

# Review and Feedback of the Creative Commons Global Network

## Transcript of Comments

These comments were submitted in response to a Call for Feedback from the Executive Committee of the Creative Commons Global Network Council. That call, as well as the resulting process for addressing issues raised in these comments, can be found here:

[https://docs.google.com/document/d/1mfKgQ5FbuDP\\_d42YknRqdFPE9yA\\_FvjkgWgwxw2oP8Q/edit?usp=sharing](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1mfKgQ5FbuDP_d42YknRqdFPE9yA_FvjkgWgwxw2oP8Q/edit?usp=sharing)

The Executive Committee is incredibly grateful for these comments - they are thoughtful and well-intentioned, highlighting positive changes in the new structure as well as a number of legitimate challenges and frustrations. This is a full, unmodified transcript of submitted comments (with the exceptions listed below).

The next step is for these comments to be summarized and categorized into a working document - which will be open for all members to discuss starting in mid-January, and members, Leads, and Representatives may suggest changes to make sure their concerns are adequately reflected. Note that the document in this next step is not a proposal for changes - it is an analysis of the comments submitted.

Considerations for reviewing this transcript of comments:

- Comments are numbered for ease of discussion, not in any particular order.
- Some comments may have been shared publicly in other venues, but as described in the original call for feedback, this transcript has immediately identifying information removed (name, country, chapter, organization). Continents and regional references remain.
- Comments submitted via Google Form were self-categorized as Critical or Positive, though the text of the comments may contain elements of either.
- 11 additional comments were submitted through the google form with the explicit request that they not be shared as part of the transcript. Of those, 10 were marked as critical and 1 was marked as positive. These comments will be worked into the analysis/summary document but are not included in this document per the commenters' wishes.

# COMMENTS SUBMITTED VIA FORM

## Critical Feedback

1 -----

**What is the structural element of the Network Strategy that you are referring to?**

The Membership Process

**How has this change impacted your chapter or your ability to organize?**

The membership process was a barrier to built a strong community in [country]. Without chapters decide on their own membership, they can not become a legal entity. Without being a legal entity, it is impossible or very hard to fund raise and to lobby in the legislative process

**What is the local context, or a situational example that might help us ensure that a proposed solution will actually address the issue?**

Tow of the most important NGOs tried to become a member, because we encourage them. One succeeded after many month of demanding, the other one gave up. We gave up to acquire new members, because we did not want to cause frustration.

**Do you have a suggested change to address this issue?**

As stipulated in the open letter, formulated in Lisbon during the global Summit:

- Every Chapter should decide about their own membership
  - The Membership Committee should only decide on membership requests from people who are not members of a chapter
- Membership of a Chapter automatically implies membership of Global Network

2 -----

**What is the structural element of the Network Strategy that you are referring to?**

Network and Chapter Composition

**How has this change impacted your chapter or your ability to organize?**

Made it practically impossible

**What is the local context, or a situational example that might help us ensure that a proposed solution will actually address the issue?**

We ([region]) were told we couldn't have a local chapter since we aren't a country. This makes it almost impossible to organize a chapter here, since there is practically a nonviolent rebellion going on in [region] with a large part of the populace that will refuse to participate in a group that

negates their right to self-determination. Omnium cultural is currently the largest association in Europe, for christsake, [region] really believes in free culture, we are losing an opportunity here.

**Do you have a suggested change to address this issue?**

yes, allow [region] to have a chapter. we have our own language, and we need the ability to communicate in our own language among ourselves and be able to organize a chapter that is not subservient to a [Country] chapter. In fact, read the book "How Change Happens", especially Chapter 1 so you can understand how to create a successful movement. The network should help local chapters to form, not put up roadblocks. Let people organize on whatever lever they see appropriate, even if it is at a local or municipal level. We are volunteers for the commons, not employees of CC. download the book here:

<https://mega.nz/#F!VOYizQha!8-Fcf4FFKuydhCn6qi7VDg>

**3 -----**

**What is the structural element of the Network Strategy that you are referring to?**

The Membership Process

**How has this change impacted your chapter or your ability to organize?**

This current model, helpful as it was, has not accounted for renewal of memberships.

**What is the local context, or a situational example that might help us ensure that a proposed solution will actually address the issue?**

For example, a person who becomes a member of the Network but stops participating after some time. At what point will we re-evaluate their status?

**Do you have a suggested change to address this issue?**

Membership should prompt renewal and a personal self-assessment at the end of a period, e.g. yearly.

**4 -----**

**What is the structural element of the Network Strategy that you are referring to?**

The Membership Process

**How has this change impacted your chapter or your ability to organize?**

The membership process seems to be slow and not as democratic as initially communicated.

The main issue in my view is that the assessment if an applicant is fit to become a member is taken away from the local community and given to a central body which has no knowledge whatsoever of the background of the application. The intention behind the change - to avoid local chapters closing off for newbies - is clear and quite admirable.

However, apparently at this point the GN is not able to provide quicker and easier access to the network, quite the contrary - the long and cumbersome process creates the unpleasant feeling of aspiring to membership in an elite club and discourages open activists from engaging further with the CC movement. In this regard, the membership procedure is directly linked to the issue of Broadening the CC network.

The lack of clarity concerning CC's goals in that regard is quite confusing for the leads as well. On one hand, we are supposed to encourage broad participation and membership, but on the other, once (if) newbies are persuaded to apply for membership, the process leaves our "jurisdiction" completely. Then the applicant not only waits for long months, but is also supposedly subjected to an additional assessment of "suitability" on a central level (nothing grassroots about having a central international body "validating" your belonging to a community, be it one consisting of volunteers), which is discouraging for the applicant and moreso for the "recruiter".

This problem is coupled with the issue that it isn't really clear what does membership provide in terms of benefits or competences.

