

Assessment of Network Potential

Creative Commons Community

Regional Report

Africa

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1. The Sample

The eight affiliate members interviewed and chosen for the sample were from Ethiopia, Tanzania and Uganda in East Africa, Nigeria in West Africa, and South Africa. It is important to state that “Africa” in this instance means Sub-Saharan Africa, and that all Northern Africa’s CC Affiliates are collated under the MENA section of this report.

The current Creative Commons Affiliate network across Sub-Saharan Africa includes Ethiopia, Kenya, Nigeria, Rwanda, South Africa, Tanzania, and Uganda. In the North Africa section of MENA region, the affiliates include Egypt and Tunisia. The sample looks at the formal affiliates within the African continent, although it does not include members from Rwanda and Kenya in East Africa.

The sample includes a range of Affiliate models, including those linked directly to institutions (Tanzania and Uganda) and those being made up of looser community-based model (Nigeria and Ethiopia) with South Africa forming a balance of both organization and community based model.

Currently, the Creative Commons presence in sub-Saharan Africa is predominantly confined to historically Anglophone speaking countries. This sample represents this language bias.

In November 2016, Regional Coordinator Alex Gakuru reported that the Regional Coordinators were in nascent discussions with *potential* country communities. Should something come of these talks, it might adjust the current linguistic bias. These potential communities include Ghana, Togo, Cameroon and Ivory Coast.

Gender balance

Since 2006 when The African Commons Project (TACP) was set up and run by Heather Ford and Kerryn McKay and Rebecca Kahn ran iCommons, there has been a particularly healthy gender balance represented by Creative Commons communities across Africa. There are as many female leaders involved in the Commons as there are men. This is a relatively unusual situation generally for organisations across Africa. In the report sample, five out of the eight interviewees are women.

2. The environment the affiliates work in

Africa is staggeringly large and diverse. It covers 11.7 square miles (30.3 kms²), which is 6% of the [Earth's](#) total surface area and 20.4% of its total land area. it's 54 countries (2 of which are disputed) has a combined estimated population over 1.2 billion. Africa's population is the youngest of all the continents with a [median](#) age of 19.7 in 2012. At that time, the worldwide median age was 30.4.

Within the continent, there are countries with rich history of open policies, just as there are many countries with very little to no institutional policies or national policies. However, despite the many wins there are just as many challenges. These challenges include access to information, present

information legislation, a lack of support for open information environments, and a lack of significant access to ICT infrastructure or public libraries as information service providers¹.

Of the many obstacles faced in each country, the key challenge to expanding access is affordability. The vast majority of those without Internet access remain offline simply because they cannot afford a basic connection. In South Africa, for example, the average income is US\$6,800 (GNI per capita, 2014). However, 60% of the population earns less than half of that amount. This means that for around half the South African population, an "affordable" mobile Internet connection (priced at 1.48% of "average" monthly income) can cost between 7-15% of their income².

The reality is even more stark in other countries. In Tanzania, an estimated 20% of the population can afford a 500mb mobile broadband plan, which leaves over 41million people who cannot afford a 500mb mobile broadband plan. For Nigerians, just 500MB of mobile prepaid data can cost more than they spend on their children's education.

This gap is even more startling when it comes to gender equality. In Nigeria, girls and women are 40% less likely to have access to the Internet than men³. In Kampala, Uganda that stats are the same where there is just one woman online for every three men online.

Despite being one of the least developed countries in the world, Uganda and Tanzania rank relatively high on the Affordability Drivers Index. Rwanda is also a co-leader of the Northern Corridor Integration Projects ICT cluster, which brings together the governments of Rwanda, Uganda, Kenya, and South Sudan to collaborate in the development of the region.

Unfortunately, affordability is not the only element that hampers access to online content. In many countries in Africa there are restrictions with regards to freedom of speech, the freedom of the press and other media. This in turn has an impact on online content, and how free or open licensed content is regarded by government and policy makers.

South Africa is considered a *free* country as far as civil liberties are concerned. However, it's press freedom status is considered *partly free*, with a Press Freedom score of 36 (where 1 is the top score). It's Freedom of the Net⁴ status is 27, and it scores an 8 for Obstacles to Access.

At the other end of the scale, Ethiopia is the second most populous country in sub-Saharan Africa. With an internet penetration of 2.9% it has one of the lowest rates of internet and mobile connectivity in the world⁵. Telecoms and access to the internet are almost completely unaffordable for average citizens, and with a government monopoly over the ageing infrastructure this is not likely to change. It's current status with regards to the Freedom on the Net is 82/100 (with 100 being the worst on the scale). There are significant obstacles to access, and a fear of speaking out after a spate of bloggers and writers were summarily arrested over 2014/5 and detained for long periods of time.

¹ As outlined by Irene Onyancha of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa in her paper titled, "Challenges of Achieving the Post: 2015 SDGs in African Societies".

² <http://1e8q3q16vyc81g8l3h3md6q5f5e.wpengine.netdna-cdn.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/A4AI-2015-16-Affordability-Report.pdf>

³ <http://webfoundation.org/about/research/womens-rights-online-2015/>

⁴ <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2016/south-africa>

⁵ <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-net/2015/ethiopia>

In 2015, Ethiopia was ranked as the fourth worst jailer of journalists in the world, with at least 17 journalists behind bars. Ethiopia was also ranked 4th on CPJ's 2015 list of the 10 Most Censored Countries⁶. The status with regards to press freedom is certainly *not free*. With regards to the rollout of Creative Commons licences advocacy, the team has to be very careful at not doing anything subversive that might offend the government.

In 2013, Nigeria's government launched the National Broadband Plan (2013-2018)⁷ that envisions a highly connected society. The government views access to broadband as a "key factor in facilitating socio-economic development for the country and its people". It commits the government to implementing an intensive plan to drive digital literacy, whilst closing the profound gender gap that exists relating to access. The gender bias to access has been mentioned previously, and is a special focus in the Plan.

Nigeria has an internet penetration of 43% (177,5 million people) and is considered *partly free* with regards to Freedom of the Net⁸, as regulators have shut down the SMS short codes of an opposition party in 2015, and journalists have been arrested. With a 52,85 overall composite score with regards to Affordability Drivers Index⁹, more Nigerians than ever are connecting to the internet. Online media is fairly free from restrictions in comparison to the attitude towards traditional media in Nigeria. However, Nigeria is considered *partly free* with regards to Freedom of the Net, as regulators have previously shut down the SMS short codes of an opposition party in 2015, and journalists have been arrested.

In 2016, Tanzania's civil liberties rating declined from 3 to 4. This is due to the passing of the Statistics Act and the Cybercrimes Act that imposes restrictions on freedom of expression and has had a chilling effect on the media, academia, and civil society¹⁰. The media landscape is diverse, but restrained and polarised along political lines. In August 2016, the authorities banned two radio stations. As a result, Tanzania is considered *partly free* country with regards to the freedom of press scoring at a 55 out of 100 (100=worst)¹¹.

Access to the internet (especially via mobile phone) has been growing rapidly in the last few years. However, internet penetration levels are low sitting at 7,6 million users or 14.5% of the population. Almost half of those users are on Facebook that has 3,7 million users in Tanzania¹². Ranked 30 in 2015 on the Affordability Drivers Index, Tanzania ranked 5th highest of the Least Developed Countries, which means that affordability and therefore access is not as expensive as other countries at a similar stage of economic development.

Finally, Uganda has had a politically tumultuous year in 2016 with elections taking place in February 2016. In 2015, there were several court decisions that ruled in the favour of journalists, restrictions and abuse against the opposition, journalists and civil society intensified in 2015 as police and the

⁶ <https://cpj.org/2015/04/10-most-censored-countries.php>

⁷ [http://commtech.gov.ng/images/docs/The%20Nigerian%20National%20Broadband%20Plan%202013_19May2013%20FIN](http://commtech.gov.ng/images/docs/The%20Nigerian%20National%20Broadband%20Plan%202013_19May2013%20FINAL.pdf)

⁸ <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-net/2015/nigeria>

⁹ <http://a4ai.org/affordability-report/report/2015/>

¹⁰ <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2016/tanzania>

¹¹ <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-press/2016/tanzania>

¹² <http://www.internetworldstats.com/africa.htm#tz>

government enforced the 2013 Public Order Management Act (POMA). With regards to Freedom of Press, Uganda is considered partly free in 2016 being rated 57 out of 100 (with 100 being the least favourable score).

In November, Parliament unanimously passed the Nongovernmental Organizations (NGO) Bill, which vastly increased the government's power over NGOs and is being seen as a way to ban targeted groups. The government's Anti-Homosexuality Act (AHA) was struck down by the Constitutional Court in 2014 but LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender) groups and individuals continued to suffer harassment and intimidation.

The government has invested significant resources into ICT infrastructure and networks. As a result, Internet penetration continues to grow in Uganda and, in June 2016, sat at just short of 12 million Internet users¹³ (around 31.1% of the population). This drive has also reduced affordability barriers to access with Uganda ranked at 16 in 2015 on the Affordability Drivers Index. It is also ranked 2nd highest of the Least Developed Countries.

Goal 9 of the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) signed in September 2015 by 193 member states includes a call to "Significantly increase access to information and communications technology and strive to provide universal and affordable access to the Internet in least developed countries by 2020"¹⁴.

Limited connectivity, low levels of digital literacy and geographical remoteness further divide inequalities and marginalise vulnerable groups across Africa. Although online content has been touted as the great equalizer. The truth remains that OERs and other digital resources, for adoption to continue require a heavy investment in print and mobile options, and provide alternative technologies that do not require constant connectivity.

Open across Africa

One of the first countries internationally to officially have a Creative Commons Affiliate, South Africa continues to be the leader in open policies both at an institutional level and government level. Kenya, Ghana, Ethiopia and Nigeria are catching up with successful buy in and are expected to grow in open policy over the next decade.

In line with the goals of the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals, there has been accelerated investment by governments, organisations and companies in ICT infrastructure and networks across Africa. Despite this, there remains multiple issues that continue to challenge the region including technology deficit's, outdated intellectual property laws, and health, poverty and inequality issues that occupy the government's legislative agenda.

Despite these obvious barriers and challenges, twenty-two countries across the continent have Open Access repositories. These include Algeria Botswana, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Egypt, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, South Africa,

¹³ <http://www.internetworldstats.com/africa.htm#tz>

¹⁴ <http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/infrastructure-industrialization/>

Sudan, Tanzania, Tunisia, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe¹⁵. The leaders in Open Access, South Africa, has 24 institutions with Open Access repositories, Kenya has 20 institutions that are similarly represented.

This has partly been due to global funders, institutions and organisations investing heavily across Africa that support capacity building and, more specifically, transparency and openness. UNESCO, EIFL, the Ford, Knight and Hewlett Foundations all represent some of the largest investments in open policy support and capacity building, and organisations are following suit.

