



WIKIMEDIA LEVANT

JORDAN • PALESTINE • SYRIA • LEBANON



Annual Report Wikimedians of the Levant User Group 2023

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WIKIMEDIANS OF THE LEVANT
BOARD MEMBERS



2023

A YEAR OF TRAGEDY

2023 was a year of tragedy and great loss in the Levant.

On the morning of the 6th of February, a series of deadly earthquakes hit southern Turkey and northern Syria, claiming the lives of 60-70 thousand in both countries, and causing utter devastation and leaving thousands more homeless.

On the 7th of October, Israel launched a campaign of wanton death and destruction in Palestine that is still ongoing. The assault on the Gaza Strip has claimed the lives of over 37 thousand Palestinians as of the writing of this report. The aggression has caused unimaginable damage to the health and educational infrastructure, as well as to residential buildings and cultural heritage. It has forced internal displacement on the majority of the population and brought about a famine to parts of the Gaza Strip.

At least one known member of the Wikimedia Movement, Hiba Abu Nada, was killed in an Israeli airstrike. Hiba was a poet, novelist, and nutritionist who had participated in copy-editing translations of Wikipedia articles.

Despite the tragedy, Wikimedians of the Levant has persevered and continued its activities in service of free knowledge, while taking a leading role in informing about events in the Levant.

In the wake of the devastating earthquake, we dedicated our social media platforms to raising awareness and we turned the logo of the User Group to grayscale in mourning. Wikimedians of the Levant was a signatory to the Joint Statement on Palestine on the 7th of April 2024, and along with other groups incorporated the colors of the Palestinian flag in our logo.

We dedicate this report to the memory of all those who have lost their lives and we wish for peace to prevail.





photo : Salem Mohammadi

Tasnim News Agency, Aleppo after the 7.8 magnitude earthquake centered in Türkiye 3, CC BY 4.0



(Palestinian News & Information Agency (Wafa) in contract with APAimages, Damage in Gaza Strip during the October 2023 - 28, CC BY-SA 3.0

Table of Contents

	.01
INTRODUCTION TO WIKIMEDIANS OF THE LEVANT USER GROUP	
	.02
BOARD MEMBERS, STAFF	
	.03
ACTIVITIES, ON-LINE	
	.04
ACTIVITIES, IN-PERSON	
	.05
ACTIVITIES, HYBRID	
	.06
PUBLICATIONS	
	.07
IMAGE LICENSES	

WIKIMEDIANS OF THE LEVANT

USER GROUP

- Wikimedians of the Levant User Group is an independent Wikimedia user group, officially recognized by the Wikimedia Foundation in May 2015.
- It covers the Levant region (Jordan, Palestine, Lebanon, and Syria).
- The focus of WM Levant is to promote free knowledge and open source projects, especially Wikimedia projects in the region.
- It has more than 65 members as of January 2024

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"Imagine a world in which every single person on the planet is given free access to the sum of all human knowledge. That's what we're doing."
Jimmy Wales

BOARD MEMBERS

UNTIL JULY 2023

Having elected board members is essential for the effective functioning of any organization or institution. Elected board members bring a level of accountability, transparency, and representation that is crucial in decision-making processes. For the first half of 2023, we had three elected members serving on the board:

- **Farah Mustaklem:** a founder of our UG, a former Affiliations Committee and Wikimedia Strategy Steering Committee member, he is currently on the Regional Grants Committee for Africa and the Middle East. (Photo1)
- **Mervat Salman:** a founder of our UG, a former Strategy and Governance Facilitator at Wikimedia Foundation, administrator and Editor in Arabic Wikipedia. (Photo2)
- **Abbad Diraneyya:** a founder of our UG, Knowledge Manager in Movement Strategy, an editor and former administrator in Arabic Wikipedia. (Photo3)

BOARD MEMBERS FROM AUGUST 2023

According to the internal policies of the Wikimedians of the Levant User Group, the community elected a new board for another year (from August to July).

The community re-elected Mervat and Farah to serve as board members and welcomed Nedhal Jarrar as a new member.

- **Nedhal Jarrar:** a founder of our UG, administrator and Editor in Arabic Wikipedia, in addition to Wikimedia Commons and Wiki data. (Photo4)

BOARD MEMBERS



(2)



(1)



(3)



(4)

STAFF

Since July 2022, **Sandra Hanbo** has been working on a part-time basis as a project coordinator for the Wikimedians of the Levant User Group. Her role is to write reports, follow up with the community, and send it updates, as well as to maintain the budget. (Photo5)

She has been a member of the WM Levant User Group since 2019, and had served as a board member in 2020-2021. She is an active editor in Arabic Wikipedia, Wikimedia Commons, and other sister projects



(5)

ACTIVITIES

Wikimedians of the Levant User Group has had an activity-packed year: from January to December 2023.

