

# Community support addressed in the Wikimedia movement strategy recommendations

## Survey report

The participants of the survey were people working in the area of community support of a Wikimedia affiliate. Their answers don't necessarily reflect their affiliate's position.

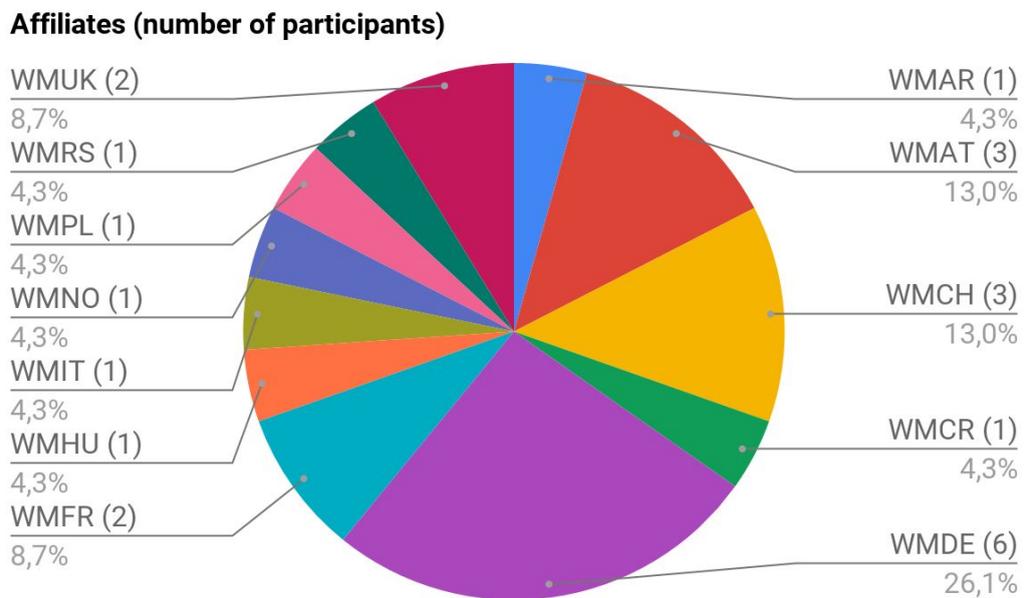
The survey ran from 28 April 2020 to 7 May 2020. It was conducted by [Wikimedia Österreich](#) on behalf of the [Volunteer Supporters Network](#) (VSN).

<b>Survey participants</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Survey results</b>	<b>3</b>
Areas of support	3
Target groups	9
<b>APPENDIX: Enclosed texts from the strategy recommendations</b>	<b>14</b>
Areas of support	14
Target groups	16

# Survey participants

The participants of the survey were staff members of Wikimedia affiliates who work in the field of community support.

**23 people from 12 Wikimedia affiliates** participated in the survey.



# Survey results

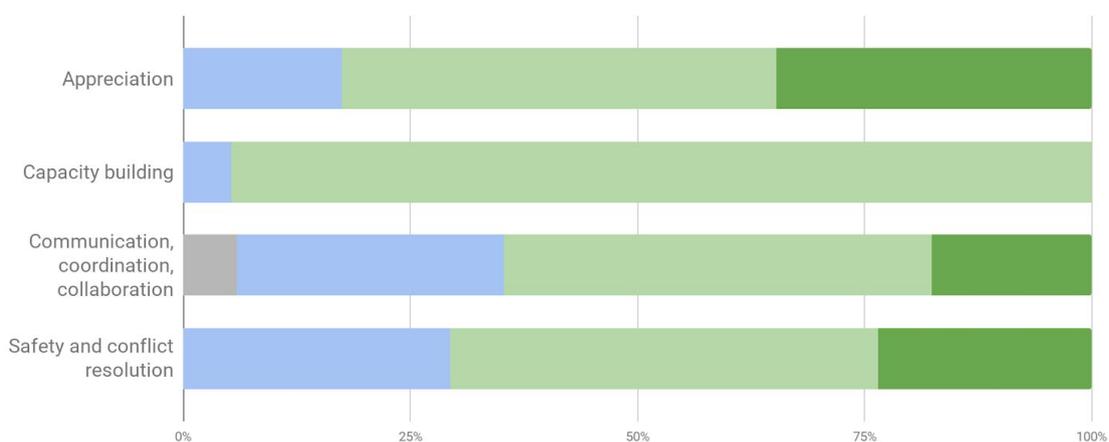
## Areas of support

The survey included texts from the strategy recommendations (see APPENDIX) which were clustered into four *areas of support*:

- Appreciation
- Capacity building
- Communication, coordination, collaboration
- Safety and conflict resolution

### My understanding and experience

■ This remains largely unclear to me. ■ I basically understand this but I don't have any practical experience with it.  
■ I'm already active regarding some aspects of this. ■ All or most of this is already part of my work.



### Comments about APPRECIATION

- This is exact the understanding of my work.
- We have a lot of experience with supporting and appreciating the editing community and the chapter's volunteers. But there is a lot to discover and do in the area of appreciation and support for movement leaders.
- We work integrating all the people who want to be part of [my chapter]. Not only as editors but also as ambassadors of our chapter. One of the biggest challenges is achieving federal equity of resources and also of possibilities of participation due to the extension of our country.
- I think the chapter is slowly trying to also distribute resources to volunteers that might have been overlooked in the past, but I also think this is rather complicated. The problem seems to be mainly that many volunteers do not know about the ways we can support them, so first they would have to find out about us.
- As an aim, more support for stakeholders is laudable but vague. What kind of support should we be offering? Technical, emotional, financial, other? At [my chapter] we actively support volunteers who lead our events and stakeholders at partner organisations, but it is unclear how closely this would align with this area.

- Regarding already active, existing community members, I am / we are already active in this field. Regarding outreach of new members (especially from underrepresented social or other groups) is not in our focus.
- We are going to develop specific volunteer programs with individualized support, by defining specific engagement missions and in particular by drawing inspiration from the work carried out by other NGOs in this model.
- At [my chapter], supporting actions are being developed but only in the sense of helping activities come to fruition. Recognition and praise are still something we need to improve.

### **Comments about CAPACITY BUILDING**

- I feel like we put a lot of focus on the development and building of people-centered skills in the community and already provide support for improving them. However, I would also like to see support in trying to advance technical skills or writing skills!
- [My same-language affiliates group] is looking to develop a capacity building center that could produce courses in collaboration between any of the members (16 affiliates). [My chapter] is also setting up a MOOC platform, open to hosting content from other affiliates as well.
- We are going to develop a very broad e-learning program bringing together various needs and run by volunteers, outside professionals and salaried teams from [my chapter]. In addition, [...] we intend to create a training and support center for affiliates in Africa but also for Wikimedian groups not yet recognized by the movement. Other initiatives will take place in the health of Wikimedians.
- My answer is somewhere in the middle. In some aspects we already practice and still improve. These texts are too theoretical or technical for my understanding to fill the idea behind with appropriate content.
- Trainings alone might lead to nowhere, too often they are not focussed on implementation or are attended by people who don't need the offered additional skills. Learning resources will not be used if just provided, as past experiences both on the global and the local level proved.
- Teaching or training is possible only for people want to participate and learn. For example, in case of communication or conflict resolution, the contributors have largest need for that tend to participate the less.

### **Comments about COMMUNICATION, COORDINATION, COLLABORATION**

- I communicate and collaborate a lot with my peers (other community supporters from other chapters) but this often feels like an additional task which is not appreciated the way it should. And sometimes I get the impression that other affiliates don't want to provide staff time for this and my colleagues have to communicate with their peers only in their spare time.
- A few communication tools exist among the [...] communities that make up [my same-language affiliates group]. Social media, a mailing list (albeit not much used at the moment), a Wikiconvention and a meta page allow those who feel so inclined to communicate with Wikimedians who contribute to the same projects. It also allows information on the movement and its structures to circulate where it would have