There is a big surge across the continent of organisations engaging in ICT development, education and contribution. Although not Open, Google is determined to train over 1 million Africans in digital literacy. Within the Open Movement, the Mozilla Foundation has a large and growing network of engaged activity and the Open Street Maps project has an impressive showing of groups working on maps across the continent¹⁶. The University of Cape Town-based ROER4D are doing exciting and innovative work displaying the impact of OER not only in Africa, but across developing nations.

Wikipedia Zero¹⁷ is the zero rated, or no cost, access to Wikipedia and is available in several countries via the Orange and other Networks. The WikiFundi¹⁸ software that will allow offline editing of Wikipedia is due to be launched at Wiki Indaba in January 2017.

The activities of locally-based volunteers, the WikiAfrica movement and the CC SA and WikiAfrica collaborative #OpenAfrica project have developed formal and informal Wikimedians groups and projects across Africa. Projects like Wiki Loves Women and Wiki Loves Africa have helped to reinforce and develop the actions of formal and planning groups in 18 countries, that include but are not limited to Algeria, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Ethiopia Egypt, Malawi, Nigeria, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, and, recently, Zimbabwe, where only a few existed in 2011.

Code for Africa, with funding through the Knight Foundation, has established four centres in Kenya, Ghana, Nigeria, and South Africa, and affiliate labs in Cameroon, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Tanzania, and Uganda.

Yet, despite so many core Open wins across the continent, the number of official CC Affiliates in sub-Saharan Africa has only grown by two Affiliates since 2012. Similarly depressing is that only 1% of all CC-licenced works published globally are published in Africa¹⁹.

The first CC Affiliate to be established was South Africa, which officially launched in June 2005 at the Commons-Sense: Towards an African Digital Information Commons conference in Johannesburg. The first team was headed up by Heather Ford, South Africa Project Lead, and Andrew Rens, South Africa Legal Lead. Other CC Affiliates soon followed and by 2012, there were official teams in Tanzania, Rwanda, South Africa, Nigeria, and Uganda.

¹⁵ <http://www.opendoar.org/countrylist.php>

¹⁶ http://wiki.openstreetmap.org/wiki/List_of_territory_based_projects#Africa

¹⁷ https://wikimediafoundation.org/wiki/Wikipedia_Zero

¹⁸ <http://www.wikifundi.org>

¹⁹ <https://stateof.creativecommons.org/report/>

In 2012, the Africa Convening was hosted by the CC Uganda Affiliate, the [Center for Health, Human Rights and Development](#) (CEHURD) and the [National Book Trust of Uganda](#) (NABOTU). The [MacArthur Foundation](#) was the major sponsor of the three-day discussion and workshop on Creative Commons and Africa. At the Convening, two Regional Coordinators were appointed. They are South Africa's Legal Lead Tobias Schonwetter and Alex Gakuru from Kenya. As a group, the delegates decided on the future goals for the direction of CC Africa, that were to supported by Tobias and Alex.

The priority projects identified by the group at the time included a focus on the *development of open educational resources (OERs), encouraging government adoption of open policies, and the creation of open health initiatives*. In addition, there were several interventions that were proposed, including a touring bus that promoted open projects (this was developed into the Kumusha Bus project) and the creation of a centralised African repository of CC materials.

Since 2012, the two Regional Coordinators, whose role has been to support and foster communities within their regions have remained Tobias Schonwetter and Alex Gakuru. In 2013 CC Kenya was formed and in August 2015, in the wake of Kumusha Bus Addis Ababa, CC Ethiopia was launched.

3. What the affiliates bring to the network

The challenges the open movement face and how it brings about change

In the main, the teams are highly flexible and fluid, but backed by key members who have relatively long institutional histories (ranging from 10 to 2 years). The majority of the teams are established, and are linked to at least one institution that acts as either the CC Affiliate home or an active partner (and even driver) in their activities.

Almost all countries face socio-economic challenges including significant levels of poverty, inequality (including gender inequality) and access to technology. Politically, there are worrying issues with regards to monopolies on communications channels and restrictions to freedom of speech. Even South Africa, which is arguably the lowest rated (with 1 being excellent) when it comes to such indicators as the affordability index, press freedom and freedom of the internet, is only considered partly free when it comes to press status.

Luckily, the teams are solid and have had enough experience to weather any issues that might challenge their status quo. Although one or two are tight knit and do not seem to be attracting new members at the rate that they should.

The makeup of the teams across Africa is heavily skewed towards the legal professions. This is not surprising given the initial focus around legislation, and it adds to the stability of the teams. Yet despite this all the CC Affiliates interviewed have been working hard to not only adapt the licences and, in some cases, translate them into local languages, but to also bring them to life through relevant application across different sectors.

The majority of activated content has been for OERs and educational material that has ranged from tertiary text books such as Textbooks4Africa and academic journals such as YARA in Nigeria, to primary school resources, textbooks and readers, from such organizations as SAIDE, Siyavula, Nali’bali and Obami in South Africa. Recently, there is an increasing trend in the more the mature countries (South Africa, Kenya, Ghana and Nigeria) towards GLAM and data related projects.

This focus on the practical application of licensed works shows the general maturity of the CC Affiliate teams in Africa where they are moving beyond legal adaption and visibility to policy change and supporting licensing implementation. This is supported by what Mark Horner, CC South Africa’s Public Lead and CEO of Siyavula, says:

“The people we have to engage with around CC South Africa have substantial, mature and well thought positions on most things. So it's not like everybody just heard about a license and thought it's cool! People understand that there are fundamental implications to adopting them, and that it adds a layer of complexity to their environment. It's a legal matter that can affect society as a whole. [...] It is nice when you finally talk to somebody that can add value, because they have a lot of thoughts and perspective on openness in general.”

The CC Affiliates have been working hard under difficult circumstances to deliver not just the legal framework for the licences, but a real life impact that is often not tangible nor trackable. Tangible impacts would be content or products produced with a CC licence. Intangible impact has included a change in awareness, an increased use of CC products of content or utilising the open business model when planning a project.

Just one example of these layered impacts was captured in the following quote from the CC Tanzania team on a recent Creative Commons Advocacy training trip to Lugalo Secondary School, Iringa Town. When asked to describe the impact of CC licensing on her and her students lives, Kasyoka said:

“To most people, CC is a legal tool — this thing that [builds on] copyright. But when you actually go out in the field and you see it influencing students’ lives (and me personally), it stops becoming a legal thing. It becomes an instrument that people are using to advance themselves. It’s not just a legal thing that was invented in an ivory tower; it is actually changing lives. It’s huge.”

Despite many challenges, this is what is possible. But the challenges remain immense.

How the environment supports or challenges the work

The reception to Creative Commons licences seems to vary from person to person, organization to organization and government to government. In many cases, across Africa, openness has become an increasingly valued aspect among many NGOs and Civil Societies, especially as donors and grant makers are pushing these values. In some cases, however, the CC projects have been able to influence funders with regards to the viability of CC in a traditional environment.

One success story is Siyavula in South Africa, which as a CC licenced textbook series has managed to get buy-in not only from the Department of Basic Education, but also managed to convince funders

as to the importance of CC licensing. As Mark Horner (Siyavula CEO and Co-Public Lead CC South Africa) explains:

“I think one of the things that we have managed to do is to raise awareness among funders in South Africa to the fact that CC licenses exist and that they can be applied to educational resources.

“One of our greatest achievements has been having a funder begin to work with other organizations and start to require CC licenses. Siyavula brought open licenses to the attention of the National Ministry [of Education]. They have seen first hand, through our work, some of the benefits and the freedoms that the licenses enable.”

This success with the South African Department of Education has been a long, drawn-out project that has taken considerable effort and persuasion.

Other government, academic, and even legal institutions are not yet ready to endorse or understand, let alone adopt, CC licences. Kayode Yussuf, the Technical Lead at Creative Commons Nigeria, recounted approaching the Director of the Nigerian Copyright Commission who responded that:

“Nigeria is not mature enough for Creative Commons. That it is an ideology that would not work in Nigeria. It's too sophisticated for Nigeria.”

As Kayode goes on to say, Creative Commons provides a structure that respects Copyright. He also mentions that it is important that, as a CC Affiliate, they have the authority to be able to discuss the difference, and to:

“educate the [Nigerian] Copyright Commission to let them know that Creative Commons is not an American ideology as the Copyright Commission believes. Rather it's a world wide effort to allow people to have access to knowledge [...] It is not Creative Commons against Copyright, it is Creative Commons supporting Copyright. Creative Commons helping people to protect their intellectual property right. [...] but, what if you allow people to use your work instead of them breaching copyright rules by stealing your work for use? Let them use it for non-commercial gain!

Much of this negative attitude can be attributed to do a general disregard for copyright information or law in many countries across Africa. As Edefe Ujoma, OER Lead for CC Nigeria, says:

“We had law students, artists, photographers. Then we had producers and marketers from Nollywood. That was actually most exciting to me, to listen to people who were involved in the whole Nollywood production of movies, to talk about the courses, and talk about how difficult it was for them to protect themselves because the Copyright system isn't entrenched. They felt this might be one way to deal with that problem and creating avenues for themselves.”

There is a similar feeling in Ethiopia that there is an IP free-for-all, as Seble explains:

“In Ethiopia we default to copying; like copying is the default, the default is standard. They don't understand that we should set the default to a culture of sharing and communicating openly.”

Beyond a complete lack of knowledge of copyright and IP ownership, there is also just scepticism for anything that veers from the “traditional” concept of copyright. In Nigeria there is skepticism even within the legal community. As Edefe observes,

“With regard to my [legal] colleagues, there’s been a bit of skepticism at the beginning, before getting used to the idea of Creative Commons, of openness.”

Kayode agrees, especially with regards to artists and other content providers:

“What makes people skeptical? I think it's two things. The first, is the fact that “will putting creative commons licenses in my work, will it stop my copyright from being infringed?”

My answer usually is: “what if copyright of your work does not stop people from infringing your copyright. Putting creative commons does not also stop them. But it's a matter of not allowing him to steal, but giving him what he wants to steal for free. He would not steal any longer. He would rather take it for free.”

However, in some cases it is either that there is no desire to understand, or that the professional cannot see the personal financial gain in pushing CC over copyright.

In Ethiopia, Seble believes that the whole notion of copyright and intellectual property continues to be challenging to some people. She recounted an instance where a policy maker arrived at a UNESCO meeting in Addis Ababa, and despite asking to meet someone at CC, was only interested in gathering what free content he could for his project.

This lack of willingness to understand, or to see the benefit beyond financial and organisational gain, is borne out by Primah’s experiences in Uganda:

“The obstructors, I would say, are people who don't understand what is Creative Commons. People who want to make money. They could be authors, but we have worked with librarians and academics and they want to put their work under Creative Commons. So they meet lawyers who want to make money, it’s then that they say, “Oh! So we put it under copyright!” But when you start explaining the aspect of Creative Commons, they say, “Okay if you are going to attribute my work and I still sell more copies”. But then how is the issue of regulation. How are you going to regulate that and the terms of the licenses and all of that?”

