

Wikimedia Sverige

Debrief

Logistical comments to WMF

These comments are based on debriefing meetings held twice with the Wikimedia Sverige office. A separate briefing will be send purely covering volunteer coordination; later on a report concluding the volunteer coordination will be sent, analyzing the survey sent out to all Wikimania volunteers.

How and if goals and intentions were accomplished for Wikimania from your perspective

Before and during the WMF Site Visit, the following goals were formulated:

Support the global movement

Get more visibility for the Wikimedia movement in Sweden, through:

- *Having side activities*
- *Creating public awareness*
- *Creating multiple tracks (with flexibility to move between)*

Connect with old and new partners (re-engage old partners)

Create Wikimania legacy, for chapter and surrounding area

- *Bring together Wikimedia chapters in the region that are not very active and WMSE can engage and support*
- *Train, engage and keep volunteers*

Initiate discussions around the SDGs and engage attendees

Bring together 1,200-1,500 attendees from across the world

Support the global movement

Part of the rationale for Wikimedia Sverige to take on the conference this year was the lack of viable bids and we were directly approached about our interests to host it. If not, we would probably have applied to host it in 2020, due to other major commitments.

As a fairly mature Wikimedia affiliate we thought that we had the responsibility to ensure consistency and to help develop the conference further. We strongly believe that the movement need to share more, not less and that the international events are a key part to achieve that.

Our intention is also to help support the 2020 team which we hope can help prevent volunteer burnout. We also hope to develop supporting material that is currently missing. We hope that this will reduce the threshold so that more affiliates feel ready to take on the task of hosting such a large scale event.

As such we consider this goal achieved, even though there is still work left to do.

Get more visibility for the Wikimedia movement in Sweden

Creating public awareness

The preliminary report from Wenderfalck, the contracted PR agency, shows a lot of visibility for Wikimedia Sverige and the Wikimedia movement connected to Wikimania: more than 50 million reached people. As reference, the population of Sweden is approximately 10 millions. According to Wenderfalck, it is their most successful project this year. About half of the people were reached via traditional media and half via social media. Visibility-wise, Wikimania was thus a success. We were happy from Wikimedia Sverige's side to be able to take part in some of the most watched morning and talk shows, which gave a lot of visibility for our chapter and some perspectives on a few of the projects we are running. Both central volunteers and a few staff members could take part, and with the morning shows in the SVT1 (public service) and TV4 (largest morning show), and one of the most credible radio programs Studio Ett (public service) we reached a substantial part of the Swedish population.

From the local hosts' side, we feel however that the media plan put forward by the WMF together with the PR Agency did not put enough emphasis on the theme or the work of Wikimedia Sverige as a chapter. If there is a local community that is ready to scale, such as in Sweden, the communication efforts done as part of the conference should focus on promoting their work, as this is an effective way to support the work done by local affiliates and volunteers and create a lasting effect. One factor to consider is of course how well used and known the Wikimedia platforms are, but in the case of Sweden the use of Wikipedia is already massive. This is something that should be planned for in future Wikimantias together with the Communication team at the Wikimedia Foundation.

Having side activities

The side activities were a success, including the culture crawl, a visit to the Swedish Parliament, a city tour and tours of individual museums. These were solely planned by Wikimedia Sverige staff, but proved an important way for us to connect with new and

re-engage with old partners. Several museums and memory institutions were involved. A lot of attendees took part in these events, and from the comments we have had the events were much appreciated. They turned out to be appreciated by the involved museums as well, which is a good starting point for further work together with the Swedish GLAM sector. The theme of the conference was chosen with the idea that it would help attract interest from partners to join the conference and the side activities and this turned out successful.

Creating multiple tracks (with flexibility to move between)

The idea was that by providing a set of different tracks we could cater to a wider set of needs from volunteers, affiliates and partners while still keeping it under one roof.

Thanks to the active engagement from around 65 volunteers that led the different tracks (what we called "Spaces") each part of the program was carefully developed by topic experts from across the world. The program was from the feedback we have received well-arranged; it was possible to find alternative tracks to participate in for attendees, and always a session of interest for most attendees, new as old.