(A different issue, but very telling of the obvious inclusivity/elitist dilemma the network is facing, is the pricing solution for the CC Cert courses and the resulting outrageous fees. These courses, simply put, contain copyright basics and open movement promotion materials, and I personally consider the efforts to proactively raise awareness on both subjects our primary mission and not something people should come to us and pay to learn. When I go to a librarian conference in [country], and I offer people the knowledge they desperately need (copyright literacy) and the values we want them to adopt (openness) for the price of their monthly salary, I instantly lose credibility as a representative of the open movement. In contrast, WIPO, with its blatant pro-rightsholders policy, offers a great number of online copyright courses at a symbolic price or no price at all. Last but not least, these courses in practice compete with the (unpaid) efforts of local volunteers to raise awareness of the very same issues within local creative communities and GLAM institutions.)

**What is the local context, or a situational example that might help us ensure that a proposed solution will actually address the issue?**

As a consequence of this lack of clarity, at the moment no one in our small chapter considers the recruitment work and formal broadening of the network a priority and is actively invested in it.

**Do you have a suggested change to address this issue?**

I would suggest, first and foremost, and without prejudice to the direct GN membership application process, to authorise chapters to register members directly into the GN. That is to say, if the local chapter approves of an application, this application should need no further validating on central level.

We should also decide if we want to put deliberate effort into broadening membership at all. And in my personal opinion it's OK if we don't, we just need to have clear goals if we do.

## 5 -----

**What is the structural element of the Network Strategy that you are referring to?**

Network and Chapter Composition

**How has this change impacted your chapter or your ability to organize?**

I still don't see the way how a Chapter can survive without a direct way of obtaining economic support

**What is the local context, or a situational example that might help us ensure that a proposed solution will actually address the issue?**

We don't have any economic support unless my personal and economic efforts

**Do you have a suggested change to address this issue?**

Chapter should be able to be economically supported receiving funding through its local institutional affiliation

## 6 -----

**What is the structural element of the Network Strategy that you are referring to?**

The Membership Process

**How has this change impacted your chapter or your ability to organize?**

In my opinion, the new membership process has a good intention but is not easy for the new "possible" members. I think that at least 3 steps complicate the process, some of them are related to communications, other with the structure of the process:

1) the network web site has a "get involved" page that doesn't mention the possibility to be a leader of the movement and participate as a member. You discover how to get involved as a member if you click on the FAQ of the page "Chapters". I mean, the information is not easy to find.

2) The process to become a member is quite a mystery. If you are new, probably someone of your local chapter invited you to be part of the network as a member. So you apply, you choose the only two names that you know for your "voucher". You write a presentation of yourself and after some days you received a note like this:

"Dear \_\_\_\_\_

Before we can evaluate your application to join the Creative Commons Global Network, we need just a few more details.

Please provide us a more complete membership statement, including some of your contributions to the open movement. Without that, it would be very difficult to process your application. If you don't have that much, don't worry. It's not required to be a Network Member to participate within the CC community!

You can update your application details by following this link:

<https://network.creativecommons.org/sign-up/individual/form/>

Once you've updated your application details, we will start evaluating it. Keep in mind you don't need to be a member to participate in your local CC Chapter or to join our Network Platforms.

If you have any questions or concerns about this process, we are happy to help you by email at [network-support@creativecommons.org](mailto:network-support@creativecommons.org), but we are limited in what we can discuss about your particular application.

– Creative Commons"

The strong mention of "Keep in mind you don't need to be a member to participate" is, at least, unstimulating. The fact that the email is signed by "– Creative Commons" is completely impersonal, and don't proportionate the chance to start a conversation with someone. Who is – Creative Commons?. What details does CC need to accept someone to its open movement?

3) The process is too long. The new leader of CC [Chapter], [name], waited for months to be accepted. The justification for that was "His application was stuck at pre-approval stage" without more details.

This situation impacted my chapter in many ways: As an old member and leader, I am not motivated to invite people to go through this process, because in the two or three cases that I have tried it has been exhausting and confusing. There is no tools in my language to explain the process (I know I should work to develop that kind of tool). Have new register members in the chapters is important in order to consolidate a core group that understands CC beyond the licenses. If the process to "get involved" in that role is so complicated, we are facing a big impact for our chapters.

**What is the local context, or a situational example that might help us ensure that a proposed solution will actually address the issue?**

The case that I use in my first answer is real. This case was explained by [Name] from CC [Country] in the last CC Summit in Lisbon. It was the case of one of the [Country] librarians that participated in the advocacy actions that positively affected the copyright reform in [Country]. It's

hard that someone accepts to have more responsibilities in the chapter, now... it is harder that these people accept to go through a process in a foreign language. But even if they try, CC needs more details in order to accept them. The voucher doesn't play that role?

**Do you have a suggested change to address this issue?**

Yes, I think we can start with a communications strategy to put in a simple language "how is the process". Create resources like videos or "guides". Translate those resources. Be clear about timing (how long the process will be). Provide a name and an email for assistance.

**7 -----**

**What is the structural element of the Network Strategy that you are referring to?**

Structure and Legal Standing of Chapters

**How has this change impacted your chapter or your ability to organize?**

The reorganization of the affiliate to the chapter structure has made it harder to do the legal and policy technical assistance work, because the relatively flat nature of the chapter structure isn't a recognizable institutional structure for government agencies, large institutions, and foundations. Also, it conflates two very different activities for the jurisdiction - providing the legal information, technical assistance and policy support that the CC affiliates had traditionally focused on, with the grassroots organization and support that the new chapter structure focuses on. Partners expect CC technical assistance from an organization with a professional role in the CC environment, not people operating in a personal capacity in a network. Also, a professional structure that has longer-term roles and responsibility is expected in many of these inter-organizational contexts.