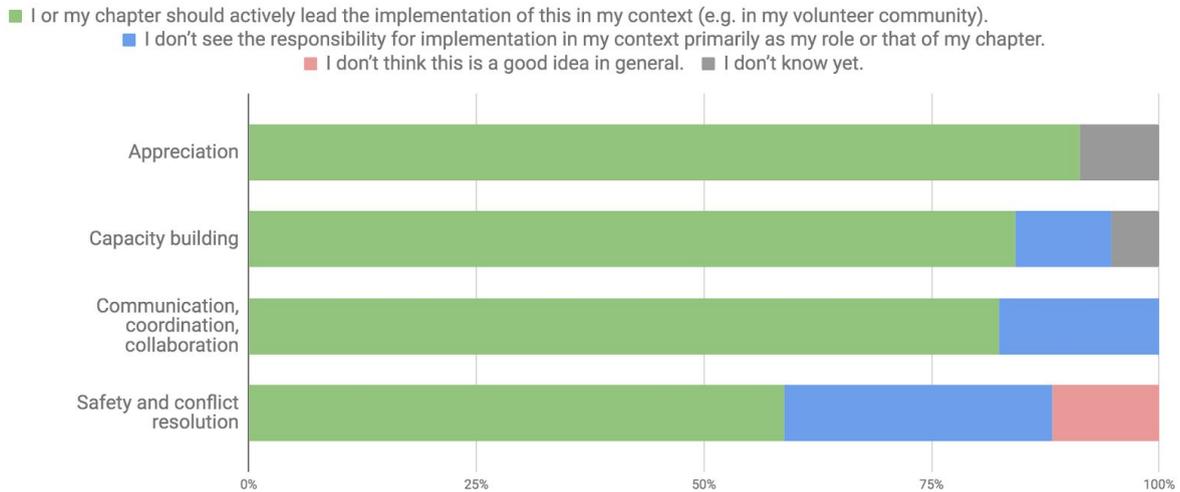
otherwise taken a long time to arrive. The same can be said of gender diversity oriented communities - quite a few communication channels exist and are maintained by [a *Women in Red* initiative]. But when it comes to regional languages, fewer examples of cross-community communications exist.

- There is an "us" vs "them" mentality in some parts of the movement and our role as volunteer supporters should be connecting the community and the affiliates and connect different areas and roles. We cannot fully support our communities if they feel that we, affiliates, are the outsiders in the Wikimedia projects - the more we trust each other the more we can do together. And there are things (especially in the community health and safety area) that cannot be properly done without trust.
- I don't think we have a conflict between the community and the affiliate in [my country], and the dissatisfaction is not higher with other authorities (like WMF) as normal. Through, improving collaboration, supporting each other better on different levels would be advantageous.
- On the way doing this in our daily work.
- Our chapter has no big trouble with that.
- I think that we can act on certain aspects in particular in terms of structuring and coordination between the actors of the movement but also by rethinking our means of communication.

#### **Comments about SAFETY AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION**

- For me self-evident and part of daily praxis work.
- All [my chapter] has in terms of safety measures is a code of conduct for irl events. Every new conflict between volunteers or volunteer and staff or volunteer and administrator reminds us that we need not only to develop clear set rules for online exchanges but also to train members of our community in mediation, so that we can start solving crisis with dialogue and compromises rather than exclusion.
- We should support our communities in building mechanisms for self-healing but not without building a good relationship with those communities. We have a lot of resources to give in this area (trainings, support for expert groups etc.) but the communities will accept them only if they will acknowledge us as true partners, not as a "safety police" which only interferes when there is a problem.
- I feel that this is one of our hardest task, but it is one of the most important as well, in order to have a healthy and growthing community.
- Very complicated subject. The chapters can act to make online contribution and IRL actions safer, but this requires training, support and the implementation of procedures common to the movement but also specific to each affiliate and community. Big work.

## My first thoughts about implementation in the future



### APPRECIATION

- *I or my chapter should actively lead the implementation of this in my context (e.g. in my volunteer community). What would hinder you from doing it, please specify:*
  - Capacity. We need more people who will be providing the support and appreciation. We are a medium chapter, but staff members sometimes don't have enough time to educate volunteers with soft skills. So, trainings are needed as well.
  - One of our challenges is the large territorial extension, and the limited number of staff to support the federal integration of volunteers.
  - Lack of time/resources.
  - We can set a good example but we can't demand how the editor community, other affiliates, the WMF and other stakeholders act; therefore it might be difficult to have a real cultural change.
  - Finding the right kind of recognition is problematic and we need to work on different types of prizes or praises for Wikimedians and for volunteers.
  - Time - our chapter needs it to start implementing VSN.
  - Lack of knowledge of local context.
  - Available time and human capacities.
  - Time to reflect.
  - Missing strategy. WMF could help but at least it is our duty.
  - We must strengthen [my chapter's] salaried team by recruiting a person whose work would be full-time.
  - Our policy at the moment is to support only our members and not the larger volunteer community; moreover, the support is seen mainly as financial support.