We would advise also for future Wikimánias to clearly mark which sessions are good for newbies and which ones require more background knowledge. Ideally to have a dedicated track for them. It might be good to keep in mind that as the movement grows larger, and more partners and potential partners interested in the movement join the conference, “newbie” gets two different meanings: a person new to the Wikimedia online platforms, or a person interested in the Wikimedia movement. These two different groups do not necessarily need the same kind of newbie sessions, and if there is a wish at future Wikimánias to work actively to attract new partners, it is fruitful to think specifically about whether there are sessions that potential partners or organizations/people interested in working with the Wikimedia movement can attend and get something out of.

Connect with old and new partners (re-engage old partners)

Early on we decided to utilize the conference as a leverage to engage with external organizations, new and old. The choice of the theme was a direct and conscious result of that. To engage them we wanted our long term partners to commit not only to send delegates to participate but also to directly develop the event with us through a number of side activities before, during and after. This way they could have some ownership, support the event financially and help spread awareness through their networks. The interest was very large, with the major limiting factor that this was one of the Summer weekends with most people on holiday (which is the reason it was chosen in the first place as this allows more volunteers to participate during their holiday and significantly reduces costs for the conference venues in Stockholm).

We co-organized a number of side activities which engaged hundreds of locals. We also had both of the party venues sponsored (saving around 25,000 USD for the event) and a couple of them also directly paid to have side events, helping to cover the cost of CO2 offsetting the entire conference.

The different side activities outlined above (the Culture crawl etc.) would not have been possible without their active and generous participation. Through these side events and their participation at the conference we have deepened our cooperation with a number of our partners in a very positive way and we have also been able to leverage the conference to reach out and engage potential partners we previously did not have any contact with. Some of the museums taking part during the side events had previously not been engaging with us.

Through the theme we also had a good leverage to engage the hundreds of large and small aid organizations that are active in Sweden. We invited hundreds of them to the conference during the last months. Many could not participate as most staff were on holiday, but requested to meet later during the year. Due to the large number of requests we intend to organize an event specifically for them to highlight some of the learnings from the conference and discuss what can be done together in the future.

Create Wikimania legacy, for chapter and surrounding area

Bring together Wikimedia chapters in the region that are not very active and WMSE can engage and support

For this year's Wikimania, parts of the planning was delegated to nearby chapters as we wanted more affiliates and volunteers to feel ownership and pride of the event and hopefully re-energize them.

A city tour was held in Helsinki, a volunteer from Wikimedia Suomi led the communication track of the volunteers and another one co-organized part of the hackathon. An Estonian volunteer helped out in the registration desk. Wikimedia Deutschland used staff time to prepare, innovate and deliver the community village, which consisted of interactive tables, an organizational gallery, portraits of participants (which proved an appreciated way of recognizing people one wanted to talk to) and a much appreciated mourning corner for Wikimedians who passed away the last year. Wikimedia Norge partly took ownership over the Language space, and was engaged in finding a close connection to the Sami minority of Northern Sweden, Norway, Russia and Finland throughout the conference. All in all, this meant that capacity building took place in the nearby area, and cooperation was deepened between the local affiliates.

For Wikimedia Sverige, this was also an important way of supporting and providing capacity building for the local and regional movement. Through preparing material that can be reused, we hoped to also support the global movement. While much of this is still to be finalized, already a lot of reusable material is prepared for the Wikimania Wiki, which is in itself for the first time reusable. Our intention is to work actively with the next year's local organizers, and try to give the support they need or ask for.

Train, engage and keep volunteers

A volunteer strategy for the conference was also developed, innovating the way that Wikimedia Sverige works with volunteers. The strategy had a goal of getting 50 volunteers, but in the end the number was closer to 60. These volunteers were trained for their tasks, and performed them well during Wikimania. The volunteers, of which a large amount were master-, PhD and exchange students, were a diverse group, making the Wikimedia community in Sweden more

diverse in general. Many of them have shown an interest in continuing their engagement afterwards, meaning a large group of new volunteers for Wikimedia Sverige. For this we need to actively create a structure to develop their skills and keep them engaged over time with new interesting assignments.

