

## Florence Devouard

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## Speaker, trainer and strategist on issues related to open knowledge management, wikis-style collaboration & online communities dynamics

I specialize in designing and cultivating resilient, adaptable, high-performing teams, and networks that thrive in dynamic environments. I am deeply committed to amplifying diverse voices, breaking down barriers, and expanding spaces where new ideas can flourish and generate global impact. Unafraid to challenge the status quo, I ask critical questions, offer alternative paths, and encourage others to be bold, to lead with purpose, and to embrace the joy in their work.

### Key achievements

- » Vice-Chair then Chair (2004-2008) of the board of [Wikimedia Foundation](#).  
The Wikimedia Foundation, Inc. is a nonprofit charitable organization dedicated to encouraging the growth, development and distribution of free, multilingual content, and to providing the full content of these wiki-based projects to the public free of charge. The Wikimedia Foundation operates some of the largest collaboratively edited reference projects in the world, including Wikipedia. In 2008, Wikipedia was (and still is) amongst the top 5 most-visited websites in the world. My main challenge was to accommodate Wikipedia exponential growth, and turning Wikimedia Foundation from a tiny non-profit in Florida to a professional organization in California.
- » Co-founder and former Vice-President of [Wikimedia France](#).  
Wikimedia France is a non profit organization which support the online encyclopedia Wikipedia, as well as other wiki based educational projects. Amongst other tasks, I was responsible of Wikimedia France fundraising from 2008 till 2011 (1.000.000+ euros collected in 2011 from 30.000 donors)
- » Co-founder and co-director of [Wiki in Africa](#), a non-profit organization in Cape-Town, South Africa.  
WIA operates global initiatives in support of the WikiAfrica movement. It seeks to empower and engage citizens of Africa and its diaspora to collect, develop and contribute educational and relevant content that relates to the theme of Africa under a free license; and to engage in global knowledge systems by encouraging access to, awareness of, and support for open knowledge, the open movement and the Wikimedia projects.
- » Conception, lead and implementation of over 10 ground-breaking international projects for the WikiAfrica movement.  
Mentorships that helped to seed volunteer communities to Wikimedia Usergroup status in 12 different African countries.
- » Wikipedian in Residence at UN agency, [World Intellectual Property Organization](#) (WIPO) since 2022.  
Help WIPO to share its knowledge and content through Wikipedia, but also advocate open source adoption to UN and IGO agencies.
- » Speaker in over 150 conferences and seminars in the past 15 years, including 3 TEDx (2012, 2013, 2016). Invited guest at Davos Summit 2008
- » Vice-Chair of [Yinternet.org](#), a swiss non-profit Foundation operating in the Civil Rights and Social Action field.
- » Board member of [Open Food Facts](#), a French non profit supporting the Open Source Database Open Food Facts. Open Food Facts is a multi-award project, on which the Nutriscore is based.

### Key words about Florence Devouard

Wikipedia, Wikidata, Wikis, Open Source, Social Media, Community Management, Fundraising, Non-profits, Knowledge Management, Governance, Free Licensing, Community Building, Intercultural Relations, Africa, Women, Consulting and Entrepreneurship.

### Professional passions

- » Free-Culture, Open Education, and Open-Source Software Movement Advocate
- » Supporter of life-long learning and access to knowledge for all
- » African voices on global plateforms
- » Gender Equity
- » Governance and internal controls

# Main professional strengths

## ***Non-profit leadership and management in the open source sector.***

Founder of several non-profit organizations : [Wikimedia France](#) (France), [Wiki in Africa](#) (South Africa) since 2004.

In leadership for several others : [Wikimedia Foundation](#) Board Chair (USA), [Ynternet.org](#) Vice president (Switzerland), [WikiFranca Hub](#) Treasurer (Switzerland), [Open Food Facts](#) board member. I seek to create successful organizations, with a vision, mission, and values. I do strategy, governance, recruitment, activities, annual reports, funder reports, grantmaking, crisis management, communication.

Governance is a sweet point of mine and I have been leading such topics for the past 20 years, for my own organizations, but also for others. Good governance requires the right ingredients and careful mixing and stirring of candid discussions, transparent practices and thoughtful governance policies. I crafted several board manuals, wrote conflict of interest policies, lead the creation of whistle blower protection policies, data retention policies, private data access policies, established assessment tools and checklists, practiced heavily and advocated for fine reporting and best practices documentation etc., and engage others with skills transfer activities. Since 2021, I have been the financial auditor of [Les sans pagEs](#) (a Swiss based organization fighting the Gender Gap).

