

**'FACES OF THE COMMONS. ASSESSMENT OF NETWORK POTENTIAL'**

REGIONAL REPORT  
for the ARAB WORLD

CREATIVE COMMONS in the Arab World:

'You Made Me in Touch with Other Things in the World'

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## PART I

### *Basic Information on the Choice of Countries against the Methodology Criteria*

For the project of Faces of Commons, four different interviews have been conducted with five affiliates and one partner from the Arab world countries namely Syria, Lebanon, Qatar, and Egypt. The affiliates who took part in the project represent different program areas of Creative Commons such as education&OER, policy&advocacy, open access, legal and technology. This is important in terms of reviewing the activities of CC in different program areas and elaborating the on the implications of these programs in the Arab World region. When the representation of the choice of countries for the region is questioned, it will be useful to look at the general circumstances of the region.

Countries in the Middle East and North Africa could be grouped into four in terms of current political and economic environments. On the one extreme, there stand the countries where there is an ongoing war. Syria, Yemen, Libya, and Iraq could be listed in this part along with some other countries having the same problems occasionally. Another category could be put forward for the states troubled with economic and political instability and/or having experienced political shifts recently. Egypt, Tunisia, Lebanon could be given as examples for this group. States with somewhat stable and democratic regimes form another group, with examples like Turkey, Iran, and Israel.

Lastly, rich and stable monarchies could be categorized as a distinct group. The Gulf countries such as the UAE, Saudi Arabia, and Qatar are among the members of this last part. Considering this environment, it is seen that countries of the affiliates interviewed represent the majority of the region, particularly in relation with the goals of the open movement.

The choice of affiliates also reflects cultural and religious mosaic of the region. For instance, in Lebanon, there are three languages commonly spoken, namely Arabic, French, and English. In terms of religious diversity, Lebanon is one of the most diversified countries of the Arab region with more than one sect of both Islam and Christianity. Syria is very similar to Lebanon in terms of religious, cultural and also ethnic diversity. Egypt as the most populated country in the Arab region is also home for different religions and local cultures. So, the countries that the affiliates work and also originally came from could be counted as a reflection of regional diversity. In addition to that, the researcher took the gender difference into consideration and included both male and female affiliates into the research.

There are four countries involved in this research from the Middle East and North Africa as part of the project titled Faces of the Commons, Assessment of Network Potential. Below the countries and interviewees from these countries are listed:

Country	Interviewee	Affiliate/Partner	Project Title
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Country	Interviewee	Affiliate/Partner	Project Title
Syria	Noura Ghazi and Dana Trometer	Affiliates	##FreeBassel Campaign
Lebanon	George Abdelnour and Fawzi Baroud	Affiliates	Open Education Resources (OER) at Notre Dame University, Lebanon
Qatar	Mohammad Al Said	Affiliate	Translation of CC 4.0 License into Arabic
Egypt	Mohammad El Gohary	Partner	Global Voices in Egypt

## PART II

### *Basic information on the environment the chosen affiliates work in*

The environment of Creative Commons affiliates working in the Arab World region is generally highly affected by poor infrastructure, such as poor electricity network and internet, slow and limitedly functioning state, political unrests, and mistrust in foreign organizations that try to operate the region. Especially in the last six years, the region has been in political, social, and economic turmoil, which was started with the democratic uprising in Tunisia and spread across most of the Arab countries, continued as instability and in some cases turned into a civil war.

As a result of the uprisings, political regimes changed in Tunisia, Libya and Egypt. While Egypt witnessed a military coup after democratic elections, for some it is a counter-revolution; in Libya, first, external military intervention happened followed by a continuing civil war. Yemen shares the same story with Libya and is currently going under civil war. Situation in Syria is maybe the worst one among all. The ongoing civil war has a complicated sectarian and ethnic dimension that escalates the conflict. It affects almost all neighboring countries: Lebanon, Jordan, Turkey, Iraq, and Iran politically, economically, and culturally.

