WikiYouth Africa: Strengthening Misinformation Research Capacity Through Wikimedia and FactCheck Africa

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What is the event or activity you want to organize?

Strengthening Misinformation Research Capacity Through Wikimedia and FactCheck Africa is a 12-month initiative aimed at equipping young Nigerians with practical research and digital verification skills to combat misinformation using Wikimedia platforms and BBYDI's FactCheck Africa tool.

The project will introduce university students, young journalists, and early-career researchers to foundational concepts in open knowledge, misinformation studies, and Wikimedia research practices. Through structured training and guided projects, participants will learn how to critically engage with Wikipedia and Wikidata as tools for evidence-based information verification.

At the core of the program are fact-checking sprints — intensive workshops where youth teams use the FactCheck Africa platform to investigate viral claims, analyze misinformation trends, and cross-reference sources with data from Wikimedia platforms. Participants will also receive mentorship from media researchers and open knowledge advocates and collaboratively produce short research briefs that highlight their findings.

The program includes:
- Wikimedia research boot camps tailored for misinformation contexts in Nigeria,
- Fact-checking sprints using the FactCheck Africa tool alongside Wikimedia sources.
- A final research showcase to disseminate youth-led findings and methodologies.

This project serves as BBYDI's formal entry into the Wikimedia research space, building on our ongoing work in digital literacy and verification. It will create a foundation for long-term engagement with Wikimedia platforms while addressing the urgent challenge of misinformation through community-led research.

What do you want to achieve by doing this community building activity?

Through WikiYouth Africa, we aim to build a community of young Nigerian researchers who are skilled in identifying, analyzing, and countering misinformation using Wikimedia platforms and BBYDI's FactCheck Africa tool. The core objective is to create an intentional

entry point for youth, particularly students, journalists, and civic educators, to contribute to the growing body of Wikimedia-related research from the Global South.

Our immediate goals include:

1. Equipping 50 youth participants with practical skills in Wikimedia research and digital verification;
2. Strengthening local research capacity on the subject of misinformation;
3. Facilitating the production of youth-led research briefs that use Wikidata and Wikipedia to support evidence-based investigations;
4. Establishing a mentorship network that connects youth researchers with Wikimedia contributors and information experts.

The impact we aim to achieve is two-fold: first, to catalyze a new cohort of contributors who can enrich the Wikimedia research ecosystem with locally grounded perspectives on misinformation, and second, to demonstrate the practical utility of Wikimedia tools in addressing real-world information challenges.

For the Wikimedia research community, this initiative represents an opportunity to broaden its geographic and thematic reach by investing in community-building that is context-specific, youth-driven, and responsive to one of the most urgent digital challenges of our time.

When do you plan to host the event/activity? What is influencing the timing of the event?

We plan to begin WikiYouth Africa in September 2025 and conclude the program by August 2026. This timing aligns with Nigeria's academic calendar, which allows for impactful engagement with university students,

journalism trainees, and civic educators during the school year. It also enables us to host in-person events during optimal weather and travel conditions across regions.

Preparations for the program will begin in August 2025, including participant recruitment, curriculum development, and engagement with mentors and institutional partners. The core activities- boot camps, fact-checking sprints, and mentorship- will roll out in phases over the course of the year. A final showcase and presentation of youth-led research outputs will take place in August 2026, coinciding with International Youth Day, offering a strategic opportunity to amplify the work.

External factors influencing this timeline include academic breaks, election-related events that may affect travel or participation, and coordination with Wikimedia contributors or research mentors based in or outside Nigeria. These elements will be closely monitored to ensure flexibility and continuity.

This 12-month timeline provides the necessary space to build trust with participants, support the full research cycle, and ensure the quality and relevance of outputs while fostering a sense of long-term engagement with Wikimedia platforms and research practices.

Who will participate in your event/activity?

Our primary audience consists of young Nigerians aged 18–30, particularly university students, early-career journalists, and emerging researchers interested in digital verification and open knowledge. Participants will be selected through an open call targeting institutions and communities with strong youth engagement and

a demonstrated interest in civic innovation and misinformation research.