**What is the local context, or a situational example that might help us ensure that a proposed solution will actually address the issue?**

In [Country], the increase in open licensing policies at large institutions and government agencies requires coordinated and professional support. It's possible to do this in parallel to the work of the chapter, but it would be preferable for there to be an official structure within the chapter for this work.

**Do you have a suggested change to address this issue?**

Ideally, I think there would be a structure like a policy host institution that was approved by the chapter, and governed by it, but that had a longer term planning horizon and decisionmaking authority on outside policy positions.

**8 -----**

**What is the structural element of the Network Strategy that you are referring to?**

Structure and Legal Standing of Chapters

**How has this change impacted your chapter or your ability to organize?**

It would be very useful to be able to add other senior leadership to the leads/ reps list - like a legal lead, or a policy lead to share power and responsibility and have clear lines of communication.

**What is the local context, or a situational example that might help us ensure that a proposed solution will actually address the issue?**

It would be better to broaden the lines of communication so that the elected positions of leads and reps aren't the only points of communication, because it incentivizes needing to run for those positions repeatedly, to stay in the loop.

**Do you have a suggested change to address this issue?**

Let chapters add up to 5 people with official leads positions, such as legal lead, GLAM lead, etc to the leads/ reps lists. Limit/remove silos of communication about policy issues.

9 -----

**What is the structural element of the Network Strategy that you are referring to?**

Navigating the Different Tiers of the Network

**How has this change impacted your chapter or your ability to organize?**

The new membership process is not transparent and has made it very difficult to officialize our status.

**What is the local context, or a situational example that might help us ensure that a proposed solution will actually address the issue?**

We have, in vain, been trying to officialize our chapter. We needed some help with the procedure because internally, there was some uncertainty about who was going to take the lead of the chapter, but once we solved that by attracting a 'new' member (who was not in the community before), we never managed to get him approved - as he was a newcomer, he could not provide credentials except from us (the local team). There was little to no communication about the process, about why he was rejected etc - in the end, there was a bulk acceptance of a number of new members but we never were informed about the reasons for this delay. Of course, our 'new' member by then was fed up and left us. By now the entire team is a bit tired of the process and we have decided to, for now, represent CC at local level but will not engage anymore internationally for now, until someone finds the energy to start up the process again.

**Do you have a suggested change to address this issue?**

With issues like this, you need somebody who will guide you from start to finish, instead of having mails bounced back and forward and then having to wait weeks for replies.

10 -----



**What is the structural element of the Network Strategy that you are referring to?**

Broadening the CC and Open Movements

**How has this change impacted your chapter or your ability to organize?**

Public (Local) still unable to see the CC vision as something noble and potentially promising for the industry due to unfamiliarity of IP and copyright knowledge hence the call for volunteerism slips from the sight.

**What is the local context, or a situational example that might help us ensure that a proposed solution will actually address the issue?**

Volunteerism

**Do you have a suggested change to address this issue?**

Not precisely. An advertorial or a promo via CC official platform. More exposure of CC movement so we can anchor more volunteering in helping to promote the open movement

11 -----

**What is the structural element of the Network Strategy that you are referring to?**

GNC Governance, Platform Framework and role of CC HQ

**How has this change impacted your chapter or your ability to organize?**

I want to point out that we have in two years not been able to bring into life many of the provisions of the current network strategy. Here is a list of some of the points that are currently not brought into life - all are quotes from our strategy document:

1. "It develops and monitors the strategy of the CCGN and provides input for the CC HQ strategy" - there is no strategy, nor does GNC provide input for the CC HQ strategy
2. "It approves Platforms (defined areas of activity, based on a shared set of objectives that Individual and Institutional Members engage in) and resources at their disposal, including a budget" - there have been no discussions about resources and platforms at the disposal of platforms; these resources are largely non-existent
3. "Contributes to the license stewardship (via the License Stewardship Committee)" - there is no License Stewardship Committee
4. "It raises funds for the CCGN" - there is no process for this.

Furthermore, CC platforms do not meet the minimal standard of having a position document, a plan of work and a set of resources - as defined in the strategy document.

Finally, some of the roles of the CC HQ defined in the strategy are also not being fulfilled:

- "It supports the Secretariat of the Global Network Council (GNC)." - there is no such Secretariat

- "It consults further development of the (existing) legal tools with the GNC (via the License Stewardship Committee)" - no such Committee has been established
- "It consults the GNC as part of its own strategic planning" - no such consultations have taken place

There is also neither an Activity Fund or Global Initiative Fund, as defined in the Strategy.

I believe that after almost two years of implementing the strategy, the network (including the HQ) needs to collectively evaluate why all these elements of the strategy have not been brought to life. This evaluation should lead either to establishing a plan for implementing all these points, or to removing them from the network strategy.

The fact that many of the elements of the new network strategy have not been brought to life means that both the network and its elements - the chapters - don't have the full capacity to do work, which were envisioned when agreeing on the new network strategy.

### **Do you have a suggested change to address this issue?**

We need to evaluate reasons for which these elements have not been implemented and based on the evaluation come up with a plan for implementing these elements in the CC network. This might need to be a long-term plan, but should be defined.

## **Positive Feedback**

12 -----

### **What is the structural change in the Network Strategy that you are referring to?**

Network and Chapter Composition

### **How has this change strengthened your chapter or your ability to organize?**

The CC Network and Chapter Composition need to be more open in order to create comfortable spaces for exchanging individual experiences and curating a shared one. The meaningful integration of diversity, inclusivity, and being welcoming to newbies allow to reach out to multiple stakeholders locally and encourage CC chapter members to become members of the Creative Commons Global Network. I suggest the applicants currently being voted on can be approved by 3 members of the Membership Committee instead 5.

