




WG1: Citizen Science and Inclusiveness

Workshop Report

**3 - 4 March 2020 at the
Royal Belgian Institute of Natural Sciences**



by Carole Paleco

Aim of the workshop

The workshop had two main objectives:

1. Have a common understanding of what inclusiveness means and how it can be tackled
2. Discover tools and means that can improve inclusiveness and equal opportunities in citizen science.

A particular focus on women involvement was made so as to encourage them in publishing their work and scientific research notably online through the use of next generation crowdsourcing tools as wikis so as to have a more gendered balance source of information providers on the web.



Introduction to the workshop by Carole Paleco on March 3rd, 2020

Participants:

Surname	Name	Country	Institution
Ferreira	Beatriz	Portugal	Herbarium of University of Coimbra
Ferreira	Gonçalo	Portugal	Herbarium of University of Coimbra
Groom	Quentin	Belgium	Meise Botanic Garden
Jacquemin	Justine	Belgium	Royal Belgian Institute of Natural Sciences
Jansen	Daniëlle	The Netherlands	Wikimedia projects and trainer
Leppée	Marcel	Croatia	Institute for Healthy Ageing
Paleco	Carole	Belgium	Royal Belgian Institute of Natural Sciences
Shulla	Kalterina	Albania	RCE middle Albania

Target

Where does the world go to find information about biodiversity? There is a good chance the answer is Wikipedia and the Wikimedia family of projects. This open and fully internationalized environment is entirely created and funded by volunteers and delivers more than 16 billion page views per month across 264 languages (<https://stats.wikimedia.org/v2/#/all-projects>).

With 134,000 active contributors just on the English language Wikipedia, it can safely be argued that this is the most open and international citizen science project in terms of usage, participants and languages. It has an irreplaceable role in formal and informal education and in the democratization of information globally. Furthermore, since 2012, Wikimedia has developed Wikidata with multilingual, public domain data.

Wikimedia and Wikipedia are in the hands of citizens and citizen scientists – however, it seems that fewer women contribute content to the platforms than men do...

Through this workshop we would like to present the work from wiki users and provide a training about this tool towards the COST action community and the community of citizen science practitioners. Our goal is also to encourage women by disinhibiting them so that they give visibility to their research by publishing it and making it available to all.



Trainer and speaker Daniëlle Jansen presenting the #WikiGap campaign, aiming to provide a platform for volunteers who want to contribute to a more gender-equal internet

Programme of the 2 days from March 3rd noon to March 4th noon

DAY 1

AGENDA

12:00 - 13:00	<i>Welcome Lunch</i>
13:00 - 13:15	<p>Welcome & Introduction to the workshop by Carole Paleco (RBINS),</p> <p>Presentation of the workshop trainer Daniëlle Jansen by Quentin Groom (Meise BG)</p>
13:15 - 15:00	<p>Presentations and addressing following grouped questions by Daniëlle Jansen</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are Wikidata and Wikimedia Commons tools and how does it link with Citizen Science? How does these tools improve inclusiveness of citizens in science and bring value to research? Why can we observe a gender imbalance among publishers?
15:00 - 15:30	<i>Coffee Break</i>
15:30 - 17:00	<p>Presentations and addressing following grouped questions by Daniëlle Jansen</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who are their publishers and who/why are they publishing for? What could be the obstacles to use these tools? How can we improve women's representation among publishers?
Evening	<i>Dinner together</i>

DAY 2

AGENDA

9:30 - 12:00	In practice: participants experiencing Wikimedia with trainer Daniëlle Jansen
12:00 - 13:00	<i>Lunch & End of Workshop</i>

Trainer:

Presentations and training by Daniëlle Jansen (NL), expert in Wikimedia projects (Wikipedia, Wikidata and Wikimedia Commons), inclusiveness and gender.

