



PRE-RESEARCH SURVEY: RESULTS

Conducted for

**WIKIPEDIA IN AFRICAN LIBRARIES
PROJECT - #WikiAfLibs**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The pre-training research was commissioned by AfLIA, as part of the monitoring, evaluation and learning requirements of the Wikipedia in African Libraries Project, to gather insights that can help the Wikipedian in Residence (WiR) and the Curriculum Development Consultant (CDC) develop a fit for purpose curriculum with relevant and relatable course content and structure, appropriate methods and patterns of course delivery, and practical assessment and certification options. The research was also intended to assess respondents' experience with online learning and their perception and understanding of Wikipedia and the Wikimedia ecosystem with the aim of informing implementation of project activities.

This report documents the key results based on feedback from 492 unique respondents from 36 African countries. From the results of the study, AfLIA is encouraged to take note of the following factors and suggestions in order to make the project successful.

Project implementers must ensure that they develop curricula and course materials in English, French and Portuguese. In the same vein, they must consider bringing on board other English, French and Portuguese course instructors to supplement the role of the WiR in delivering the course and managing the course participants. The employment distribution of prospective participants gives a good signal of AfLIA's ability to easily get the target audience for the training but it is apparent that participation in the course will be high. AfLIA should therefore institute a cohort or batch system to help reduce the stress of managing larger groups and classes.

Quite a significant proportion of the prospective participants have not had any experience with online courses but respondents have clearly shown their willingness to learn new things and adapt. Thus, the project should painstakingly train participants on how to navigate the learning management system (LMS) that it will be using to deliver the course along with other facilitation platforms within a reasonable period of time. Further, AfLIA should be targeting a course with duration of between 5-13 weeks, that also requires participants to spend an average of 3-4 hours per week to study on the course.

It is obvious that majority of the prospective participants will pay for their own data in order to access the course. Given the high cost of internet in Africa, the project implementers are advised to be wary of how long live sessions will take, how many live sessions will be required as well as the number of videos and recordings participants will need to download. Lastly, the project implementers should consider giving participants who are unable to fully complete the Course, certificates of participation while those that are able to fulfill the completion requirements are awarded certificates of completion.

OUTLINE

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	3
1 BACKGROUND	5
PURPOSE OF STUDY	6
METHODS	6
2 RESULTS	8
DEMOGRAPHICS	9
CONTENT AND STRUCTURE OF COURSE	10
COURSE DELIVERY, CERTIFICATION & CAPACITY	13
PERCEPTION & KNOWLEDGE OF WIKIPEDIA AND WILLINGNESS TO PARTICIPATE	14
3 CONCLUSION	17
4 APPENDIX	18

1 BACKGROUND

Wikipedia is a multilingual open-collaborative online encyclopedia created and maintained through the effort of a community of volunteer editors using a wiki-based editing system. Averaging more than 1.7 billion page views per month¹, Wikipedia is the thirteenth top site on the web² and the most popular and frequently accessed online encyclopedia in the world³. Thus, the platform is among the most important sources of free, fact-based knowledge for people around the world.

The Wikipedia model thrives on crowd-source content from contributors across the globe to make knowledge accessible to all. It will therefore be expected that given its openness, reach and influence, there will be a fairly even geography of knowledge on the online encyclopedia. Unfortunately, that is not the case, especially for the amount of content and number of editors from Africa. There still remain voices and narratives of African communities and peoples (knowledge of its people, cultures, languages, pop culture, heroes/heroines, philosophies of life, discoveries, innovations etc.) that are largely underrepresented and in some cases, misrepresented or absent on Wikipedia.

As custodians of information, African librarians are key players in knowledge creation and dissemination. The African Library and Information Associations and Institutions (AfLIA) believes that African library and information professionals are uniquely positioned to help bridge the identified knowledge gap on Wikipedia. AfLIA has therefore partnered with the Wikimedia Foundation through the *Wikipedia in African Libraries Project*, to primarily build the capacities of African library and information professionals and equip them with requisite skills needed to create and maintain credible content, tell stories of Africa and accurately amplify Africa's voice in Wikipedia, thereby addressing the phenomenon of unequal geographic contributions on the Wikipedia platform.

Wikipedia in African Libraries - **#WikiAfLibs** - is a one-year project being implemented by AfLIA with funds from the Wikimedia Foundation. The project will roll out a course based on the OCLC 'Wikipedia + Libraries Better Together' curriculum adapted to the African context. It is expected to train at least 10 library and information professionals each from 30 African countries who will be able to carry out community outreaches and help their different user communities to be adept at using Wikipedia the online resource for learning, research and telling their own stories.

