

Central America and Colombia Regional Report

Executive Summary

by Sandra Conteras Aprile

1. Subject Matter

This assessment provides a detailed overview of three CC affiliates (El Salvador, Costa Rica and Colombia), including their motivations, needs and potential. The objective of this assessment is to contribute to the Creative Commons (CC) strategic and governance processes by providing an in-depth understanding of the affiliates.

2. Methods of Analysis

The method of analysis for Central America and Colombia is based on 7 individual in-depth interviews of representatives from El Salvador (2 members of CC El Salvador and 1 affiliates' partner), Costa Rica (2 members of CC Costa Rica) and Colombia (1 member of CC Colombia and 1 affiliate partner). The interviewees were selected to reflect geographic distribution, size and model of involvement, duration of involvement, as well as diversity.

3. Limitations of Report

The research was carefully prepared following the Faces of the Commons discussion guide and instructions from the assessment coordinator. However, there were some unavoidable limitations as described below:

- All interviews were conducted online and lasted a maximum of 2 hours. The internet connection wasn't stable and on several occasions it affected the flow of these conversations because the researcher had to ask the interviewees to repeat the answers or vice versa.
- The delivery of the interview transcripts was significantly delayed and this caused for the analysis process to fall behind schedule. The transcriber that was highly recommended and hired did not meet the agreed upon deadline and the researcher had to outsource to two other transcribers in order to have all the transcripts that were needed for the analysis. Since the research process was already under a tight deadline this didn't leave much time for a thorough analysis. More time for the interview and transcription phases of the research project to ensure that enough time is left for the analysis phase would have been helpful.
- The researcher was an outsider to the CC world, which on the one hand contributed to the objectivity and reduced biases. On the other hand, however, being an outsider meant that the researcher had to rely on the El Salvador co public lead to provide a more detailed picture of the background of CC. Since the timeline for the research

phase out was limited a package of key CC documents would've contributed for the researcher to acquire an overview of network more promptly. The researcher searched online to familiarize herself with one affiliates' work and activities, but the other two affiliated members did not have a functioning website at the time.

4. Results

The Central America and Colombia affiliates all share a sense of belonging to the global movement that has been instrumental to keeping the movement alive. That said, this sentiment cannot alone sustain the global movement in the long run, and additional support and resources will be key in order for CC to evolve as a movement.

In Central America and Colombia, the open movements' main challenges are linked to lack of resources (time and funding). The three affiliate organizations lack independent funds to carry out CC specific activities on a continuous basis and that ends up affecting their ability to reach a wider scale with their initiatives. The issue of lack of time also arose; all of the affiliates indicated that CC related activities and initiatives tend to become a significant additional workload to their already busy professional lives. Depending completely on the goodwill of volunteers that don't have all the resources (financial and/or technical) needed will eventually compromise the affiliate's ability to sustain the CC agenda or to have scale

The Central America and Colombia affiliates are a diverse group of actors with different capacities. The Costa Rica affiliate is a research based chapter that has specialized in promoting the use of the right licenses in educational resources and open knowledge sharing. The Colombia and El Salvador affiliates have key capacities in community cultural management/collaborative cultural management, licenses/intellectual property, and open and free software. The ability of Colombia and El Salvador to reach out to different communities is a very valuable trait. This allows them to broaden their scope of influence considerably by putting licenses into practice among creators from different sectors and also increases their ability to disseminate the values of CC among the consumers of these goods.

5. Conclusions

Among the Central America and Colombia affiliates there is a clear overarching sense of accomplishment that was shared by all the Central America. All interviewees genuinely believed in Creative Common's ability to become a global social movement and network that transcends geographic borders, ideologies, language, technological and operational barriers.

CC's ability to become a social movement and vibrant network with limited resources is quite remarkable. However, the network has reached a point in these countries where it needs to dedicate human and financial resources to support the affiliates in carrying out CC's important mission.

6. Recommendations

Recommendations include:

- Facilitating systematic knowledge sharing among affiliates.
- Facilitating active participation of members/teams in international discussions/conversations (in Spanish).
- Establishing regular communication to encourage exchanges, participation and a deeper sense of connection to the global movement.
- Addressing the need to establish a mechanism that can help fund initiatives or strategic needs that affiliates have identified.
- Providing mentoring and a basic package of training materials to new affiliates.