Report

The workshop has been set under the joint initiative from Carole Paleco (RBINS) and Quentin Groom (Meise Botanic Garden) with the intention to increase the participation from ITC countries in citizen science, increase the participation of women in citizen science activities, raise awareness on the poor representation of women in online initiatives such as the new generation of tools in Wikimedia and give a focused training with an expert on both gender issues, inclusiveness and wiki tools.

The attendance to the workshop has been lower than expected because the date has been postponed and resulted in a shorter period of time to advertise towards the network. Nevertheless, despite this delay, the workshop attracted 8 people coming from 5 different countries. Among them where 5 women and 3 men. The organisers are really grateful to the trainer Ms Jansen for her presence and for having been so dedicated during these 2 days, and to the participants that travelled to the workshop, specially knowing that it would have been impossible to hold this meeting on a later date as it was planned during this last year of the COST Action and, unexpectedly, due to the health crisis that arose just afterwards.

DAY 1:

- Following a brief introduction to the concept of the Action, and reminding of the specific role of equal opportunity officer, Carole Paleco focused on the goal of the workshop and introduced both trainers of the 2 days Daniëlle Jansen and Quentin Groom.
- She gave the floor to Daniëlle Jansen who started to introduce herself by giving a presentation on the various roles and functions she occupied linked to wiki activities. She explained her involvement in gender diversity issues, which led her to become project leader for more than a year in Residence at the UNESCO Caribbean for the “*Wiki goes Caribbean*” project of [Wikimedia](#) NL. This activity consisted of stimulating more people with roots in the (Dutch) Caribbean/Suriname to edit and contribute to [Wikipedia/Wikidata/Commons](#) and to create more content on subjects related to the Dutch Caribbean and Suriname. She highlighted her strong interest and support to more inclusive practices among editors towards women/ LGBT/people of colour so as to improve their representation in the provision of content on Wikimedia.

She reported on the few coloured people using wiki tools, although the tool represents a help to improve the quantity of data on Surinam currently lacking. She also mentioned discrepancies in the following criteria:

- gender
- race and colour
- sexual orientation
- geographical location

Daniëlle then highlighted the following knowledge gaps and situated them among Wikimedia:

- users
- editors
- content

Daniëlle explained to the participants that there was a specific wiki jargon according to fields like GLAMs, Galleries, Libraries, Archives, Museums.

She pointed to some references like the rosadoc.be website which is a platform improving the presence of women in culture, acting like an atrium.



Daniëlle Jansen presenting the Wikimedia projects

The participants were then carried into the story of Wikimedia, a US initiative, from San Francisco – funding based on donations paying for the servers (paid infrastructure) – which covers 15 different projects (ex. [wikivoyage](http://wikivoyage.org) – which gives information and guidance on travels, ...)

The main principle underpinning Wikimedia is to give access to knowledge. On [Wikipedia](http://wikipedia.org), there's no need to have an account, but you can create one with an anonyne profile. So that no one knows who you are and who really is providing the content. However, the profile is to abide to the rules. When one publishes an article online on Wikipedia, it does not belong to this publisher anymore, the track remains in the history of the publication record but anyone else can change and modify the article! However, nobody can delete a page.

We were explained that there were 298 different language versions of Wikipedia!

Among the various tools we can find "[Wikimedia commons](http://commons.wikimedia.org)". The content published on "Commons" goes into the public domain 70 years after the publisher has died or immediately if the publisher agrees to the open license.

Another tool is [Wikidata](#). The data on there are “editable” and “readable” by humans and machines! It is a database with more than 80 million items of linked open data, as of May 2020, and it is growing all the time.

The representation of women on Wikipedia. The topic of the representation of women on Wikimedia was raised and Daniëlle took as example the Dutch pages on which women account for 11% of the publishers and 20% on the English pages. Only 17% of the biographies on the English pages are on women. This situation raises a major concern and questioning on female representation on these tools and could result from a lack of information, difficulties in accessing the tools, tangible obstacles that impair women from being involved and included in this community of practitioners.