## CAPACITY BUILDING

- *I or my chapter should actively lead the implementation of this in my context (e.g. in my volunteer community). What would hinder you from doing it, please specify:*
  - Lack of capacity/skills.
  - Funding, user data.
  - In my context, I am in contact with different communities and setting up solutions particular to each of them would prove costly. On the other hand, centralizing all capacity building contents on one platform could make it difficult to navigate through.
  - Lack of detailed knowledge on a chapter level how to develop the process.
  - Lack of internal coherence within chapter.
  - Lack of technical support.
  - Should be a joint effort by chapter and community - if the latter does not want this, it could be hindered.
  - For this program, the risk comes mainly from a potential lack of financial resources.
  - I am working a lot on online resources for basic and technical skills, not very much on soft skills and with other instruments than webinars and videos.
- *I don't see the responsibility for implementation in my context primarily as my role or that of my chapter. The lead should belong to (e.g. online community, Wikimedia Foundation, other affiliates etc.):*
  - Somewhere between the single-affiliate and WMF level would be good.

## COMMUNICATION, COORDINATION, COLLABORATION

- *I or my chapter should actively lead the implementation of this in my context (e.g. in my volunteer community). What would hinder you from doing it, please specify:*
  - I totally agree with the principle, but this is not a focus of my chapter at the moment.
  - The big investment in time that it requires and that requires you to detach yourself from everyday life to gain height.
  - It would demand a big cultural change on all levels that more communication/coordination/collaboration within the movement is worth doing, that it's rewarded and not punished because it draws attention from everyday work.
  - Challenges of internal communication between areas of activity.
  - In the past, the Foundation reaching directly to volunteers without informing my chapter first meant I had to deal with confused volunteers reaching out to me for clarification about Foundation work I was not aware of.
  - Resistance from the community.
- *I don't see the responsibility for implementation in my context primarily as my role or that of my chapter. The lead should belong to (e.g. online community, Wikimedia Foundation, other affiliates etc.):*

- All stakeholders together (one party cannot make collaboration, network etc.).
- Should be led by the online community if they want to grow together with affiliates.
- Sure, we as CM have to have this on our screen, but I think good communication and explanation of acting and ongoing processes are the best way to avoid lack of harmony.

## SAFETY AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION

- *I or my chapter should actively lead the implementation of this in my context (e.g. in my volunteer community). What would hinder you from doing it, please specify:*
  - From top to down.
  - Resistance from the community.
  - Lack of mechanisms.
  - My chapter is working on clear rules, but we have experienced conflict of interest, leading to the community being wary of the chapter.
  - Learnt behavior samples and bad practices which can be changed over years.
  - I agree with the principle, but at the moment this is not an area of action for my chapter.
  
- *I don't see the responsibility for implementation in my context primarily as my role or that of my chapter. The lead should belong to (e.g. online community, Wikimedia Foundation, other affiliates etc.):*
  - Primarily online community, secondarily WMF.
  - Volunteer community (with support but not leadership by WMF).
  - Probably the online community and maybe some kind of expert circle that could consist of community and possibly chapter people.
  - Only for what concerns Wikimedia activities.
  - I think that this is a reflection and a global program that can be adapted and adapted by affiliate or community, but we need support to deal with these subjects. Perhaps the WMF could be the leader on this subject or organize an international working group with some affiliates and members of the communities in charge of producing documentation, building the processes.
  
- *I don't think this is a good idea in general. Please specify why not:*
  - Police-like actions should only be taken by the communities themselves; affiliates should only provide trainings for a better togetherness; a Code of Conduct can only come out of the communities and cannot be set by any third party (WMF, affiliates, external body even when [partly] selected by community members).
  - Already done or self-evident and not to deal with. Or did I understand in a wrong way?

