

# Language diversity on Wiki projects

[Language diversity on Wiki projects](#)

[Summary](#)

[11/10: initial call](#)

[Attendees](#)

[Other Attendee notes](#)

[Daniel's notes](#)

## Summary and Instructions

- These are rolling notes from the [language diversity roundtable from Maryana's listening tour](#). If you would like editing access, please email [daniel@wikitongues.org](mailto:daniel@wikitongues.org).
- To add your notes, add a section under **11/10: initial call** under the header, **<Your Name>'s Notes**, using the document's header 3 format.
- Use the **comment feature** to suggest changes to another person's notes

## 11/10: initial call

### Attendees

- Iñaki from Basque Wikimedians
- Amir from the Foundation; helps with language diversity projects
- Kimberli, who works on Sámi-language Wikipedias
- Farhad, from Tatar Wiki projects
- Sree from India who works on the Telugu language and WikiData
- Shola from Nigerian Wikimedians
- Satdeep from the Foundation; helps with language diversity projects, especially in India
- Sadik from Ghana, who works on local Indigenous languages and Dagbani Wikipedia
- Mohammed from Art+Feminism and Dagbani Wikipedia
- Anass from Morocco, who works on Arabic and Amazigh languages
- Jon from Wikimedia Norway
- Mohsen from Iran, who works on under-resourced languages
- Daniel and Kristen from Wikitongues
- Cornelius from the Foundation
- Faisal from Ghana, working on Ghanaian Pidgin in the Incubator

### Other Attendee notes

*Please create a section for your notes prefaced by **<Your Name>'s Notes (in header 3)***

## Daniel's notes

- **Iñaki**
  - We've struggled growing and with SEO, stemming in part from our inability to get a more active role from Basque institutions in the implementation of Basque-language settings for digital devices, e.g. public educational centers and administrative facilities. Some browsers and search engines do not allow Basque-language customization, nor certain digital devices. Basque searches often result in Spanish Wikipedia results.
- **Amir**
  - Basque Wikipedia is actually doing better, per metrics, but the metrics are apparently poorly available, inhibiting the ability of mother-tongue project leaders to measure their success
- **Kimberli**
  - Many Sámi people can't contribute for free because of economics. The expectation that people are available to edit/translate/etc comes from a place of privilege
- **Farhad & Kimberli**
  - SEO is a persistent challenge because search engines default to majority languages over minority languages (for example, if you search for the President of Finland, English or Finnish language Wikipedia will show before a Sámi-language version, even if you're Sámi and normally search in Sámi)
- **Sree**
  - Sandbox templates tend not to translate well
  - WMF filters all machine translation through English, which works poorly with South Asian languages
- **Shola**
  - Anglocentrism in Nigeria (a lack of institutional support for non-English languages) has created challenges for Nigerian Wikimedians to attract and maintain mother-tongue volunteers - a social challenge somewhat outside WMF control, but perhaps this speaks to Kimberli's and Satdeep's point that without dedicated support, a lot of projects are going to atrophy
- **Satdeep**
  - Coming from Wikisource which is a core infrastructure, especially for most of the non-latin languages, I believe one of the major challenges is volunteer bus factor. Most of the tools and gadgets on Wikisource are volunteer created and maintained and not having any dedicated support for the project makes things complicated and also inhibits the growth of the project
  - For instance, VisualEditor is still not available in a good enough way for Wikisource; I can say the same for Wikimedia Commons, there is no dedicated Product Team to support some of the core functions there either, such as uploading videos on Commons (it's so difficult that people end up uploading to Youtube instead)
  - Here is a project around Oral Culture Transcription ([https://meta.wikimedia.org/wiki/Grants:Project/Rapid/Oral\\_Culture\\_Transcription\\_Toolkit](https://meta.wikimedia.org/wiki/Grants:Project/Rapid/Oral_Culture_Transcription_Toolkit)) that I am mentoring at the moment and many of these issues came up again and again when the project coordinators are working with new and existing volunteers to document audio-visual culture on Commons (for video) and Wikisource (for transcription).
- **Sadik**

- the majority of his constituents use mobile phones to contribute, and Wiki mobile optimizations, especially WRT keyboards (that work better on Android than on iOS), could improve the editing flow
  - local internet costs are high and a data allowance / direct support for connectivity/expanding bandwidth would be invaluable
- **Anass:**
  - the lack of international sources about locally relevant information has made it difficult to publish information about them on Wikipedia; a project in Mali found a way around this by contacting the media and encouraging them to write about specific subjects (and use the articles as sources); the foundation could try to partner with locally reliable media outlets to help create even more sources
  - we need to find a way to accommodate oral citations and consider developing a roadmap toward non-text-based Wikipedia
- **Jon**
  - The Incubator process is a horrible experience which needs to be rethought, because it likely pushes away would-be mother-tongue Wikipedia editions
  - The foundation could do a better job supporting smaller projects rather than exclusively focusing on 'big impact' for the 'big projects'
  - Amir has a proposal for improving the Incubator:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DdyzrDzD0qg>
- **Maryana**
  - Excited to have convened this group
  - Suggested we convene again in January.
  - You can contact her at any time: [miskander@wikimedia.org](mailto:miskander@wikimedia.org).
  - Wants to learn more about what has worked well, too.
- **Farhad**
  - Small cultures can leverage Wikidata for “notability” guidelines; this aligns with Satdeep’s ideas about how WikiSource can help this, too