All CC affiliates that we have conducted interview with stressed the importance of local/national and regional situation which in almost all cases limit their activities and well-functioning. Noura Ghazi from Syria stressed the government control and censorship policies over the internet even before the Arab uprisings, drawing the picture of the situation in the country: *'In Syria now, to make an explosion or to have bombs and any kind of weapon is better than doing something on the internet and in digital ways.'*

Dana Trometer, who is running the team of #FreeBassel Campaign -based in London, the UK and of Lebanese origin, was very cautious in explaining their work and underlined many times the non-political character of #FreeBassel Campaign. By stressing that *'we never said anything political, never made any political statement, and never published anything about anybody, about the president'* Dana Trometer was drawing attention to the Syrian political context. Besides, since the dictatorial nature of the Syrian state is obvious, people and movements are better to embrace a bottom-up approach to change policies in order to be successful and effective. By saying that *'We want to do it [policy change] indirectly by creating a movement of people ... and through sharing ideas and everything'* Dana confirms the approach that seems more relevant to Syria.

The other country facing similar challenges with Syria in terms of working environment is Egypt. The CC Egypt partner Mohammad El Gohary who works as Lingua Manager for Global Voices took attention to censorship over journalism, suppression of activism and control over foreign organizations, which has even worsened after the military coup in 2013. El Gohary underlined that after the coup, activism in every sense has started to be seen as being anti-regime and any cooperation with international organizations as a foreign agency against the country. Especially social media activism and expressing one's dissent about the regime online and through the media are grounds to face arrest and

unfair trials. Egyptian government's tightening the screws on people and especially activists undermines also the activities that CC could take part in. Because of the political situation in Egypt, currently CC Egypt is active only on the legal front.

Lebanon affiliates George Abdelnour and Fawzi Baroud on the other hand reflected on the problems of infrastructure in the country as the factors that are out of their control and limiting their activities: such as poor electricity and high cost of internet usage. Currently there is no president of the country since no candidate reached a required number of votes to be elected. So there is a political paralysis in the country, which limits the functioning of the state to the minimum. Both affiliates underlined that in addition to Lebanon's own problems, being surrounded by neighbors that are in a conflict and a crisis makes the country even more fragile. These are the problems that international organizations, especially those like Creative Commons, operating in the country and the region cannot solve, but should take into consideration while making their programs.

Qatari affiliate Mohammad Al Said also paid attention to the region's lagging behind the general model of CC structure due to the lack of a systemic support to CC activities like a functioning state system and properly working infrastructure. The unrest in a number of countries in the region obviously is one of the main factors that has already limited or could further limit the activities of CC on the regional level. Specifically, in Qatar, it has to be noted that the political system is stable, the economy is rich, and society is a multicultural one. On the other hand, it is important to stress that most of the entities that CC Qatar team works with are state-owned, so overcoming bureaucracy is something that should be taken into consideration in Qatar.

## PART III

### *What affiliates bring into the network*

In this part of the report, current or potential contributions of the affiliates into the network are evaluated. As briefly pointed in the beginning of the report, many countries in the region suffer from problems that are not even a matter of discussion elsewhere. Civil war, lack of basic infrastructure such as a continuously operating electricity grid, limited access to food and medicine are among these fundamental problems. So some of the things the affiliates potentially bring into the network might have a unique value.

- Promotion of CC as a Bridge between People and the Global Community

CC's general fields of operation in the countries where the organization has been present longer could be perceived as a "good problem to have" in some other parts of the world. It is a fact that free access to educational resources or non-commercial use of copyrighted visual media could be listed as basic human needs; however, it is also obvious that they rank lower in comparison with the needs of physical freedom or uninterrupted supply of water and electricity. So, any new attempt in such a circumstance should be relevant to the current immediate needs of the public. A Syrian affiliate Dana Trometer summarized the importance of developing relevant agenda and projects and said that *'coming up with big projects, big concepts such as all these copyright ideas, freedom of accessibility does not help CC [in the region]. The idea of so many CC licenses makes everybody lost; even we are lost in what is what.'* Therefore, the region's CC affiliates' experiences in adapting CC's programming for the difficult circumstances could be instructive for broadening the programs in current countries or opening up in new places with similar conditions.