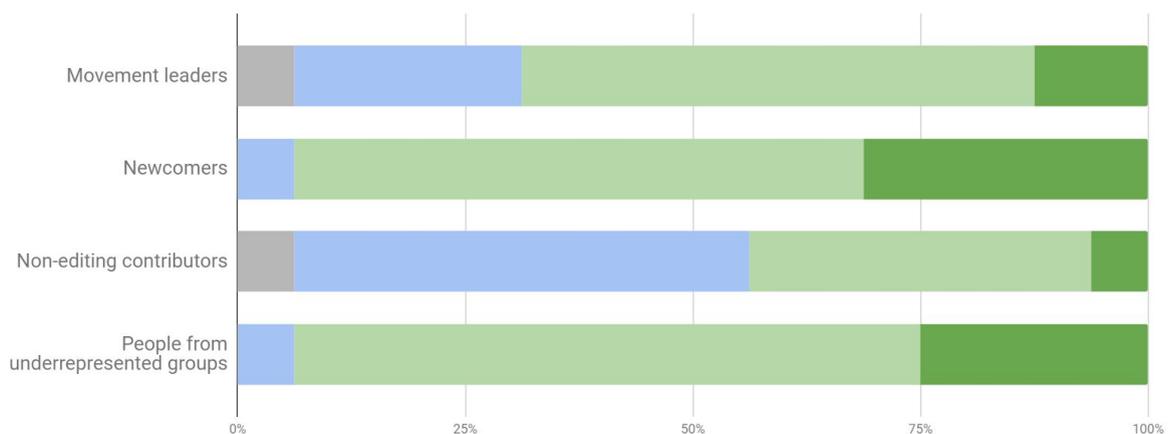
## Target groups

The survey included texts from the strategy recommendations (see APPENDIX) which were clustered into four *target groups*:

- Movement leaders
- Newcomers
- Non-editing contributors
- People from underrepresented groups

### My understanding and experience

■ This remains largely unclear to me. ■ I basically understand this but I don't have any practical experience with it.  
■ I'm already active regarding some aspects of this. ■ All or most of this is already part of my work.



### Comments about *MOVEMENT LEADERS*

- I co-organized [international learning days]. For two days, administrators and high responsibility volunteers [...] shared their experience on topics as different as volunteer recruiting and management, cultural partnerships, crisis mitigating, project management and rules and structures in the Wikimedia movement.
- This raises the global question of the retention of contributors but also of locally active Wikimedians. There are plenty of things to do in this area, in particular by drawing up voluntary routes that are independent of the Wikimedian life course.
- In preparation.
- We have a minimal experience with this topic, but it is far from enough and we do not do it very well...
- Who are movement leaders? What is the connection to our online communities which try to avoid any (formal) leadership?

### Comments about *NEWCOMERS*

- The most effective way of retaining and developing newcomers is constant social contact, not better onboarding materials (which would be nice to have but only as an add-on).

- In the context of [my same-language affiliates group], people who want to start new communities in remote [...] countries and who come to [my chapter] for help are put in contact with nearer Wikimedians who can help them and or shown access to [same-language] online learning tools.
- Because [a certain language] is a minority language in [my country], I frequently rely on material created by [another chapter].

#### Comments about *NON-EDITING CONTRIBUTORS*

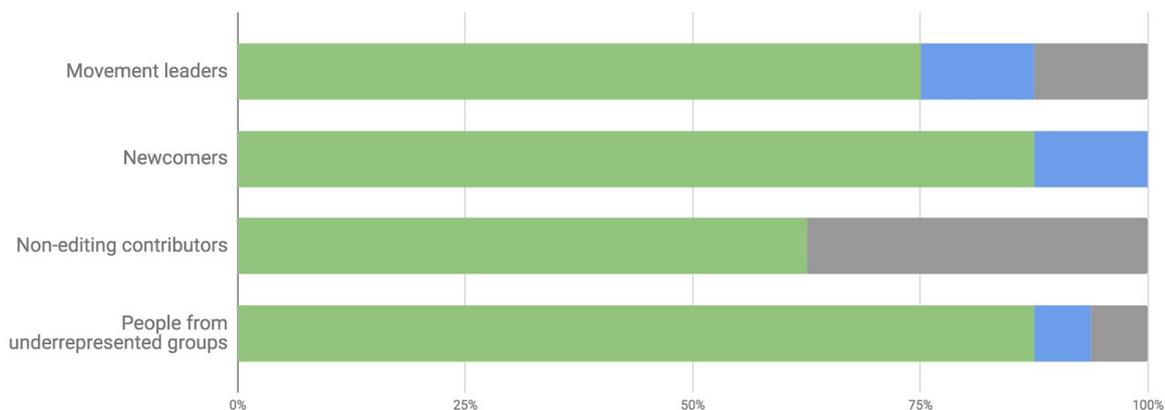
- I strongly agree, and I / we should do that better... We should help with processes and best practices.
- I agree with that. It takes time, thought and effort.
- I'd be very interested to learn more about this.
- Wrong assumption: many stakeholders already recognize and appreciate not only editing contributions; remains unclear what Movement advocates are.
- For me: nice to have but not mandatory.