Despite a seemingly pervasive negative attitude towards openness and sharing, and the imperative to make money, the CC teams are winning the battle. One interviewee mentioned that while it was not apparent as a national culture, many African cultures, including her own relied on collaboration and sharing, as an echo of South Africa’s indigenous *Ubuntu*²⁰ philosophy. As Edefe explains:

²⁰ [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ubuntu_\(philosophy\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ubuntu_(philosophy))

“I think that sharing is a very private kind of a sharing, so our public culture is closed, I think that's why the people don't feel connected to governments, public institutions but more so to their families, their friends, the communities.”

Further, the number of content and resources used daily across their countries (such as Wikipedia) is increasing and the Affiliates use it as daily success stories of Open resources and licences. As mentioned by Mark Horner, as a critical mass of projects and organisations adopt Open licences as individuals know about it, there is a different level to the discourse. Visibility and advocacy becomes less important and gives way to strategy and support of organisations and individuals already convinced, just needing direction.

The key capacities of the open movement in the regions

As discussed previously, many of the teams have an equal if sometimes larger component of legal professionals as members. As such, many teams were formed through personal connections.

Strong personal connections are key to keeping teams motivated, Seble thinks that what binds teams is placing “people in a context. As long as people within the team are motivated and energetic and are aware of the benefits and the potentials that sharing has [...] we keep on being motivated and energetic.”

Primah in Uganda spoke about how, as a recent and unemployed law graduate she met Paul Asima (CC Uganda legal lead in 2010), who spoke about CC and brought her on board. Edefe met Kayode through Tobias and became involved in CC Nigeria. In Ethiopia, Seble discussed how the team was formed:

“One of the founders, Abel Asrat, who was a Wikipedian in residence was introduced to CC by Kelsey and Isla from WikiAfrica. So it was like people introducing you to a new idea and you start to understand what has been done and what could have been done and people were informed about CC. I was introduced to CC by Tobias. And Abel wanted to contribute something, so we started this Kumusha Bus²¹ event. We had a meeting and we started thinking about how we can usher [Creative Commons] in Ethiopia.”

Many teams are made up of legal professionals with a few more tech- or education-oriented individuals. In order for the volunteer teams to be effective, they must bond. Beyond professional alignment, there are deeper values that bind them. In many instances, the teams claim they are drawn together through a mutual belief in sharing, not being driven by profit but a higher belief in the power of sharing and the spirit of volunteerism.

In Uganda, Primah values

“The willingness for people to work without being paid. The voluntary spirit. I don't even know how to explain it. If I sent out an email for work on Creative Commons, everyone will

²¹ Based on the *Libre Bus*, the Kumusha Bus project took place in 2014 in Ethiopia and Ghana. Kumusha Bus was developed and implemented by CC South Africa and WikiAfrica, and supported by a CC Affiliates Grant. https://meta.wikimedia.org/wiki/Kumusha_Bus

come expecting no pay. That is rare in Uganda. We give them tea, bites and all of that and they would be very excited to share how we can transform our country with an open culture.”

She goes on to mention that team members are very keen to contribute to documents and brainstorm ideas, but that very few will get involved when actions and tasks are required.

Most teams are dynamic and flexible. Although newer than the other Affiliates, Seble’s team in Ethiopia has the same flexible dynamics as Uganda, and Nigeria:

“Because it’s a volunteer work, it’s not very structured. We have this communication system where if I am doing something I inform everybody. If Nebiyu is doing something he informs everybody and he asks for people to give comments or feedbacks on what he is doing how we can improve it. I also do the same. When we have the chance to do that in a help out, also when other members of the team, who do not have a designated responsibility, they jump in and help. If they see some opportunities that they want to bring CC, they do that.”

Nigeria’s team celebrates its “blending of personalities” and has formed a pattern and learnt to work remotely from each other in a manner that just “works” for them. The OER Lead, Edefe, has been studying in New York for two years. As a result, they work together – brainstorming, planning and project managing – online. They claim that while “very good working chemistry” is essential, it helps to be supported by strong volunteers:

“We do things ad hoc and we just do things from our heart. We don't have an official letter head. We don't have a bank account. We just do things from our heart and try to be as open-minded and as honest as possible. So, we don't have a structure but that’s how we operate.” [Helen, Nigeria]

In Uganda, Primah experience of Uganda’s volunteers sees value in harnessing team members whose jobs are associated with IP and Creative Commons. This ensures longevity and means that team members do not burn out quite so quickly.

“How do we sustain this thing? One of our advantages of the team members and why they have lasted, I feel it’s because they have jobs and other aspects of work that have a connection to Creative Commons. So people have facilitation to do this kind of work. The academics are teaching copyright, they are practicing copyright. At Makerere [University] they are already being paid to do that, so adding aspects of Creative Commons is just promoting what they are already working on.”

Mostly, successful team members are respectful and enjoy each other’s company. As Seble says of the Ethiopian Affiliate:

“We are open to each other we listen to one another. There’s actually some respect for each other. We can easily communicate with each other and help one another. The relationship we have with each other is not touch and go. I think some of them have been friends for a bit longer. I just met them through the Kumusha Bus, but there is an attachment that it’s easier to communicate.”

Unfortunately, the same flexibility and fluidity that makes things work well among most of the teams, are often the reason they sometimes don't work. As Edefe mentions when talking about what sometimes does not work in their team:

“Where there are no specific action items, balls will be dropped. So I guess, the thing that has worked is this flexibility; supporting one another. The thing that has failed might be a little bit attached to that as well. Because we have had projects in the past where you think you want to have a particular event because there is no specific action ... you did this, you do that, you go ahead and take care of this ... and it's difficult to say “Well, this person of in charge of doing this” and specifically point fingers. We had a couple of events that we wanted to rule out but because one person, maybe Kayode, was the one pushing it along and maybe the rest of us got really busy, we couldn't support him because a task was specifically assigned that did not happen.”

The values and qualities that seem to be prized are dedication to the cause, a love and passion for openness, conviction that the work is important and beneficial, and a need not to be monetarily rewarded for the work. In Tanzania, Aristak believes what keeps the team active in Tanzania is seeing the reception to the team's hard work and keeping channels of communication open. Mostly, as CC Nigeria's Edefe suggested, it is key to “Build strong teams that the project would outlive. It takes a lot to build that team and get the project to the state where it can stand on it's own.”

However, as with all teams, there are several challenges. These include a scarcity of time as all the affiliate's members are employed. This is a real element that not only leads to burnout, but causes dissatisfaction in the team and often results in one person's projects dominating over others who have less time.

One element that could remedy this is the introduction of a paid admin person for each affiliate who would take up onerous administrative and communication tasks (currently being haphazardly actioned by the members), thus releasing the members to focus their precious volunteer time on projects that are strategic meaningful and effective.

Key characteristics identified by the interviewees as being essential for their job, were identified as: young, passionate, committed, efficient, focused, ambitious, proactive, eager to learn, adaptable to change, self-motivated and hardworking, and also to be a team player, yet have a strategic brain that understands what is going on within the country. It goes without saying that they would have to be personally dedicated to openness and sharing, is a collaborator and would have an innate interest in giving back to the society.

Why the work is personally important

The sample interviewees are a cross section of Africa's CC Affiliate leads. As diverse a group as they are, they all share similar traits and passions. Core among these is a pursuit for knowledge, that is combined with a deep understanding of the privilege of education and an ongoing love of exploration. As Aristak from Tanzania mentions:

“I have learnt something that if you share some thing you know, you gain more. If you don't share, you don't gain. I gain a lot at Creative Commons. It has been an eye opener about so

many issues. The issues of innovations, the issues of networking, social media, social interactions, meeting different people with different views. There are a lot of things we are planning. Personally, I think people do learn a lot of things from sharing knowledge and ideas, especially when you have an open environment because you learn from others and people also learn from experience.”

Exploring knowledge and exploring new horizons is a driving factor, so is the need to share the experience and spread the joy of knowledge. As Seble from CC Ethiopia says her motivation is rooted in the socio-political dynamics of her country:

“We can't access so many things freely in Ethiopia because of how the country is organized and the policies that are in place. I am involved in CC so that people, including myself, can get easy access to the works and information. I want that because for centuries Ethiopia has been a very closed country, and we are not exposed to what's going on in the world.”

In this way there is an intense need to share part of this world. One way to do this is to pay it forward, whilst simultaneously enlarging their expertise for work they do. As Megan from Siyavula, South Africa, reveals

“For me it's about the open education movement. I grew up with quite a privileged background in South Africa. I had a really good education. I had access to all the resources that I needed. I had good quality teachers. This made me realise that education and good quality teachers shouldn't be a privilege. It should be something everyone in South Africa has access to. Starting with access to the basic resources that you need to achieve your education. That is my motivation. I want others to be able to have access to education that they deserve. The licenses obviously fits into that because we want the licenses to be applicable to everyone, for there to be no cost barrier (not clear) our traditional (not clear) copyright imposes. That's my motivation and all we have turned up in open education.”

As mentioned by Megan above, the Affiliate member's motivations are in a sense noble, especially as there is no remuneration. Indeed, several of the Affiliates mentioned their colleagues using their own money for project elements over the years. This comes from a need to “pay” their educational privilege forward to society. It speaks volumes about the kind of people they are and why they keep volunteering, year after year.

The altruistic desire to share runs deep, however, there are also benefits for volunteers that have personal value. As Helen from CC Nigeria explains:

“People used to say that I do this voluntarily, but there is nothing voluntary about this effort. There must be something you gain from it. It might not be money, but there must be an interest. So why do you I do this work Creative Commons work which is mostly voluntary? The number one reason is that I derive a lot of satisfaction to impart knowledge and introduce people to things that they wouldn't have known before; the satisfaction of imparting knowledge to educate people to see the improvement, to see the changes that this knowledge creates in them, those are the things that give me satisfaction on a very personal level.

“But again, I also see it as an opportunity to establish myself in a particular field because I get feedback in terms of career development, developing my expertise and being known as an expert in that area. I derive satisfaction without the money, but it is also a way of developing my career.”

Kayode echoes Helen’s dual motivations:

“Most of the things that interest me in volunteering is just helping people out, devoting my time, knowledge and effort to help people build a community. I also see it as an investment in people because I think investment in people usually might not be monetary returns.

“But you get returns in other ways. I get access to a network of people. People who attend our training usually see me as an expert. Last year I was able to go to the Hague because I worked with Creative Commons on the School of Open project. I was invited because I did something with creative commons, but at the end of the day, I get the the glory. That's a lot of incentive for me.”

The impetus of any volunteer whatever they are volunteering for is reduced to five key motivations: values, community concern, esteem enhancement, understanding and personal development. It is not surprising to see that each of these elements have all been explicitly expressed by the Affiliates interviewed.

How the organizational culture allows for an innovative environment

The organisational culture of each Affiliate has a different dynamic. In some of the Affiliates, such as CC Nigeria, CC Uganda and CC Ethiopia, there is a more organic and fluid structure. This is represented by the remote working ethos of team CC Nigeria.