Around half of the volunteers were also trained with CPR prior to Wikimania, which was appreciated, both because of the certificate the CPR trained volunteers got, but also as a team building activity. Furthermore, this helped make the event safer for the participants in case of an emergency – as well as for the volunteers. In the survey, more than 70% of the respondents give, on a scale from 1-5, a 5 in response to the question “Do you feel that your safety and wellbeing was ensured at all times throughout the conference?” Nobody has answered less than a 4. If there are legal risks for WMF to provide such training, the local host should be encouraged to provide it.

Many of the volunteers also made new friends, and for most, Wikimania seems to have been not a burden but a fun experience with positive outcomes afterwards. 75% of the respondents to the volunteer survey give a 5, on a scale from 1-5, in response to the question “on a general level, do you think that it was a positive experience to volunteer for Wikimania?” One of the volunteers commented by saying “THANK YOU again for choosing me and giving me this great opportunity!”. Another volunteer commented that “volunteering at Wikimania is the best volunteer experience I've had by far.” 93,5% of the respondents answer that they would like to volunteer for the Wikimedia movement again in the future. This means that, all in all, the strategic and long term efforts to work with volunteers, with an end goal being volunteer retention and an increased Wikimedia community in Sweden, worked well, and that the strategy we worked according to fulfilled its goals.

Engage attendees around the SDGs

The SDGs as part of the theme were consistent throughout the program, and proved to be engaging for a lot of attendees. It was applauded by many on stage, and Wikimedia Korea, for example, were inspired and have now arranged a regional conference using the UN SDGs as a theme, to localize the outcomes. We have also noticed other individual initiatives focusing on the SDGs being announced on different channels after the conference. To date we have received a very positive feedback from participants and partners about the theme which they felt added value to the conference and their experience. We look forward to see the analysis of the survey to see if this anecdotal evidence is true also for the larger group of participants.

1,200-1,500 attendees

Initially, in communications between WMF and WMSE, the goal was set to have 1,200-1,500 people attend the conference. Somewhere through the year, the WMF changed position, and said that it could be no more than 1,100 people. There was a feeling from the local hosts that WMF rather wanted to push that number further down. For Wikimedia Sverige, Wikimania was important as a way of gaining visibility and new friends and partners to the movement in Sweden, why the amount of people was an important thing. Unclearly about the numbers also

meant unclarity about how to communicate about registering, and who should do this communication. While the conference turned out to be a large success in most aspects, the final number of registered attendees was disappointing, and from our side, we believe that this could have been avoided if WMF had been clearer in their communication and expectations around this.

What worked and what we should continue to implement for future years

General

The event was carbon neutral, which was the first time for a Wikimedia event. This is something we strongly recommend to continue with, as we believe that it is important that Wikimedia takes responsibility for the sustainability. This is also something that is requested by the community and received a lot of support.

Wikimedia Foundation's environmental impact report was presented during the conference which was something we were happy about, as it connected well to the theme and the work done to build a more environmentally friendly event. We see a potential for the conference to be used even more strategically for such announcements as the media coverage is high and many of the movement leaders are present. Even symbolic signing of documents on stage etc. could be worth exploring.

A large part of the conference was video recorded and quickly uploaded to Wikimedia Commons afterwards. Though not originally a goal, our work in this area deepened as it connected strongly to the SDGs (participation with low costs, no need to travel etc.), and also as many Wikimedians requested it and emphasized its importance. Recording improves the general outcome of the conference as more people can learn from the material presented at the conference and also refresh their knowledge later. With such a large program many relevant session would be missed also by the people physically present. We have had some feedback from remote participants, stressing that especially the Friday Spotlight Session worked well to participate remotely, and that it worked better during this Wikimania than many previous ones. The large program however put a lot of hard work on volunteers, who have also had to take the blame for the times when recording failed of different reasons. This is an area where we think that the WMF could take a larger responsibility; either to take responsibility for more video recording themselves, or in close dialogue with the community answer why the requests of the community for more remote participation cannot be fulfilled. Now some of the volunteers felt that they had to take the blame for this, which we believe is a pity.