Following is a sneak peak of the activities in this reporting period.

ON-LINE

Workshop about References in Wikidata	01
Women's Biographies	02
Diabetes Workshop	03
The Second Edition of "How To be Wikipedian"	04
Al-Arz 3 Contest	05
Why My Page Has been Deleted Podcast	06

WORKSHOP ABOUT REFERENCES IN WIKIDATA

Wikimedians of the Levant User Group organized a workshop for the Arabic Wikimedia community about Wikidata, to raise awareness about this project which is the link between all the different Wikimedia projects. The workshop was organized by experienced and very active users. The workshop was published on YouTube for the benefit of anyone wishing to learn more about Wikidata.

[Link](#) to the workshop page on Arabic Wikipedia.

[Link](#) to YouTube uploads.

Statement	Number	Notes
Organizers	2	Michel Bakni Bassem Flefl
Participants	24	From the Arabic Community
New items to Wikidata	260	Add all the data (around 10 properties each)
New citations to Arabic Wikipedia	500	

WOMEN'S BIOGRAPHIES

Our user group participated in 2023 in celebrating women as part of the global Wikimedia Community's activities on International Women's Day.

We organized an edit-a-thon from 12 to 30 March 2023 and oriented it to the Arabic community to help bridge the gender gap that exists, and specifically to highlight Arab and Levantine women.

[Link](#) to edit-a-thon page on Arabic Wikipedia.



(6) Edit-a-thon Barnstar

Statement	Number	Notes
Organizers	2	Mervat Salman Farah Mustaklem
Participants	12	From the Arabic Community
New articles	40	

DIABETES WORKSHOP

Diabetes is a chronic disease affecting millions all over the world. We, as a community, helped raise awareness about this disease on World Diabetes Day (14th of November).

There was a webinar on diabetes presented by Dr. Rami Essa, Internal Medicine and Diabetes Specialist. The hosts were Sandra Hanbo and Abdullah Hajareen.

The Webinar was the starting point of an editing month on Arabic Wikipedia about this disease and related articles.

Wikipedia page of the workshop: [https://w.wiki/8AF\\$](https://w.wiki/8AF$)



(7) Diabetes Workshop Logo

Statement	Number	Notes
Organizers	2	Sandra Hanbo Abdullah Hajareen
Participants	16	From the Arabic Community
New articles	10	

WHY MY PAGE HAS BEEN DELETED PODCAST

Every day, many articles are deleted from Arabic Wikipedia due to issues of notability. As our user group has a large number of administrators and veteran users, we organized a podcast to highlight this issue and give answers to the most common reasons for lack of notability.

The podcast was organized by Tamuz Hasan and Sandra Hanbo and presented by Tamuz.

Guests included admins and users from different regions and from different domains, and discussed the notability of people, geographic places, films and media, among other topics.

The podcast streamed on the Wikimedians of the Levant Facebook page, and work has begun to upload them to Wikimedia Commons.

During the podcast, the guests answered questions by the host and by the audience.

The average audience size for the each episode of the podcast was 250.



(8) Why my page has been deleted
podcast Logo

THE SECOND EDITION OF "HOW TO BE WIKIPEDIAN"

This was the second edition of the workshop "How to be Wikipedia", aimed at teaching the basics of editing Arabic Wikipedia and its sister projects.

This edition was hosted on ZOOM In August 2023, organized by Rotana Al-Hasanat. It consisted of two parts, a teaching workshop, followed by an editing competition.

Statement	Number	Notes
Organizers	1	Rotana Al-Hassanat
Participants	22	
Added Articles on Arabic Wikipedia	120+	
Total New editors to Wikimedia Projects	22	

THE SECOND EDITION OF "HOW TO BE WIKIPEDIAN"

Statement	Number
MultiMedia added to Commons	100+
New members to WMLevant	3
Prizes	3

During this workshop, participants learned how to edit using the Visual Editor, the basic policies of Arabic Wikipedia, and how to upload files to Wikimedia Commons.

These workshops attracted new users to learn how to effectively add content to Wikipedia and begin their Wikipedia journeys.

AL-ARZ 3 CONTEST



(9) Anas Eljamal (Aboluay)

Al-Arz 3 Competition aimed to improve articles related to the Levant in the Arabic Wikipedia, and to improve featured articles in this context.