Another concern, a limited fund reduce the activity of the CC chapter!. Last September, the Second CC [Country] Chapter meeting was held at the University of [City]. Our grant application to the CC Community Activities Fund was unsuccessful, we haven't received any financial support. However, our meeting was successful, we can read the notes on these blog post and tweet :

[Link]  
[Link]  
[Link]

### 13 -----

**What is the structural change in the Network Strategy that you are referring to?**

Navigating the Different Tiers of the Network

**How has this change strengthened your chapter or your ability to organize?**

It makes things clearer.

### 14 -----

**What is the structural change in the Network Strategy that you are referring to?**

Grants and Scholarships

**How has this change strengthened your chapter or your ability to organize?**

We are very grateful for the \$1000 grant we received for the open awards, we are currently working on the video to promote the idea, and begin with the first awards in 2020! Thank you!!

### 15 -----

**What is the structural change in the Network Strategy that you are referring to?**

Broadening the CC and Open Movements

**How has this change strengthened your chapter or your ability to organize?**

[Chapter] is relatively "new" among all the other restructured chapter. I am not sure how things work for others but I think that more tools can be designed for us to teach others about CC. The card game is great but CC Global Network maybe consider to produce boardgame or even apps? It's a chicken and egg issue, more people know about CC, more resources can be pulled together from local authorities.

### 16 -----

**What is the structural change in the Network Strategy that you are referring to?**

Broadening the CC and Open Movements

**How has this change strengthened your chapter or your ability to organize?**

Members are much more aware of their roles and started to think for wider engagements in open movement.

17 -----

**What is the structural change in the Network Strategy that you are referring to?**

Monitor the whole process

**How has this change strengthened your chapter or your ability to organize?**

The new Chapter system seems to be good but some issues need to be monitored. The online application process seems, for some people to be a bit buggy (some system bugs and some people-related delays). There were issues in some countries, such as [Country] where the chapter collapsed, seemingly due to people leaving the country and no one taking up the roles. The CC team needs to keep a watch on the technologies that “hold” the network together both globally and at a country level, including the availability of corporate file sharing (such as Google Drive), video conferencing (such as Zoom), and Slack.

18 -----

**What is the structural change in the Network Strategy that you are referring to?**

Network and Chapter Composition

**How has this change strengthened your chapter or your ability to organize?**

It's been great to have the chapter structure to organize CC meet ups and connection and other OER and open events. It helps people feel connected to the CC community.

19 -----

**What is the structural change in the Network Strategy that you are referring to?**

Grants and Scholarships

**How has this change strengthened your chapter or your ability to organize?**

More grants and scholarships are required for African Countries especially for lobbying and advocacy training to policy makers

20 -----

**What is the structural change in the Network Strategy that you are referring to?**

Broadening the CC and Open Movements

**How has this change strengthened your chapter or your ability to organize?**

It has made our chapter to be more familiar with the community around us

21 -----

**What is the structural change in the Network Strategy that you are referring to?**

Network and Chapter Composition

**How has this change strengthened your chapter or your ability to organize?**

Chapter should have a strategic plan and a regular monthly or quarterly meeting is important to run the chapter with the strategic goals.

## COMMENTS SUBMITTED VIA EMAIL

22 -----

Como aporte a la discusión me gustaría destacar aspectos positivos hasta ahora y otros que pueden mejorar:

Como positivo debo decir que recibí constante y clara ayuda en el acompañamiento en la creación del Capítulo [Country]. Simeon en todo momento estuvo presto a dar asesoría y muy pendiente de que cumpliéramos el procedimiento establecido. Esto fue sin lugar a duda una gran ayuda y respaldo.

Además, hemos sido beneficiados con ayuda para asistir a la cumbre de este año 2019, así como un pequeño grant de 100\$, que en el contexto [Country] nos sirvió para organizar tres eventos académicos en tres ciudades diferentes.

Creo que el proceso de las ayuda recibidas fue transparente en todo momento e incluso con contraloría pues se respondieron diversos cuestionarios y controles que transparentaban tanto el uso que le dimos al dinero como el proceso para obtenerlo y los criterios.

Así mismo, obtuvimos una beca parcial para el certificado Creative Commons de una de nuestras miembros lo cual es una ayuda para actividades futuras y certificar a la comunidad dentro de [Country].

Lo que creo que puede mejorar: CC es una organización internacional, manejarse en solo un idioma no parece ser la política mas abierta posible. Un ejemplo claro son los organismos internacionales que admiten comunicaciones en los idiomas mas comunes entre sus miembros. Por otra parte, quizás una instancia regional seria adecuada, para coordinar actividades entre los capítulos nacionales de la región. Esta instancia se sentiría mas cercana que un lejano HQ, que debe atender asuntos globales.

Por ultimo, creo que la iniciativa de las paginas webs para los capítulos, así como la sugerencia que se acompañara con correos corporativos, etc, son formas de dotar de sentimiento de pertenencia a los miembros, lo cual es indispensable para crear comunidades duraderas.

Es ese mi pequeño aporte y en aras de una conversación constructiva que sirva a mejorar la red.

*[English Translation]* As a contribution to the discussion I would like to highlight positive aspects so far and others that can improve:

As a positive I must say that I received constant and clear help in accompanying the creation of the [Country] Chapter. Simeon was at all times ready to give advice and very pending that we comply with the established procedure. This was without a doubt a great help and support.

In addition, we have been benefited with assistance to attend the summit of this year 2019, as well as a small grant of \$100, which in the context [Country] helped us organize three academic events in three different cities.

I believe that the process of the aid received was transparent at all times and even with comptrollership, since various questionnaires and controls were answered that transparent both the use we gave to the money and the process to obtain it and the criteria.

Likewise, we obtained a partial scholarship for the Creative Commons certificate from one of our members which is an aid for future activities and to certify the community within [Country].