The work of the Syrian affiliates is an example of how the CC's concepts are adopted in the midst of an ongoing war. Noura Ghazi and Dana Trometer are focusing mainly on leading the #FreeBassel Campaign.<sup>1</sup> Noura Ghazi is the wife of Bassel Khartabil, and met him only two months before his imprisonment and got married to him while he was in prison. Dana Trometer has never met with Bassel but she is passionate about his case and advocating for him as the CC lead.

Bassel Khartabil is a Palestinian-Syrian open-source software developer who joined CC network after he attended one of CC conferences in the Philippines and met with CC leaders. Currently he is a political prisoner in Syria since March 15, 2012, first imprisoned at the Adra prison, but on October 3, 2015 transferred to an unknown location. As a technology open-source advocate, he was the co-founder of the collaborative research company Aiki Lab and served as project lead and public affiliate for Creative Commons Syria with the aim of educating people about using the internet and opening up the internet access for the Syrian people.

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<sup>1</sup> Related information about Bassel Khartabil and #FreeBassel Campaign can be found in the following link: <https://creativecommons.org/tag/bassel-safadi/>

Starting from the case of Bassel, CC's advocacy for a free access to internet has been transformed to a call for freedom for human rights activism from a different perspective. In this spirit, Dana Trometer insisted on not calling Bassel Khartabil an activist but a technology open source advocate in order not to politicize Bassel's case in the Syrian context.

Egyptian case also is similar in many aspects to the Syrian context. In support of activists and political prisoners, the campaign of #FreeAlaa has been launched on Twitter in order to bring attention to the Alaa Abdel Fattah's case and advocate for his release. Alaa is a software developer, a political activist and a blogger who has been sentenced to five years in prison in February 2015 for taking part in a protest and as a result of a false accusation of assaulting a policeman. So as in the case of #FreeAlaa campaign, the current political and social situation in Egypt, shifts the focus of the CC work towards human rights activism.

- Experience in Coping with Bureaucracy

As noted at the beginning of the report, Qatar is an example of a stable and economically prosperous monarchy that a number of can be found the region. These features of a country imply a strong state, or a state with high control over all the systems in the country. So the teams working in such environments learn a lot about how to cope and work with the bureaucracy, which is a basic challenge to enter and operate in the market in such places. This experience and knowledge could contribute to the network when shared and help the CC operations move more smoothly in countries with similar bureaucratic conditions.

The CC Qatar team, in which Mohammad Al Said is the legal lead and who has led the 4.0 translation project over the past three years, organizes a number of activities and events, which mainly aim at introducing the concept of CC to both users and to the public authorities in Qatar. The affiliate is running the annual CC Iftar during Ramadan fueled with sharing and the spirit of Ramadan, and that attracts a large number of individuals to the social event.

The Qatar team is very actively participating in the activities of public institutions in order to introduce the concept of CC to this audience. Although they haven't had chance to see the concrete outcomes of this activeness, they are hopeful as they got good feedback from the public side. The team is also well aware of other audiences that should be supported, such as universities and public libraries. At the same time they are also aware of their insufficient skills in overcoming bureaucratic obstacles. So the team has recognition of weaknesses and limitations of working with the bureaucracy. As one of the remedies, Al Said points to the possible support by HQ and its involvement in targeting high level entities and authorities such as ministries of education and of culture.

- Promoting OER in the Region and Experience of Working with Educational Institutions

Open Educational Resources (OER) is a field in which CC has a long and profound experience. On the other hand, OER is not common in the Arab region as well as in many developing countries around the world. The CC affiliates in Lebanon opened a door for a widespread use of OER in the region and worked through the process of collaborating with a higher education institution.

CC Lebanon affiliates have been promoting OER at Notre Dame University-Lebanon (NDU). In November 2015, Creative Commons and NDU signed an official agreement. The CC Lebanon affiliate team, which is led by Fawzi Baroud, George Abdelnour and instructors within the English and Translation Department at NDU, have been running a pilot project at the faculty. They are using OER learning materials in teaching English. The project is forecasted to spread into humanities, information technologies and applied sciences departments in 2017.

It seems that even a mere advertisement of what is accomplished at NDU could facilitate wider use of OER in Lebanon and beyond its borders in the region. As a matter of fact, even very successful implementations, for instance in the US, are not perceived as feasible and implementable as they are 'somewhere far' and 'in totally different conditions'. So when educational institutions and professionals in Lebanon and in other Arab states have chance to see an ongoing OER project in their region and to discuss with its users on the advantages and disadvantages of it, adoption of OER will be facilitated.

