The joy of volunteering with open technology and culture

Netha Hussain
Wikimedia India
Four years of volunteering (and still surviving!)
Summary:

* How to mentor volunteers?

* Why volunteering is fun?

* Best practices in conducting outreach events
How to mentor volunteers?

1. FIND
2. TEACH
3. ENGAGE
4. SUSTAIN
Why volunteers volunteer?

* To make a difference!!
* To gain skills and experience
* To network with peers of similar interests
* For fun!!
Where to find volunteers?

* At the most unexpected places!!
* Schools, Universities, workplaces
* On social media and blogs
Trouble to start off right away?

* Lack of time/Being too busy
* Editing/coding/content writing is too hard
* Lack of self-confidence
* Lack of access to resources
* Communication and language barriers
How I started off volunteering with open stuff?
Workshops

1. Participation by invitation
2. Leaderboard
3. Mix newcomers and veterans
4. Repeat events
5. Less is good!
6. Ask for feedback
7. Anti-harassment policy
8. Go slow!
9. Ask questions, encourage answers
10. Don’t intimidate
11. Spread the word
12. Document everything
13. Expect surprises!
14. Look at the numbers!
15. Women-only workshops
16. Additional opportunities
Organizing an event

* Plan in advance
* Over-prepare
* Create an agenda based on participants’ experience levels
* Spend generous amount of time for hands-on workshops
Learning resources

* Learn by experimenting!
* Cheat sheets, workbook, videos
* Maintain a list of resources
* Choosing learning resources: brief, comprehensible, illustrated, local language
How to engage volunteers?

* Collect usernames and contact details
* Keep in loop
* One-to-one mentorship
* Assign activities
Recognition matters!

* Badges and barnstars
* Featured volunteer of the month
* Certificates, letters of reference
* Conference passes
* Free access to resources
* Press and media recognition
Motivations to volunteer

* Swags: T-shirts, lapel pins, bags
* Surprise gifts
* Volunteer meetups
* Travel scholarships
* Internship opportunities
Why volunteers quit?

* Lack of sustained motivation
* Fighty culture and poor conflict resolution
* Insufficient recognition of contributions
* Unwelcoming culture
* Disorganized work culture
* Personal reasons
Manage the volunteers

* Volunteering spreadsheet
* Adequate interval between events
* Maintain a list of participants
* Keeping in touch on social media
Ensure diversity

* Workshops for targeted groups
* Safe space policy/ anti-harassment policy
* Trainers from a wide variety of backgrounds
* Code of conduct
Burnout
Thank you!