Venue and logistics

From our perspective, the venue worked fairly well in general. It was a large venue, with many different parts, corners and room layouts. People still, in general, managed to find the way,

partly through the help of good volunteers and signage. We believe that many attendees appreciated the peculiarity of the venue, while at the same time this made it more important to guide attendees by different means.

From the organizers' end, we appreciated the separated production team room. There was also sufficient space allotted for food, and the mingle nature of the food space made food breaks a social event in itself. Across the venue, there were many places with good opportunities for spontaneous meetings, which contributed to some spontaneous happenings of a more un-conferenced nature. In all, we would say that a university works relatively well as a Wikimania venue, *as long as* the program committee, local hosts and central volunteers can do a proposer site visit well in advance – that is, more than half a year. A university as a venue requires a program and a program design that is more tailored to the venue, as compared to a conference hotel or similar, which can be expected to be more mainstream and adaptable.

In the entrance area to Aula Magna, a large screen showed the program in its latest edition. This proved to be a good idea, partly because it made it easier for attendees to find sessions, but also because it turned out to be an area for gathering, where people started to talk with each other. It became a natural area for new contacts, which is important at a conference like Wikimania.

Providing basic information of importance for the attendees on their badges was a good idea which worked well. It made it easy to find the important information, and decreased the amount of needed signage. While it is hard to measure, it is also likely that it reduced the amount of questions of very basic nature that was asked to the help desk. Providing information by other means than the help desk gives more time for the help desk to focus on questions of a more intricate nature. The names should next time however be written on both sides, as the badges have a tendency to flip around. This is especially important for people within the autism spectrum, where many have problems recognizing faces.

Communication-wise, it was also a good idea to provide summaries of important information with pinned posts on Telegram. For many attendees, that was an easy way of finding vital and quick information, and Telegram is a good platform for that kind of information. We will try to write a series of recommendations from this, so future organizers can make similar communication. It should however also be developed in conjunction with a larger communications plan. If the Telegram channel and group is the most used communication channel before and during the event, all attendees should be informed about this; if not, the same information should be mirrored on other channels.

The water bottles were very appreciated, both the design and the bottle in itself. We have even seen them being used by the participants at other Wikimedia events afterwards, and have had requests from attendees and other organizers where they were ordered from, and if they could get more of them.

The lunch was generally of good quality, and the large amount of vegetarian and vegan food was an important way of reducing the carbon footprint. We believe that having half of the food vegan or vegetarian should be a goal also for future Wikimanias, potentially even more. There's quite a few events with only vegetarian food nowadays. That makes however the food quality even more important, as people might otherwise be prone to complain. The food

served at the party at the Nordic museum should *only* have been vegetarian as only one option could be served. It would have been easier to defend that option from people who at one point couldn't get meat, than as now, to not provide food for vegetarians, vegans and people with allergies who could find nothing to eat.

Program

The concept of space leaders worked well, and gave responsibility and ownership to an increased community over the program, spreading the work to a more diverse and global group of people. The concept should be evaluated by the WMF and the Program Committee, and if future Wikimánias want to work in a similar way, the concept has to be aligned with the scholarship processes and other Wikimánia processes.

The hackathon and the learning days broadened the value of the event and encouraged a more diverse crowd to participate, and these pre-conference activities should be kept. The learning days were popular and could perhaps be broadened to allow for more participants (a higher number) and also function as an entry point for the newcomers to the movement. It would be good if applicants, if it is the case that not everyone is accepted, would be notified earlier than what was the case during Wikimánia 2019; if they rather want to do cultural activities such as culture crawls it is then easier for the local hosts to try to adapt.

Given the program design, with focus on workshops, seminars and future oriented and problem solving sessions, the poster session (breaking all other program points) was appreciated as an opportunity for projects to get visibility. Breaking all other sessions for the poster session is a good idea also for future Wikimánias. The drinks and mingle food during the poster reception, while appreciated by attendees, took however away focus from the posters. For some people presenting posters it was also hard to find time to take food themselves. Our suggestion would be to start with food shortly before and serve drinks during the event.