## ***Creation and then management of international and intercultural projects related to Wikipedia, Africa, and Women***

Created several successful projects, such as (but not limited to) :

- » [Wiki Loves Africa](#) (annual photographic contest in Africa since 2014 – 30+ countries), in collaboration with Africa Centre in 2014-15; in collaboration with Ynternet.org in 2016-17. With the support of Wikimedia Foundation, Movetia, and African Union
- » [Wiki Loves Women](#) (content liberation project and mentorship program related to African Women) , in collaboration with Goethe Institute. (2016-2017-2021-2022). Supported by Wikimedia Foundation (since 2018)
- » [WikiFundi](#) (an offline editing environment that mimics Wikipedia + action kit), in collaboration with Wikimedia CH, support from Fondation Orange in 2016-17 and support from Wikimedia Foundation since 2018
- » [WikiAfrica Schools](#) (South African pilot to train the next generation of wikipedias in Africa), in collaboration with Lettera27/Moleskine Foundation in 2017
- » [WikiChallenge Ecoles d'Afrique](#) (annual writing contest and development of soft and editorial skills by primary school children in francophone Africa), in collaboration with Fondation Orange since 2016 and with the support of Creative Commons.
- » [ISA tool](#) (an open source micro-contribution software tool to add structured semantic data to Wikimedia Commons/Wikidata). In collaboration with Histropedia, supported by Wikimedia Foundation since 2019 and Wikimedia Sweden in 2021-22.
- » [Africa Environment](#) (a full month action oriented drive to create open source content related to Africa's Climate). In collaboration with Wikimedia Community UserGroup Côte d'Ivoire, supported by Wikimedia Foundation and African Union in 2023.
- » [WikiAfrica Hour](#) (a live broadcast, conversation-based monthly 'vodcast' that aims to reconnect, network, and drive sharing and collaborations across the african continent). Supported by Wikimedia Foundation since 2021.

All those projects belong to the WikiAfrica movement (an international movement across the African continent and beyond that encourages individuals and organizations to create, expand and enhance online content on Wikipedia about Africa).

My role: each of those projects was carefully designed, described, pitched, funded, implemented, reported, and lessons learned. They are all international and intercultural in nature. Several of those projects included the creation of the OER resources.

## ***Community Building and Skills Transfer***

Creating and implementing projects that intentionally build communities in order to intentionally contribute to the Open Movement and provide platforms to share art, cultures and knowledge through various means, such as (but not limited to):

- » Celebrating women through gender equity  
[Wiki Loves Women](#) mentorship group – 8+ african countries and beyond. Organizing trainings and being a trainer on governance topics  
[Inspiring Open Podcast](#) and annual [#SheSaid](#) campaign – to give women a voice and inspire other women. Interviews and hands-on training
- » Educating the next generations of content creators  
[WikiChallenge African Schools](#) - annual since 2017, 10 French speaking countries. Training and skills transfer to all local facilitators
- » Celebrating Africa : sharing perspectives and Culture  
[Wiki Loves Africa](#) - training skills of photographers from 2014 till 2024

But also **training, public speaking** and **consultancy** with large companies on topics related to Wikipedia, wiki software, online communities, open source governance, charter and code of conduct, decision-making practices in groups, OER (open education ressources), or adoption of free licences etc. so that lessons learned from the online communities can be useful for third parties ([references](#)).

My latest engagement is with Wikimedia CH to define their roadmap against hate speech.

## ***Product Owner and Subject Matter Expert in Software Development***

- » Design of several computer-based decision making tools in sustainable agriculture (Quantix 2000-2005)
- » Since then, participation to several tech projects, and conceived then led the development of :  
[ISA Tool](#) - 'micro-contributions' tool to encourage addition of WikiData structured data descriptions on Commons  
[WikiFundi](#) -- offline collaborative solution for 17 communities + education facilities

## **Fundraising, Managing and Partner Liaison**

Under my leadership, Wikimedia Foundation jumped from a 56k dollars budget in 2004, to 1000k dollars in 2006 and 5.6M dollars in 2008 (and from no staff and no office to 16 staff members in office).

Volunteer lead of Wikimedia France fundraising (2008-2012). 1.000.000+ euros collected in 2011 from 30.000 donors

Since 2013, programmes developed for WikiAfrica. Funding sought, pitched, relationships developed and secured, reporting and feedback done, partners and fiscal sponsors network developed. USD 432,000 collected between 2013 and 2020.

Main funders include : Orange Foundation, Wikimedia Foundation, Goethe-Institute, Moleskine Foundation, Wikimedia CH

Former treasurer of [WikiFranca Hub](#).

Financial auditor of [Les sans pagEs](#).

## **Liaison between online communities and Academic Research Teams**

» Former contractual researcher at CNRS in Nancy and INRA in Frejus.

» Since 2015, worked several times as Scientific Collaborator at [SUPSI](#) – Univ. Lugano (Switzerland) in the Laboratory of Visual Culture, Department for Environment Constructions and Design.

» Min 2019-2020, worked with CivilServant - Princeton University – (now [Citizens and Technology Lab](#)) as part of Applied Research on online communities.