In Tanzania, the Creative Commons Affiliate is hosted by the Law School at Open University of Tanzania (OUT). Although based at OUT, the CC Tanzania Affiliate team is comprised of volunteers made up of staff and students of different universities and colleges in the country. The centrality of the OUT connection has provided a solid base and consistency over the years. Which has been reinforced by strong connections with ‘patrons’, that include Prof. Tolly S. Mbwete (president of the Pan- African University), Prof. Tozo Bisanda (the Vice Chancellor Open University of Tanzania) Prof. Deus Ngaruroro (the Deputy Vice Chancellor Academic (OUT)) and His Justice Dr. Paul Kihwelo (Principal Institute of Justice Administration, Lushoto).

With a strong and active “home” institution, a large and engaged volunteer group and important patrons, shows an affiliate that is structured and focused around the formal work plan, in this case education, determined by the main host.

In South Africa, the project started with strong, high visible development through the mentorship of Andrew Rens and Heather Ford at the LINK Center (University of the Witwatersrand), the initial work of iCommons, Africa Commons and Access to Knowledge (A2K) projects and the stalwart support of the Open Society Institute, Shuttleworth Foundation and the IDRC. This work in South Africa was instrumental in convening the global movement. In 2008, with the new public lead of David Duarte (Max Kaizen took over as public lead in 2011), the organisation became more fluid and the

institutional home was then transferred to the Intellectual Property Unit in the Law School at the University of Cape Town where it remains. In early 2014 Mark Horner and Kelsey Weins took over as co-leads and have enacted several visible initiatives such as the CC 10 event, #OpenAfrica project, Kumusha Bus (in Ghana and Ethiopia), the Open Textbook Summit and the Institute for Open Leadership gathering in 2016.

CC South Africa seem to currently hold a highly adaptive, hybrid model where there the structured 'home' at the UCT IP unit appears dissociated from the more organic and reactive space occupied by the co-Public leads Mark and Kelsey (based from the offices of the CC educational publisher Siyavula).

In all cases, the core teams are relatively small. They rely wholly on the motivation and impetus of each Affiliates members. Whilst institutional support is necessary to the continued development of the CC Affiliates, a more structured organisational culture (unless as a core part of the organisation's project), might be too restrictive and could stifle the member's ability to innovate and react to opportunities or crisis'.

The lack of financial support to cover a formal institutional presence has been raised by four out of the seven Affiliates interviewed. For some of the Affiliates there is no formal structure. Although they might have organisations that are partnering with the CC Affiliate, several do not have a specific base. In some cases, just finding a stable institutional home for the Affiliate, that also has the capacity for potential volunteer base, has proved a problem. In Ethiopia, the CC Affiliate started out with at the Research Institute, but as Seble mentions,

"We had to move, as nobody was ready to take it on at the Institute. So I am trying to move it to Addis University Law School, which has a lot of volunteers."

Even at a stable organisational "home" the lack of an office with staff dedicated to CC, causes cascading negative effects. These include the long-term stability of the team as the team's take on onerous communications and organizational tasks that increase the risk of burnout. It also ensures projects are limited (with a member's pet project being actioned, rather than a strategic task for the road map). As Aristak from Tanzania suggests:

"If we have a capable human resource, who knows and understands what they are supposed to do and facilitated the financial capital, I think that would take us far."

Helen concurs:

"The most important for me first is infrastructure. Because most of the things we work with we provide them ourselves. We don't have a lot of support from the institution, and I would say the same for Kayode. I remember the times he goes to Abuja, he pays for his transport and everything. So if we had that kind of funding support, support to fund infrastructure, that's one is it. Mentorship is also very important."

Further, it confuses prospective partners and members, who are expecting a solid presence from a global brand. In this instance, the perceptions of Creative Commons are not fulfilled by reality. As an international body with global standing, the reality on the ground does not live up to the

expectations of such a forward thinking organization. As Primah says there is confusion when people wish to get involved, they ask ...

“Where is the creative commons office? Can I call the chairman?”

“But you tell them this is the legal lead and he has a job, and an institution he has to run. So when you come and you want to ask about Creative Commons, not today ... he feels like ooh [disappointed]

“He was expecting an office. Then they call someone, “I want a license where can I access it? Can I get a video? My name is so and so, can I do this?”

“We don't have someone to answer these questions.”

Finding local opportunities for funding are difficult to find. As Kayode says:

“If we have access to funds, there are a lot of things that we could do. We have a couple of projects, but we are not able to fulfil them because it costs a lot. So link to direction, possible sponsors, people who will collaborate with us would be very helpful to us.”

As Alex mentioned in the Kayode interview, “I think the lesson is that CC doesn't have basket loads of money to go and sell free things to people.”

Over and above the issues around organisational administration and stability, the Affiliates have learnt key lessons from working on CC projects. These include networking with different people, and presenting to different players across diverse sectors on issues of licensing and innovation. It has opened Affiliates to working with people from outside their professional sphere. As Aristak from Tanzania explains:

“So many people have ordered us to do presentations on the Creative Common licenses. This has opened us to so many stakeholders, especially those who are involved in the operations and activities regarding matters of education resources or the matters of research. We have opened up so much on that; and we have done so many presentations!”

The Creative Commons modus is a different model to how advocacy organisations usually operate. It's non-traditional ways of engaging stakeholders, say via Salons or other events, are a far cry from board meetings. Also, due to the nature of the content, there is often controversial work being done. The relaxed nature of the Salon allows people to engage more and be open to discussion and new ideas than in a boardroom, and this creates a new way of engaging with people on complex, controversial or alternative subjects.

All the interviewees, as professionals, have had strong institutional experience, especially those involved in legal work. All have travelled internationally for study, work or project involvement, such as the A2K project. But due to their ages and international experience they are not as embroiled in the process, which allows personal space for innovation and flexibility.

Although the interviewees relish the flexibility of their affiliate's current operational structure and respect the professionalism and skills of their team members, they almost all asked for more stability. This stability could be either in the form of one person who was dedicated (requiring stable

financial support) to communication, administration and strategy, or it could be establishing an official “office” that would raise the visibility and local presence of the brand.

While the teams do not ‘need’ an official space, as Primah mentioned, many of the people they need to talk to (corporates and government officials) expect such a presence. Of course, such changes to the organisational structure requires funding and guidance. Ironically local funding and corporate support has proved difficult to source due, in part, to this very lack of an official structure.

4. How the network can help the affiliates

The belief in CC licencing is completely cemented within the interviewees. This is not only demonstrated by their continued commitment to the cause after many years of volunteering, but in the way they still articulate the importance of the work and the impact that it has made on them and their country.

They aptly express the impact that openness, and specifically the licences, have on had on their countries understanding the importance of copyright. As Aristak exclaims:

“The biggest impact has been on the sense of understanding copyright issues. Previously most people did not understand copyright issues. When you talk of copyright they think it relates to *locking up* your work and not giving anyone access. But nowadays at least the issue of Open Access, sharing is now understood.”

Helen agrees that the educational aspect of Creative Commons has been a key impact. Through regionally conducted programmes like Copyright X²² there has been a greater understanding copyright and the potential for CC by individuals.

“Our biggest success has been advocacy. We have been able to create enlightenment to a large extent. So many people are talking about Creative Commons, particularly by people who are in the entertainment industry. This is due to our individual activities; but also activities that are connected with others. I am personally involved in the Copyright X course. So, in the Copyright X course, we are also talking about creative commons.”

This is also the experience of Primah, from CC Uganda:

“There is the Copyright X course... the people that came on board. We taught them about copyright and this sharing culture and how we can move from a restrictive an open environment.”

Kayode from CC Nigeria mentioned that projects, like Copyright X, Kumusha Bus, and the School of Open, that took place across the region in several CC affiliates at once had better local reception - this is due to the regional projects reinforcing the ‘global’ relevance of CC and the work:

²² CopyrightX is a twelve-week networked course that has been offered annually since 2013 under the auspices of [Harvard Law School](#), the [HarvardX](#) distance-learning initiative, and the [Berkman Klein Center for Internet and Society](#). The course is run outside of the US by affiliated organisations: <http://copyx.org/affiliates/>

“One of the reason why the School of Open was able to sell is because we said that, the School of Open is happening in five African countries. Nigerians were happy to hear that something happening in South Africa is also happening in Nigeria. It's happening in Kenya. The wonderful thing was that it happened in the five countries, and Nigeria had a five-week program that was the largest of all. That was a sort of a moral boost because I was able to get people really interested and I think there was really large turn out. So that's what the regional community give to us.”

Beyond Copyright education and advocacy, there has also been a massive impact via the content that has been produced. The most focused content happens to be in OER or Open Educational Resources. As Megan at Siyavula says, OER products not only achieve their original aim of leveling the educational playing field, they also spread the word about CC and Open licences.

“The people who have benefited the most are the teachers and the learners in schools. We have had countless emails and messages from learners and teachers to this day referring to books and content that was delivered 2-3 years ago. All our content is available online and it's zero rated, so kids can just read it for free. Being openly licensed, has had such a huge impact everyday on the learners because they can actually just access the content they need to achieve their education. We also engage the individuals in the process, and they have really learned about the power of community and collaboration. Some of the teachers we worked with have gone on to do their own events, creating new resources from one of our textbooks.”

In a similar way, individuals, entrepreneurs and companies alike have found the concept of CC liberating. This is especially true of countries where the ethos has previously been more traditional and structured. In Ethiopia, Seble reports that:

“The community is drawn from young entrepreneurs, ICT innovators and startups. Apart from this community, which could be categorised as a non profit organization, we've had private companies interested in what we are doing, and open access. One example is a private tech company, who wanted to more information about CC. So we are not just working on speaking to this small community of Ethiopians, but private companies too.”

The teams are adamant that the work that they do adds to the greater global power of CC. The CC brand works well, and being able to speak and present under CC's logo makes the work easier. In one way it is a capacity enhancement for lawyers themselves. The brand gives the affiliates an easy entry point, because they are the people to explain. Additionally, there is a sense of pride in the personal impact that they are making on the global brand. As Aristak in CC Tanzania recounts:

“Yes I am proud of Creative Commons being understood by so many people in Dar es Salaam especially. We are now planning to go up country. Wherever you go, they ask about Creative Commons, because they have seen you talking about Creative Commons. We have also done trainings in secondary and primary schools. I think that is what would mark as one of the accomplishments. Also our penetrations into some of the institutions, like the Copyright Society of Tanzania. They ask us so many questions about CC. Whenever they give presentations, they ask us to at write something about Creative Commons so that they can

also speak about it. Whenever there is anything about copyright, they always call us and ask us to talk about it.”

The teams and the interviewees have done vital work on the ground to spread the news of the many benefits to adopting CC licences and open practices. As outlined above, this has not been an easy task!

In many cases they felt they would be further along in their advocacy and in the local adoption of the licences if there had been more formalised and accessible support of all kinds – moral, networking, funding or just brainstorming ideas and strategy – from global or regional colleagues.