#### Comments about *PEOPLE FROM UNDERREPRESENTED GROUPS*

- [There] is a tool developed by [my chapter] to tailor a way into Wikimedia projects for those who at first don't feel comfortable contributing in written form. That is mostly regional language oriented, in the hope that speakers might start recording words in their language and then move on to written contribution on the Wiktionary or Wikidata. As far as gender diversity is concerned we've relied largely on [a *Women in Red* initiative] so far to propose new solutions. We intend to work more closely with them in the near future.
- I am surprised to find that the Black-related content group of volunteers I support is sometimes not taken as seriously as others.
- Importance of this topic depends on cultural and other background, local capacities, and many other questions. Just for an example: I would personally be happy if we could reach/involve any kind of volunteer programmer, and not limit this request to gay, female, roma etc. programmers.
- All-in-one solution to have a platform for everyone is unrealistic because people have divergent intentions; there is, in fact, a minimum of abilities for participation required which does not mean that support, technical development, trainings, etc. for obtaining these abilities should not be given
- Accessible in all aspects is one of our goals.
- So in this area in question, this requires the development of a specific support program but which crosses all other issues.
- The definition of "underrepresented" in the glossary makes no sense: because there isn't any definition of what "larger population" we're talking about every single person on the planet can be regarded as being part of an underrepresented group. (We must support more Americans because there are more Chinese in the world population, more people from Spain because they are underrepresented in the Spanish-speaking population, more men because Madrid has more female than male inhabitants etc.)

## My first thoughts about implementation in the future

- I or my chapter should actively lead the implementation of this in my context (e.g. in my volunteer community).
- I don't see the responsibility for implementation in my context primarily as my role or that of my chapter.
- I don't think this is a good idea in general.
- I don't know yet.



### MOVEMENT LEADERS

- *I or my chapter should actively lead the implementation of this in my context (e.g. in my volunteer community). What would hinder you from doing it, please specify:*
  - [My chapter] should take the lead with her regional language communities, on lingua libre and as far as [our] oversea territories are concerned. However in [my same-language affiliates group] we should rather push forward other members of the community who have more valuable experience for new members on how to start a usergroup in [same-language] African countries.
  - Uncertainty of how legal procedures will develop in the near future.
  - Contractors are appearing quicker than my chapter is managing to build a coherent Education program.
  - Yes, on focus, but not so easy to implement.
  - An employee in full-time charge of this issue.
  - We do have some coaches within the staff but they work mainly for GLAMs and only marginally for the community.
  - "Recruitment" of "leaders" should only be done by the community – leaders growing out of the communities; third parties should only provide trainings for community members – who will give direction/advice should come from the community.
- *I don't see the responsibility for implementation in my context primarily as my role or that of my chapter. The lead should belong to (e.g. online community, Wikimedia Foundation, other affiliates etc.):*
  - This could be most effective on an collaborative, regional or international level: people work on similar area can receive support together.

## NEWCOMERS

- *I or my chapter should actively lead the implementation of this in my context (e.g. in my volunteer community). What would hinder you from doing it, please specify:*
  - A full-time employee :)
  - We would need more staff time for this.
  - Not enough time to do.
  - So far we've been relying on other affiliates to actively welcome new communities into the Wikimedia movement. As far as our communities [...] are concerned we have a lot to improve.
  - Too much bureaucracy.
  - Lack of inter-chapter collaboration.
- *I don't see the responsibility for implementation in my context primarily as my role or that of my chapter. The lead should belong to (e.g. online community, Wikimedia Foundation, other affiliates etc.):*
  - Primarily online community, secondarily chapters/affiliates.