Community village

The community village, developed by Cornelius Kibelka of Wikimedia Deutschland, consisted of three main areas and one extra: the interactive tables, the organizational gallery and the Who's Here cards, and finally the mourning corner. For us it was important to try to give the community village a purpose and a clear structure, which it has often lacked in previous years. We believe that this was fulfilled, and that many of the concepts could or should be reused for future Wikimánias. The organizational gallery helped connect the venue's different parts to each other as it utilized the space *in between* the two main conference buildings, and made sure that we made a proper use of the space at the venue. Thinking of how community village can serve the purpose of connecting different parts of the venues is also something we would recommend for future Wikimánias.

The Who's Here cards, photos of attendees put up on a board in the Aula Magna lobby, proved to be an important way of recognizing people. Several attendees specifically mentioned that it was through these photos they could recognize Wikimedia Sverige staff members they wanted to talk to. We believe that a similar concept would be fruitful also at future Wikimánias, as part of the Community Village.

The table arranged for Wikimedia Sverige's board was something that our volunteer board appreciated. It was a clear task and a fixed point for them to meet people and collect ideas and thoughts and also to coordinate the boards' involvement. We recommend this concept to be used also at future Wikimánias, especially if the board is not directly involved in the logistics and production themselves.

Volunteer coordination

Using a core team where coordinators, with different clear and well defined responsibilities, take the lead of their own teams or “tracks”, worked well, and created enthusiasm for the different tasks. Using a core team with higher responsibility for volunteer coordination also mitigated the responsibilities, so that fewer people had to take on too much responsibility, which we believe in the end also helped preventing volunteer burnout.

The strategy included several strategic and new ways of recruiting volunteers from selected groups in society, and this also worked well. Our experience is that Master's students especially, and young people in academia in general, are very well suited for this type of tasks. They are also generally prone to be interested in our type of work; and so far, of those who have answered, more than 90% have stated that they want to continue to volunteer for the Wikimedia movement.

Preparational and social meetings with volunteers before the conference proved to be a good thing, as it created a feeling of community among the volunteers, enhancing the work ethic and diligence of tasks performed. It must be considered a success that so many of the volunteers actually showed up and performed their tasks diligently. It shows the importance of having volunteer coordinators who can spend a reasonable amount of time quite some time before the conference, on building up a good team of volunteers. That is a great resource both for Wikimánia and the Wikimedia movement in the long run. Some of these volunteers are very likely to be interested in supporting work during future Wikimánias and should be actively and strategically engaged in the near time.

A lot of engagement was created in social media through a dedicated communication volunteer team. To this end, it was good that the WMF visual design team prepared visual elements that were easy to use for the volunteer team. This should be made also for future Wikimánias. This sub-group of volunteers are also relevant to keep engaged after the conference and could perhaps also help support local organizers in other parts of the world if they are interested.

Social events

Surströmming Tasting

The surströmming tasting (fermented hearing) was perhaps the one happening that created the most excitement among the attendees. The connection to local culture and traditions were appreciated and the perceived weirdness made it something to talk about and share as a story.

Welcoming reception and closing party

We were happy to be able to secure two receptions/parties with the support of partners. Stockholm is an expensive city for conferences, and without the partnerships, we would

probably not have been able to provide as many opportunities for social gatherings. The receptions turned out well, with beautiful venues, mingle food and cultural activities that we believe enhanced the experience. In some ways, the cooperation with the WMF team could however have worked better. We had no clue about overall budgets for the social events, but were still asked to give input on what to include culture-wise. It is very hard to give good input without knowing the cost limits. It was also hard to give input or take part in the planning of the events themselves, when the venues were finalized. Perhaps this is wished for by the WMF, but then that should be communicated clearly to the local hosts in the future.

Culture crawl

The purpose of Culture Crawl was to give the early arrived visitors an opportunity to take part and explore Swedish culture and culture heritage before the conference began. It is often very busy at conferences and the schedule can be time-consuming. It can be perceived as unsatisfactory if you as a conference participant cannot see anything of the country.

We did two guided tours in two tracks, a total of four full-day tours that went from 9am to 8pm on the Thursday before the conference. One in central Stockholm around Gamla stan (Old Town) and Nationalmuseum and one track around Royal Djurgården, a national city park with the open-air museum Skansen. We estimate that about 80 people participated during the day. The tours had volunteers who accompanied and host institutions were guides. At the last stop of the tour, a shorter edit-a-thon was arranged.