- Capacity Building and Human Factor

In all CC supported projects and activities, human factor becomes key. It is a fact that considering the regional environment, persistence and patience in conducting long-term projects, coping with poor state structures, bureaucracy, and financial difficulties, human capacity management becomes vital. Based on the interviews, local affiliates in the Arab World region seem dedicated to their job and projects. On the other hand they point out that the lack of dedicated volunteers is an obstacle in expanding the work of CC in the region.

Dana Trometer underlined the importance of promoting voluntary work in the Arab world. She thinks that since the basic living expenses are very high in the region, many people would welcome the opportunity to make money from every project that they take part in. Therefore, in order to create a global network of Arabs who will be more ready to share their work freely, the value of voluntary work should be promoted. Mohammad Al Said also stressed a similar issue and laid emphasis on being patient and persistent at work in order to secure continuation of what is being done.





## PART IV

### *How can the network help the affiliates in the region?*

In this part of the regional report, the capacity and capability of the network will be evaluated. Related to the field that they work and based on their successes and failures, affiliates expressed different expectations and stressed the need for different kinds of help from the network although they underlined common expectations and needs at some points.

- Promotion of the Global CC Network As a Legitimizing Factor

All the affiliates agree on the need of localized promotion of Creative Commons as a global movement and marketing of CC in Arabic designed specifically for the region. It would make it easier for regional teams and projects to demonstrate legitimacy and receive more support from local authorities as well as individuals. In the words of George Abdelnour '*affiliation to the global network brings legitimacy, which makes things easier to explain and continue.*'

The promotion of CC in the region is significant also because it creates a collaborate atmosphere in which people feel that they belong to the bigger family. This itself is a source of motivation for a large number of individuals who work for CC. Mohammad Al Said underlined that this motivation comes from the belief in the mission of the network and makes individuals a part of the global CC community which works on regional issues not only from a Western point of view.

Using the region's language more is also part of CC marketing in the region. It also makes adopting projects successfully completed in one Arab country easier in other regional countries. As stated in the interviews and throughout the report, in order to be more successful, CC needs more Arabic for the Arabs in the region.

- Significance of Using Arabic Language in CC Projects

As stated above, promotion of CC in Arabic is key to the successful mainstreaming in the region. It has to be kept in mind that what CC aims to achieve is to provide "institutional, practical and legal support for individuals and groups wishing to experiment and communicate with culture more freely."<sup>2</sup> Considering that language is one of the essential tools of culture, using local language(s) in every platform that CC operates is vital. Arabic is the first and common language in the Arab World region, so local affiliates often brought up the issue to the researcher's attention.

Using Arabic language more in CC related projects is also a key in terms of being successful in localization of the global strategy of the network. All the interviewed affiliates underlined the need for *more Arabic translation of CC licenses, CC platforms, promotions, communications, and works*. The Lebanese affiliates underlined that most of

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<sup>2</sup>David Berry, On the "Creative Commons": a critique of the commons without commonalty, Free Software Magazine, July15, 2005.

the OER materials are in English, however, lots of universities in the Arab world use Arabic content at the universities such as in Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and Qatar. Therefore, it will be needed in the near future to create Arabic content of OER materials and to have all the required open source materials in Arabic.

Syrian affiliates stressed that the reason of their relative failure in the first two years of #FreeBassel is the fact that English was the language of the campaign at that time. It was the reason why they could not reach the Arabs, not only in the Middle East but also Arabs who live in the West and other parts of the world. After the two initial years they have started doing everything they do in Arabic as well and managed to reach more Arabs and to be present on Arab streets. Having all materials in Arabic brought a better visibility and more support to the campaign.

Qatar team lead Mohammad Al Said mentioned that the translation of CC licenses and CC supported projects into Arabic is the biggest achievement of CC in the region. CC terms and licenses seem complex for entities who want to use them. By having Arabic translation, and not only adaptation of CC 4.0 licenses, makes reaching more entities and individuals easier than before.