Following the presentation from Daniëlle, Quentin Groom explained his experience with these new tools. He raised the point that actually “Newbies” are not always welcomed on [Wiktionary](#). Among the users and publishers, those that are involved for a long time can be suspicious about a definition from a newcomer and really test the degree of knowledge and references used.

Quentin Groom is also involved in the COST Action on **Alien Species (Alien CSI)**. The Action is notably working on Wikipedia pages related to the List of invasive alien species of Union concern from the EU Regulation 1143/2014 on Invasive Alien Species. He explains that from his study, the English Wikipedia has good coverage, but other language Wikipedias, such as Greek, are not well covered.

This key element gave rise to a discussion with the participants on the value given to the own Wikipedia language – According to the participants the **wiki pages written in Croatian or Portuguese are seen as less reliable** and less trusted than those is written in the English Wikipedia pages. From this observation, there seems to be a **preconceived view on the quality of the content whether it comes from a country or another one**. Even Croatians and Portuguese natives prefer to trust [English wikipages](#) than their own pages, possibly because of the British scientific and cultural renown.



Quentin Groom presenting the challenges of the new generation of tools like wikimedias

At the end the day, some questions to reflect upon so as to build on for the next day which would be more practical were raised. Participants were to reflect on the reasons that seem to



prevent women to contribute to wiki projects. Among the participants elements such as the fact that “*men are more confident in pressing on the edit button than women*” came out. Still, how can we encourage women, and people at large to publish on Wikipedia?

Daniëlle gave some hints for the new users such as: “*Just start by adding something to the article and add an image or think to improve and add, or propose a translation.... Often people think they have to write a whole article, but starting with a small contribution can be a first step.*” You can also just “*Start by adding some sources to an article for instance. You can also “use” the community by letting it improve your article – because, remember that, anyway others will add or modify it as it won’t belong to you anymore. See what happens with publications and how people to these*”.

Daniëlle asked as homework for Day 2 to the participants to make sure they have a picture they can add to an article for instance, and that they have created an account on Wikipedia.

Daniëlle and Quentin also gave some references such as:

- Scholia – website linked to Wikidata.
- Bloodhound – linked to Wikidata
- Add name to Orcid and privacy – can be linked to their profile on Research Gate.
- Mix n Match – linking the database of an organisation to Wikidata.
<http://tools.wmflabs.org/mix-n-match>

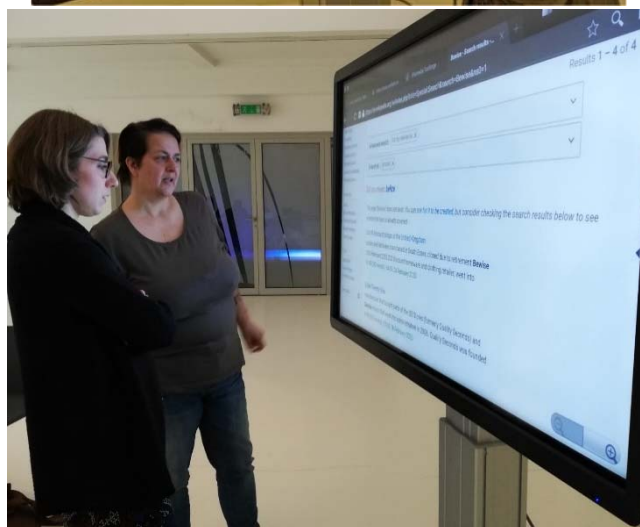
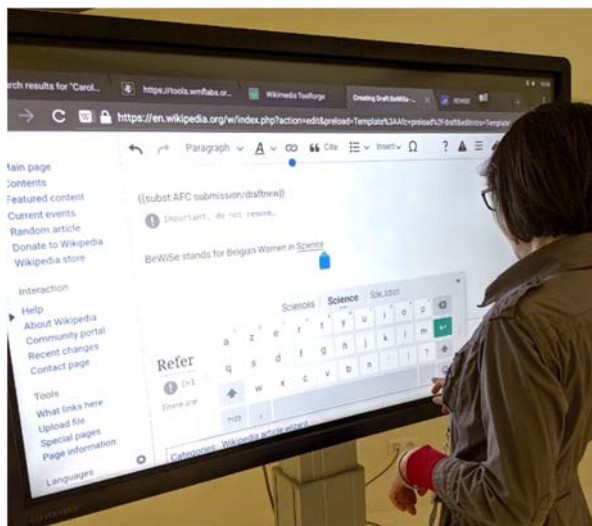
DAY 2

