TOOLKIT FOR VIRTUAL CONVERSATIONS

Between
African Wikimedians (Wikimedia Movement in Africa)
And
The African Library sector (Librarians and allied professionals)

- WORKING DOCUMENT -

Developed for the project,
Integrating Wikimedia projects into African libraries' ecosystem
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This toolkit has been designed to provide background information, purpose and guidelines to moderators of Virtual conversations between the African Library sector and the Wikimedia movement in Africa. The conversations are a part of the *Integrating Wikimedia projects into African libraries' ecosystem* project.

https://mapswire.com/maps/africa/

1   **Background**

Opening up knowledge and making it accessible for their user communities is what libraries do, thus the default setting for libraries could be considered to be 'open.' Libraries in Africa advocate and drive open knowledge practices which are all encapsulated in Wikimedia projects, for example Wikipedia, Wikidata and WikiCommons, which can all be used to foster openness, sharing and linking of knowledge. This creates a strong connection between library and information science institutions and what Wikimedia projects do. The African Library and Information Associations and Institutions understood this and, with funding support from the Wikimedia Foundation, has run the *Wikipedia in African Libraries course* (2020) which was an adaptation of OCLC's *Wikipedia + Libraries: Better Together!* curriculum. [1]

AfLIA has gone further to introduce African librarians to Wikidata through *Promoting Open Knowledge practices in African Libraries through WikiData* course (2022). Since 2020, the organisation has also been driving the African Librarians Week, an annual campaign which rallies African Librarians to make contributions to Wikimedia projects, in keeping with the annual global #1Lib1Ref campaign.

Efforts by AfLIA in capacity development and awareness creation have successfully created a cohort of African library and information professionals, who are utilising Wikimedia projects and tools. However, a majority of these library and information professionals engage more actively in response to short-lived campaigns and edit-athons without the understanding of how Wikimedia projects could be integrated into their daily routines or how their libraries and other institutions within the sector could collaborate with the Wikimedia movement in Africa for wider and more sustainable impact. As a result, the expected level of editor retention, contributions and utilisation of Wikimedia projects by African librarians and their user communities have not reached its maximum potential. Also, at WikiIndaba, 2022, AfLIA started to interrogate the Authority Control (AC) construct in Wikidata and Wikipedia to find out how the template can link content from Africa and about Africa to the resources in African National libraries as it presently only directs readers of African content to National Libraries outside the continent for 'validation' through the AC template.[2]

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[1]   https://www.webjunction.org/explore-topics/wikipedia-libraries.html
[2] https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Interrogating_the_Authority_control_and_Library_templates,_Knowledge_equity_and_African_Libraries.pdf

On the other hand, there is a notion that there are insufficient Africa citations for African historical and current content on Wikimedia projects. This notice

> 'This article **needs additional citations for verification**. *Please help improve this article by adding citations to reliable sources. Unsourced material may be challenged and removed.*'...

can be seen on a reasonable number of African content on English Wikipedia. Questions about quality and use of unreliable sources have also been raised about African articles on English Wikipedia.

Additionally, the importance of open knowledge is yet to be fully explored in Africa despite its critical role in providing pathways for Africa to tell her own stories and making available resources that can drive the attainment of SDG 4 (quality, inclusive education and lifelong learning). African libraries of all types and the Wikimedia movement within the continent are stakeholders in the drive for awareness, deepened acceptance, practice and favourable policies as pertains to open knowledge.

IWIPALE Project and the Virtual Conversations

The "Integrating Wikimedia Projects into African Libraries' Ecosystem" (IWIPALE) project seeks to explore and implement strategies that will enable African libraries and librarians to integrate various Wikimedia projects into their everyday operations. This initiative is driven by the recognition of Wikimedia's value as a global knowledge-sharing platform that can enhance information access, literacy, and research in African libraries. Wikimedia projects, such as Wikipedia, Wikidata, WikiCite, WikiCommons, and Wikibase, offer vast resources that, when incorporated into library services, can amplify the role of libraries as hubs of open knowledge, collaboration, and learning.

As part of this effort, AfLIA has designed a two-pronged data collection approach: Virtual Conversations and an online survey. Both mechanisms aim to gather ideas and perspectives on how best to integrate Wikimedia projects into the daily workflows of African librarians, thus transitioning them from passive users to active contributors in the global Wikimedia movement.

This toolkit serves as a comprehensive guide to facilitate the Virtual Conversations, which are a series of online stakeholder dialogues designed to engage African librarians and Wikimedians. These conversations will provide a platform for collaborative brainstorming, insight-sharing, and community building. With facilitators and panellists representing various regions across Africa, the Virtual Conversations aim to identify practical approaches to incorporating Wikimedia projects into library services, ensuring their sustainable integration into African libraries, and to

bring librarians, allied professionals and the Wikimedia Movement in Africa to the table to discuss and explore how to make collaborative efforts for mutual benefits.

The toolkit outlines key information, including the project context, the format and objectives of the Virtual Conversations, and specific guidelines for facilitators and panellists. It aims to equip facilitators with the tools needed to lead engaging, productive discussions that will result in actionable strategies for transforming African libraries into active participants in the Wikiverse. Through this initiative, AfLIA envisions African librarians becoming not just consumers of knowledge but contributors to the vast body of open knowledge that Wikimedia represents.