## **Education**

» ENSAIA. Nancy. France

**Ingénieur agronome**, spécialisation Génétique et Biotechnologies

(Agricultural sciences, master level degree)

1988 – 1992

Ecole Nationale Supérieure d'Agronomie et des Industries Alimentaires <http://www.ensaia.u-nancy.fr>

» Institut National Polytechnique de Lorraine

**DEA (master level) in Biotechnologies and Food Science**

1992 – 1992

» Arizona State University. USA

**Master level courses in Computer science**, civil engineering and environmental engineering.

1995 – 1996

» ISIMA. Clermont-Fd. France

Institut Supérieur d'Informatique, de Modélisation et de leurs applications in Clermont-Ferrand

**Computer sciences, master level** (450 hours training in 2000)

## **Professional certificates**

» **CITI Human Research**. Social & Behavioral Research Investigators. Massachusetts Institute of Technology. January 2019 ([credential ID](#))

» **Creative Commons Certificate**. Creative Commons. June 2020 ([credential ID](#))

## **Honors and awards**

» **Knight in the French National Order of Merit (France)**

Proposed by French President Sarkozy. Decorated by Mr Besson, secretary of state

May 2008

» **Montgolfier Award in category « communication et formation »**

Société d'encouragement pour l'industrie nationale

October 2008

» **Unesco OER Implementation Award for Excellence 2021**

Issued by Open Education Global

Sep 2021

## Recognitions and references

- » Who's Who in France, 2008-now
- » Featured in top 100 women in "Histoires du soir pour filles rebelles » by Alice Babin. ISBN : 979-1037501127. June 2020 .
- » [Featured in Women in Culture and Tech](#). By Emily D'Alterio, Europeana Blog

» Quotes :

### **Jimmy Wales**

*Florence provided us with leadership and a strong community spirit during a period of extreme growth and change. I would recommend her for any position involving independent thinking a willingness to challenge the status quo.*

Jimmy, Wikipedia Founder, worked directly with Florence at Wikimedia Foundation Inc

### **Andrew Whitworth**

*As chair of the Wikimedia Foundation, Florence was able to do nothing less than the impossible: Focus on building one of the world's largest websites while still keeping the small details in perspective; Lead an ad hoc group of multilingual contributors who generally did not want leadership; teach the world to have faith in an organization composed of anonymous non-expert volunteers; and grow a simple online encyclopedia into a multinational organization with thousands of web communities written in hundreds of languages supported by dozens of chapters and millions of volunteers from around the world. I sincerely recommend Florence for any position that requires dynamic leadership or involves impossible challenges.*

Andrew, Architect at ASI, worked with Florence at Wikimedia Foundation Inc

### **Théo Bondolfi**

*Ms Devouard is an excellent consultant for complex missions. She brought us vision as well as great day to day follow-up within the projects she helped us develop. Her understanding of structures is very good and quick. She understood quickly the internal rules of both private and public partnerships, bringing high added value in digitally-driven projects. Her taxonomy of collaboration is a very precious key for any empowerment of collaborative culture.*

Théo Bondolfi. Curator & licensee chez TEDxGeneva

### **Isla Haddow-Flood**

*I have collaborated with Florence Devouard on two projects for WikiAfrica at the Africa Centre that together sparked considerable Wikipedia contributions in 8 territories across Africa, and across two languages. The two projects have rolled out over the last 24 months. She is a delight to work with. Diligent, efficient, full of creative ideas, funny and self-effacing. She goes beyond the defined tasks and, important for me, is gentle but firm when ensuring that sound reason and her considerable experience prevails.*

Isla Haddow-Flood, project manager at WikiAfrica Inc

## Main published works

[Wikipedia : Découvrir, utiliser, contribuer](#) de Guillaume Paumier et Florence Devouard (PUG editions - 6 janvier 2009)

Book published under a free licence.

### **Beyond notification: Filling gaps in peer production projects**

Mar 2018. New Media & Society. Sage Publishing

Ford, H., Pensa, I., Devouard, F., Pucciarelli, M., Botturi, L. (2018)

Beyond notification:Filling gaps in peer production projects. New Media & Society. Sage Publishing. <http://doi.org/10.1177/1461444818760870>

### **Commons Knowledge : the challenge of transdisciplinarity** (EPFL press)

Collective book. Chapter : Collective Intelligence and Business Enterprise 2.0. Authors include : John Sulston (Nobel prize, Institute of Science, Ethics and Innovation, University of Manchester), Christiane Nüsslein-Volhard (Nobel Prize, Max Planck Institute for Developmental Biology, Tübingen, Germany), Richard Ernst (Nobel Prize, ETH Zürich) et d'un prix Pulitzer Edward O. Wilson (Pulitzer Prize, Harvard University), Pierre Levy, Hubert Reeves etc.

<http://www.epflpress.com/livres/EPFL978-2-940222-28-5.html>

### **La Nouvelle Renaissance**

Collective book. Chapter « Intelligence collective et renaissance de l'entreprise »

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