¹ <https://stats.wikimedia.org/#/all-wikipedia-projects>

² <https://www.alexa.com/topsites>

³ <https://www.thesun.co.uk/archives/news/161498/worlds-most-popular-online-encyclopaedia-wikipedia-turns-15-2/>

PURPOSE OF STUDY

Before adapting and finalizing the curriculum that will be used to train 300 African librarians in two cohorts, it was crucial to conduct a pre-training research to serve as a baseline and gather insights that can help the Wikipedian in Residence (WiR) and the Curriculum Development Consultant (CDC) to:

- ❖ develop a fit for purpose curriculum with relevant and relatable
 - content
 - structure
 - means and patterns of course delivery
 - assessment and certification
 - skills set and opinions
- ❖ and also inform implementation of project activities.

METHODS

A structured questionnaire was developed to gather the relevant data for analysis and reporting. The questionnaire was circulated among the Project Team members, representatives of the Wikimedia Foundation, as well as members of the Evaluation Sub-committee for review before finalizing the data collection tool. An online survey form was subsequently built on SurveyMonkey in three languages – English, French and Portuguese. These are the operational languages of that AfLIA uses to serve its member institutions across Africa and the diaspora.

The online form in three languages were also to ensure that, as much as possible, every prospective participant - library and information worker - in Africa has the opportunity to participate in the survey and provide feedback that can prove useful for successful project implementation across the English-speaking, French-speaking and Portuguese-speaking countries in Africa. The choice of deploying the questionnaire via an online data collection platform was informed by the fact that findings from the research was intended to result in the development of an online course. Of course, incidence of the COVID-19 pandemic further reinforced the need to conduct the study online.

Invitations to participate in the pre-research survey were widely disseminated via existing communication channels of AfLIA including newsletters, news alerts, social media (Facebook and Twitter) posts, AfLIA Google forum, WhatsApp groups, African Wikimedians mailing list and other mailing lists available to AfLIA. Our partner, the Wikipedia Library, was also very instrumental in widely broadcasting and inviting people to respond to the survey.

The survey was opened to receive responses from September 24, 2020 to October 18, 2020. Two preliminary analysis were completed during the course of data collection. Highlights of the preliminary analysis were shared with the Wikipedian in Residence (WiR) and Curriculum Development Consultant (CDC) to give them an idea of how the results were shaping up and to guide their work since they had begun working on the curriculum by then. After the survey was closed, responses submitted in French and Portuguese were translated into English. The resulting composite dataset was extracted and transferred to SPSS v24 for review, de-duplication and analysis.

2 RESULTS

Results and discussions presented in this section are based on the analysis of 492 unique responses received from 36 African countries - Algeria, Angola, Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Cote D'Ivoire, Egypt, Ethiopia, eSwatini, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Libya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritius, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Africa, Tanzania, Tunisia, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Responses were generally representative in terms of regional spread and language. Submissions came from Central Africa, East Africa, North Africa, Southern Africa, and West Africa. Fig 1 graphically shows African countries from which responses were received (shaded light green).



Expectedly, responses from English-speaking Africa were predominant (77%) in comparison to 15.4% from French-speaking Africa and 7.5% from Portuguese-speaking Africa. It is assumed that the language distribution typically reflects the people who will eventually participate in the course. Project implementers must therefore take into consideration the need to provide the curriculum and all course materials and training in English, French and Portuguese.