Purpose of the Virtual Conversations

To achieve the goal of integrating Wikimedia projects into African libraries, AfLIA has developed a two-level data collection strategy, one of which is the Virtual Conversations series. These Virtual Conversations (VCs) are structured, region-specific online dialogues designed to engage librarians and Wikimedians across Africa in identifying feasible and sustainable approaches for incorporating Wikimedia tools into library work. The series will include six separate sessions targeting different regions—West Africa (English), West Africa (French), East Africa, Central Africa, Southern Africa, and North Africa—with French-language sessions ensuring inclusivity for Francophone audiences.

One of the targets of the IWIPALE project is to build a stronger relationship between the African Wikimedia movement and libraries within the continent to create more opportunities for opening up access to knowledge about the motherland. How? - through streamlining Wikiprojects into everyday library services. The main objective of the Virtual Conversations is to gather actionable insights and best practices on how African libraries and librarians can effectively integrate Wikimedia projects into their routine work.

Specifically, from the perspective of African Wikimedians;
- The conversations seek to identify and understand how the Wikimedia Movement in Africa can benefit from the resources within African libraries for bridging the insufficient citations gap of African content in Wikimedia projects where they exist.
- Also, the conversations will explore pathways through which the research, reference and information literacy and retrieval skills of librarians can be systematically impacted to volunteers within the Wikimedia movement to boost their fact-checking and information finding techniques.
- Additionally, the conversations would highlight in-country policies and practices that deter Wikimedians from opening up knowledge and explore how collaborative advocacy strategies with the library sector can address such issues.

For the African Library sector;
- The conversations are meant to provide clearer understanding of how African librarians and allied professionals can better serve the Wikimedia movement in Africa through provision of resources and impartation of information literacy and retrieval skills.

- The conversations would also highlight the natural alignment between libraries and Wikimedia projects, thereby potentially frame engagement with these projects as an extension of the core principles that underpin librarianship, making it a more palatable proposition even for librarians who may have preconceived prejudices or initial reservations.
- Also, the conversations would answer the questions of how Wikimedia projects can fit into library services, their workflow routines and how to address the probable shortfalls in Wikimedia skills by African librarians.
- The conversations would also seek to establish institutional or infrastructural impediments that may hinder collaborations between the Wikimedia movement and the African library sector, and how they can be removed or circumvented as well as strategic pathways for achieving this.
- Furthermore, the conversations would highlight possible collaborative efforts between librarians and Wikimedians in the area of advocacy for policies that would grow the open knowledge ecosystem.

Overall, the Virtual Conversations will be an essential platform for promoting deeper collaboration between Africa librarians and the Wikimedia community, enabling them to share experiences, challenges, and ideas for working together. Librarians are recognized as trusted custodians of knowledge, while Wikimedians represent a community of active contributors to open knowledge. This initiative aims to bring together these two groups in order to harness the full benefits of their synergy, including strengthening the role of African libraries within the Wikiverse. Furthermore, the Virtual Conversations will feature experienced Wikimedians and librarians who can share successful examples of libraries integrating Wikimedia projects to enhance their services. Showcasing these real-world case studies will provide concrete evidence of the value of Wikimedia projects for information provision beyond any perceived prejudices and limitations.

3.   **Overarching principles**

1. Libraries and the Wikimedia movement are natural allies.
2. Boldness in making connections and seeking collaborations between libraries and volunteers/communities within the Wikimedia movement is to be encouraged. The OCLC Wikipedia + Libraries: Better Together and Wikipedia in African Libraries are good examples of collaborative programs that worked,
3. The Africa Agenda https://meta.wikimedia.org/wiki/Afrika_Baraza/Africa_Agenda is a true reflection of the opportunities and challenges within the Wikimedia movement in Africa.
4. The resources and facilities of Libraries and allied institutions would help deepen the accuracy and depth of contributions of African Wikimedians to Wikipedia and sister projects.
5. Working in silos may slow down, hinder and totally derail the achievement of the African Agenda within the Wikimedia movement
6. Favourable policies for open knowledge practices are better achieved when there are more strategic voices speaking the same language.

<u>Format for Virtual Conversations</u>

The Virtual Conversations are designed to be dynamic, inclusive, and regionally tailored sessions that facilitate in-depth discussions. Each session will follow a structured format to ensure productive dialogues, participation, and the achievement of the session's objectives. The format is crafted to allow panellists and audiences from across Africa to contribute valuable insights during the dialogues.

Session Structure

Each Virtual Conversation is 90-100 minutes long, broken down into 6 main parts - Welcome and opening remarks, ice-breaker activities, panel discussions, open floor discussion, and closing remarks..