This was the 3rd edition of the Al-Arz contest, and was named in honor of our late colleague Anas Eljamal for his great contributions to Arabic Wikipedia.

Anas (User:Aboluay) was a Lebanese-Canadian educator and a contributor to Wikipedia since 2008. He was an asset to the community and a mentor to many. He passed away in July 2019, leaving behind a great legacy of volunteerism in the world of free knowledge. He is dearly missed by all who knew him.

[Contest Link](#)



(10) Al-Arz contest Logo

AL-ARZ 3 CONTEST

Statement	Number	Notes
Organizers and Judges	5	Mervat Salman Michel Bakni Faisal Ahmad Naji Mohammed Hijjawi
Participants	48	From the Arabic Community
New articles	1197	
Total Edited Articles	1418	
Prizes	5	
Data added to Arabic Wikipedia	171,595,800 Bytes	More than 170 MB

ACTIVITIES

IN-PERSON

EDUCATION PROGRAMS

The 5th Educational program in Hebron
university in Palestine 07

Cultural Interaction Training 08

WORKSHOP

Basic Knowledge on Editing Arabic Wikipedia
in Jordan, titled: "How to be Wikipedian" 09

Edit-a-thon against desertification 10

THE 5TH EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM IN HEBRON UNIVERSITY IN PALESTINE

Wikimedians of the Levant has run educational programs in Palestine since 2018. In 2023, we ran the 5th edition of the program in Hebron. This program was organized over three working days at the Faculty of Medicine, Hebron University.

In it, the trainees learned the basics of editing the Arabic Wikipedia and Wikimedia Commons.

[Link](#) to program page on Arabic Wikipedia.

Statement	Number	Notes
Organizers	2	Tala Nagham
Participants	30	
Added Articles on Arabic Wikipedia	200+	related to public health and medicine
New members to user group	6	

PHOTOS FROM SESSIONS AND CLOSING CEREMONY



(11)



(12)



(13)



(14)

- Photo11: Sami with the participants.
- Photo12: Program organizers (Tala, and Nagham)
- Photo13: Final meeting, and closing session.
- Photo14: First place winner with the organizers

BASIC KNOWLEDGE ON EDITING ARABIC WIKIPEDIA IN JORDAN, TITLED: "HOW TO BE WIKIPEDIAN"

Wikimedians of the Levant has cooperated with "All Jordan Youth Commission" for the first time to run a program to teach Jordanian youth basic knowledge about editing Arabic Wikipedia.

The workshop was ran for 12 hours across 3 weeks. At the end of the workshop a competition was held for the Commission's members to encourage them to engage in Arabic Wikipedia.

[Link](#) to program page on Arabic Wikipedia.

Statement	Number	Notes
Organizers	1	Rotana Al-Hassanat
Participants	18	
Added Articles on Arabic Wikipedia	100+	
New members to user group	6	

CULTURAL INTERACTION TRAINING

Training for University students held in Palestine in June 2023

Wikimedians of the Levant launched a diverse training series for university students worldwide, including participants from Spain, France, the US, Lebanon, and Canada. Organized by Osama Eid in Palestine, the training was held from June to September 2023 and included workshops on Wikimedia projects like Wikidata, Wikimedia Commons, and Wikiversity. The sessions emphasized cultural interaction and diversity, with a focus on programming and editing in multiple languages. The initiative aimed to deepen understanding of free knowledge and to foster international cooperation, with plans for participants to start educational programs at their universities.



(15) Osama Eid presenting a session

EDIT-A-THON AGAINST DESERTIFICATION

For the second year, Wikimedians of the Levant was part of Wiki
For Human Rights campaign.

Our User Group participated in organizing an edit-a-thon about desertification. It was held at Zinc open area in Amman, Jordan on June 17, 2023 to raise awareness of a vital environmental issue in the region, namely desertification and efforts to combat it. This edit-a-thon was attended by 10 members of the Jordanian youth community. It was organized by User Group member Rotana Al-Hassanat,

This activity lasted for four hours and contributed to the addition and development of 20 articles to the Arabic Wikipedia on combating desertification.