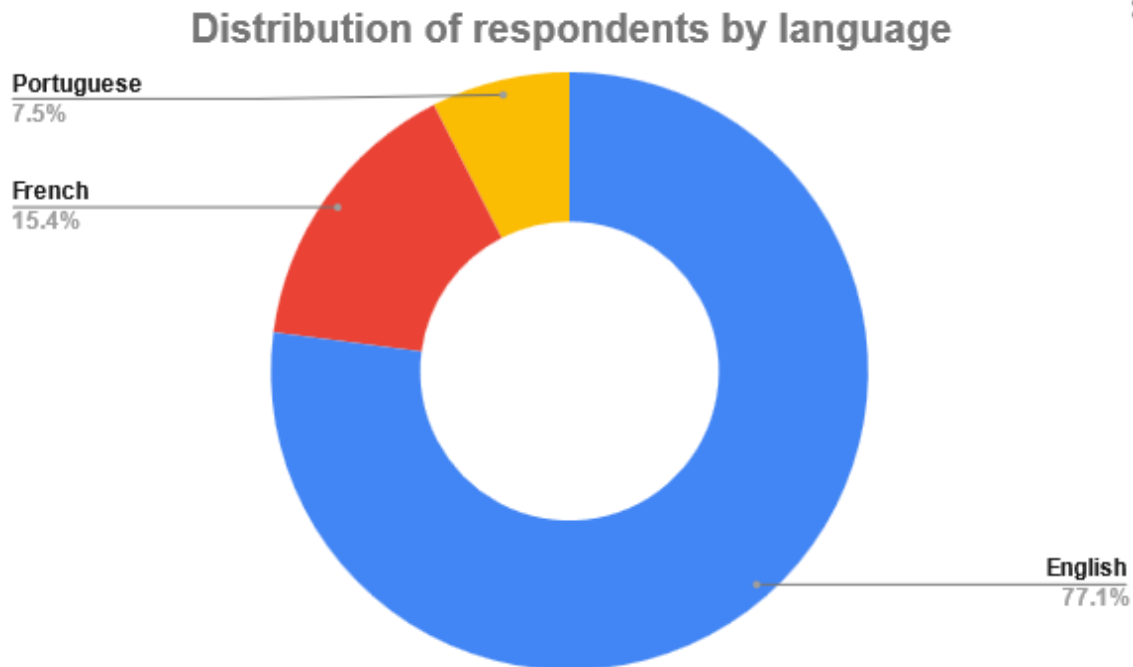


Fig 2: Distribution of respondents by language

DEMOGRAPHICS

The ages of respondents were more concentrated above 30 years with majority (36.8%) falling between 31-40 years. About 27% of respondents were between 41-50 years whereas those older than 50 years and younger than 30 years constituted 17.9% respectively. More than half the respondents, i.e. 52.4%, were female and majority (84.8%) were employed in library and information sector. A few others (5.7%) were also students whereas 3.7% and 3.5% were unemployed and self-employed respectively. Those employed were either librarians, LIS educators, teacher-librarians, archivists, other library staff and information workers.

Table 1: Age and gender of respondents

Age	Frequency	%		Gender	Frequency	%
20-30 years	88	17.9		Male	258	52.4
31-40 years	181	36.8		Female	234	47.6
41-50 years	135	27.4				
> 50 years	88	17.9				
Total	492	100.0		Total	492	100.0

Most likely, the age, gender and employment distributions will also be representative of persons who may eventually participate in the WikiAfLibs Course hence during curriculum development and training, the WiR and CDC must be sensitive to certain important indicators that can be affected by these factors, e.g. participant's digital literacy level, available time for study, and learner expectations. The employment distribution however, gives a good indication of AfLIA's ability to reach its target audience – library and information workers, for the Wikipedia in African Libraries project.

CONTENT AND STRUCTURE OF COURSE

A slight majority have had prior experience with online courses, that is, 52.7% as against 47.3% who, as at the time of data collection, were yet to take any online courses. Prior experience with virtual courses will come in handy in terms of participants' ability to navigate the learning management system (LMS) and other facilitation platforms that will be used in this project. Thus, in one breath, the experience of the majority with online courses will be a useful advantage for successfully facilitating the completion of the Wikipedia in African Libraries course.

On the other hand, the proportion of respondents who have not had any experience with online courses is very significant and poses a potential challenge of either a high attrition rate or overly protracted course duration. The project will be expected to first and foremost, adequately train the participants to navigate the LMS and other facilitation platforms that will be used for the Course. This finding should factored into the duration of the WikiAfLibs Course yet to be developed.

Have you enrolled in or completed any online course(s) before?