What I think can be improved: CC is an international organization, managing in just one language does not seem to be the most open policy possible. A clear example is the international organizations that accept communications in the most common languages among their members.

On the other hand, perhaps a regional instance would be adequate to coordinate activities between the national chapters of the region. This instance would feel closer than a distant HQ, which must address global issues.

Finally, I believe that the initiative of the web pages for the chapters, as well as the suggestion that will be accompanied by corporate emails, etc., are ways of providing members with a feeling of belonging, which is essential to create lasting communities.

That is my small contribution and for the sake of a constructive conversation that helps to improve the network.

23 -----

Though my suggestions/Proposals are not directly related to strategy thats why i chose email instead google form:

**Asia Pacific regional meeting:** After 2016 no Asia pacific regional meeting scheduled, but as a focal point of CC movements in Asia, there should be one regional meetup/Conference in each year with some activities.

**Some Promotions Event of CC Summit:** As like other mega events of open sources Conference they usually do some Promotions event of the summit with Local Embassy of the summit host country, it eventually helps many ways like Local Community got some introductions in the community as well as its easy for the Participants to get the Visa for the Summit. I believe CC will take some initiative for CC Summit 2020.

**Mobile App for CC Summit:** I believe every Country is now aware of environment pollution. So a paperless Summit will be great, Last month i joined PCF9 in Edinburgh,UK where the Conference Committee used one Mobile app for the whole summit. So i will propose for a Mobile App for next CC Summit 2020.

24 -----

#### **Network and Chapter Composition:**

I think the change in the composition of the CC Network was very healthy in terms of openness. Personally, I became a member last year, and I couldn't have had that chance with the older structure, as I am not part of any institution or NGO. I think the new structure facilitates the process for new people and new ideas to enrich CC from grassroots, and that's great. Also, I think it's great in terms of transparency.

At the same time, this new openness and diversity generate new challenges. It would probably be harder to organize coordinated actions between individuals that could, hypothetically, never get to see each other in real life (especially in big countries). It is complex even to get to some basic agreements on an agenda. Still, I think that complexity is completely worthy if we want CC to serve real people with real problems around the knowledge commons.

Also trying to carry out things based on voluntary work is a hard task. Voluntary work is amazing, but not very reliable; you can't work on a schedule if people are volunteering and they need to put time on other jobs to feed their families. So that's a huge challenge, that we share with lots of volunteers-based organizations in the world. I agree with the statement "The network should offer volunteers something worthy in exchange for their time." Motivation is a key factor. Also, I think that self-determination in the chapters is a very good thing, but it would be great to have a little more guidelines about the projects that are being discussed (both at national, regional and global levels), and how to contribute. Sometimes volunteers are keen to collaborate, but they just don't know how or where to start. The knowledge commons is big, and so are the factors that threaten it... for the non-lawyer ones, sometimes it could feel like a labyrinth. More articulation would be very much appreciated.

#### **The Membership Process:**

I've heard there have been some troubles at the membership process in [Country] - I haven't experimented them myself. Of course no one's happy if a bad bot gets on the way, or a technical bug prevents a worthy person to become a member... but in general, I think the process is essentially ok (as long as it works).

### **Structure and Legal Standing of Chapters:**

I don't think that not having legal standing in each chapter would be necessarily a bad thing... it's the tension between openness and control. What is more problematic, though, is how would the chapters manage to afford the cost of activities, given the fact that they rely no more on organizations with a certain level of budget for that.

### **Navigating the Different Tiers of the Network:**

As I said, I think we could use a little more articulation :-)) in order to contribute more efficiently.

### **Grants and Scholarships:**

I have nothing but gratitude for the travel scholarship system, that helped me to meet this amazing community.

I think the small grants system could be a good one to help get projects done... Unfortunately, the one time I applied for a grant for a project, I never got an answer. So working on that protocol could be useful.

### **Broadening the CC and Open Movements:**

I think this is a core issue. As the world changed in so many ways since 2001 when CC was created, and so fast, it's important for the CC community to remain open and flexible, eager to be relevant in the big picture of the fight for the right to know, share and multiply. But that's certainly not easy. Due to structural global inequalities, the individuals and communities that get easy access to the organization are usually those who need it less: well educated and empowered communities, mostly lawyers or librarians, white and English speaking. I know language issues are complicated, but I find very challenging this "English first" de facto policy, so established that no one even talk about it; I think no one talks about it because the people you get in the room are people who can deal with English, and the other, would just never get there. I think the global CC Community is losing some important points of view because of that linguistic barrier. I'm not sure about how to deal with that, but I would start saving some part of the CC Summit budget for simultaneous translation, at least for the keynotes and main sessions and for the language of the host country.

Also I think there is a huge effort put on each Summit (I LOVE summits! So much information and energy and ideas condensed!). So it would be amazing to have a way to enjoy that flow of energy for longer periods, and to really be able to continue the conversations, discussions and projects that start on those bustling days. Maybe some kind of documentation protocol could help. We do have the Sched structure for that, but in real life, the sessions that get notes are a very low number; most of them just vanish in the air without any record. (I know that because as a journalist, I'm always trying to cover the most and catch up with the sessions I'm missing, and



it's hard!). So I think that might be great to put up a documentation team, maybe with volunteers, who could be part of the local volunteer summit teams (always amazing people!), or recruited from the people who attend the Summit as grantees. That could also lead to having notes and records in different languages, which could be a nice improvement in diversity

## 25 -----

I'm [Name], part of the Creative Commons community in [Country].

I have participated in multiple translations for Creative Commons, and for many free software projects.

The translation of most of the CC materials has not been easy. The license allows the modification of the materials, but they have not been designed to be easy to translate.

My feedback is: spend some time on the early stages of the production of new materials to make sure that they will be written in a format that is straight-forward to translate. Bonus points for engaging a community of translators and to help them publish the materials once they are fully translated into their languages.