- ❖ **Opening Remarks (5 minutes)**
  - ➢ The session will begin with a brief introduction by the facilitator, who provides an overview of the session's purpose, objectives, and structure. This includes introducing the panellists (*two African librarians and one Wikimedian*) and explaining their roles in the discussion.
  - ➢ The facilitator will give a brief introduction to the "Integrating Wikimedia Projects into African Libraries' Ecosystem" project to set the stage and context for the discussion.
  - ➢ **Ice-breaker Activity**: During this time, a fun, lighthearted activity (such as a quick trivia question or a poll related to Wikimedia or libraries) is used to engage the audience and create a relaxed, interactive atmosphere.
- ❖ **Panel Discussion (60 minutes)**
  - ➢ The core of the session is the panel discussion, where the panellists respond to a series of pre-set questions designed to address the key themes of the project.
  - ➢ **Pre-set Questions**: The facilitator poses each question to the panellists one at a time, ensuring all panellists have the opportunity to provide their perspectives. The questions are strategically crafted to draw out insights related to the challenges, opportunities, and best practices for integrating Wikimedia projects in libraries.
  - ➢ **Facilitator's Dual Role**: In addition to moderating, the facilitator may also act as a panellist by sharing their perspectives and insights when necessary. This dual role ensures that the facilitator can contribute meaningfully to the conversation

without overshadowing the panellists. All facilitators for the five regions in the continent are Wikimedians. This balances the panel (2 Wikimedians, two librarians with the Wikimedian-facilitator steering the conversation).

➢ **Regional Focus**: Each session is tailored to a specific region (West Africa [English], West Africa [French], East Africa, Central Africa, Southern Africa, and North Africa). This regional focus ensures that the discussions reflect the specific contexts, challenges, and opportunities relevant to each region.

❖ **Open Floor Discussion (25 minutes)**
   ➢ Following the panel discussion, the floor is opened to the audience for a more interactive segment. Participants are to be encouraged to ask questions, share their own experiences, or offer comments related to the discussion.
   ➢ **Audience Contributions**: The facilitator manages this segment by selecting audience members to speak or submit questions via chat, ensuring that the conversation remains focused and productive.
   ➢ **Clarification and Deep Dives**: This open floor session allows for further clarification on points made during the panel discussion or deeper dives into specific issues raised by the audience or panellists.

❖ **Closing Remarks (5-10 mins minutes)**
   ➢ The session concludes with the facilitator providing a summary of the key takeaways from the discussion. This includes highlighting major insights, suggestions, and proposed strategies for integrating Wikimedia projects into library services.
   ➢ An AfLIA staff reminds participants of the next steps, including how the discussions will be transcribed and analysed to inform the final white paper and toolkit.
   ➢ Participants are encouraged to remain engaged with the project and its outcomes, whether through follow-up activities, additional sessions, or continued collaboration within the Wikiverse.

Session Frequency and Audience

❖ **Regional Sessions**: The Virtual Conversations are organized to be in six distinct sessions, each targeting a specific region:
   ➢ West Africa (English audience)
   ➢ West and East Africa (French audience)
   ➢ East Africa
   ➢ Central Africa
   ➢ Southern Africa
   ➢ North Africa

❖ **Language Inclusivity**: For the French-speaking regions (West and East Africa [French] and North Africa), the panel discussions and facilitation will be conducted entirely in

French, with French-speaking panellists to ensure accessibility and engagement for Francophone librarians and Wikimedians.

Ice-breaker Session:

The session will include a brief ice-breaker activity to foster a comfortable and engaging environment from the outset. This will typically be a fun question or a simple poll related to libraries, Wikipedia, or the participants' experiences with open knowledge platforms. For example, participants might be asked, "What's the most interesting Wikipedia article you've read recently?" or "Which Wikimedia project do you think has the greatest potential to improve library services in Africa?"

Use of Technology

- ❖ **Virtual Platform**: Each session will be conducted via an online meeting platform - Zoom. All participants will register. An email with the necessary information to join the online sessions, including links, access codes, and instructions for participation, will be sent to participants. Participants will receive auto reminders via Zoom at specified intervals till the day of the VC.
- ❖ **Interaction Tools**: Zoom's interactive features, such as polls, Q&A sessions, and chat, will encourage audience participation and keep the sessions dynamic and engaging. Mentimeter will be used for the Ice-breaker sessions.

Session Recording and Documentation

- ❖ **Recording**: Each Virtual Conversation will be recorded for future reference and documentation purposes. This allows for accurate transcription and analysis of the discussions.
- ❖ **Transcription**: The recorded sessions will be transcribed and used to extract key insights, which will feed into the final white paper and toolkit, outlining actionable strategies and best practices for integrating Wikimedia projects into African libraries.

<u>Roles and responsibilities</u>

This section outlines the specific tasks and responsibilities of each role, ensuring that every aspect of the conversation series runs smoothly, from preparation to facilitation and follow-up. The key roles include facilitators, panellists, AfLIA project team members, and technical support personnel.

1. Facilitator

The facilitator plays a crucial role in steering the Virtual Conversations by moderating discussions, engaging with the audience, and guiding the flow of the session. For the VCs, the facilitator also doubles as a panellist, contributing insights and perspectives as a seasoned Wikimedian.