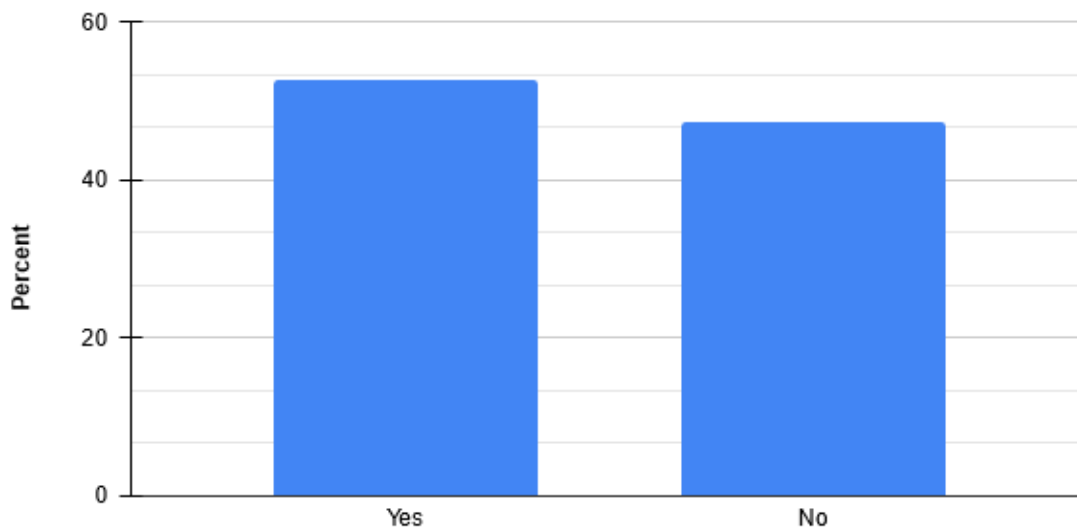


Fig3: Distribution of respondent's participation in online courses

Respondents who had taken online courses before shared their impressions on what they liked and disliked most about taking virtual courses. Their impressions were mainly related to convenience, timing and duration for live sessions (if any) and the familiarity with the LMS employed, among others. These are important feedbacks that should characterize the Wikipedia in African Libraries Course in order to achieve success in the project.

Table 2: What respondents liked and disliked most about online courses

	What they liked	What they disliked
1	Self-paced and flexible	Exhausting and boring if it requires long hours behind the screen
2	Ability to download and access course materials and videos even after course is ended	Some learning platforms (LMS) are cumbersome and difficult to navigate
3	Interact with and learn from wider (international) network	Unreliable internet, power cuts and high cost of data hampers maximum participation
4	Access to recordings even when one missed a live session	Little to no technical support or assistance in the case of fully automated courses,
5	Relatively cheaper compared with in-person courses which may involve traveling to attend classes	Inappropriate timing of live sessions with no recourse to varying time zones of learners.

The respondents prefer a good mix of interactive tools and approaches for the online course including doing assignments and getting feedback (79.97%), having live interactive sessions with instructors (76.97%), watching videos (72.47%), discussing sessions with other learners (71.91%), reading texts (69.66%), reading comments from other learners (52.25%) and having one-on-one interactions with instructors (47.19%). Having a blend of these strategies will sustain the interest of participants while ensuring a higher completion rate.

When respondents were asked to indicate their preference for online tutorship over traditional face-to-face classes, majority were indifferent but were still expectant to enroll in the Wikipedia in African Libraries (WikiAfLibs) Course. Even though close to half did not have any experience with virtual courses, only 0.8% of them were a bit nervous about joining online classes. This finding emphasizes a clear willingness by the majority of respondents to learn new things and adapt.

Respondents also specified their preference relating to the overall duration of the online course and how many hours they were willing to spend every week as participants. Based on the results, a greater section of the respondents (cumulatively 62.5%) prefer a course duration between 5-13 weeks. More specifically, approximately 23% preferred a 'less than 5-weeks long online course'. The modal course duration was however 5-7 weeks. Furthermore, most of the respondents, 34.7%, were willing to spend 3-4 hours per week on the course. About 29% of the respondents were willing to invest 1-2 hours weekly whereas 18.6% of them were willing to invest 5-6 hours per week.