I'm happy to help in any way I can. I will continue translating, but to really feel like I am a part of the project, I need my language and my community to be taken into account early, not as an after-thought.

## 26 -----

Hello! Thank you for the opportunity to send comments on the structure and operation of the global network. My name is [Name], I am a member of the global network and a member of the [Country] chapter of CC. I will share some ideas on the topics proposed for the feedback process.

\* Network and Chapter Composition: I think the new network structure has helped bring back many chapters that have been inactive for a long time. That seems like a great achievement.

I think it is positive that the presence of legal experts as chapter leaders is not required. That requirement was appropriate when Creative Commons licenses were to be ported to the legal framework of each country. However, as of version 4.0 of the licenses, that requirement ceased to have a reason to support it, so it seems very positive that the new charter adapts to the new reality.

I think that the new network structure favors the confluence of experts from diverse sectors (lawyers, but also educators, librarians, researchers, artists, musicians, designers, etc.), each

contributing their knowledge about open cultural production and Open access to knowledge. I think this is also a positive thing.

\* The Membership Process: First of all, I think it is important to point out a problem of technical and / or procedural implementation that is quite noticeable in the membership process. I had the pleasure of receiving vouch requests from enough people from different countries to join the global network. However, after sending my vouch, I received comments from the people recommended by me saying that the process had been delayed too much without a specific reason. This has caused loss of motivation in some of the vouched people, especially in some who were already part of the CC community for several years and were only asking for their participation in the new network structure.

As for the conceptual aspects of the new membership process, it seems to me that there has been a very positive progress with respect to the old model. The new model has allowed to involve many people from different countries who felt excluded from the network because they did not have access to the affiliated institution of their country. The new, much more open membership process allowed these people to approach the chapters and begin to participate in the activities. This has revived many chapters that were inactive, and has revealed the lack of activity of other chapters that were in a "zombie" state.

In the future it is possible that the characteristics of the network require new adjustments in the membership process, but, in summary, it seems to me that this was the right change at the right time, to solve the problems that the network was having.

\* Structure and Legal Standing of Chapters: I find it very interesting that the possibility has been opened for various organizations to become institutional members in a country. Personally, I belong to a chapter ([Country]) that never belonged to a specific affiliated organization, but we were always a group of volunteers from various organizations. Under the old network model, we were forced to ask one of those organizations to do us the favor of signing the Memorandum of Understanding, formally becoming the affiliated institution, but that MoU did not reflect the true functioning of the team. The new structure, however, is better suited to the operation of our chapter.

\* Navigating the Different Tiers of the Network: I think that, in this aspect, the new structure has interesting aspects, although they should be improved. What seems most interesting to me is the incorporation of platforms, that is to say, groups of global reach gathered by thematic affinity. I think this participation model has great potential. In a way, it resembles the Wikimedia user groups, which have served to revitalize the way they organize in that community. I believe, however, that the platforms still need more vitality, having a calendar of continuous activities. Platforms are an element that should continue to improve, with more resources and solid leadership.

I believe that, as long as the platforms do not gain that vitality of which I spoke, there is little that the network can provide to the members, beyond what they can do in their chapters. There are many things that could be done to enhance collaboration: organize regional chapter meetings; organize annual or biannual thematic meetings of each platform; favor the connection between chapters, groups and individuals to co-organize events or to develop research projects, training, dissemination, festivals, conferences, workshops, toolkits, etc.

\* Grants and Scholarships: Chapters like mine, in which all members are 100% voluntary and do not have other sources of financing, require a minimum amount of funding to be able to print materials, pay transportation and develop some face-to-face activities. I think that the chapters should have the possibility of requesting an annual grant for operating expenses, of at least 5000 dollars per year, covering the most basic expenses to run without volunteers having to put money from our pockets. That small expense would have a great impact, favoring a much more important presence of CC in the territory.

As for the Scholarships to attend the CC Summit, I think it is very positive that people from the global south are prioritized. However, I think there is a problem: the selection process for scholarships tends to favor the most "famous" people or those with the greatest experience in the network, given that they are the ones that can most easily demonstrate their merits to participate in the Summit. This can make it difficult for there to be true diversity in the awarding of Scholarships, since there is a tendency to exclude new or less experienced people. In particular, the [Country] chapter has found it difficult to deal with this issue, since we have always tried to have a rotation in people traveling to the Summit, so that new people gain experience and get to know the network better. I think that if the chapter could choose or recommend the people who most need the scholarship, this problem could be addressed in a better way. In short, I would like to recommend that the scholarship system favor the inclusion of new people rather than the repetition of historical people.

\* Broadening the CC and Open Movements: I think CC's willingness to work in coordination with what has been called the Big Open seems very important. This alliance has strengthened not only the struggle for free access to knowledge, but also for an open internet, the right to privacy, freedom of expression and, in general, for human rights in the digital environment. The articulation between social organizations is fundamental to achieve important achievements in a common front. I believe that these articulations could be expanded a little more to have stronger alliances with other organizations fighting for human rights. For example, there is a whole important movement of independent media and community radios that fight for freedom of expression both online and offline. Feminist, indigenous and Afro-descendant movements have also developed actions to favor the presence of women and minorities on the Internet, and to carry out work to decolonize knowledge. These are objectives shared with the CC community, and I believe that therefore, new alliances could be created, for example by carrying out joint activities with organizations of these movements.

In addition, I think there is a fairly important presence of women in the CC network, but it is necessary to discuss what kind of roles women play within the network. In general, women are in positions of less hierarchy or less visible than men. This and other issues I think could be better debated if the global CC network had any place to think about the gender perspective and intersectionality within our movement. Perhaps it might be interesting that in the future there is something similar to a platform that addresses these issues in the CC network.