The majority of the support being requested is not financial, but in the form of drawing on the experiences of others. This could be through efficient access to information from CC global’s collective experience in order to find a solution to, or navigate around, local deficiencies. While the affiliates might not have exhausted all the ways they can help themselves, they are feeling increasingly unsupported or isolated in what they are doing. While this is valid, given the 85 affiliates, CC HQ should ultimately think about ways of opening up dialogue among other regions, and find ways of supporting the affiliates as they mature and work towards sustainability.

Direct help that the global network could offer to the affiliates

The relationship between the local affiliates and global and regional networks should be a two way street. Currently this does not seem to be flowing as well both ways as it should. The interviewees, while dedicated to the work, are definitely feeling unsupported and disconnected from the larger global community. Where people are part of the greater community, this has been due to specific, proactive effort on the part of the individual, and this personal effort to connect to and work with regional and global colleagues has borne positive and progressive results.

In many cases, ad hoc but pivotal support was forthcoming from colleagues in other affiliates and the aligned open movements. This support available only due to proactive requests and direct personal relationships between the interviewee and the person who assisted.

Several interviewees – most notably Kayode in Nigeria and Seble in Ethiopia – mentioned that Kelsey Wiens, CC South Africa Public Lead and Open Textbooks4Africa, was pivotal in linking them with other movements. Kayode explained that Kelsey was also instrumental in setting up Wikimedia Usergroup Nigeria. He listed members of the movement who had been important mentors:

“I appreciate Jane for her influence. She has done a lot to support us at CC Nigeria. All the projects that we have done, she was able to link us to other open movements, outernet, and many others that have sort of supported our work. Another person that I admire so much is Kelsey. She has done a lot to help us, provide leadership and mentorship for us. And then there’s Gwen, the European regional coordinator.”

This kind of informal support has been possible as most affiliates feel that their counterparts are kindred spirits. As Seble explains:

“The African Affiliates help us ... because of our culture we are similar to some extent; actually to a great extent we are similar! So it's easy to communicate, to understand our challenges, our potential our priorities, our issues. We understand one another and it's very easy to help one another. We have received help from Nigeria (we wanted to get Copyright X to come to Ethiopia, but we don't want to teach Copyright X in English). I have had advice from Helen, Alex, Simeon regarding CopyrightX. And, I have got support from Kelsey, Tobias, Simeon, and Alex, in terms of other activities that the community does.”

Direct relationships are sought against a lack of apparent and organised support. Networking is crucial to the success of the work, as is the ability to do stuff together. As Helen from CC Nigeria says, much of this depends on the personality.

“We are all working on the same project, towards the same objectives and agenda. At one point we have CC Nigeria and CC Global coming together when they have the congresses, and then some projects are sponsored. The round table that we are working on, which I understand is our proposal and funding has been approved.

“So those are some of the connections that I see. Besides that, connecting with CC global has been more on the individual basis. I know Kayode interacts a lot with CC global. I also think it's just my own way of operating. I have not had much interaction with CC global.”

Alex Gakuru's claims that the two RCs have ensured that the highest number of Africa team representatives have attended the Global Summit meetings in Buenos Aires, and Seoul. But within the larger regional network, and on a day-to-day, week-to-week basis, many affiliates feel disconnected from the global network. As Seble mentions:

“CC Global ... I have to complain! We weren't included in the global mailing list, and still haven't! I have requested and Nebiyu has also, but we were not given priority. We don't know what's going on, because we only get information CC Africa mailing list. This means that we don't know what's happening at the global level. We get general information that CC gives to any person who has subscribed to their mailing list, but apart from that we are not part of the affiliates mailing list.”

Several interviewees mentioned that they are connected to the regional network through personal relationships that they have developed over the years, and not as part of a cohesive and consistent communications strategy. In addition, there is a feeling of disconnect between their affiliate, and being part of the regional network and the global network. Primah seems to be the most distressed about it:

“I just feel like that sense of community is diminishing. Now we have the layers existing but those days, you would not feel like the layers. I just feel like that's what I would try to do, I would try to bring it back. Even at an African level, there was a time we had an African list that people were posting at OER. We knew people in the movement. [...] Why is nobody talking? Have they died? Now you were telling me about the Tanzanian guy, Paul. [...] People don't post updates anymore. But a lot is happening.”

In many cases it seems, from their responses, that relevant information and opportunities are stuck in a bottle neck and is just not getting through to the affiliates. That unless they are proactive and they seek out the information and the opportunities, they just do not have access to global information. When asked how connected he feels to the global network, CC Tanzania's Aristak responded:

"I think it's 50/50. We have not had so much because we are not so much involved. If we were more involved, we could, of course, learn so much from you guys or from the global network. But for the regional part of it I think we have had a lot of conversation between us; we have discussed a lot of issues. I think we feel that it's ok. But for the global part of it, it is not yet there. Because I see a lot of activities taking place outside, but Tanzania is not part of them."

As Primah laments the current lack of communication and connection, and feels disconnected from the global community. She used to feel part of the global community, and knew people well via email interaction. This sense of community connection to global colleagues used to be there. However, since 2012 and the shift to Regional Coordinators, it is not there any longer.

"I feel like there is a lot of distance that have been created lately between the global network and the local network. In the past there was that exchange of expertise and community. I just feel that there is a bit of a distance that has been created. That's what I feel like. Like nowadays when a communication comes, it feels like it's coming from heaven. You just feel like, who are those people? What are they saying? Why are they saying that?"

"Or, for once, Tobias will forward a communication from Ryan: "Ooh the community we feel this, bla bla bla ... ooh we had consultation, our community is this ...".

"It's not how it used to be in the past."

Some interviewees expressed frustration and disappointment around the lack of proactive support by the Regional Coordinators in the form of sharing experiences and providing access to global systems. As Kayode says:

"I will start from you [Alex] and Tobias. I think we could use a lot of direction from both of you. You have done a lot, but I think there is a lot more you could do. Directions in terms of how to go about it. You have much more experience than we do. You have spoken to diverse of audiences. So a couple of times, may be once in a month you could ask, "Oh what are you doing? Why don't you do it this way? That could help."

This need for more involvement and guidance from the Regional Coordinators also applies to requests for access to funding or even suggestions for in-kind provision. In Ethiopia, Seble explains:

"We have asked for support in terms of fund-raising, like how can we mobilise money or finance from within? We don't need a lot of money; all the team members understand that this is a voluntary service that we are giving to our community, to our country and people. We need some money to organize events, say for snacks. It's very difficult if you are from a poor country, as we don't expect to use the money out of our own pocket."

“So we asked for funding related support from the CC Regional Coordinators, and we haven't received all the support that we needed. We have gotten advice in terms of the translation project and Project Luwi, and also from affiliates from South Africa and Kenya. We have gotten as much information as we needed, but we could have done better if we had some extra help.”

The CC affiliates obviously feel that they are on their own; left to their own devices. As Edefe explains in how they have made strategic alliances to try to make the CC Nigeria work applicable to a more national agenda than their resources can manage:

“We're mostly based in Lagos, where most of the events are undertaken. Kayode has made some attempts to expand the network out of Lagos. He has worked with The Nigerian Institute of Advanced Legal Studies²³ which is an influential national body and is a pretty influential public body. We have also tried to build the network to include the Open University. Helen was talking to UNESCO at some point. So there has been the effort to expand from the local Lagos community to a much bigger national project.”

As previously mentioned at the implementation level, the affiliates would like the community to know what they do locally. The validation of their work is important. As Aristak so aptly states:

“What we take to the network ... one of the most important things is issues on CC in Tanzania and that we share them with the world! We are about to conduct a training in Iringa [a region of Tanzania]. We are going to document what we do, and then we will take them to the global, so that the world can see what happen in Tanzania!”

They would like to connect to others and share their experiences, but they tend to hold back as, at a personal level, they don't know who are the right people to help them, and they are not sure if they would be interested anyway. There is a definite desire, and even a hunger, for connection to the global project. There is an appetite for more involvement and the need to take part in, and learn and gain experience from, more concrete global or regional projects. As Edefe also says,

“For education, the global network, basically opens us up to, and exposes us to, open opportunities that are out there, and for what we can bring to it. This is why Yara²⁴ was very important to me. One of the biggest objectives of Yara was to take the African voice and put them on the global stage. So I think that's what was the biggest thing that we were hoping to contribute: here is what young Africans are writing about; here is what they are saying; here is what they are thinking about – intellectually, socially. So [the thing we wanted to contribute] would be the voices that we were putting out there.”

Kayode specifically seeks out opportunities to work on CC global projects so that he can bring that experience to bare on local projects.

²³ <http://www.nials-nigeria.org/>

²⁴ The Young African Research Arena is a forum for young Africans to express their ideas and develop their research and writing skills to be able to do this more effectively. <http://www.yararena.org/>

“Fortunately I have not been in a position to choose between local and international. I have been involved internationally. I have joined a couple of committees, a couple of working groups with CC HQ. If I had choose between local and internationally, it would come down to the kind of project. I will give you an instance ... so recently someone from CC HQ posted an opportunity to work as an admin for the translation project, and I applied. What made me apply was because I want to do translations locally. So I think that if can do that, I should get technical on-the-ground experience, [in preparation for] when we finally need to do local translations. So I think those kind of projects need to happen across local and international.”

Not only does the one feed into the other, but if they want to expand their CC affiliate, and take it to the next stage, their feeling of global relevance and the need for experience matters. As Helen says,

“The global level has done a lot. Right now, most of our projects are designed along with their own objectives. They [Global] provided the support that we need, so we have to say thank you to them for that. For instance, even when we attended the core conference in Abuja we had support from global CC. The School of Open that we organised sometime ago, we had support from the global CC. The roundtable that we are going to organise had support from the global CC. So we have had that to take from them. Also I think they are getting a lot of benefit from us because we are representing CC and bringing CC to the grassroots of Nigeria; to the people that need it. Without us being here CC Global would not be of any relevance to Nigeria.”

There are many elements in which, in order to grow and expand as a community, the affiliates feel they need more support from the regional and global network. Among those articulated above include, but are not limited to:

- a more visible CC branded presence in their country;
- reinforcing personal connections through more direct communication;
- Re-integrate the regional communications networks into global ones;
- strategic support in outreach and advocacy; and
- a collaborative approach towards connecting and engaging with the partners of CC HQ and regional and aligned groups.

The relationship between global and local is an important one. It should be symbiotic, but at the moment, this seems to be under a lot of strain. Some of this would appear to be related to a bottleneck caused by the Regional Coordinators. More does need to be done to support the flow of information, communication and project support in both directions; to involve the CC affiliate members in more of Global’s activities, and to learn from their local interventions and activities in return.

Direct and indirect support for the Affiliates

Not surprisingly, as Seble mentioned earlier and all the other interviewees corroborated, funding and in-kind support is a large part of their requirements. It should be remembered that the business and legal culture is very formal in the CC Affiliate countries.

Almost all interviewees expressed a desire for stability and consistency through institutional support of some sort. In many cases, the personal burden is onerous. As Primah expresses when discussing her dreams for the future of CC Uganda:

“My hope and anxiety will be to have someone who will coordinate CC Uganda. Someone who is going to be responsible. It's also my fear that I don't have time to do it ... and then may be then no one will do it.”