## NON-EDITING CONTRIBUTORS

- *I or my chapter should actively lead the implementation of this in my context (e.g. in my volunteer community). What would hinder you from doing it, please specify:*
  - The most difficult part would be that the non-editing contributors are welcomed and not excluded by the existing community. We should not raise false expectations on the non-editing contributors' side and teach them about cultural sensitivities of the community we want them to be part of.
  - So far we show appreciation through verbal praise. A whole system needs to be put in place.
  - We do have lots of non-editing members, but our training activities are mostly about project contribution.
  - Available time and human capacities.
  - Must be part of our work, but not yet implemented.
  - Not enough of people to take care of that.

## PEOPLE FROM UNDERREPRESENTED GROUPS

- *I or my chapter should actively lead the implementation of this in my context (e.g. in my volunteer community). What would hinder you from doing it, please specify:*
  - More staff time.
  - Chapters must lead the way but the Foundation must not forget that these costly programs will require its support.
  - Very time consuming process.
  - Lack of knowledge/taking into account the material conditions of underrepresented groups (ie advancing money for grants is often needed,

reimbursement is not enough, they tend to have less free time,...). A training to welcome them better could be nice.

- The main block here is the language and the chapters can manage it better.
  - Unbalanced perception of minimum abilities for contributors.
  - Not enough proactive approach yet.
  - Specific competence to address minority audiences.
  - It is not a priority currently.
- *I don't see the responsibility for implementation in my context primarily as my role or that of my chapter. The lead should belong to (e.g. online community, Wikimedia Foundation, other affiliates etc.):*
    - We are doing our best.

# APPENDIX: Enclosed texts from the strategy recommendations

(These texts were included in the survey.)

## Areas of support

### Appreciation

In our current setting, support and appreciation is distributed unevenly. ... We must develop further support systems to enable and engage all stakeholders. Finding improved ways to recognize and appreciate their work ... better means of valuing the people who are already in our Movement and who have developed collaborative relationships. (source: [Promote Sustainability and Resilience](#))

### Capacity building

The most effective capacity building is respectful to local cultures and conditions, and empowers participants to develop, test, and share their own promising practices. (source: [Ensure Equity in Decision-Making](#))

Develop the indispensable technical skills needed to contribute, as well as people-centered skills, such as communication, conflict resolution, and intercultural dialogue ... Online, we should create a coherent and fluid learning experience, preferably through a platform or network of material, offering a wide set of contextualized learning resources about both Wikimedia projects and Movement processes. ... Offline, capacity building should be distributed at all levels (individual, local, regional, global), and include multiple formats (train-trainers programs, training, mentoring, coaching, workshops, clubs, camps, conferences, and hackathons) ... Create a system of skills assessment, mapping available and missing skills, and delivering official skills recognition (e.g., through open badges certification). (source: [Invest in Skills Development](#))

Training needs to be established for volunteers and staff dedicated to trust and safety (including members of communities, such as administrators or Arbitration Committee members) in order to provide psychological and resource support to participants. ... We must offer training, as needed, to raise awareness and build response capacity to provide ways to safeguard the privacy and security of those contributors who put themselves at risk or face complex challenges due to their participation. (source: [Provide for Safety and Security](#))

## Communication, coordination, collaboration

Often there is a lack of harmony between the volunteer communities and other parts of the Movement. A lack of clarity about the roles of the various stakeholders, ineffective communication channels, and differing prioritization systems have created points of conflict ... We must prioritize communication, information exchange, and working together and adopt an organizational structure that has a collaboration function built-in. The structure needs to provide, at all levels, for contextualized thematic/regional discussion and networking, support, planning, research, monitoring, advocacy, capacity building, learning, mentoring, etc. ... Enhance communication capacities to enable better management of knowledge, exchange of information, support, and collaboration amongst internal and external partners. (source: [Coordinate Across Stakeholders](#))