We plan to engage:

- 50 core participants who will complete the training and contribute to youth-led research projects,
- An extended network of attendees who will join specific open sessions, sprint events, and the final showcase,
- At least 8 mentors and facilitators who will shape the program design, lead workshops, and guide research teams.

This initiative will intentionally focus on involving participants from underrepresented communities in the Wikimedia research ecosystem, specifically youth from North Central and South Western Nigeria who have limited prior access to Wikimedia platforms or formal research opportunities. Many of our participants will come from non-urban communities, public universities, and underserved civic tech spaces, where misinformation has a tangible impact on public discourse and social cohesion.

Participants will be drawn from institutions, including the University of Ilorin and Kwara State University, where BBYDI has ongoing collaborations. We will also work with community organization like Webfala Digital Skills for all Initiative, and partner with youth-led civic engagement organization such as YIAGA Africa to broaden access and relevance.

Where will the event/activity take place?

WikiYouth Africa will be delivered through a hybrid model combining in-person events with virtual components to ensure accessibility, flexibility, and broad participation across different parts of Nigeria. The program will be primarily local and regional, with in-person activities hosted in Kwara State, Nigeria, particularly in the city of Ilorin.

In-person components will include:

- Wikimedia research boot camps held at university campuses and community hubs,
- Fact-checking sprints conducted in local ICT centers and innovation labs,
- A final in-person research showcase event, open to local stakeholders, students, and the media.

Virtual components will support:

- Remote mentoring from Wikimedia contributors and researchers across the region and globally,
- Online research team collaboration,
- Asynchronous skill-building sessions for participants with limited internet access.

This model will allow us to engage youth from diverse backgrounds, including students from less-connected communities who may not typically access Wikimedia-related programming. It also supports equitable participation for mentors and contributors who may be geographically dispersed.

All activities will focus solely on Nigeria, but the research findings and digital toolkit developed through the project will be publicly shared via Wikimedia-compatible formats, offering potential value to similar efforts across the Global South.

Experience organizing similar events or activities

BBYDI has over a decade of experience designing and delivering youth-centered programs focused on digital literacy, media resilience, fact-checking, and civic engagement across Nigeria. Our work is rooted in community-based, participatory approaches that emphasize hands-on learning, local relevance, and social impact.

Notable examples of our experience include:

- **MyAIFactChecker:** A digital platform and educational program developed by BBYDI to equip youth and educators with tools to detect and counter misinformation. This initiative has reached over 5,000 students and young professionals through both in-person workshops and digital engagements.
- **Fact Check Election Training:** A partnership with FactcheckElections and funded by the Karibu Foundation. This training program was attended by 45 journalists who were trained on how to combat fake news and misinformation in election reporting.
- **Post COP 27 Workshop:** This workshop, 'Reflecting on Promises, Negotiations, and the Way Forward,' brought together over 150 participants, including environmental activists, policymakers, and community representatives.
- **Rural Climate Education Program:** The Rural Climate Education Program in Sentu Community, Ilorin, was a resounding success, engaging over 60 students and 30 farmers. The program aimed to increase awareness and understanding of climate change, especially its local impacts.
- **Climate Education Workshop and Flashcard Launch:** Our collaboration with COP28 Delegate Tolulope Gbenro led to a successful climate education workshop for over 40 school teachers in Ilorin. The workshop, funded by the Nigeria Youth Futures Fund, was designed to integrate climate education into school curricula effectively

Specific outputs

WikiYouth Africa is structured to deliver both immediate research outputs and long-term capacity-building tools that can contribute meaningfully to the Wikimedia research ecosystem and beyond. Our outputs will be community-rooted, evidence-driven, and intentionally designed for reuse, adaptation, and scaling.

1. 50 Trained Youth Researchers

We will train 50 young Nigerians, primarily university students, early-career journalists, and civic educators. They will complete a structured learning track covering Wikimedia research practices, digital verification using Wikipedia and Wikidata, and applied use of BBYDI's FactCheck Africa platform. Participants will receive mentorship and complete practical assignments, culminating in a certificate of completion and project portfolio. BBYDI will maintain a database of participants and provide pathways for continued engagement with the Wikimedia ecosystem.