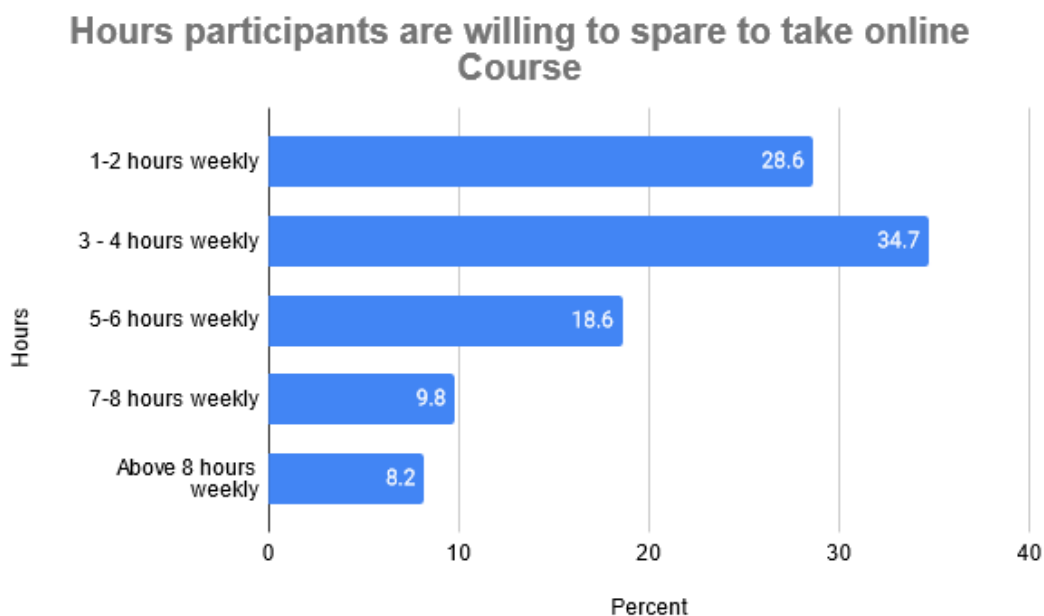


Fig4: Preferred hours per week for online course

COURSE DELIVERY, CERTIFICATION & CAPACITY

Prospective participants are expected to primarily rely on mobile internet (68.7%) to take the online course even though 24.9% of the respondents expect to rely on fixed internet or broadband sources. Mobile internet sources often take the form of USB modems and mobile hotspot routers etc. Since these are usually personal rather than corporate internet sources, majority of the participants are most likely going to directly and personally pay for the internet they need to access the Course. Given that the cost of internet is widely known to be expensive in Africa, the curriculum developers and trainers should be wary of this finding in order not to implement training protocols that consume a lot of bandwidth because that will eventually serve as a barrier for access and completion by many.

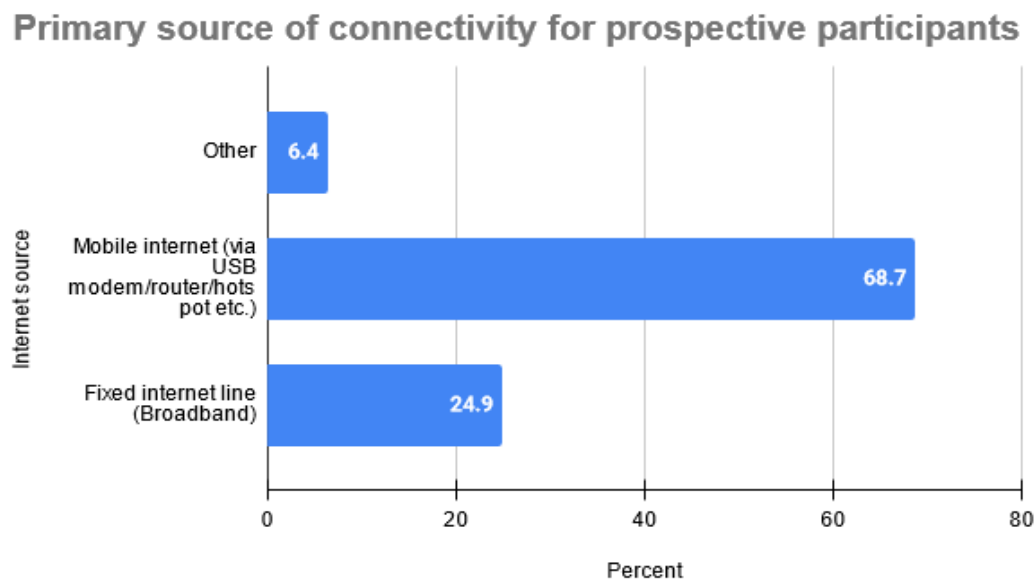


Fig4: Source of internet connectivity for prospective participants

The WikiAfLibs course may predominantly be accessed on laptops and phones. According to respondents, 52.8% will be accessing the Course using their laptops whereas 34% will be relying on their smartphones. Close to 11% will be using desktop computer while 2.4% will use their tablets. The devices that respondents have access to can influence their ability to fully participate and complete the course. In many cases, the LMS that will be used to deliver the course as well as other platforms learners need to access to perform certain tasks dictate which devices are most appropriate and convenient to use. Hence, it is important that participants are informed and advised on which devices can be used for which tasks as part of the course and accordingly encouraged, as early as possible, to use the right devices for the right tasks.