- Capacity Building in Line with Local Needs

All the affiliates underlined the need for doing more capacity building workshops, protocultural<sup>3</sup> events, and more training programs, organizing more conferences and face-to-face meetings. Grand strategies need grand support from HQ and other affiliates. It is stated by almost all the affiliates that high-level visits from the HQ would help secure a high-level institutional support. Such visits from the HQ and consultancy on introducing OER by high-profile CC team members at the ministerial level would certainly make it easier to widen the scope of OER countrywide or region-wide. The relationship with Bibliotheca Alexandrina in Egypt is an example of such an effect. The approach presented by CC met with resistance within Bibliotheca Alexandrina and the direct intervention from HQ helped reinforce the MoU agreement terms with higher authorities at the institution.

In this regard, Lebanese affiliates underline that the resistance comes from the people who should be adapting to the new system, such as teachers who lack the technological know-how or libraries that lack open resources. Students are welcoming the initiative since they have the technological know-how and moreover, OER is adding a comprehensive dimension to their learning in addition to reducing book expenses. Adjusting the Lebanese K12 curriculum to the usage of OER resources, K12 access to the internet and technology in rural areas are other challenges that the Lebanese affiliate has been facing. That is why they stressed the importance of providing support first from the regional coordinator and the network for the organization of trainings and workshops for faculty and university personnel, and activities to increase awareness in OER.

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<sup>3</sup> A protocultural organization is a type of a CC-supported cultural organization aiming to advance open data policies related to culture. An example: <http://www.newpalmyra.org/events/protocultural-dubai/>

In addition to using more Arabic in promoting CC, Dana Trometer underlined the need for Arabizing online platforms like Flickr and YouTube by making these platforms more collaboration friendly. By this way, people would be able to both contribute to the content of the platforms that support collaboration and open licensed content such as Wikipedia, to YouTube and other platforms of sharing knowledge, and also to specific projects. For instance through the #FreeBassel Campaign, people from a very diverse backgrounds and communities such as artists, creative writers, journalists, graphic designers started to contribute simultaneously to Creative Commons and Free Internet Movement. According to the Syrian affiliates, one of the ways of getting more advocates out there on the ground is to provide workshops and trainings on how to use social media. That is why they expect organizational and financial support from the network to do so.

According to Dana Trometer, as the lead of #FreeBassel Campaign and the person who thinks that the easiest way to reach Arab streets is through multimedia, *media attention* is very significant for the success of CC projects in order to draw people's attention to the work. Media promotion of the projects and being visual and audio-led are vital in helping local affiliates as a direct help from the global network. It is because people want to know that when they create things in Arabic, a global network will freely support spreading what they have created. Related to that, Dana suggested regional network to visually showing success stories like Lawrence Lessig and the work of other CC communities in Arabic.

- Building on the Capital of Campaign

Based on the hopes and anxieties expressed by the affiliates in the interviews, it seems that Creative Commons needs to develop various strategies for helping the regional affiliates. For instance Syrian affiliates underlined that at the end of #FreeBassel campaign, they would be happy to set Bassel free, however, they are realistic about the situation in Syria and therefore they give importance to be able to make everlasting change. Dana Trometer summarized their hopes for achieving a preventative solution for people who could face the same situation: *'We want Bassel to become a reason for things that we never want to happen again. We want to create something more sustainable in the sense of a foundation that maybe his wife runs on that. We would like to open a charity or a body in the name of Bassel'* They also want to advocate for policy changes that will allow internet freedom and the right to share and collaborate on the internet without facing prosecutions. In this regard, the Syrian affiliates just stated that all of the technical online infrastructure will be open sourced and all of the content of the projects enlisted on the online platform will be licensed under Creative Commons. They expect high involvement and support from the global CC network. And accordingly they will be constantly reaching out to them through the regional coordinator.

The Lebanese affiliate expressed their wish that Creative Commons continue its role as a mediator between unrestricted access and copyright restrictions. With regard to their project of OER in NDU, they wish to achieve spreading the OER and open education first

on the national and then on the regional level. They are in the final stage of launching OER Lebanon website and wish to establish an NGO in the future. What they would expect from CC at this point is high-level visit from CC HQ to talk and introduce OER to high-level Lebanese officials.