Aristak also mentioned the desire and need for the stability of a dedicated team with the capacity to enact a long term established strategy:

“I want to start with the hope that, at some point, we will have a permanently employed Creative Commons team to run all things in Tanzania, especially on the matters pertaining to Creative Commons licenses. This team will train people, do lobbying to the government, advocate for Creative Commons licenses in different [departments] across the country, so that people get to understand Creative Commons activities.”

As Kayode explains, one of the core frustrations has been to access a local pot money in order to carry out small events.

“We need as much funding as is required for the events that we need to host. The biggest challenge is getting local funding to carry out the events. Lots of the time, I don't want to keep on badgering CC for money ... and I felt I needed to enhance local fundraising, or put my own money into the pot. Also, I wanted to be independent. This was a huge challenge!”

Many loved the Awesome Fund, but did not think that there were enough opportunities like that, or that it was flexible enough for the long term planning in projects. As Aristak suggests:

“We appreciate the little support that we get from the global network like the Awesome Fund. We got some funding, and then last time we also had some funds to do the training for the school children. We appreciate that and from the global perspective, we learn a lot from the website itself, from the blogs and other emails that we get, the updates. We scale them down to the local level, but we still need some more exposure at the global perspective.”

However, the affiliates note that providing access to different funding models at a global level might be a good solution to ensure support for both short- and long-term projects. A more layered or streams of funding could consist of different application timeframes and processes for institutional or event hosting (from Salons to African Convening), long term projects (such as an annual School of Open and CC Ethiopia's Project Luwi), and then for one-off projects (translation drives, etc.).

In addition to direct financial support many affiliates expressed the desire for formalised connections to be made between key influencers close to the movement and the partners of CC HQ, and the local projects of those partners. In this way, in-kind support can be provided. One example is working on mutual advocacy projects. Wikimedia Usergroup Nigeria's work on a host of projects introduces CC licencing option to the many people it works with for the very first time. As Kayode explains, it is not only in-kind support that is needed, but additional endorsement of the project and extended access to opportunities:

“So some of these organizations have [existing] projects and it will cost them little or nothing to support us. We are not going to be asking for huge sums of money, but they are just not available to give you a listening ear. But if, for instance, CC HQ can easily contact Google in the US to contact Google here in Nigeria and say, “Oh listen to these guys, they are part of us!” CC HQ can speak to them on our behalf and we, in turn, may be able to implement projects on behalf of CC HQ.”

While it may seem that there is a desire for more money, the majority of support being requested is not financial, but in the form of drawing on the experiences and connections of others.

Other opportunities could come from working closer with Open Street Maps, Code for Africa or, for example, the projects and opportunities offered by the regional Open Society Institute being more formally connected to the local Affiliate.

The key trends affiliates identify for the future

The CC affiliate teams have many ambitious plans. What can be identified through their hopes for the future are work on government policy, while also proliferating CC licensing into a variety of communities and sectors, but especially among ones that produce CC licenced content. These sectors include GLAM organisations (artists, musicians and heritage), education (by working with educators, teachers, and students), but also public authorities and their content (statistics, data, etc.).

Seble sees CC Ethiopia and the larger African regional network being responsible for driving a key shift in attitude:

“Locally in Ethiopia I want to see more works from different regions, cultures, and environments coming out under CC license. Across Africa I want us to have some sense of ownership. CC Africa might lack affiliate team from Africa but if we are somehow able to own CC; not like stakeholder, but with a sense of ownership. If we can be able to make it *ours* context-wise – or even as it is in terms of our involvement, our contribution to the global community and also in terms of teaching our people. Make so that it is not just some foreign concept; it's for the benefit of the public. That even though it's well developed, outside it still can be used for our benefit.”

Kayode has a similar dream, but one that involves CC affiliates advocating for more affiliates to happen within the region.

“We will improve our own community. Then we can also spread Creative Commons outside Nigeria to the whole of West Africa. I am happy that something is happening in Cameroon. Something could happen in Togo. Ghana was almost going to come on board just before the global summit, I don't know what happened. [...] We are going to influence our community. We are going to influence our region. We are going to have CC across West Africa.”

In keeping with their dedication to their country, many dream of implementing the space where CC has a real impact on everyday life and business. Seble feels that by focussing on the youth, the future is secure:

“In the best it would be to get all the youths involved in this and see them share some of their work if possible all of all they want to share online and also offline. Youth is most important because it is the youth that what is disrupting the country right now. They are powerful, if we can get them, which is very easy. That is 60% of the population!”

Helen is excited about Nigeria being at the forefront of open legal policies in the region:

“I want a CC in Nigeria where CC is reflected in the legal policies in such a way that even the policy makers understand what it's all about and what they have to do. Where they will understand that CC is very relevant to other projects that help other developing countries in terms of accessing information, like open education. Information which many institutions in Nigeria are beginning to awaken to, like open access publishing. I want to see a community that understands all this and that CC is used as a model; a foundation for them to properly implement these and other policies of openness.

“Nigeria is going to be on the forefront of advocating CC, using CC, implementing CC policies in Africa! So I am really hopeful about that, and I am really optimistic!”

Having said that, Helen also is aware that things must change internally within the affiliate in order for this to happen.

“That’s where my fear comes. We need to put our house in order and to get our act in order. Are we ever going to be able to do that, given that the present challenges? Do we need to start looking at a transfer of roles and changes like that? Things change [...] today it's a very strategic institution and I believe that we will always continue to play a very significant role, no matter the challenges. But that we could do better and that goes for other institutions that are involved

“So I have very high hopes for CC Nigeria! All things put together, challenges whatever. As time goes by we are definitely going to make progress ... the problem is how fast we are going to do it?”

Mark, co-public lead of CC South Africa and CEO of Siyavula, wears both institutional hats as he dreams of establishing a sustainable model for OER

“I think on the OER side ... key values, qualities and products should be developed that are not just demonstrated [and benefit] higher education in the United States; but that works at a school level in the developing countries – because we really want to make an impact! What is the sustainability model, we ask? Can we develop one, that we can demonstrate? For me that is really ... it's quite obvious. We hope that we achieve it and roll it out to other countries.”

As Mark, Primah, Aristak and the others have expressed, sustainability is key. Many feel under-resourced and overburdened. As Primah reinforces:

“Human availability and financial resources are necessary, because we plan, put in place the strategy, but the finances are not there. So next time we have a strategy it should be something we can do without feeling that they are being bitten to report.”

When dreaming about where they could take CC Nigeria in the future, Edefe also thinks that sustainability will secure the future of the project in her country.

“I want enough money to sustain this project for like 10 years [...] so have a permanent office in Lagos, hire people, so let it self-sustain for the first 5-10 years and build something that people would want to invest in. Maybe have one or two dedicated people who bring the goal of our own contribution and resources together. A small secretariat that would help us to increase our opportunities, to build our networks. They would do the research on who to reach out to, and then Kayode, Helen and I could still focus more on high level stuff: meeting people, talking to people! And not worry about how much it's going to cost to get to somewhere or to put together all the resources that we need to go to somebody. This would be something that would help!”

A lack of stability and longevity appears to be causing some of anxiety for the future. Affiliates are most anxious about community ties dissolving and losing team members. Seble sums this feeling of insecurity:

“If we could be on the public’s side and we are endorsed by the government, or a very influential group of people, then we can survive and carry on so that it doesn't die.”

They also worry about not being relevant or understood by their community if they cannot present the CC proposition in a specific language or in a way that local people can embrace. This could be as simple as presenting it in the local language - like Amharic as CC Ethiopia are trying to do. As Seble, again, explains:

“We want to have CC license in Amharic because, in my opinion, it’s very abstract. Imagine if you are from Ethiopia and, because of our history, English is not our first language. We have almost 80 different languages, but there are 4 major languages that are widely spoken. One of them is Amharic. We want people to have an appropriate understanding of CC. We don’t want them to push themselves to understand, we want to make it easy for them.”

However, it does raise the larger issue around using accessible or lay language in the toolkits and communications materials, so that people can quickly and easily see how it applies to their context.

Further, CC affiliates are aware that they need to move quickly with Government before they policy becomes more draconian or nullifies their efforts. Aristak lays out his fears and anxiety about the future of the project:

“The worst case scenarios are a change in government policies, and issues around the finances. Those would be the worst.”

Kayode has a similar anxiety.

“The anxieties is that definitely we will get opposition when trying to access government. It will take a lot of democracy, a lot of going back and forth, a lot of pressure, a lot of time and putting in a lot of effort. And then after that, we just don't get any results. So that is actually an anxiety ... the opposition from government.”

The key trends identified by the interviewees are mainly focused on the expansion of CC within their country and the people benefiting from their rollout. These ambitious plans range from systemic change, to involving the youth and the next generation and the government. Yet, on the other hand there are basic shortages in staff, funding and political will. It is interesting to note the discrepancy between their plans for the future and their current capacity, which affects the ability to achieve these dreams. The affiliates themselves are aware of their capacity issues, but do not seem to have a long term strategy in place. By developing a long term local strategy, that is in line with a regional strategy, this could help to halt any possible burnout and ensure that capacity development can be built into the strategy and planned for.

The local lessons and best practices that can be upscaled by the global network

With regards to organisational culture, CC volunteers across Africa are very good at forging out their own CC space against many odds. With a passionate and adaptive attitude they have embraced CC despite institutional challenges and a lack of proactive or concerted effort on the part of the Regional Coordinators. They have made it work, even if they have to go alone.

They are also innovative, and there have been several interventions that have been worked on by CC affiliates in Africa, and could be applied to other countries and regions with similar success.

The School of Open Africa ran in four countries across Africa - Kenya, Nigeria, South Africa and Tanzania. The School of Open Africa connected and synchronised education and ICT policies with OER projects being conducted Open Education initiatives and sharing the lessons learnt. It connected current School of Open programs in primary and high school education to academia and national research and education networks. The aim was to discuss a strategy towards the realisation of universal access to education.

The highlights were that 4 CC Affiliate teams were involved doing different things under the same banner. This helped with creating excitement and visibility for the project and OERs. Each of the country implementations were funded by CC through a partnership with TIDES Foundation. Additionally, there was very strong, hands-on facilitation by Jane Park at CC HQ and the project was coordinated in Africa by Simeon Oriko.

The model shown by School of Open would be useful to do it in other countries, especially as OER advocacy and to introduce more people to CC licences and Open practices.

Kumusha Bus was part of the #OpenAfrica project (and included #OpenAfrica training and #OpenAfrica Toolkits²⁵) in 2014 that was conceptualised and run by Kelsey Wiens from CC South Africa and Isla Haddow-Flood from WikiAfrica. Kumusha Bus is a short, intense intervention that is designed to educate several communities in Africa about the Open Movement. Intended to rollout across Africa, this adaptation of Libre Bus²⁶, had its first pilot in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia in June 2014, and an additional Kumusha Bus took place in Ghana in November 2014.