Majority (66%) prefer to earn certificates based on their performance in assignments/tests as well as completion of all modules. However, 6.1%, 13% and 14.9% of respondents preferred that

participants are given certificates based on enrolment only, performance in assignments only, and completion of modules regardless of the level of performance respectively.

The WikiAfLibs course is an important continuous professional development opportunity for all library and information workers in Africa. Whether or not participants are able to fully complete the course or fulfill all completion requirements, they will definitely pick up new knowledge and useful skills that can be applied to their line of work. The project implementers can therefore consider giving participants who are unable to fully complete the Course, certificates of participation while awarding those that will be able to fulfill all completion requirements with certificates of completion.

Table 3: How participants propose to earn certificates

Category	Frequency	%
Based on mere enrollment and participation	23	6.1
Based on performance in Course assignments and tests	49	13.0
Based on completion of all modules in Course regardless of performance level	56	14.9
Based on both performance and completion of all modules	249	66.0
Total	377	100.0

More importantly, respondents are conversant with a variety of technological tools for online learning. Popular among them were; participating in Zoom online meetings and webinars (80.34%), using Google Docs/Drive to create and save documents (55.06%), using Google Classroom to post on discussion boards, obtain and post assignments etc. (49.44%), using Moodle and Blackboard to post on discussion boards, obtain and post assignments etc. (47.19%). Familiarity with these tools imply an acceptable digital competence that will aid participants to fully engage the course.

PERCEPTION & KNOWLEDGE OF WIKIPEDIA AND WILLINGNESS TO PARTICIPATE

Sourcing of information from Wikipedia is relatively not so regular among the majority, both for personal use or recommending for others. Respondents who reported that they sometimes source or rely on information sourced from Wikipedia constituted 38.1%. Interestingly, 5.1% of those who participated in the survey always sourced or relied on information sourced from Wikipedia whereas the same proportion (5.1%) never relied on Wikipedia for information.

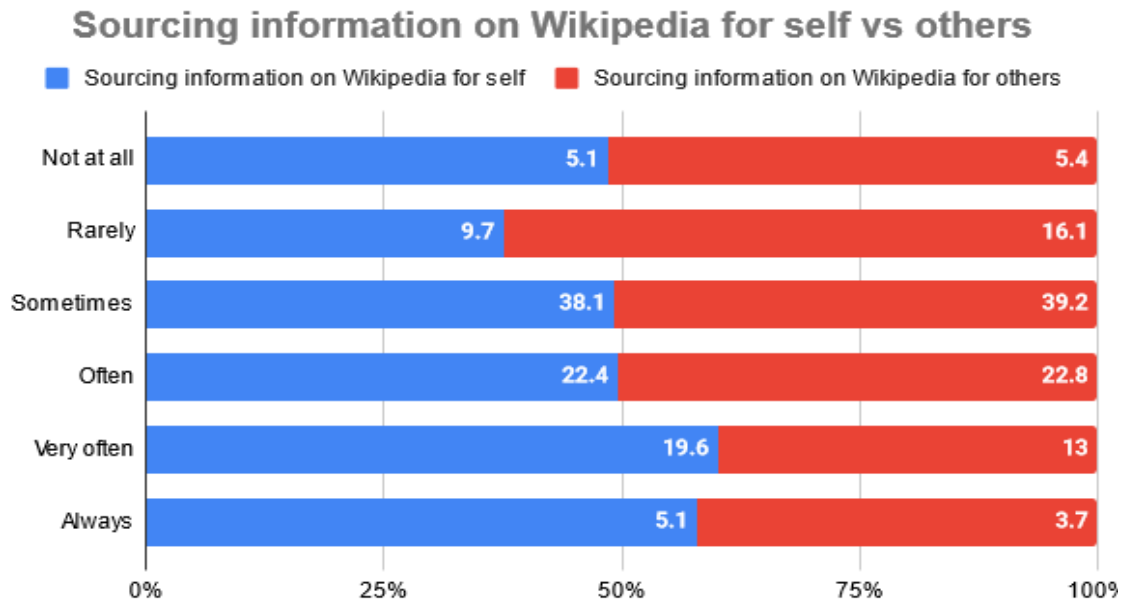


Fig5: Relying on information from Wikipedia for self vs others

Close to 63% of the respondents were not aware of the existence of Wikimedia communities in their countries. Approximately, 15% of the respondents knew of the local Wikimedia communities but were neither members nor were they aware of what the communities do. However, approximately 14% of the respondents were aware of and members of Wikimedia communities in their respective countries. Regardless, 98.3% of those who were non-members of Wikimedia communities showed interest in being part of a local Wikimedia community, if any.