Link to the event on the Arabic Wikipedia: <https://w.wiki/6sWa>



(16) Attendees of the edit-a-thon

ACTIVITIES

HYBRID PROJECTS

INTERNATIONAL TRANSLATION DAY

Webinar	11
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Edit-a-thon	12
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ARABIC LANGUAGE DAY

Webinar	13
---------	----

Edit-a-thon	14
-------------	----

Forum	15
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INTERNATIONAL TRANSLATION DAY

WEBINAR

Wikimedians of the Levant marked International Translation Day with a well-attended webinar (16 participants), introducing the machine translation tools in Arabic Wikipedia. The discussion emphasized the role translation plays in bridging cultures and sharing knowledge. The content translation tool itself facilitates translation between Arabic and numerous other languages. Recommendations included continued promotion of the tool, workshops on its use, and collaborative efforts to leverage translation for enhanced cross-cultural communication.

[Link](#) to workshop page on Arabic Wikipedia.

[Link](#) to YouTube video.

Statement	Number	Notes
Organizers	1	Sandra Hanbo
Participants	16	From the Arabic Community

INTERNATIONAL TRANSLATION DAY

EDIT-A-THON

In celebration of International Translation Day, Wikimedians of the Levant hosted a successful edit-a-thon in Amman, Jordan, where nine dedicated participants came together to edit and translate articles, enriching the Arabic Wikipedia with valuable content. This event highlighted the power of translation in bridging cultural divides and fostering knowledge sharing, showcasing Wikimedians of the Levant's commitment to expanding and diversifying Wikipedia's Arabic content.

[Link](#) to workshop page on Arabic Wikipedia.

Statement	Number	Notes
Organizers	1	Rotana Al-Hasanat
Participants	9	
Articles edited to Arabic Wikipedia	20	

ARABIC LANGUAGE DAY

WEBINAR

Wikimedians of the Levant, Wiki Palestine and Wikimedians of the Islamic Civilization User Group cooperated to hold a webinar on World Arabic Language Day (December 18) about the use of proper Arabic language in the modern world. It was presented by Bassem Fleifel, and organized by Mervat Salman from WM Levant, Michel Bakni from WM Islamic Civilization, and Batoul Qaisieh from Wiki Palestine. The guests were Dr. Hassan Al-Tayyan and Ayman Zou Alghina.

The webinar lasted two hours and was broadcast via Facebook and YouTube.

The number of attendees exceeded **1000**.

[Link](#) to YouTube video.



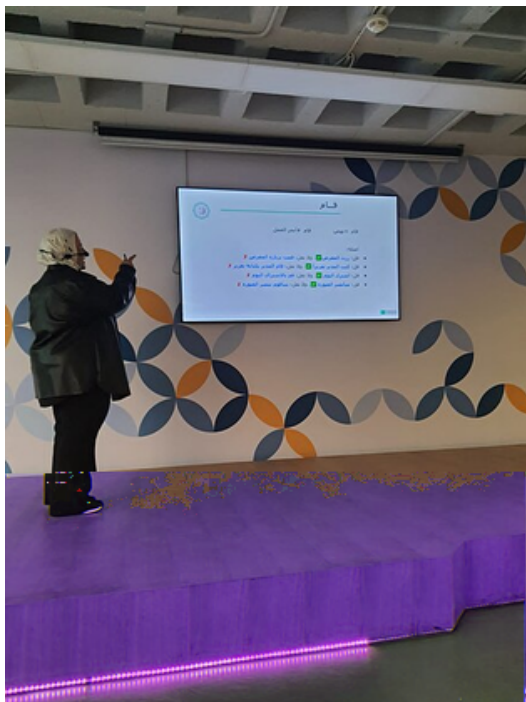
(17): Poster of Arabic Language Day Webinar

ARABIC LANGUAGE DAY

EDIT-A-THON

Wikimedians of the Levant held an interactive session led by Mervat Salman, titled "Common Mistakes in Arabic Language Usage" at the Abdul Hameed Shoman Library. The workshop, attended by library staff and patrons, analyzed Wikipedia content and editor observations to identify frequent linguistic mistakes. Building on successful social media discussions about these mistakes, the session presented a consolidated and interactive resource to raise awareness and promote proper Arabic language usage.

[Link](#) to workshop page on Arabic Wikipedia.



(18) Attendees of the edit-a-thon

(19) Mervat presenting the session

ARABIC LANGUAGE DAY

FORUM

The Arabic Language Forum in Jordan, organized by Rotana Al-Hasanat to celebrate Arabic Wikipedia Day, was attended by 12 participants. The event aimed to teach the attendees about common Arabic language mistakes, develop their proofreading skills, and benefit from the expertise of Arabic language professors.

[Link](#) to report on Arabic Language Forum report on Meta Wiki.