## 27 -----

1. Sobre las afiliaciones a la red global. Como capítulo [Country] si bien entendemos la diferencia y el valor de reconocer a cualquier persona que a título individual trabaje por la misión de Creative Commons encontramos diversas problemáticas a mediano y largo plazo en el fomento a este tipo de afiliaciones desde Creative Commons central.

Primero, no habría ninguna diferencia entre actuar a título personal y a título organizacional, de hecho, contar con esfuerzos descoordinados individuales minaría de a poco los esfuerzos comunitarios e históricos detrás de las organizaciones Creative Commons con alcance nacional y su función se limitaría a la vocación de agruparse ya que, salvo el trabajo conjunto, eso no amerita ninguna facilidad para los grupos frente a la estrategia global. Adicionalmente, si para un grupo organizado es difícil abrirse camino dentro del discurso político-legal-digital de un país, no nos imaginamos los esfuerzos individuales o aislados.

Segundo, pensando a futuro no entendemos cómo se podrán empatar diferentes esfuerzos que se empalmen unos sobre otros, es decir, ¿qué pasará cuando dos grupos separados estén trabajando con una misma institución? ¿qué pasa si un dos grupos o un grupo o individuo comienza a competir o toman posturas separadas sobre un mismo tema que atañe al territorio común? ¿Cómo se dirimirán las diferencias en ese sentido? Tales huecos en la estrategia y la forma en que se ha implementado pueden causar serios temas organizacionales y plantean un reto en la reflexión de la gobernanza del movimiento.

2. Proceso de vouching. El proceso de voucheo nos ha parecido una herramienta valiosa para evitar que gente con claras intenciones arribistas o que busquen solo el uso de la marca Creative Commons o el provecho propio lleguen a integrarse a la estructura de CC. O como ocurrió en el caso [Country] en el pasado, que incluso quienes detentan la marca de manera legítima utilizaran en fines ilegítimos el prestigio y la responsabilidad que implica el tenerla como afiliado. Aunque ello no omite posibilidades de tergiversación del proceso como compadrazgos o amiguismos. Una vez que la estructura crezca un mismo grupo tenderá al crecimiento de sí mismo y podría bloquear el de otros.

3. Chaptership. No hay duda que [Chapter] fue beneficiario del reinicio de la estrategia y agradece que haya pasado. Sin embargo, aún quedan dudas sobre el trabajo de organizaciones reconocidas anteriormente y el daño que hicieron dentro de nuestro territorio. Es decir, muchos de los esfuerzos de nuestro capítulo se concentran en reparar errores de

concepción y entendimiento de lo libre y de las licencias dentro de nuestro país, esto supone un doble esfuerzo.

En nuestro grupo el rol entre el coordinador (Coordinator) y representante ante la comunidad global (Representative) está resultando innecesaria. De hecho generaba confusión entre los roles internos y externos de cada uno y, aunque ambos existen, en la práctica la comunicación hacia la comunidad global y la coordinación del capítulo recaen en la misma persona. Todo lo anterior con pleno apoyo y consenso del capítulo. Por tanto pensamos que cada organización debería tener la capacidad ya sea de fusionar ambos roles o bien de adoptar el contacto con la red global como un recurso que pueda asumir el grupo pero sin la obligación de adoptar dos roles diferentes. La libertad en estructura y forma de trabajo es para nosotros un beneficio puesto que nos permite flexibilidad y dinamismo de trabajo por un lado, mientras que por otro nos ahorramos la necesidad de buscar la incorporación jurídica conforme a las leyes del país puesto que aún no nos sentimos preparados para ello ni lo sentimos necesario.

De fondo el problema tiene origen que las estructuras designadas desde el mandato central de Creative Commons resultan extrañas desde una perspectiva cultural en nuestro país en donde de ordinario las organizaciones trabajan bajo una sola cabeza.

4. Perspectivas de futuro. Entendemos y ejercemos las responsabilidades del capítulo, pero por otro lado nos gustaría ver, también, una lista clara de los derechos con los que cuenta nuestra organización al formar parte de la red global. Nuestro capítulo crece rápidamente así como sus actividades, por lo que comienzan a surgir los temas de sostenibilidad e infraestructura. El trabajo voluntario es nuestro capital más valioso pero no pasará mucho tiempo antes de que las personas comiencen a agotarse. Igualmente, cada vez comienza a relucir la falta de recursos económicos para desarrollar nuestras actividades con más eficiencia y con una presencia generalizada en todo el territorio [Country] que es muy extenso. También, nuestros voluntarios y voluntarias tienen grandes ideas y proyectos que quieren aplicar pero la carencia de recursos y vías claras de fondeo no permiten llevarlos a cabo. Esto último frenará nuestro crecimiento a corto plazo dentro del siguiente año.

Si queremos profesionalizar al capítulo será necesario alguna forma transparente, eficiente pero expedita de fondeo.

5. Comunidad global. Salvo por las valiosísimas iniciativas de integración regional con Latinoamérica, no sentimos que tengamos intercambio de experiencias, mejores prácticas o de aprender de otros capítulos del mundo. Por ello distinguimos la necesidad de formar y consolidar redes regionales de apoyo en donde sean posible.

*[English Translation:]* About the CC GNC Memberships: As the [Chapter] we understand the value of recognizing individual members of Creative Commons, but we find several problems with this affiliation with Central CC in the middle and long term.

First, there would be no difference in acting as an individual member or in an organizational capacity, in fact, having many uncoordinated individual efforts could gradually undermine the collective ones behind organizations hosting a local CC Chapter, and their function could be limited to just getting together given that, besides some collective work, there is no advantage for Chapters from the global strategy. Furthermore, if an organized group faces challenges breaking into the legal-political-digital discussions in a given Country, we can't imagine how lost the individual efforts could become.