²⁵ <http://www.wiki africa.net/toolkits/>

²⁶ librebus.org/

Kumusha Bus was effective at garnering like-minded individuals and organisations that are working within the open spheres; giving them more detail, and encouraging them to form into a cohesive group around an open project. It was instrumental in establishing CC Ethiopia. And, more recently in late 2016, the Wikimedian team that hosted Kumusha Bus in Ghana, Raphael Berchie and Felix Nartey, have been in discussion with CC HQ and RCs to establish CC more firmly in Ghana. Kumusha Bus is a great model for activating new territories and is a model that should be used to this end.

Towards the end of 2016, CC Ethiopia's Project Luwi (initial elements funded by CC's Awesome Fund), was finally launched. Project Luwi aims to create a community with the culture that utilises and shares open content, through a series of workshops and events aimed at the university campus' of Ethiopia. Project Luwi was first conceptualised during Kumusha Bus in Addis Ababa.

CC South Africa's Kelsey Wiens' Open Textbooks 4 Africa (ot4a.org) project was designed to help support the adaption and adoption of Open licensed textbooks across Southern Africa. Their pilot project involved creating an astronomy textbook for the Global South (with the sky the right way down) and supporting the adoption of open-licensed textbooks that are currently available. There was a lot of enthusiasm for the project, especially among academics and it is something that can scale in other regions.

In addition to Project Luwi, Ethiopia's focus on translating the licences and additional information materials into local languages is a very positive activity and should be encouraged more. CC Uganda has ported licences 3.0 into Luganda. Similarly, CC Nigeria, CC Tanzania and CC South Africa are interested in translations into official local languages.

CC Tanzania has also made an unprecedented move for a developing country by opening regional offices across Tanzania. This was put forward and funded by CC's Awesome Fund.

Over and above the exciting and innovative projects discussed above, there are several 'soft skills' that have been developed within the region. These 'soft skills' include navigating uncertain political terrains, by coming up with persuasive arguments for what could be seen as unusual, alternative and therefore potentially subversive legal tools. One example was Kayode's interaction with the Director of the Nigerian Copyright Commission, another is Seble's interaction in the notoriously traditional environment of Ethiopia.

5. The collective identity of Creative Commons affiliates and the preferred model of leadership

The values and goals that predominant in your region

The values and goals that predominate in the sub-Saharan Africa region are no more or less relevant than the ones that predominate elsewhere. This might seem strange as each of the interviewees comes from a developing country that has dramatic rifts between the rich and the poor, and huge unemployment problems.

Megan believes that Creative Commons has the power to close that gap, to equal the playing field, and to change society for the greater good.

“I think just increasing transparency make the society in general more inclusive of each other. That's an experience that is pleasing to me and in a way we have been able to bring different people together. It makes people have the open channel of communication. For me that's what being open is all about.”

Yes, the socio-political issues dominate the policies and overt actions of the government, but the affiliates, as established earlier, have the universal traits that are part of volunteers and CC activists across the globe. These traits are of being relatively young, passionate, committed, efficient, focused, ambitious, proactive, eager to learn, adaptable to change, self-motivated and hardworking, and also to be a team player, yet have a strategic brain that understands what is going on within the country.

Working in Ethiopia is an interesting experience for Seble. Being unconventional, many people initially think that Creative Commons has the potential to be subversive. As she says,

“The society is so conservative that we are not such activists. We are not very assertive. This is my personal view. We are a very reserved people, maybe it's because we are religious. 45% of the population is Muslim, 55% is made up of different types of Christians and the rest are people who don't have religion. We are forced to be subdued. You don't see people carrying banners, you wouldn't see activists going out. CC does not affect anybody the wrong way.”

One of the main elements that are stressed though is the need for people to volunteer (to know they are not getting paid) and to do it for the belief in it (which is obviously tied into the motivation for doing it for free). This is stressed because it is an unusual attitude in Africa where the imperative to make ends-meet is strong. Volunteerism is looked upon as unusual. But sharing and collaborating are not. As discussed earlier, sharing feels very much a part of the continental culture. As Edefe stresses:

“I think the big thing the common thread was just this whole idea of sharing, of access of sharing. So just sharing and creating access for a much broader range of people, those were like the core underlying things, I don't know whether to call them values, the best or main thing I have seen that drives, sharing and access.”

Seble feels that openness gives you a chance to grow.

“Openness gives you a chance to grow – when you share your work, exchange information, collaborate with people and then openness is the norm. I don't understand openness as free, as in you could just do whatever you want.”

Helen celebrates that openness actually consists of people from many sectors coming together to further the cause:

“So you have the creative people, and the technology people. So what brings these people together, is, I think ... number one because we are working on the same subject. This is of

common interest to all of us. The lawyers are there because they are interested with the copyright, the technologists are there because they are interested in all this technology that is used to manage copyright, materials and things like that, the creative are there because they are the beneficiaries.”

Of course, some of the interviewees believe that they, or their region, are particularly good at one thing over another. To Mark, the power of Open is in the licences and what it allows other people to achieve.

“I think CC has done an exceptional job. All the people affiliated to CC that we have come into contact with have been very valuable. But I think the single most important thing is the existence of the licenses, and the materials and toolkits that we use to train people about them. They simplify the copyright issues and that means that they are really valuable. The different organisations and affiliates that are trying to figure out the different ways to do the training could be valuable.”

Although Mark is also aware that at Siyavula, they are at the cutting edge of what they are doing. He believes that the tools are only as good as the product:

“The thing is that we can demonstrate is that the world has the need for this policy work. But we have also been really successful in terms of building community, developing OER resources, engaging with the government around the curriculum alignment, the development of schools that all endorsed the books.

“The key values, qualities and products? I think we know how to develop material better than anyone else! The key values, qualities and products come from CC licensed material.”

For Tsion it is about providing access to information to those who cannot afford more ‘traditional’ means of knowledge distribution:

“I believe information is power. It is something that takes you to the next step, to act or not act on something. With education people should be able to take part. A person might not be able to buy a copyright book US\$50 Dollars, but they might be able to get on the Internet and access the same information there, and use it to gain knowledge.”

There are certain values that connect the community. These include having an open attitude, having the willingness to donate your expertise, to donate your time, to volunteer. But in most cases it appears that the tie that binds, the great motivator of all, the element that is most valued, is an impetus to share knowledge with others using CC licences as a conduit.

The key features of an openness leader

When asked about leadership, very few applied this question to their own experience. The majority of the interviewees answered by listing traits. Very few mentioned people within their region or their teams, but this could just be general reticence on their side, or a misunderstanding of the question. For Megan the key features are a combination of experience, openness, inclusivity and transparency.

“A leader is someone that is approachable, someone who is open, in the way that they communicate. He does not feel nervous about asking them for help or getting the insight from other’s experience. So to me that’s really an open leader. I think someone who is also proactive. Someone who is actively engaged into the community that they continue to speak about open in general.”

For Tsion at CC Ethiopia, it is all about the right kind of personality:

“Personality maybe. If we say Seble ... She is outspoken, someone who can be there as a leader to express herself; having that open minded, thinking outside the box, being able to express yourself and being outspoken. What also matters is personality.”

And for Primah, it is about the integrity of walking-the-walk.

“People must actually see you practice what you preach. You must have tested and proven what you are saying.”

Helen focused on the skills that leaders can share with the larger group. This obviously has relevance to team dynamics for the affiliates:

“Skills, number one! I think you should try to stay relevant in one aspect or another; either in the technology, advocacy, or legal. If you’re not good in technology, then you should be good in advocacy or organisation or coordination.

“There must be something you are bringing to the community in one way or the other, we need to have one kind of skill something you want to contribute in growing the community. Maybe you are good at organising people, or you are good at taking care of a website, or in reading the legal issues. There are different ways you can really contribute so it's important to have one of those skills for anybody that is aspiring to be a member of CC.

“Our membership is important. Anybody can come in, but we need people that are ready to work with each other, people that are creative also. You need creative people so that you can conceptualized ideas. We also need patience, leadership skills, interpersonal skills – those are the kind of values that we need. People that are willing to work without expecting interest. People that are working without a sense of selfishness.”

Among the interviewees, the people they felt embodied those traits the most had to do with global Leaders like Larry Lessing. Edefe, said of Larry, “he seemed really interested in people beyond his space”. For Edefe open leadership qualities were defined by people who thought “more broadly about communities, about people even outside their own space and their own sphere”. She felt that they should have a:

“driving passion for people, especially people who ordinarily you probably wouldn't be expected to empathise with or whose conditions you won't be able to empathise with. I see that also in many of the other open leaders, even in our own CC community that I know ... that underlying desire to make change.

“I see people driven not by any kind of remuneration or any kind of personal gain, but because of their passion for this particular field and this particular issue. So I mean particularly Kayode, how involved and how driven he is.”

Kayode himself believes that:

“Every open leader must be willing to share; every openness leader must be willing to serve. You must be willing to donate your skills. May be not your money but your skills, and knowledge, to help the community. You should also have influence, because leadership is nothing without influence. You should be call on people who will serve as ambassadors.”

Core amongst the interviewee group is the belief that leadership is not about command, but about sharing ideas and being able to discuss them. As Aristak mentions,

“The people you are leading, engage in all the decisions that you make and, of course, you share experience and skills. Being a leader does not mean that you have to command people, you share the ideas, discuss them all together and then they happen together. There is involvement and open engagement and positiveness.”

Core to their idea of an open leader is the belief that such a person embodies the key values that have drawn them to the work. These include sharing your ideas and skills, giving of themselves (although not selflessly), collaborating with others, and providing personal access to new ideas and alternative thoughts.

The affiliates share pride in a specific accomplishment of the movement

As mentioned above, the affiliates show pride in what the licencing as a legal tool has been able to achieve. With Creative Commons being central to the success of such globally recognised brands as Wikipedia and Mozilla, more visibility through the search functions of Google and Flickr, and the growing take up of the licence by non-profits, civil society, heritage and grant makers, ordinary individuals and more traditional organisations are starting to take notice.

As Megan says, the achievement is in the way the licences as a tool are distributed and easy to implement, regardless of language and context:

“From a personal perspective, getting a set of licenses that have become so globally adopted is one of the major achievements. Before Creative Commons, we had another whole suite of open licenses which am not even familiar with, but I think Creative Commons has really worked hard to create a space and they are known for what they do. Creative Commons licences are adopted for all the countries but there is still that underlying foundation that we can refer back to and have something common between all countries. Creative Commons was a head of the time to have those tools in place to ensure that people do that legally and freely.”

Helen also believes that CC’s strength is as a tool for other projects. But she takes personal pride in the way it has impacted her life, and reflects on her professionalism.

“I like the impact that CC is making globally, when I read the testimonies I feel very proud. If I can just give a personal example ... my husband is a lecturer at Federal University. He publishes in Open access journals and has to pay in order to publish in those closed journals. Recently he has been telling his University to invite his wife to come and talk about Creative Commons. I am very proud of that. Soon, I will be going to my husbands University to talk about CC!”

For Aristak, its is about the impact it is making around the world.