(20) Attendees of the forum

(21) Attendees of the forum



Assesment for the first half of 2023

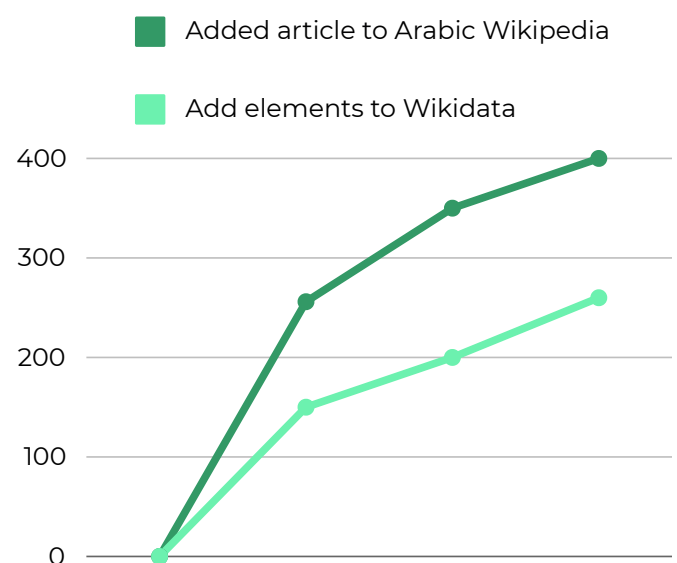
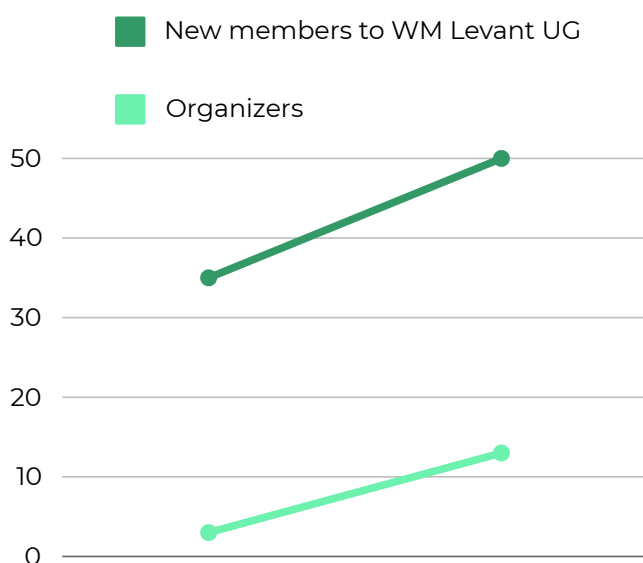
- During the first half of 2023, the Wikimedians of the Levant User Group focused on targeting communities in the region, attracting more members and developing work on Wikipedia and the Wikidata project. The group achieved the following results:

a. Increase the number of user group members from 35 to 50 (June 1, 2023)

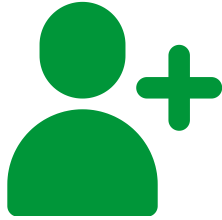
b. Addition and development of about 400 Arabic articles in the Arabic Wikipedia in various projects.

c. Addition and development of 260 items in Wikidata.

d. Increase in the number of active organizers of activities and events in the group to 13 people.



In Brief



**+65 Members are
in Our UG**



**10 Event
organizer**



**2 Educational
programs**



**More than 2000
edited article**



**More than 100
Files**



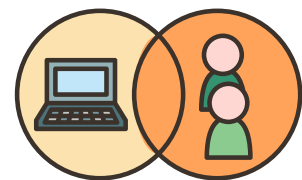
**More than 2200
edited Element
+260 New items
in one contest**



6 Online Events



4 Physical Events



2 Hybrid events

Publications

- American University in Beirut published an article about Assad Rustom Documentary: [Here](#)
- Diff post on how to be Wikipedian: [Here](#)
- Diff post on How to be Wikipedian (2): [Here](#)
- Diff post on Cultural Interaction Training: [Here](#).
- Diff post on Workshop about Resources in Wikidata: [Here](#)

IMAGE LICENSES

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- 5: Sandra Hanbo, CC BY-SA 4.0
- 6: Sandra Hanbo, CC BY-SA 4.0
- 7: Sandra Hanbo, CC BY-SA 4.0
- 8: Tamuz Hasan, CC BY-SA 4.0
- 9: Aboluay, CC-BY 3.0
- 10: Nedhal Jarrar, CC BY-SA 4.0
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THANK YOU

شكراً



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