Stakeholders and systems in our Movement must function together as a collaborative, supportive ecosystem and avoid confusion over authority. (source: [Ensure Equity in Decision-Making](#))

Provide new mechanisms that allow finding peers with specific interests, roles, and objectives along with communication channels to interact and collaborate. (source: [Improve User Experience](#))

## Safety and conflict resolution

We must ensure that we have a welcoming and usable environment where contributors and new communities can safely flourish. The effects are not restricted to the online communities, but reach into external social media channels, off-wiki communities, workgroups, and organizations. ... we must have a universal Code of Conduct setting standards of behavior for all stakeholders. (source: [Create Cultural Change for Inclusive Communities](#))

Ensuring a space free of conflict, or with mechanisms to mitigate conflict, is fundamental and benefits all contributors. The specific solutions could range from hiring staffing dedicated to conflict resolution, to defining clear processes and follow-up practices, to training. ... here should be clear understanding in the communities of the existence of toxicity as well as about how to both prevent it and address it if it arises. ... Provide easily accessible pathways for users to report incidents, either technical or human, and have them addressed effectively, and with appropriate urgency, regardless of language or location, while respecting privacy. ... Policies for conflict management must provide methods to deal with issues before, during, and after. (source: [Improve User Experience](#))

Ensuring anonymity, privacy, and access to the necessary security measures to address practices such as doxing and trolling ... We must ensure that the participation in our projects does not tolerate any kind of violence. (source: [Provide for Safety and Security](#))

Establish conflict resolution mechanisms at all levels of the Movement ... provide easily accessible conflict-resolution reporting and support systems ... (source: [Ensure Equity in Decision-Making](#))

## Target groups

### Movement leaders

We must train, support, and retain Movement leaders ... we need to actively recruit, encourage, and develop new leaders ... encompassing all the types of leadership support such as mentoring, peer-to-peer development, training events, tutorials on a knowledge management platform, etc. ... we envision the incorporation of coaches or trusted advisors, these would be independent contractors or Movement staff. (source: [Foster and Develop Distributed Leadership](#))

### Newcomers

We must support people: a dynamic and often changing volunteer base able to bring new ideas, leaders, and methods for inclusion, and continual inflow of people. (source: [Promote Sustainability and Resilience](#))

The first experiences newcomers have and their ability to access learning resources, mentors, or guidance to perform any task is especially crucial for fostering their retention and continued engagement ... Provide newcomers with easy-to-find and easy-to-understand resources, such as onboarding media and guiding interfaces helping them independently navigate and learn their way. ... Provide a welcoming environment through mentor-based programs that actively reach out to newcomers using best practices both within and beyond the Movement to help and guide them in contributing. (source: [Improve User Experience](#))

“Learning packs” oriented toward newcomers (individuals, affiliates, or partners), including welcome packs, growth plans, toolkits for them to enter and thrive in our Movement, and delivering skills recognition (eg. through open badges certification). (source: [Invest in Skills Development](#))

### Non-editing contributors

We must begin to recognize and appreciate not only editing contributions, but the value of mentoring, training, advocating, and other activities which strengthen our Movement. ... acknowledge new ways of contributing, like encouraging and empowering Movement advocates. (source: [Promote Sustainability and Resilience](#))

## People from underrepresented groups

Underrepresented = A group of people who are omitted or are not represented in a given situation at the same level as they are represented in the larger population. (source: [Glossary](#))

A more proactive approach in reaching out to those who are not yet represented in our communities and who advocate for our Movement. ... tailored pathways that attract and retain more people from a variety and diversity of languages and cultural backgrounds will increase our outreach on a local or global level. (source: [Promote Sustainability and Resilience](#))

We need to continually improve the design of our platforms to enable everyone—whatever their gender, culture, technological background, or physical and mental abilities—to enjoy a fluid, effective, and positive experience during both the consultation and contribution. (source: [Improve User Experience](#))

The alarming gender gap in contributors can be attributed to several causes, among them the lack of a safe environment, as evidenced by numerous reported cases of harassment over the past years. (source: [Create Cultural Change for Inclusive Communities](#))

For skills development to grow steadily and equitably, it will need solid investment in terms of resources and staff, with a focus on under- and unrepresented communities. (source: [Invest in Skills Development](#))