“The greatest accomplishment of CC globally could be the penetration of Creative Commons licenses in so many countries within a short period of time. It has a big network all over the world. We can see CC in America, Asia, Africa, Southern America, Northern America, Australia and the Arab world. The penetration is the biggest achievement. And of course zeroing down down to the countries' affiliates. They are so many. More than a hundred affiliates in the world is not a joke. Seventy nine jurisdictions and of course they support that, they disperse that everywhere in the world is of course one of the biggest achievements for the CC.”

The element that injects the most pride, and a daily motivation to share their own personal skills, time and resources, is that the global impact of Creative Commons has evident local relevance. The responses above reinforces the case for better communication and collaboration across regions and with CC HQ. The CC affiliates expect to be part of the global conversation, indeed they would relish it. To them, the impact of CC is no longer just theoretical, it is tangible - they can see it in the websites, books, images and journals that they use and read, and textbooks and readers that educate and bring joy to their children. If there was more free flowing communication between global and local networks, such tangible examples could be better used to promote CC to its global audiences as concrete impact in all parts of the world.

6. Recommendations

The recommendations below have come from an assessment of the interviewees’ insights and experience of the region in a similar field. The recommendations are split according to the potential of the region, and what types of assistance the global network could consider providing to the region’s affiliates as a whole.

Regional potential

Cohesive regional strategy

In 2012, over 50 CC volunteers, Affiliates and aligned stakeholders came together at Africa Convening to dream about what CC Africa could be in 5 years. They developed a list of priorities²⁷ for the region. Two people, as Regional Coordinators were tasked with supporting the existing CC Affiliates and attracting more Affiliates as they went down this path. These African Priorities should

²⁷ https://wiki.creativecommons.org/wiki/Africa/CC_Africa_Regional_Meeting_2012/African_Priorities_2012

have been developed into a key strategy that would guide the development of the region and provide key goals for the CC Affiliates. The feedback from the interviews has shown that when the CC Affiliates do projects together - such as School of Open Africa or CopyrightX - everybody receives a boost. The exciting projects that have taken place across Africa have all been achieved through the incredible passion, innovation and personal connections of individuals within the regional network, not as part of an overall strategy for the region driven by Regional Coordinators.

“There is a lot to be done at the ground level to ensure the growth of CC Africa.”

[Tsion, CC Ethiopia]

This lack of an agreed and cohesive strategy has left CC lagging behind other aligned groups, such as Mozilla, Wikimedia, Open Street Maps, and Open for Africa. Luckily, should a cohesive strategy be developed in collaboration with CC Affiliates and aligned Open Movement organisations, it should not take long for CC to catch up with its counterparts.

“I look forward to better engagement of the affiliate teams. I also believe that African-wide projects should be carried out. We achieve more when we have a project held in Kenya, SA, Cameroon and Nigeria. Finally, CC Africa needs to focus its efforts in starting and sustaining new affiliate teams.”

[Kayode, CC Nigeria]

Language regions and new affiliates

Africa is very fractured across colonial language lines. Despite several decades since independence, this is still the case. It seems that Creative Commons has got traction in the Anglophone region.

Included in a regional strategy should be extending the reach of CC into other countries. The bias towards Anglophone Africa should be addressed urgently. Francophone Africa is waiting.

In Cote d'Ivoire there is an active Wikimedia Usergroup and in Cameroon there is a Planning Wikimedia Usergroup that takes part in the Wiki Loves Women and Wiki Loves Africa interventions of the WikiAfrica movement. In Cote d'Ivoire there is also the O Village²⁸ open space that prides itself on civil society activations via the Open Movement. For the first Awesome Fund in 2016 money went to CC Togo and CC Benin in order to Promote Creative commons in West Africa's French Countries (Togo, Benin). It will be very interesting to see how successful these initial foray into Francophone countries progress.

Effectiveness of the Regional Coordinators

The present Regional Coordinators have been tasked to advocate, encourage and support the development of CC and the work of it's Affiliates – current and new – across Africa. From the feedback it seems that four and a half years since they were tasked with the work, their interventions were not as effective as was initially expected. While the RCs have been involved in some of the happenings on the continent, their involvement is not a part of a larger strategy. All of the interviewees displayed that, on a personal level, they like the RCs. However, many of them

²⁸ O Village is a dedicated space that hosts open access organisations such as Wikimedia CI, Open Street Maps, Raspberry Pi affiliates and Jerry Can among others. ovillage.ci

stated that there should have been more strategic interventions, information, and more support from the RCs. This would have assisted them in their work.

In effect, the bulk of the community growth since their appointment has come from an adaptive and passionate continental community who has embraced CC despite institutional challenges; instead of a proactive or concerted effort on the part of the Regional Coordinators.

Strengthening networking

Africa Convening was a galvanising event for the community. Events such as this should become a regular yearly or bi-annual action within the community calendar. In between these large events, there should be ways developed for getting regional affiliates and stakeholders together to share achievements and experiences, but ways of involving Africa's volunteers in Global opportunities and vice versa.

“I want to see a global community that is reaching out to everybody, I would like to see a global community that is close knitted and carries everybody along and not just a few people, a global community that everybody can feel like I can actually participate, I can be a local player and at the same time play at the global level as the CC member.”

[Helen, CC Nigeria]

It is important for the teams to know they are making an impact they are making; for their global colleagues to see and acknowledge the “innovations and creativity” and achievements of the teams in their countries.

Communication

Communication is key to developing and maintaining relationships and attachments. To have the communication line between CC HQ and the global community go through the Regional Coordinators has caused people to feel disconnected and severed from the larger community. This needs to change and the communication lines need to be freed. It would appear that with the adoption of Slack much of the mailing list bottleneck will be bypassed, but it is important that a regional communication strategy is maintained and agreed on.

“I would like to see better coordination towards inclusiveness for everybody, because if some people think they are excluded then that's the beginning of disintegration of the foundation; and that is the problem.”

[Helen, CC Nigeria]

There should be increased communication and collaboration across the region and with CC HQ. The CC affiliates expect to be part of the global conversation – and they have great experiences, projects and solutions to offer. Many of their frustrations relating to feeling left out, not being involved in global opportunities or news, not knowing if other people are interested in their stories, would be remedied if communications lines were more open.

Recommendations for Affiliates

Teams are close-knit but taking strain. There is anxiety about support, longevity and sustainability. Team members are feeling disconnected from the global project, and unsupported by the RCs and CC HQ.

Reading through the feedback it feels that now is the perfect time for the teams to revisit their CC Affiliate roadmaps and, together, workshop a long term strategy. Elements that could be re-visited are team management issues, team outreach and recruitment, prioritising a work plan, capacity building and long term sustainability milestones and targets. Once this is in place, CC Affiliates will be able to articulate their concrete needs in order to garner assistance and support from local partners, local and international funders and CC HQ. This exercise will help to inform a Regional Strategy to help CC grow across the region.

Further, in order to feel reconnected to global, it is important to ensure that each Affiliate team shares their wins, successes and projects with the global community. It could be in the form of regular posts on Slack, and sharing blog posts or results and reports from projects. It is also important to ensure that members of the group are encouraged to proactively engage with global opportunities, conversations and projects.

Global Assistance

Awareness of the brand

As there is increased adoption of the CC licences by household brands, CC HQ should take this opportunity to build the visibility of the brand. CC has the ability to explain Copyright for the next generation.

“It is my view that a lot of awareness creation programs and platforms should be created to promote the legal protection given by sharing your knowledge and how it could benefit everyone in creating an innovative and accessible future for Africa.” [Tsion, CC Ethiopia]

A high level publicity campaign would provide an entry point for many to their prospective ‘targets’ and attract new volunteers to the CC Affiliate teams. It could also be aligned with a strategic regional push to opening up new Affiliates across the region.

Increased “official” visibility

In many parts of Africa, the culture of the people that CC Affiliates need to speak to is more formal than most their counterparts in the rest of the world. In this case a more formal or official presence would make the Affiliates’ tasks a lot easier. This could be as easy to supply as CC stationary and an official letter of association, to a physical manifestations of both the existence and status of the CC brand (such as an office door or branded desk). These trappings of officialdom could help to validate the work as serious and worthy of notice. When the CC Affiliates were mentioning more formal presence, it is about the culture that requires a desk and a phone number as manifestations of a serious business.

Access to global and local partnerships

Many affiliates expressed the desire for formalised connections to be made between key influencers that are close to the movement and the partners of CC HQ, and the local projects of those partners. These could be with similarly aligned groups or chapters (Wikimedia, Open Street Maps, Code for Africa) to the local offices of Google, Mozilla, etc.

They would have a better listening ear if, for instance, someone had a business relationship and said: “Oh listen to these guys, they have got stuff to offer.” So some of these organizations have projects for things like these and it will cost them little or nothing to support us. They are just not available to give you a listening ear. But if CC HQ can easily contact Google in the US, to contact Google here in Nigeria and say, “Oh listen to these guys they are part of us. CC HQ can speak on our behalf, and we, in turn, implement projects on behalf of CC HQ. [Kayode, CC Nigeria]

This is one way of leveraging existing projects to spread an aligned message, whilst drawing on the experiences, networks and connections of others.

Formalised access to funding

It was noted by the affiliates that accessing funding was not often as easy as it could be. Part of this reliance on CC HQ providing funding has to do with the local CC affiliate developing a long term strategy towards sustainability. Due to the cultural issues, local deficiencies and other elements, the Affiliates are finding it difficult to access funders or in-kind support locally. This has created anxiety around the longevity of the local project, and the inability for day-to-day tasks to be handled.

We need help in engaging funders and sponsors, Africa as a whole. I know there are so many other people that are willing and ready to form projects like CC but so far we have not been able to. So we need a lot support in that. If we can be able to connect to the potential funders in Nigeria I won't even be looking at Global. [Helen, CC Nigeria]

One way to circumvent the crisis mode is to offer assistance or strategies to engage local funders. In the meanwhile, CC HQ could also provide different funding models at a global level to support for both short- and long-term interventions. Specific funding could consist of different application timeframes and processes for institutional or event hosting (from Salons to African Convening), long term projects (such as an annual School of Open and CC Ethiopia's Project Luwi), and then for one-off projects (translation drives, etc.).

Conclusion

Africa is a vast, complex space. The many cultures within its geographical space, have the contradictory environment that is on one hand highly conservative and traditional and on the other flexible, adaptive and a driver for innovation. The CC Affiliates interviewed as part of this report embody the second aspect mentioned, whilst trying to offer solutions to the former. This ability to be flexible, adaptive and a driver for innovation has meant that there is a continent-wide take up of innovative tech and communications startups. The big brands in information and technology have taken notice and are increasingly present.

In this environment, CC Africa, as a force for change has not been as proactive as it should have been. Although the CC Affiliates have worked with what they have, much more could have, and should have, been done on a continental level to support existing Affiliates and develop new ones.

Let's hope that this is an opportunity delayed, not lost. With a solid regional strategy that has been co-developed and signed by CC Affiliates (and is aligned to their internal long term plans and goals) there should be exciting times ahead.