The second day was really a hands-on and practical day aimed at encouraging the participants to get acquainted with the platforms and leave out all the preconceived ideas such as the “quality level” of an article for it to be published online. There is a confusion between scientific articles published in journals and online articles. Although the quality is very important, as the online and community members are safeguards of the standing of the information online, Wikipedia is a democratic tool open to everyone and a platform where knowledge can be shared to the largest audience.

Daniëlle concretely indicated ways to work: she reminded us to use the friendly space policy – when one organises an event – so that everyone feels comfortable and at ease. This is quite important for inclusiveness.

Regarding the creation of an account, Daniëlle helped or reminded the participants how this could be done: one can use one account that is applicable across all Wikimedia platforms.

As an exercise, members from the Belgian Woman in Science association who were present (Justine Jacquemin and Carole Paleco) decided to create a Wikipedia BeWiSe page (that did not exist yet!) – and learned how to upload pictures on Wikicommons. They also decided to make it in FR & NL & EN, given the target audience of the BeWiSe network. The English page is still under construction (and will be translated into FR and NL when finished), and the link to the draft is <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Draft:BeWiSe>



Working on the draft of the new BeWiSe page on Wikipedia during the training phase of the workshop

A discussion was engaged regarding the groups that are less present on Wikimedias. The following groups were identified:

- **Who are those less involved groups?**

1) Youngsters: They should be already readers, and have already the sufficient background to benefit from Wikipedia.

2) People from the developing world (e.g. overseas French, do not have technical access, support or the networking)

3) Women non-scientists vs. scientists. Non-scientists do not “dare” publish. Women are inhibited, non-scientists, not used to publish articles. It is very different in the Caribbean for instance where women are networking, and traditionally in charge with the education and knowledge transfer.

4) Other groups of people not feeling legitimate to publish: elderly people not connected to the internet.

- **How can we involve these groups and include them in this community of users?**

- 1) Youngster: inform the teachers on the benefits of Wikipedia. The schools could promote the tool and encourage kids to write articles with their teachers. Here are some assets of the use of the tools pointed out:
 - a. Research skills
 - b. Use of resources
 - c. Editing and improving articles
 - d. Critical thinking
- 2) For the developing world, we could emphasize the cocreation asset which can be tailored to their needs. This is also relevant for (4) elderly people.
- 3) Include women by raising awareness on the different kinds of possible contributions and networking leverage effect. Disinhibit them and train them on the valorisation it can bring
- 4) Use Wikicommons as an existing & free promotion tool.
- 5) Promote the use of local and national languages.
- 6) Inform on democratic and open process.



Identification of the groups being less present on Wikimedias

Conclusion

The discussion was very inspiring and led to a better understanding on the wiki tools and their benefits among the participants. Although the number of participants was low, it has been an enriching experience to all. The links between citizen science and the use of these powerful knowledge dissemination tools was made obvious through the identification of the various potential citizen science groups that were marginalised and the ways these could be included within the community. These reflexions are tracks to encourage inclusiveness from the point of view of the community of citizen science practitioners, Wikimedia users but also the scientific community and society at large. It was agreed that this workshop and training was to be done on another occasion so as to promote the tools also towards associations and other potential beneficiaries.

Last references:

- <http://listen.hatnote.com/>
- <https://seealso.org/>