Formal Statement for Wikimedia UCoC Drafting Committee

April 19, 2021

In February 2021, the Wikimedia Foundation's Board approved a Universal Code of Conduct (UCoC) that covers all affiliates, chapters and user group members. The enforcement and execution process of the Universal Code of Conduct is an important factor in creating a safe, inclusive environment in our affiliates and wiki-workplaces. The UCoC works in tandem with Art+Feminism's Safe/Brave Space Policy and the Anti-Harassment Working Group Security Toolkit.

Art+Feminism is encouraged by the Wikimedia Foundation's Board approval of the Universal Code of Conduct (UCoC), which covers all affiliates, chapters and user group members.

In April 2021 we shared a survey with our community (via our Meetup page, email and social media) looking for feedback regarding the implementation and enforcement of the UCoC. We received 14 responses from users of ten Wikipedia language versions (Bikol, Dutch, English, French, German, Portuguese, Spanish, Italian, and Tagalog). Select comments from the survey results have been incorporated (edited for anonymity) into this document.

Methodology and Priorities

The Art+Feminism UCoC implementation about UCoC implementation was short and direct and all fields were made optional. Participants were invited to respond in whatever language they were most comfortable with and could choose to upload an audio file, video, or PDF as their response.

Art+Feminism asked respondents to rate the following enforcement strategies, as devised by WMF.

A. Written, accessible guidelines.
B. Training of affiliate members on how to report incidents.
C. Guidance for staff on how to implement the UCoC
D. Periodic reminders of the existence and importance of the UCoC

E.   Periodic review of how UCoC is being used to govern behaviour
F.   Other

Participants responded that **A. Written, accessible guidelines** were the most effective strategy for implementing the UCoC, with 10 of the 14 respondents placing it in their top three strategies, and 7 claiming it as the number one strategy.* However, none of the participants felt that written accessible guidelines alone were sufficient to enforce the UCoC. Ten participants rated **C. Guidance for staff on how to implement the UCoC** as important, with most rating it as the third most effective strategy. Eight participants rated **E. Periodic review of how UCoC is being used to govern behaviour** as important with none rating it above a 2 for priority. Seven participants rated **B. Training of affiliate members on how to report incidents** between a first and third priority. Finally, four participants rated **D. Periodic reminders of the existence and importance of the UCoC as important**, with all ratings at a third priority. Participants added their own suggestions for effective implementation which included **funding for Wikimedia community members to manage ethics and values (as opposed to WMF exclusively**) as well as **transparent data collection with regards to UCoC violations**.

Whereas, the Art+Feminism community generally is in favor of the work of the drafting committee and creating and enforcing a Universal Code of Conduct, it is noted that one respondent to our abbreviated survey felt strongly that all the enforcement strategies were misguided. While not representative of Art+Feminism's general community feelings on UCoC, the user's response is more in-line with some of the larger Wiki-community pushback against the UCoC and WMF involvement. However, their statement uplifts an issue that resonates with our community as well, that the UCoC reflects a predominantly US American viewpoint that may not reflect the desires and needs of the entire community."The UCoC is to be rejected. It is a poorly written, unintelligible mess. It cannot be translated into something that makes any sense. It is a colonialist dictat from so-called progressives from San Francisco, not something that represents global consensus."*

Enforcement Suggestions

Respondents of the Art+Feminism survey signalled that the most proactive approach to implementation is clear communication of the guideline and rules. However, these guidelines need to be constantly reassessed to make sure they are still useful to the community needs.

The UCoC should specify the mechanisms for its enforcement. Based on our community consultation process, this can include:

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1. **Transparency**
    a. Creation of an accessible incident reporting system that contains a clear outline of the responsibilities of the reporter, and detailed information about what the process involves so that the reporter can choose whether or not to consent to the process.
    b. A list of penalties for those who violate the UCoC, this could include loss of funding, and reference to those in charge of enforcing and overseeing it (administrators and/or dedicated committee).
    c. Enforcement should follow a peer review process to avoid bias.
    d. Point person/department to handle those issues which are impossible to be resolved on a regional or local basis.
    e. Regular or quarterly data collection and reporting about UCoC violations from various projects
        i. Yearly report on the number of complaints; types of complaints; and general outcomes (including penalties, remedies, solutions).
        ii. Reflect upon any noticeable trends and work on ways to mitigate or prevent similar issues in the future.