Key Responsibilities:

- **Session Preparation**:
    - Familiarise themselves with the background of the project, the specific objectives of the Virtual Conversations, and the region-specific context of each session.
    - Review the pre-set questions to ensure they align with the session's objectives and can elicit meaningful responses from the panellists.
    - Work with the technical team to ensure they are comfortable using the online platform and its interactive tools (e.g., polls, Q&A features, chat).
- **Moderation**:
    - Start the session by delivering opening remarks, introducing the panellists, and outlining the format and objectives of the session.
    - Pose the pre-set questions to the panellists, ensuring that each panellist has adequate time to respond.
    - Maintain the flow of the conversation by guiding the discussion through a logical progression of topics, while ensuring that the conversation remains focused on the objectives.
- **Panel Contribution**:
    - As a seasoned Wikimedian, the facilitator also contributes to the discussion by sharing their own perspectives and insights on the integration of Wikimedia projects in African libraries.

- Provide additional context or clarification on key points when necessary.
- **Audience Engagement**:
  - Manage the open floor segment, selecting questions from the audience and encouraging participants to share their experiences.
  - Ensure that the discussion remains respectful, inclusive, and relevant to the session's goals.
- **Closing and Summary**:
  - Deliver closing remarks, summarising key takeaways from the discussion and highlighting actionable strategies that emerged.
  - Provide information on next steps, including how the session's findings will be documented and shared.

2. Panellists

The panellists are the core contributors to the Virtual Conversations. Each session features two African librarians and one African Wikimedian, who offer their perspectives on the pre-set questions and share insights based on their experiences.

Key Responsibilities:

- **Session Preparation**:
  - Review the background of the project and familiarise themselves with the objectives of the Virtual Conversations.
  - Prepare responses to the pre-set questions, drawing on their experiences with Wikimedia projects or libraries.
  - If a librarian, reflect on the specific challenges, opportunities, and strategies for integrating Wikimedia tools into library services within their region or institution.
  - If a Wikimedian, offer insights on how Wikimedia platforms can be leveraged by libraries and how librarians can actively contribute to the Wikiverse.
- **Active Participation**:
  - Respond to the pre-set questions during the panel discussion, providing thoughtful and informed answers.
  - Share real-life examples, best practices, and lessons learned from their experiences working in libraries or with Wikimedia projects.
  - Contribute to the open floor discussion by answering audience questions and responding to comments raised during the conversation.
- **Collaboration with Other Panellists**:
  - Engage in a collaborative dialogue with the other panellists, offering alternative perspectives or building on their responses to create a holistic discussion.
  - Maintain a cordial and respectful tone, ensuring a balanced and constructive exchange of ideas.

3. AfLIA Project Team

The AfLIA project team is responsible for the overall coordination of the Virtual Conversations, ensuring that all logistical, technical, and organisational aspects are in place for the smooth running of the sessions.

Key Responsibilities:

- **Session Planning and Coordination**:
    - Plan the dates, times, and structure of each Virtual Conversation, ensuring that the sessions are regionally tailored and accessible to the target audience.
    - Identify and confirm the participation of panellists and facilitators, ensuring that they are briefed on their roles and responsibilities.
    - Prepare the pre-set questions in collaboration with the facilitator, aligning them with the project's objectives and the specific needs of each region.
- **Communication with Stakeholders**:
    - Coordinate communications with panellists, facilitators, and participants, providing them with relevant session details, including the agenda, schedule, and access links.
    - Send reminders and any necessary updates to participants ahead of the sessions.
- **In-session roles**:
    - Delivering Welcome Address
    - Lead the ice-breaker activity, using fun and engaging questions to build rapport with the audience.
- **Technical and Logistical Support**:
    - Ensure that the online platforms (Zoom and Mentimeter) are set up and functioning properly for each session.
    - Arrange for sessions to be recorded and transcribed for later analysis.
    - Provide technical assistance during the session, resolving any technical difficulties that may arise.
- **Documentation and Follow-up**:
    - Ensure that the discussions from each session are transcribed and analysed, feeding into the development of the final white paper and toolkit.
    - Distribute recordings and summaries of the sessions to participants and relevant stakeholders.

4. Technical Support Team - AfLIA

The technical support team ensures the smooth operation of the virtual platform and the overall technical aspects of the Virtual Conversations.

Key Responsibilities:

- **Pre-session Setup**:
  - Set up the virtual meeting platform, including creating meeting links, setting up breakout rooms (if necessary), and testing audio-visual equipment.
  - Provide panellists and facilitators with a pre-session orientation on using the platform, troubleshooting, and interactive tools (such as polls or Q&A features).
- **In-session Support**:
  - Monitor the technical aspects of the live session, ensuring that all participants have stable access and that the audio and video are functioning properly.
  - Resolve any technical issues that arise during the session (e.g., poor connectivity, audio difficulties).
- **Post-session Responsibilities**:
  - Ensure that the session is properly recorded and saved for future use.
  - Assist in managing the transcription of the recorded sessions and ensure that it is delivered to the project team for analysis.

5. Audience Participants

The audience participants will consist of librarians, Wikimedians and other stakeholders from across Africa and beyond. They will also have the opportunity to contribute to the discussions and offer their own perspectives during the open floor session.

