essence to affiliates (chapters, thematic organisations and user groups) were spelt out respectively. We were encouraged to share our problems in order to get help. One very important issue that was raised was how key volunteers were to our movement and how best we could preserve them for future use.

I then joined the Collective impact and Fund Raising session. It was shared that cooperation with other Wikimedia Affiliates on the continent and other institutions with similar ideals (open source movement, open data, creative commons, etc.) was key to building volunteer base and also sustainability of projects. As most of these volunteers are already involved in volunteerism of a sort and are already conversant with the open source and open knowledge movements. We also spoke about how to manage our finances and raise funds from appropriate partnerships and other related organisations that may benefit from our work. The last session i joined on the day was "Learn about the FDC" where they thoroughly spoke about the work of the FDC. We then moved to the WMDE office at the close of the day to have dinner.

On Saturday i attended the sessions on Volunteer Supporters Network, Reporting & Storytelling, Community Capacity Development Framework, Wiki Loves Photo Contest, Lila's Talk and Reflection on Lila's Talk.

At the volunteers supporters network we delved into matters surrounding volunteer recruitment and retention. We also learnt that reporting was key for future works on similar projects and communities had to build a strong base of committed members to be able to thrive in their activities. Lila's talk reiterated the commitment of the WMF in support affiliates and the willingness to implement strategies that will suit the growth of the movement. She indicated that the level of growth of the foundation demands some meticulous restructuring to accommodate the needs of all.

The last stop for the day before dinner at WMDE's office was a reflection on the Lila's Talk and the way to possibly go as a movement.

On the final day of the conference i participated in the Grantmaking impact Focus and Communications Best Practices. I was forced to join the Usergroup Meetup after these sessions because i went on the ticket of my usergroup thereby missing two other very important sessions i wanted to be at (Future of the WMCON and Building Bridges between WMCON & Wikimania).

*I suggested at the usergroup meetups that the WMF could also deepen their commitment to user groups in this direction by allowing at least **two (2) representatives** to allow for delegation*

*to sessions since it was difficult for me throughout the conference to choose between sessions, this caused me to miss out on some sessions that i deemed equally important to the ones i sometimes chose to attend. **This was my greatest worry and complaint at the conference and i fear is still my greatest fear for the future of the conference.***

Lest i forget, we had the **African Meetup** on the saturday. The focus of the meetup was to discuss what had resulted from the Wiki Indaba Conference and the way forward.

In attendance were;

- Habib Mehni - Wikimedia TN Usergroup
- Nacim Aboura - Wikimedia Algeria Usergroup
- Felix Nartey - Wikimedia Ghana Usergroup
- Theresa Hume - Wikimedia South Africa
- Bobby Shabangu - Wikimedia South Africa
- Dumisane Ndubane - Wikimedia South Africa

Highlight of the meeting

We are ready to work our best in ensuring the next Wiki Indaba.

Conclusion

A lot was learnt from this conference and am glad I was there. I can confidently say the future is bright for only those who are willing to jump on to the train, and for those already on board, it will take hard work to stay on or you might as well just fall off if you don't cope with the speed at which we are going.