The feedback received so far has been very positive for the Culture crawl and we think it would be a good addition also for future Wikimaniacs. It does however add complexity and a lot of work for the organizers.

Edit-a-thons

Several edit-a-thons were organized around Stockholm in the days before Wikimania, by partners and volunteers. Our goal was to spread the conference around the city, and through the edit-a-thons, we could include more people in the larger event than “only” those coming to the conference. Through the partners, such as *Nordiska* and *Musikverket*, and also an edit-a-thon arranged at the Swedish Library Association, we could get attendees from other networks than we may usually do. Using edit-a-thons in this way is a nice way of spreading the conference out from the sessions and the ordinary attendees.

What didn't work and suggestions/recommendations for improving for future years.

Communication

We lacked an internal communications strategy or plan for the event (what is communicated and where for the attendees). We strongly believe that such a strategy and/or plan should be developed for future Wikimaniacs, preferably together with a general timeline. Such a strategy and/or plan should also clarify which parts of the internal communication is the responsibility

of the WMF and which parts is the responsibility of the local hosts. For example, it was not clear that the communication around registration was solely a responsibility for the local hosts. While it is understandable that the local hosts have a responsibility to communicate to the local audience, we believe that the WMF Communications Team should be involved to a higher extent in creating an interest in the event *before* the event, and we recommend partnerships around this in the future. We also recommend that this is included in agreements with PR agencies, to use their local expertise in creating interest before the event.

Neither was there a strategy on how to use existing WMF channels to get people to register, including the use of a banner on Wikipedia which has an incredible potential to reach new participants.

As this absence was not clearly stated on beforehand, it meant a lot of work for the local hosts before the deadlines, and in the end some disappointment from the local hosts that too few people registered. Clear processes need to be established and documented regarding all aspects of the communication.

Venue and logistics

The numbering and naming in the building *Södra huset* was not always clear, and for some it was hard to move around in *Södra huset*. For future Wikimania where it can be expected that some might find it hard to find their ways, a clear naming strategy, including the relationship between naming, mapping and signage, for the rooms would be beneficial. Furthermore, it was not marked specifically where *not* to go, which could have been good in several cases (i.e. some type of "conference area ends here" signage).

The lunch was too small and there was not enough coffee provided. The food was served for only a short time. The salad buffet that was initially promised was not there in the end. While the lunch itself was of good quality, providing enough food for people to stand the entire day is important. The catering firm also behaved disagreeably towards some attendees, and its personnel was unhappy due to the long days.

There were no food alternatives in the closing party, which was especially disappointing for vegans, religious people or people with allergies. While we knew this beforehand and communicated it to all registered attendees, (1) many attendees had still missed it and were disappointed about that and (2) WMF should strive to avoid a similar situation futurewise, both in terms of sustainability (the one part where it was impossible to get vegetarian or vegan options) and to not upset the community.

The hotel rooms were small, which a number of participants complained about. The size of the rooms is something that should be clearly communicated.

It might be beneficial to provide at least one hotel room for the local team at the hotel that could be used in case of logistical difficulties or for them to rest. No one in the Swedish team lived close to the venue or the main hotels which made some arrangements more demanding. This is especially valuable if very early meetings for the logistics team is planned before the event starts.

Community village

The Community Village concept was changed and renewed to a high degree this year. While the changes were good, and the outcome positive, the changes should have been communicated earlier and clearer, for a larger impact. That could, for example, have led to more organizational posters and personal portraits submitted. If the same or a similar concept is developed for the next and future Wikimánias, we believe that the concept can reach even further if it is more fully integrated into the communication plan and timeline.

The development of this year's community village served some more general purposes, like bridging venues, connecting people and limiting the community village's functions as a rather dead area. These purposes were all fulfilled to some extent, and we believe that all parts of the community village could or should be kept; but including it earlier in the communication, organization and general planning will make sure that the goals are reached to a higher extent.

Volunteer coordination

We experienced some friction between the WMF and local hosts in how to view the volunteers. For the local hosts, it was crucial to use the opportunity of attracting and educating volunteers to bring a new and diverse group of people to the Wikimedia community, whereas WMF in some cases more seemed to view the volunteers as "extra hands" needed to perform specific "tasks".