After a workshop in Deir al Ahmar, the rural area in the Bekaa region of Lebanon, the interviewees observed that, when applied properly, the promises of open resources could be a solution to many problems in education related to capacity and connectivity of rural communities in Lebanon. The scope of the OER projects should be expanded to the refugees in the camps in Lebanon and also Jordan. Expansion of the scope of the OER projects is within the road map of Lebanese affiliates, and is embedded in the MoU between the NDU and CC. So, in accordance with the MoU, CC Lebanon affiliates at NDU are working for such an enlargement under the supervision and coordination of CC regional coordinator. When it is needed, they expect support of regional network and eventually from the HQ. George Abdelnour said that *'I would like to see that educators could use high value learning materials licensed under Creative Commons that are open to anyone. In practice this high quality material would be used at a local level for better and better outcomes among students.'*

CC Qatar affiliate and legal lead Mohammad Al Said underlined the importance of successful projects that provide basis to continuing the work. As he is optimistic about the outcomes of the translation project of 4.0 licenses, he hopes *'to push a lot of entities, a lot of individuals and the community to be able to use it and utilize properly, and obviously leading further the process of development, the process of knowledge dissemination of the society.'* He also drew attention to the risk that unsuccessful projects lower the trust to the quality and may harm the continuation of the CC work. In this regard, the local team works with the regional coordinator and when it is needed, they expect support from the global network and HQ.

- The Local Goes Global

All the affiliates stressed that being a part of both the local and the global network are inseparable from each other. George Abdelnour argued that the distinction between regional and global is a false distinction. For him, although there are particularities in every region of the world, *'the moment you go into regional means that you already go into global.'*

Qatari affiliate Mohammad Al Said similarly said that *'It is an integrated process. National level will eventually feed regional level, and regional level will feed into the headquarters. I see that CC local leads will not be able to deliver unless they have the support from the headquarters. And I think headquarters will not be able to carry the mission without the local affiliates.'* Therefore he called for *'the investment in this area and ensuring that more involvement on regular basis would be very important to be successful on the mission. You cannot just work globally and really not invest locally. Because local components are very important, whatever you learn internationally will*

*be feeding into the local. That is where success will happen. For CC to succeed it will happen to succeed at the local level and that will drive the global mission.'*

In that sense, the words of a prisoner who had been taught English by Bassel Khartabil with the use of OER print outs when imprisoned summarized the relations between the local and global: 'You made me in touch with other things in the world'.

CC should take a different local perspective into consideration and bring people from different perspectives on board in order for these particularities to be represented. So, in order to bring a more in-depth knowledge into the global strategy, it is crucial to have people who can play a catalyst role and become instrumental in the region. Mohammad Al Said underlined bringing the local knowledge, local background, and region's priorities on to the CC board table with regard to ensuring the success of the global strategy. It is because there are cultural differences, which are one of the most important factors in the project implementation. As Fawzi Baroud said *'what can work well in the US, or in Europe, or in Germany or France, maybe will not work the same in Lebanon, in Qatar, in Kuwait.'*

- Opening Up to the New Areas in the Region

Compared to the other countries that took part in this project, Qatar is more stable politically and economically. That is why the needs and expectations are different than elsewhere. For instance museum authorities in Qatar have started utilizing CC. This is a new area where CC could provide different kinds of support such as legal and technical assistance. Such support can then be upscaled to a wider community in the Arab region. Promoting more awareness and assistance to libraries, universities and research institutions is also among future targets of CC Qatar.

On the other hand, Al Said raised his concerns that what is happening in the region is going to limit the activities of CC since the priorities of the individuals become different in times of crisis. Therefore with its local, regional and global network CC should be able to devise volunteer management strategies accordingly; especially that financial resources and job opportunities are becoming difficult to tap into in times of a crisis.

Egyptian partner Mohammed El Gohary also expressed his concerns over the country's political situation, which could limit the CC activities. He underlined that there is the risk of militarization of budgeting, since the government is increasing oversight of a financial side of any enterprise. It means that the government will most probably increase its control on both the money flow and the activities of the non-profit sector.