Key Responsibilities:

- **Active Participation**:
  - Engage in the ice-breaker activity and participate in polls or other interactive elements during the session.
  - Submit questions or comments during the panel discussion, either via chat or by raising their hand to speak during the open floor segment.
- **Respectful Engagement**:
  - Contribute to the conversation respectfully, allowing for a diverse range of viewpoints to be heard.
  - Focus comments and questions on the session's objectives, avoiding unrelated topics.
- **Post-session Follow-up**:
  - Stay engaged with the project by reviewing session recordings or summaries and participating in follow-up activities as appropriate.

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__Facilitation guidelines__

Each Virtual Conversation will feature a panel of two African librarians and one Wikimedian, alongside a facilitator who is also a seasoned Wikimedian. The facilitators play a dual role: managing the dialogue as moderators while also contributing to the discussion as knowledgeable panellists when necessary. The sessions will follow a structured format, with pre-set questions designed to stimulate deep and insightful discussions around the opportunities and challenges of integrating Wikimedia into library operations.

The VCs will collect a broad range of ideas and insights that will inform the creation of a toolkit, guidelines, and strategies to support African libraries in their journey towards integrating Wikimedia projects and activities into their library routines. The discussions will be transcribed and analysed, resulting in a white paper that details actionable strategies for turning African librarians into active contributors to Wikimedia projects. The toolkit will be a freely available, openly licensed (CC BY) resource that can be used by any library or librarian interested in adopting similar practices in their institutions. Below are some specific guidelines for prospective moderators to follow:

Setting the scene

a. **Moderator introduction:** Introduce yourself. Welcome everyone. Talk about the global Wikimedia movement and what it represents in the knowledge ecosystem. Share some statistics about the movement in Africa. Highlight some commonalities between libraries and Wikimedia guiding principles.

b. **Introduction of panellists:** Introduce the panellists and those in the audience - country by country and/or Wikimedia User Group/Community (note that mentimeter, quizizz or Kahoot! could be used for eliciting responses from the audience).

c. **Session outcomes and expectations:** State the goals and desired outcomes of the conversation which is to share views and hear the thoughts, ideas and suggestions of all in the room on opportunities for collaborative efforts between the Wikimedia movement in Africa and the Library sector in the continent. Also mention the overarching principles as well as the African Agenda

d. **Emphasise locus of AfLIA and the support from WMF and its affiliates:** Explain that the conversation is taking place at the behest of AfLIA (African Library and Information Associations and Institutions) with headquarters in Accra, Ghana and with membership from 34 African countries.

e. **Set the ground rules.** Here are some examples.
- The panellists will speak for 45-60 minutes before others are allowed to join the conversation.
- Nevertheless, people in the audience are allowed to introduce themselves, share their questions, insights and suggestions in the Q&A or Chat box.
- Microphones should be muted except when one is called to speak.
- Contributions, responses to questions, suggestions etc should be straight to the point and not long winded.
- Disruptive behaviour would be firmly but politely handled. Wikimedia's Friendly space policy requirements apply in the conversation
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    f. **Icebreaker activities** that highlight facts about Africa, Wikimedia movement and libraries would be used to make the conversations engaging. Moderators would choose the icebreaker questions in *Appendix 3*. AfLIA would load them on Mentimetre and play at the appropriate time.

The conversation proper

The following are suggested questions for the panellists. Nevertheless, given the moderators' extensive experience in the Wikimedia movement, the suggested questions could be recast, tweaked, or new ones suggested.

f. These are suggested questions to the panellists;
- Provide a general overview of the African Agenda and its potential for growing the African Wikimedia movement.

- How can African libraries and allied institutions further the objectives of individual volunteers and communities within the Wikimedia movement? In other words, what do you think that libraries/librarians can offer to individual volunteers and Wikimedia communities in Africa?

- How can librarians work with Wikimedians to organically grow the accuracy and scope of contributions about Africa and Africans on Wikipedia and sister projects?

- How can professionals in the Library sector work with African Wikimedians to open up more knowledge about the **big-picture challenges** of **Climate Change, Disinformation, food security, Digital literacy skills, etc?**

- Provide an overview and or an evaluation of the skills of African librarians and allied professionals as pertains to different Wikimedia projects

- Do African librarians point their users to Wikipedia and sister projects as credible information sources? How can the rate at which this is done be increased? Or is the African Library sector nursing prejudices againstWikipedia and sister projects?

- Are there pathways for integrating Wikimedia projects into daily library routines?

- What are the examples of policies that the Wikimedia movement and the Africa Library sector can advocate for as a bloc? How can libraries and the African Wikimedia community jointly advocate for supportive policies that favour open knowledge in Africa?

- In which areas do you envision an official working or an informal relationship between libraries and the Wikimedia movement (communities, individuals and/or thematic groups) in Africa? Are there infrastructural, institutional or personal prejudices that could be impediments to such a working relationship?

- Will there need to be a 'clearing house' for collaborations between libraries and Wikimedia communities and/or individuals to ensure integrity of engagements and to avoid misrepresentation?