2. 5 Youth-Led Research Briefs

Teams of participants will design and implement small-scale research projects focused on misinformation trends in Nigeria, using real-world case studies. For example, one team may investigate the spread of election-related disinformation on social media, tracing citation practices through Wikidata queries; another may evaluate how Wikipedia is used (or misused) in viral claim verification. Each team will produce a research brief summarizing methods, findings, and recommendations. These briefs will be peer-reviewed internally, compiled into a publication, and disseminated through Wikimedia-compatible platforms and BBYDI's channels.

3. Wikimedia + FactCheck Africa Toolkit

We will co-develop a practical, open-source toolkit for educators, researchers, and community organizations. It will include:
- Step-by-step guides on using Wikidata and Wikipedia for verification;
- Instructions on integrating FactCheck Africa into civic education;
- Case studies from youth-led research outputs.

The toolkit will be published in digital formats (mobile-optimized web version) and promoted through Wikimedia-affiliated mailing lists, community forums, and BBYDI's partnerships.

4. Mentorship & Peer Learning Network

We will engage 8 mentors, including Wikimedia contributors, media literacy experts, and academic researchers, to guide teams through project design and implementation. This network will facilitate one-on-one mentorship, peer feedback sessions, and community meetups. BBYDI will document lessons learned and recommend models for sustainable mentorship in Wikimedia-aligned research programs.

5. Final Showcase Event

At the end of the program, BBYDI will organize a hybrid Research Showcase and Knowledge Dialogue event in Ilorin, Kwara State. This will provide a platform for youth to present their findings, receive public feedback, and network with institutional partners, the press, and Wikimedia community members. Key moments will be recorded and shared as a knowledge product.

6. Online Knowledge Products

To support visibility and knowledge sharing, BBYDI will produce:

- Short videos and social media reels highlighting project milestones;
- Visual infographics summarizing each research brief;
- A landing page with all program resources (hosted on BBYDI's website with Wikimedia cross-links).

These materials will ensure the project's insights reach both local communities and the broader Wikimedia research ecosystem.

Evaluation

Our key evaluation criteria will include:

1. Sustained Participant Engagement

We will track how many of the 50 trained youth researchers:

- Continue to engage with Wikimedia platforms (e.g., as contributors, editors, or project collaborators),
- Use their training in academic, professional, or civic contexts (e.g., fact-checking, research, teaching),
- Maintain involvement in the mentor network or participate in subsequent BBYDI programs.

This will be measured through follow-up surveys, alumni interviews, and a closed community platform we will host for continued knowledge sharing.

2. Application and Reach of the Toolkit

We will assess the number of:

- Downloads and uses of the Wikimedia and FactCheck Africa toolkit,
- Requests for adaptation or translation,
- Institutions (universities, NGOs, community educators) using the toolkit in training or curricula.

BBYDI will also track social media analytics, reposts on Wikimedia community channels, and citations in related work.

3. Research Brief Utilization

Success will include the extent to which the five research briefs:

- Are cited or referenced by Wikimedia contributors or misinformation researchers,
- Influence content improvement on Wikipedia/Wikidata entries,
- Spark further inquiry or collaboration, especially by Global South research communities.

4. Wikimedia Research Community Connections

We will track whether new collaborations emerge between BBYDI, participants, and Wikimedia contributors/researchers globally. This includes participation in conferences, contributions to Wikimedia strategy discussions, or co-authored research.

All findings will be compiled into a 1-year impact report, which we will share with the Wikimedia Foundation and make publicly available for learning and replication.

Budget

The proposed [budget](#) totals $50,000 and has been carefully structured to align with all core activities of the WikiYouth Africa project, including training, research, mentorship, toolkit development, and evaluation. BBYDI has ensured that each cost item reflects current market realities in Nigeria, and we have included essential categories such as participant support, facilitator fees, project management, and an independent evaluation process.