Participants' perception of Wikipedia was assessed using a set of negative perception statements measured on a 5-point likert scale where 1 represented a strong negative perception (strongly agree) and 5 represented a strong positive perception (strongly disagree). In this case, when interpreting the results of the perception index, a higher index score means disagreements to the statements which in turn implies a favourable or positive perception towards Wikipedia.

An overall perception index of 2.88 was observed, implying a weak negative perception towards Wikipedia. Perusing the results, it is apparent that most of the respondents have a poor perception regarding the credibility of information available on Wikipedia and little to no perception towards editing and review processes of the platform. The evidence of a neutral or no perception towards Wikipedia and its open knowledge principles and processes is consistent with the fact that majority of the respondents have very little to no knowledge about Wikipedia especially its collaborative editing processes. In a way, this finding cuts out the amount of work the WiR is expected to do in terms busting the myths of these popular "propaganda".

Participants perception of Wikipedia pre and post training

Statement	Perception score*
Wikipedia lacks transparency in terms of how articles are deleted or approved for publishing.	3.01
Criteria for approval or deletion of articles on Wikipedia is subjective	3.13
Wikipedia subtly restricts freedom of speech and expression for its editors	2.70
Editing process on Wikipedia is too bureaucratic	2.85
The editing environment on Wikimedia is too hostile for new editors	2.82
Any editor can edit any article regardless of competence in the subject matter and that may imperil the quality of articles on highly technical subjects	3.09
Information on Wikipedia lack reliability hence cannot be used as a research source.	2.81
Articles on Wikipedia are unprofessionally written and difficult for the general reader to understand.	2.49
The fact that everyone can edit/contribute on Wikipedia regardless of expertise make the encyclopaedia a potential source of misinformation and disinformation	3.01
Overall Perception Index	2.88

* Perception statements were measured on a 5-point likert scale where 1 represents a strong negative perception (strongly agree) and 5 represents a strong positive perception (strongly disagree). Figures presented are weighted averages of the responses. The perception index is the average of averages.

Finally, majority (98.8%) are willing to enroll in the WikiAfLibs Course and hope to most especially “understand how the Wikipedia community and libraries share a common goal of providing access to information and “learn how to plan and implement forms of Wikipedia engagements or events in respective libraries/institution/countries”. It is also evident from the results, that participation in the course will be high and that in itself can present a challenge for the WiR and supporting staff in managing such large numbers at a go. Running a cohort or batch system might be more productive and will help to reduce the stress of managing larger groups and classes.

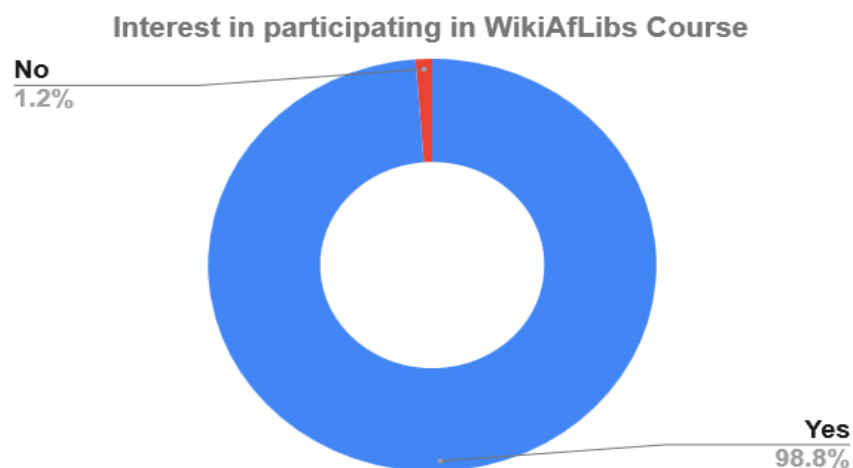


Fig6: Respondents' willingness to enroll in Wikipedia in African Libraries Course

3 CONCLUSION

The report has covered the results of a pre-training research conducted to serve as a baseline and gather insights to help the Wikipedian in Residence (WiR) and the Curriculum Development Consultant (CDC) develop an intuitive curriculum for the Wikipedia in African Libraries course and also inform implementation of project activities. Based on the results of the study, the following are a number of factors, critical suggestions and recommendations that project implementers must take note of in order to ensure a successful training project.