Also, follow-up open ended questions can be asked when new ideas are introduced by the panellists or when the moderator sees the need to dig deeper so as to elicit more tangible responses into a question that is not well answered. For example, the first question suggested in this section, could be followed up with *'How can collaboration with libraries drive the African Agenda within the Wikimedia movement in Africa?'* Nevertheless, the moderator could ask a question and specifically guide panellists on what and where to focus on as they give their responses. This is at the discretion of the moderators.

g. It is important to note that these questions would be sent to panellists ahead of the conversations to enable them to provide deep insights and well thought-out responses.

h. As much as possible ensure that no single panellist or a member of the audience dominates the discussions. Give room for balanced exchange of views.

i. Actively listen. Be present physically, mentally and emotionally during the conversation. It is encouraging to the panellists and audience when moderators show that they have been listening to them by integrating responses or feedback into their comments.

j. Maintain neutrality when opposing views are expressed by panellists or the audience despite the fact that you have your own opinions on the subject under discussion.

k. Encourage participation. Create an inclusive environment where everyone feels comfortable to share their ideas and perspectives.

l. Manage time effectively. Panellists would be told in advance that they would be allocated 3-4mins to answer questions. Repeat that as part of the ground rules. Politely cut off long winded answers. responses by panellists.

Note: There are alternative or additional questions for the panellists in Appendix 2.

Closing

a. The conversation is meant to last for 90-100 minutes but the moderator should know when to draw the curtains.

b. At the end of the discussions, give a summary of the highlights, pinpointing action steps and ask the audience to continue the discussions on Facebook and X with the hashtag #WikinAfricaLibs

c. Also, people with more answers or thoughts on questions raised or ideas not fully discussed to their satisfaction could send such views and suggestions to afliacomm@aflia.net within a week after the virtual conversations.

Note
AfLIA will record and transcribe the conversations. This would be validated by moderators, panellists and participants in the conversations. AfLIA would produce a White paper which would be externally reviewed and published. It would serve as a template for collaborations between the Wikimedia movement in Africa and knowledge practitioners in the continent.

Technological Platforms for the Conversations

To facilitate the Virtual Conversations, we will leverage two key technology platforms: **Zoom** for hosting the virtual dialogues and **Mentimeter** for engaging participants during ice-breaker activities. These platforms have been selected based on their ease of use, interactivity, and widespread accessibility, ensuring that all participants can engage in a smooth, seamless, and dynamic experience. Below is a detailed overview of how each platform will be used in the sessions.

1. Zoom: Hosting the Virtual Conversations

Zoom is a widely-used video conferencing platform that offers robust features for hosting online discussions, making it the ideal tool for our Virtual Conversations. Zoom's flexibility in handling large groups, breakout rooms, and interactive features such as chat and polls makes it well-suited to foster collaborative dialogue between panellists and audience participants.

Key Features of Zoom for the Virtual Conversations:

- **Video and Audio Conferencing**:
  - Zoom's reliable video and audio functions will enable clear communication between panellists, facilitators, and audience members. Panellists will have the opportunity to share their viewpoints via video, while audience participants can use both audio and chat features to contribute to the conversation during the open-floor segments.
  - The platform supports high-quality video and sound, allowing participants from different regions to engage in the discussion with minimal technical disruptions.
- **Screen Sharing**:
  - Zoom's screen-sharing capabilities will allow facilitators and panellists to present visual aids, such as slides or relevant documentation, during the discussions. This

feature can be used to display data, provide context, or summarise key points in real-time.

- **Interactive Features**:
  - Zoom's **chat function** will be utilised for audience engagement to enable participants submit questions or comments during the session.
  - **Polls and reactions** (such as thumbs up, claps, or emojis) will allow the audience to provide immediate feedback during the session.
- **Recording and Transcription**:
  - All sessions will be recorded using Zoom's built-in recording feature. These recordings will be essential for transcribing the discussions, which will later be analysed and used in the development of the final white paper and toolkit.
  - Automated and manual transcription services following the session will provide detailed documentation of each dialogue, ensuring that no valuable insights are lost.

Before the Session:

- **Zoom Invitations**: Participants will receive a Zoom invitation with the necessary details, including the date, time, and a direct link to join the session. This invitation will also include instructions on using the platform, ensuring that even those unfamiliar with Zoom can participate.

During the Session:

- **Facilitator Moderation**: The facilitator will manage the Zoom room, initiating the session, introducing the panellists, and guiding the conversation flow. The open-floor discussion will be moderated through the chat and raise-hand feature, allowing the facilitator to choose questions from the audience.

After the Session:

- **Follow-up and Recordings**: After each session, participants will be provided with access to the session's recording, ensuring that those unable to attend live can still benefit from the conversation.

2. Mentimeter: Ice-Breaker Activities

To engage participants right from the beginning of each session, **Mentimeter**, an interactive presentation platform, will be used for ice-breaker activities. Mentimeter's real-time polling, word clouds, quizzes, and other engagement tools are ideal for creating a fun and interactive atmosphere, helping participants feel more comfortable and connected.