In these circumstances, according to El Gohary the best to do now is increasing efforts to create a functioning CC community in Egypt. Since the individuals and the organizations are on proverbial separate islands, it is hard to achieve. Therefore, CC local affiliates should intensely continue to play role in bringing people and organizations together.

## PART V

*What is the collective identity of Creative Commons affiliates and preferred model of leadership?*

The collective identity of CC affiliates in the Middle East and North Africa region is mostly shaped by their approach to knowledge sharing. Based on the interviews conducted, the fundamental thing that connects all of the affiliates and supporters of CC is the idea of giving and sharing as well as the belief in sharing knowledge and making it accessible to everyone with the purpose of common good. All this serves the society by transforming it into a more open one.

It is also observed by the researcher that the personal character of the affiliates is supporting their affiliation to CC as they expressed their belief in sharing knowledge and experience. In this sense affiliates seem to be sharing the definitions of values. However, it is the researcher's personal impression about what the interviewees understand from the questions related to openness and the definition of openness as a concept differs. They all seem to believe that openness is a result of sharing of what one is able to create in a very personal way. But for instance, Lebanese affiliates stressed the differences among the definitions of openness and leadership from person to person. The Syrian affiliate defined openness as the crucial component in the real life experience of the supporters of #FreeBassel campaign, because the campaign made them more social and outspoken.

As for the evaluation of the greatest accomplishment of CC, all the affiliates highlighted that CC as a global movement is very successful in achieving the change of patterns in sharing. All of the affiliates underlined that all that CC achieved has brought alternative ways of looking at sharing knowledge and ideas to the international arena. In the words of Mohammad Al Said it achieved *'breaking the knowledge monopolization through providing an alternative.'*

When it comes to the specific accomplishment that they are proud of, all of the affiliates named the project that they have become part of. For example, while the Syrian affiliates are feeling proud of #FreeBassel Campaign since they had a chance to contribute to CC and got to know open-source movement, Lebanese affiliates find the OER project at the Notre Dame University - Lebanon as an accomplishment. Qatari affiliate sees the translation of 4.0 CC license into Arabic as a great accomplishment because of the lack of consensus on the translations of some concepts until that one, when these were finally clarified.

On the organization's global strategy, Lebanese affiliate George Abdelnour made one important point based on his past experiences and kind of advised to CC not to run into the problems of commercialization and to stay away from market seduction. He said that *'I have seen many organizations, well-meaning organizations, media organizations, institutions of higher education, all sorts of things began with the particular mission and particular good idea and then run into problems further down the road often because of the appeal of the market, and of certain myths about the market like efficien-*

*cy, productivity, the need for budgetary considerations and all these things which make sense in the free market economy.'*

Based on how they perceive openness as a concept, affiliates underlined various key features of an openness leader that can be specified as:

- Having professional skills such as digital openness know-how
- Being able to understand the complexities in dealing with various local entities and individuals
- Building consensus rather than forcing ideas on individuals
- Being highly disciplined and persistent in pushing and pursuing projects
- Giving importance to have a supporting team and value them
- Sharing with no hierarchy

Beside the above-mentioned features, the Egyptian partner stressed that CC does not need more CC HQ openness leaders, but rather a motivated committee of different organizations and individuals who work more efficiently together.

When it comes to Creative Commons leaders who are admired by the affiliates and the partner, while almost all affiliates value to all thought leaders of CC and CC as a community, some of the names come to the fore such as Lawrence Lessig on copyright reform, Paul Stacey and Cable Green on OER.



## PART VI

### *Recommendations*

Across different parts of the regional reports, there are various recommendations implicitly and explicitly, sometimes directly from the words of the interviewees. On this part of the report, all these aspects are brought together shortly, leaving the underlying explanations for each recommendation in the relevant section of the report. Perhaps the majority of the recommendations touched both the local affiliates and headquarters (HQ) of the network; however, for the sake of analytical simplicity, they are grouped into two: recommendations those to be considered and carried out by the local affiliates and for the aspects in the particular responsibility of HQ.

- For the Affiliates

Starting from the recommendations, which are burdened more on the local affiliates, the local CC communities should expand their capacities by reaching more experts in their field of work and possible fields that could widen the scope of community outreach. Headquarter, in this vein, should support such an expansion financially and technically through face-to-face and online capacity building workshops / meetings.