1. Project implementers must ensure that they develop curricula and course materials in English, French and Portuguese. In the same vein, AfLIA must consider bringing on board other English, French and Portuguese course instructors to supplement the role of the WiR in delivering the course and managing the course participants.
2. The employment distribution of respondents gives a good indication of AfLIA's ability to easily get the targeted audience and number for the training but it is evident that participation in the course will be high and so AfLIA should aim at implementing a cohort or batch system to help reduce the stress of managing larger groups and classes.
3. Quite a significant proportion of the respondents, who in this case are the prospective participants, have not had any experience with online courses. Respondents have shown a clear willingness to learn new things and adapt. Thus, the project should painstakingly train participants on how to navigate the LMS for the project along with other recommended facilitation platforms within a reasonable period of time.
4. AfLIA should be targeting a course with a duration of between 5-13 weeks, that also requires participants to spend an average of 3-4 hours per week to study on the course.
5. The WiR and CDC should be guided by the perception of prospective participants towards Wikipedia. The evidence of a poor to neutral perception towards Wikipedia and its open knowledge principles is consistent with the fact that majority of the respondents have very little to no knowledge about Wikipedia especially its collaborative editing processes.
6. It is obvious that majority of the prospective participants will pay for their own data in order to access the course. Given the high cost of internet in Africa, the project implementers are advised to be wary of how long live sessions will take, how many live sessions will be required as well as the number of videos and recordings participants will need to download.
7. Lastly, the project implementers should consider giving participants who are unable to fully complete the Course certificates of participation while those that are able to fulfill the completion requirements should be awarded with certificates of completion.

4 APPENDIX

Employment status

	Frequency	Percent
Other	3	.6
Employed	417	84.8
Self-employed	17	3.5
Unemployed	18	3.7
Student	28	5.7
Retired	9	1.8
Total	492	100.0

Profession

	Freq.	Valid %
Other	36	7.3
Librarian, LIS Educator, Teacher-Librarian	410	83.7
Other library staff (with no professional training in librarianship)	28	5.7
Archivist	16	3.3
Total	490	100.0

How do you feel about taking a class(es) over the internet?

	Freq.	Valid %
I prefer online tutorship over a traditional class	117	31.0
I am nervous about it. I am not sure it is for me	3	.8
I do not look forward to it, but I need the course.	5	1.3
I look forward to the experience.	252	66.8
Total	377	100.0

Via what primary device would access the proposed Wikipedia in African Libraries course, if you are selected?

	Freq.	Valid %
Smartphone	128	34.0
Tablet	9	2.4
Laptop	199	52.8
Desktop computer	41	10.9
Total	377	100.0

How many weeks will you be willing to take the WikiAflibs Courses?

	Freq.	Valid %
< 5 weeks long	86	22.8
5 - 7 weeks long	106	28.1
8 - 10 weeks long	85	22.5
11 - 13 weeks long	45	11.9
Above 13 weeks long	55	14.6
Total	377	100.0

How many hours will you be willing to spare per week to take online Courses?

	Freq.	Valid %
1-2 hours weekly	108	28.6
3 - 4 hours weekly	131	34.7
5-6 hours weekly	70	18.6
7-8 hours weekly	37	9.8
Above 8 hours weekly	31	8.2
Total	377	100.0

How often do you source or rely on information sourced from Wikipedia for use by yourself?

	Freq.	Valid %
Not at all	18	5.1
Rarely	34	9.7
Sometimes	134	38.1
Often	79	22.4
Very often	69	19.6
Always	18	5.1
Total	352	100.0

How often do you source or rely on information sourced from Wikipedia for use by another?

	Freq.	Valid %
Not at all	19	5.4
Rarely	57	16.1
Sometimes	139	39.2
Often	81	22.8
Very often	46	13.0
Always	13	3.7
Total	355	100.0

Do you know of a Wikimedia Community in your country?

	Freq.	Valid %
Yes, but I am not a member	54	15.3
Yes, I am even a member	49	13.8
No, I do not know of any	221	62.4
No, I think there is none in my country	30	8.5
Total	354	100.0