Key Features of Mentimeter for Ice-Breakers:

- The Virtual Conversations will use any of the following features for the ice-breaker activities depending on the agreed mode by the AfLIA Project Team
  - Real-Time Polling
  - Word Clouds
  - Quizzes and Competitions
  - Open-Ended Questions

Before the Session:

- **Mentimeter Links**: Participants will receive a link to the Mentimeter activity in the Zoom chat at the start of the session. The facilitator will explain how to participate and encourage everyone to share their responses. Mentimeter is user-friendly, requiring no sign-up, and can be accessed via any web browser or mobile device.

During the Session:

- **Real-Time Engagement**: As participants respond to the Mentimeter questions, their answers will be displayed on the screen in real-time.
  - The AfLIA Team and facilitator will take a few minutes to discuss the results, highlighting interesting or unexpected responses and using them as a springboard to introduce the main topics of the conversation.

Expected Outcomes for the VCs

The Virtual Conversations have the following 10-point outcomes:

Outcomes	Notes
Comprehensive Understanding of Integration Opportunities	A clear and detailed understanding of the various ways Wikimedia projects (e.g., Wikipedia, Wikidata, WikiCite, Wikimedia Commons, and Wikibase) can be integrated into the daily operations of the different African library types.
Identification of Challenges and Barriers	A thorough analysis of the potential challenges and barriers that African libraries face in adopting and integrating Wikimedia projects into their information services and daily routines.
Development of Regional and Context-Specific Strategies	Contextualised strategies that are regionally tailored for the successful implementation of Wikimedia projects in libraries across different parts of Africa as well as advocacy pathways for favourable policies in the information and education sector..
Enhanced Collaboration between African Librarians and the Wikiverse	Strengthened collaboration between African librarians and the African Wikimedia community, fostering a shift from passive consumption of Wikimedia content to active participation in the creation and curation of knowledge.
Creation of a Practical Toolkit for Library-Wikimedia Integration	A comprehensive, CC BY-licensed toolkit that serves as a practical guide for organising multi-stakeholder engagements on integrating Wikimedia projects into libraries.
Increased Awareness and Capacity Building for Librarians	Increased awareness and capacity building among African librarians regarding the potential of Wikimedia projects to enhance library services.
Informed Policy and Institutional Support	Policy recommendations and institutional support

	frameworks for promoting Wikimedia projects and activities adoption in African libraries.
Contribution to a Final White Paper	A white paper that consolidates the findings, insights, and strategies from the Virtual Conversations into a cohesive document.
Empowerment of Librarians as Knowledge Curators	Importantly, the Virtual Conversations would give a sense of ownership and agency to librarians thereby making them empowered professionals who view themselves as active knowledge curators within the Wikimedia ecosystem.
Long-term Engagement and Sustainability	Long-term engagement with Wikimedia projects by African librarians and sustained efforts to integrate these tools into library operations.

APPENDIX

Appendix 1
Commonalities between Wikimedia guiding principles, projects and libraries

Libraries exist for the main purpose of making access to information available to their user communities. The core aim of Wikimedia projects is to open up knowledge. The 2024-2025 Wikimedia Foundation Annual Plan, has identified four (4) goals which align with the Wikimedia Movement's Strategic Direction and Movement Strategy Recommendations. These goals match what libraries stand for globally. The commonalities between Wikimedia and libraries viewed through the prism of the four (4) goals mentioned above are succinctly outlined in the table below.

Table 1: The 2024-2025 Wikimedia Foundation Annual Plan and Libraries

S/N	Wikimedia Foundation's Goals	How it aligns with what libraries stand for
1	**Advance Knowledge as a service**: Wikimedia (the Foundation and the Movement) works at providing the infrastructure and resources that 'support the creation, sharing and accessibility of knowledge'.	From the beginning of times when libraries came to be until the present period, these institutions have a core, a primary and an overarching objective namely; the provision of access to knowledge for their different user communities. They do this through the collection and processing of knowledge resources in varying formats and the provision of information services that answer to the information requirements and needs of their users.

2	**Support Knowledge equity:** This includes ensuring resource distribution in an equitable manner that would augur well for closing knowledge gaps.	Different library types have always been about equity as they grant access to information to all within their user communities which may be people and groups in urban, semi-urban and rural areas (lettered and unlettered irrespective of their social, religious and educational status and affiliations); students, faculty members and researchers in tertiary institutions, pupils and students in primary and secondary schools, people within particular establishments where libraries are situated for example law firms, banks, research institutes and other corporate offices. Importantly, libraries build collections equitably in due regard to differing postulations, philosophies, perspectives, opinions and abilities as a measure of inclusivity.
3	**Promote Safety and Integrity:** Wikimedia is committed to the safety of all who contribute to their projects as well as the integrity of the knowledge contained within the said projects.	Libraries promote safety and integrity from two different perspectives. First, librarians apply professional skills in ensuring the integrity of their collections as they carefully select relevant, and accurate knowledge resources in different formats. Second, libraries always strive for data privacy of their users. Beyond these two perspectives, libraries are seen as 'safe and neutral' spaces where anyone within the user community can come in and access knowledge.
4	**Strengthen overall performance:** Wikimedia aims to continuously improve the processes and effectiveness of opening up knowledge.	Libraries are continuously evolving. They have moved from being mere physical spaces with collections of books to hybrid spaces that encourage scholarship, research, creativity, innovativeness and learning. Libraries are also reshaping their services to answer to the changed and heightened users expectations in view of technological advancements in the communication and information sector.