There is a significant need for customization of CC activities in the region. Although it might be seen as a duty for HQ, the crucial part of the responsibility is of the local affiliates. Local affiliates should bring local knowledge and local background on the table. HQ, in this sense, should notice and highlight the local voice from the region, localize communications and targeted messages, and promote local affiliates' work. By utilizing this accumulated local knowledge, regional differences and priorities could be taken into consideration.

In order to ensure the sustainability of CC activities in the region, local communities should focus on transferring the know-how and the knowledge to the new generations and new individuals by sharing experiences with workshops, face to face meeting with the authorities, and trainings. HQ should financially support these efforts and devise strategies to combat several issues inhibiting this work such as mobility, technological literacy, and internet issues.

- For the Headquarters

Coming to the potential steps, which could be taken by CC HQ, there is a need for bringing the regional communities closer to each other to share their ideas and successes as examples to be implemented. As seen by CC's accomplishments' being equalized to the projects implemented in each country, CC affiliates in the region are somewhat similar to isolated islands in practical terms. Connecting the regional communities, hence, is a necessity also for the establishment of an organic network and common identity in the Arab region, which is another suggestion to be taken into account by CC HQ.

This can be reinforced by encouraging face to face meetings, facilitating mobility, regional capacity building to promote collaboration which will lead to an infrastructure for policy changing in ICT and education advocacy projects.

CC's visibility in the region, apart from the individual project, is perceived as important, even for the success of individual projects being implemented. The promotion at a high level is important because the state plays a determining role in every country of the region in the fields relevant to CC's ideals. This could be achieved by:

- High level visits from regional coordinator and HQ staff to relevant state institutions in the region;
- Regional and international meetings to which bureaucrats from MENA along with other countries where CC already has significant accomplishments are invited;
- Working capacity building of affiliates who have good contacts at the ministerial level and encouraging the current affiliates for bureaucratic promotion activities;
- Determining the innovative needs in public services in MENA countries, which could be solved by CC's applications and approaches; then proposing these solutions to relevant state authorities.

For the bottom level visibility, utilization of and promotion through the conventional and social media, the organization of events and competitions, sponsoring youth activities could be listed among many others. Allocation of a budget and human resources for all these is another step to be taken by CC. Translation of CC licenses into Arabic and their promotion has to be another priority in order to clarify what CC stands for and how. This will serve both the visibility of CC and the expansion of the network.

Some MENA countries are in dire circumstances ranging from the war to large infrastructural deficits, which sometimes make CC's fields of work much less relevant in comparison with other, more basic interventions. So CC's collaboration with international organizations working for these issues, ranging from trans-border power grid organizations to humanitarian aid institutions, could facilitate CC's current and future activities in the region, especially the future ones. In this field, it has to be considered by HQ that Arab world cannot function fully without the inclusion of the all MENA countries into the regional projects specifically Turkey, Iran, and Israel.

The future plans of the local communities should be revised and followed by HQ. For instance, Syrian affiliates have a future plan to establish a foundation based on their experience in #FreeBassel campaign and Lebanese affiliates has a plan to transfer their experience in OER at NDU into a more institutional form like an NGO that addresses OER issues in K12 and OER policies on the national level. HQ should always stay in direct contact with regional affiliates through regional coordinator that understands the particularities of the region, the downfalls of fieldwork and cooperates in promoting these projects in the global affiliate network to induce global collaboration.

Despite not being voiced by other interviewees, Lebanese affiliate George Abdelnour's comments on preserving the initial spirit and staying away from the market myths could be seen as a last but not least recommendation for the part of CC HQ. This recommendation could be perceived as a personal view; however, when considered as a warning by an experienced affiliate, there are some implications worth consideration. For instance, the members of the network might be reluctant to take up the measures like performance evaluation or efficiency measurement. They might prefer an environment in which the periphery and the HQ work as a team rather than the local networks receiving the pre-set goals from the HQ and being asked for meeting a set of targets in the end. All in all, this is a matter of high-level decision, but it is clear that the affiliates value working in such a non-market motivated environment.