2. **Accountability**
    a. Support for people making complaints to help avoid further harm by *"working with them to decide the approach they will undertake with the person who violated the UCoC."*
    b. An accountability process informed by restorative justice models
        i. Accountability is not the same as punishment.
    c. *"Users in violation might be "flagged" with the violations on their talk and user pages so that their contributors and activities might be appropriately noted by other users with whom they may interact or encounter."*
    d. Especially egregious or repeat offenders might be expelled as affiliates with the relevant notations as suggested above.
    e. List possible penalties and remedies in regards to noncompliance.
    f. Easy to find method for reporting and appealing violations:
        i. Guiding questions:
            1. Who will be reviewing reported incidents?
            2. How transparent is this process?
    g. A new space and/or team to deal with UCoC enforcement should be created as current users do not trust instances like the Administrators' noticeboard

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(ANI) and Arbitration Committees.

h. *"Making public the timeline of incidents and the resolutions so everybody can be collectively responsible for it, banning repeated infractors from interacting with people and/or content that have been subject to previous incidents."*

i. Specific examples of what constitutes harassment in the context of Wikipedia. "

　　i. *From my experience, most editors engage in this kind of behaviour without even knowing that it is a toxic way of interacting w/ other people."*

　　ii. *"Examples that I have experienced in the past 12 months: - leaving messages in edit summaries of my user DP, that have nothing to do with what an edit summary is for. Tagging an editor in a discussion where she is not involved, with the intention to shame her or drag her."*

3. **Financial support**

a. Financial support for an external review process that includes the voices of the Wiki community organizations who receive sponsorship from the Wikimedia Foundation. The team responsible for the external review process should not be made up of WMF staff exclusively.

b. Financial support for the community who helps to draft policy for the WMF.
i. *"WMF not being transparent about resource sharing - WMF staff involved in this process are paid well but volunteers who have participated in this desperately over the years get no funding. I am not advocating funding to individuals necessarily, but I definitely advocate for funding to affected communities so that they can practice self-determination, organization, and claim credit for their volunteer contributions."*

c. Transparency around funding.

　　i. *"Undoubtedly harassment and conduct is a problem, but the Wikimedia Foundation has a tendency to advertise the harassment problem as a fundraising strategy, collect resources, then not share the collected resources with affected communities. If for example, the WMF does not transparently report its funding communities who are LGBT+, LMIC, etc, then it should not be speaking on behalf of these communities in fundraising appeals. In general, the WMF should never insult the community of editors, and if there is a harassment problem, then they should sponsor community organizations to develop a values judgement*

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and assessment. Community can criticize offenders; WMF never should and should instead empower groups like A+F to establish ethics."

4. **Equity**
   a. Enforcement by every user group, thematic organization and chapters, and also those groups that conduct wiki meetups but are unofficial affiliates.
   b. Aspects like high edit count shouldn't be considered as factors in exempting those who violate the Universal Code of Conduct.

5. **Training**
   a. We encourage a mentorship system for those wishing to engage in administrative roles.
   b. Periodic reviews and the ability to request retraining for noncompliance
   c. We encourage the Foundation to support mediation training for administrators.
   d. We noted a lot of concern around anonymity - and suggest greater protections in place so that Usernames are not linked to real identities unless the user expressly wishes it.
   e. Training for WMF funded projects

6. **Recognition**
   a. WMF should share credit for the UCoC which builds on the work of movement members over a long period and also specifically over the drafting process.
   b. Thanks should be explicitly extended to the community which helped to create this version of the UCoC as well as its antecedents.

This statement was written by Art+Feminism based on the contributions generated through a community consultation and dialogue process, led by Amber Berson.