We believe that it is not enough to only have a mandatory training on the Tuesday evening before Wikimánia, in order to have a good set of volunteers diligently performing their tasks, but that further investment is needed to maximize the outcome of the event. For future Wikimánias, volunteers should be trained and prepared for a longer time; this will increase their work ethic, their abilities, make their volunteering more fun, and to the extent they are new to the movement, more prone to keep being active.

For future Wikimánias, a clear timeline for volunteer involvement is also much needed, and specifically from the WMF side. As a concrete example, it was not communicated to the local hosts until very close to the event that volunteers needed to be scheduled already from Monday morning, which created extra stress for local hosts and unclarities for the volunteers, among whom some had to subsequently step in for more slots even though they were already scheduled for long days for all conference days. Even though the volunteers were generally happy, such information given on short notice affects the wellbeing of volunteers negatively (which we have also seen in the comments).

We also believe that responsibilities for volunteers need to be more clearly specified. Especially for key volunteers, it was unclear what responsibilities and requirements WMF expected from them. As an example, neither these key volunteers nor the local team knew until the week of Wikimánia that they were expected to take part in production team meetings on early mornings of each day of the week. They got no invitation for these meetings, and no support to make it easier to attend easier (such as providing taxi rides etc.).

Especially for the key volunteers it is crucial to be very clear on expectations, responsibilities – and rewards, as they often spend close to full time work for weeks or months prior to the event. Not being clear towards these volunteers risk burning them out; this feedback is very important for coming Wikimánias, especially if the local hosts have less of staff and rely to a higher degree on volunteers' work.

As it is now, Wikimedia Sverige has worked hard to secure, through partnerships and own funding, events to show gratitude for the volunteers; an event is planned at the National Museum, and we made sure that they got time to be personally thanked by Katherine Maher during the conference. We believe that this kind of signs of gratitude should be integrated into the planning and budget futurewise, and especially in the budget, so that the local organizers can arrange a final dinner of some sort to show gratitude without having to pay for themselves, which is not something that all affiliates can afford. It is a very important way of showing gratitude to the volunteers, without whom the conference couldn't run, and should be prioritized by the WMF for future years.

Visum preparations

One of the most strenuous tasks of any global conference, especially within the Wikimedia movement, where a large amount of scholarships often go to active members who are young students or similarly from developing countries, is the visa preparations. Whereas the main work of the visa preparations are always on the applicants themselves, we believe that more could and should be done from the WMF side to make sure to give the visa applicants the support they need. We got a lot of valuable input from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, who in the end unfortunately could not give any recommendation letter or similarly of value for the applicants, but this input was not thoroughly integrated into the process. Several applicants complained that they received their documentation late, sometimes even after their scheduled times were due, and as it is a energy consuming and stressing thing to do in itself, this causes an extra and unnecessary burden. It requires a lot of work, and futurewise, more can be done to plan and put up structures for giving the volunteers around the world the support they need.

Social events

There are a number of different sub-groups in the Wikimedia movement that want to organize dedicated meetups at the international events, e.g. lunches for their groups (such as the WikiWomen lunch) or more formal meetings (such as the Chairperson meeting). A list of requests from previous years should be compiled and the sub-groups should all be directly approached well in advance to identify their specific needs. These meetups are a valuable outcome of the international events and should not be overlooked. This year, some groups had not proactively contacted us about a space to use, but still expected us to be able to organize it on the fly leading to complaints from them and added stress for the team.

Timeline

We felt like we were always too late, even when we had to push WMF teams to start earlier. 9 months was way too short for many parts. We suggest that preparations should be started up to

two years in advance to avoid overload and stress, provide more opportunities for partners to engage, to build capacity to engage more volunteers, to find local sponsors and to allow for course correction if needed.

However, if the host is entirely dependent on volunteers then two years could instead be too long as the volunteers might not have the possibility to be active for such a long time period. For this to be viable the local host need to receive dedicated funding for a part time staff member for the entire time.

Wikimania has grown larger than the structures supporting it.