APPENDIX 2

Alternative/Additional questions for panellists

1. The rate of editor retention among African librarians has been low. What is the suggested panacea for this?

2. Do you subscribe to the idea of librarians having a User community within Africa or should they continue to play active roles in the already existing User groups in their countries?

3. How can African Wikimedians and Wikimedia communities work together with the African library sector to address perceived knowledge gaps as pertains to Africa and Africans in Wikipedia and sister projects?

4. How can libraries leverage Wikimedia projects to increase the visibility and accessibility of their collections?

5. How can the usage of library facilities lead to the improvement of the quality and reliability of African content on Wikipedia and sister projects? What role can the professional skills of librarians play in this regard?

6. Are there skill development opportunities specifically targeted or that are available for librarians towards making them not just effective Wikimedia contributors but active user community members?

7. Are there any known successful collaborations between libraries and Wikimedia User Groups? What can we learn in this regard?

Appendix 3
Possible Icebreaker questions
"Two Truths and a Lie" with a Wikimedian and African twist
1. Input 3 sentences in a set about Wikimedia into Quizizz
2. Two sentences within each set would be right and one would be false.
3. Ask participants to choose the false statement in the first and third set of sentences and the two correct sentences in the second and fourth sets.
   1st set
   A. Sao Tome and Principe is a country in West Africa
   B. The Wikimedia Foundation was established as a nonprofit in 2003 to give Wikipedia a
       permanent home
   C. The Wikimedia Foundation funds editathon, outreach efforts, events, and conferences

   Alternative 1st Set
   A. Libreville is the capital of Gabon.
   B. Kakata is a town in Sierra Leone
   C. Douala is a town in Cameroon.

   Alternative 1st Set
   A.The Dogon people are found in Mali and Burkina Faso
   B.The Mursi tribe are found in Malawi
   C. The Samburu people are from north-central Kenya.

   2nd set
   A. Wikimedia Foundation hosts 14 collaborative free knowledge projects
   B. There is only two Wikimedia Chapters in Africa
   C. Wikimedia Foundation employs between 400-500 staff

   Alternative 2nd set
   A. Burkina Faso is presently being ruled by Saye Zerbo
   B. Banjul is the capital of Gambia
   C. Antananarivo is the capital of Madagascar

   Alternative 2nd set
   A. The Hamar people are found in Seychelles
   B. Baka is a tribe in Cameroon
   C. Herero is spoken in Namibia, Botswana and Angola
   3rd set
   A. https://wikimediafoundation.org/ is the right website for WikimediaFoundation
   B. https://www.wikimedia.org/ is the correct website for Wikimedia Foundation
   C. https://enterprise.wikimedia.com/ is the main website for the Wikimedia
Foundation

Alternative 3rd Set
A. The National Library of Angola is in Luanda.
B. Bibliothèque nationale de Madagascar is the National Library of Madagascar
C. Ghana has a National Library.

4th Set
A. https://www.wikihow.com/ is a project under the Wikimedia Committee
B. Eritrea is a country in East Africa.
C. Benguela is a town in Angola

Alternative 4th set
A.The Oromo people are found in Ethiopia and Northern Kenya.
B. The Hadza, or Hadzabe are found in Tanzania
C. The Himba people are found in Uganda

Appendix 4
Moderators

Table 2: Moderators and their regions

S/N	Region	Moderator	Remarks
1	**Central Africa**	**Georges Fodouop**	(co-founder Wikimedia Cameroon, joint content creator *'Increasing the visibility of African libraries through Wikidata'*), Chair, WikiFranca
2	**East Africa**	**Alice Kibombo**	Manager Regional Programmes, Wikimedia Foundation
3	**North Africa**	**Afek BEN CHAHED**	Tunisian Librarian, an active member of Wikimedia Tunisia User Group, Founding member of Africvs & has won the first prize of Wiki Women Tunisia
4	**Southern Africa**	**Bobby Shabangu**	Wikimedia ZA President, WikiIndaba Steering Committee (WISCom) member, Member, Working group, Afrika Baraza, Event lead, WikiIndaba Conference 2024.
5	**West Africa**	**Olusola Olaniyan**	President, Wikimedia Nigeria, Project manager, Nigeria Language Oral History Documentation, Open movement Advocate, Public Speaker, Women's Advocate
6	**French Speaking West, East and Central Africa**	**Kangah Donatien KOFFI**	Wikimedian from Côte d'Ivoire, editor of French language Wikipedia, a community leader active on local, regional, and global levels, a huge football fan, and the co-creator of the Wikimedia Community User Group Côte d'Ivoire
7	**Summation and Validation**	**Nkem Osuigwe PhD Stanley Boakye-Achampong Doreen Appiah Eunice Jones-Arthur**	**AfLIA Secretariat**