Second, thinking about the future, we can't understand how to balance different efforts going in the same directions: for example, what would happen if two different groups are working with the same institution? What if one group starts competing or takes stands differently on the same subject? How will those differences be resolved? Such loopholes in the strategy and the way it has been implemented could cause severe issue for organizations and set up a challenge that requires reflection in terms of "movement governance".

2. Vouching: We believe this process has potential in terms of avoiding people with clear intentions of blocking processes or just wanting to use the CC trademark for self convenience. Or, as happened with [Chapter] in the past, those who hold the brand legitimately will use the prestige and responsibility for illegitimate purposes. On the same page, it is important to mention that when the structure grows (chapter) there are many chances of blocking people and concentrating power.

3. Chapters: It is clear how beneficial the strategy restart was for [Chapter] but we still have doubts regarding the efforts and work provided by organizations in the past and /or the damage they cause within our territory. Our efforts now focus on dealing with their mistakes, which means a double effort on our side.

In our chapter, the roles of a chapter lead and chapter rep. are completely unnecessary. In fact, it causes confusion between the internal and external roles of each one, because in practice, the communication and coordination fall on the same person. We support the idea of every organization having the right to decide how it wants to organize, and should have the capability of merging roles or designing the outreach to the global community as they see fit. Freedom of structure is a benefit for us allowing us flexible and dynamic adaptations.

The problem lies in the design that the central structure has determined (HQ) which are strange from a cultural point of view of our Country where organizations answer to one head/lead.

4. Future perspectives: We understand our chapter responsibilities, but we would like to see, also, a clear set of rights we should have as a chapter. [Chapter] is growing fast and so are our events and activities, so questions regarding infrastructure and sustainability are starting to appear. Voluntary work in our chapter is valuable and it won't take too long until people start to burn out. In the same way, everyday is more clear how not having the possibility of raising funds to develop our activities more efficiently in a big territory like [Country] is a problem. Our

volunteers have great ideas that simply without funding can't be developed. This will cut short our growing speed by early 2020. If we want to professionalize the chapter, we need a clear but fast way of funding us.

5. CC Global Network: Except for the regional integration initiatives in Latin America, we don't feel like we are having any exchange or communications of experiences or visions with the rest of the CC Global Network. That is why we distinguish the need to form regional networks whenever possible.

## 28 -----

Dear GNC Executive Committee, fellow members of the GNC,

We welcome an open review of the Global Network Strategy. Our community is, next to the license infrastructure, our greatest asset as Creative Commons. Over the past 2 years, a lot has changed for Creative Commons in the [Country]. This is in part due to the opportunities the new network structure have provided us. We are therefore happy to share our views, and hope for a strong shared outcome of this review process.

From Affiliate to Chapter

The [Country] affiliate to Creative Commons international was one of the oldest, created in 2004. This was done by organisations with a passion for intellectual property, openness and the commons, [Organization], [Organization], and [Organization]. The affiliate achieved a lot until 2018, when it was transformed into the Chapter.

We welcomed, and still welcome, the more loose approach of the Chapters. The institutional model excluded many members of the open community in the [Country] to explicitly share their affiliation with CC, either because they were natural persons, they were not connected to one of the affiliated institutions, or the perception was that 'CC [Country]' was already claimed by the affiliate.

It has to be noted that none of the former affiliate organisation are actively part of the new chapter. This can be due to a lack of ownership within the new structure, but can also be a coincidence in changing their organisational directions.

We've created the Chapter and have solved our need for a legal structure in [Organization]. By doing so we have gathered over a 100 members in [Country], a subset of whom want to be active in the Global Network but most choose not too. By working in a '[Organization]' structure (Association) we have created a 4-person elected board that supports our work in [Country]. This helps us give appreciation in titles to active members in the community.

**In short we are happy with the current Network and Chapter Composition. It gives us the flexibility to shape it to our local needs, either by raising a separate legal structure and opening up to the community.**

## Membership Process

In terms of the new membership process, we have positive and negative experiences. Our biggest grievance is the timeline of becoming a member of the global network. We have - in part due to technical issues on the website - had to actively manage the process membership of several local community members. However, we also had a successful campaign to increase membership. Currently 1 in every 20 GNC member is from the [Country].

We worry that more new people to the community may not be able to find us in order to get local help to navigate the membership process. **A good review of the membership process, with a focus on speed and appreciation for those who apply, is therefore needed.** We have not seen a new [Country] GNC member in a year.

**We also argue for a clarification of the 'vouching' process.** It is sometimes difficult for people to start becoming an appreciated member for whom people can vouch, as the only opportunity presented is becoming a member. This can be counter-intuitive. We need to be able to bring people into the fold as a new active volunteer, and not bar people from joining.

Next to the process of becoming a member, **we argue for a discussion on how we can actively appreciate the members we have more.** While we work within the [Country] to show appreciation and support to our members, we feel it can be perceived as if the global organisation has very little support for the network. We recognise that a lot is done to support the network in terms of infrastructure, and the people present at the International Summit also receive appreciation. However, someone who is less able to travel to this event can feel left out. We do not have a concrete solutions to this, but welcome a conversation.

## Core infrastructure

We are very worried about the maintenance of the core license infrastructure of Creative Commons. The current technology stack that support the over 600 licenses that Creative Commons offers was created over a decade ago and issues have been developing over the years that are not addressed. Issues like inaccessible 3.0 license legal text that have been prominent at active chapters have not been accessible since the introduction of the 4.0 licenses in 2015.

Creative Commons HQ is currently more focussed on innovative products (i.e. Search) than in maintaining their license infrastructure. While we appreciate the temptation (and funding possibilities) of developing new and innovative products **we urge CC HQ to ensure that the**



**core license infrastructure is and will be in working order.** Not doing so would undermine our credibility.

## Funding

A common discussion within the network is that of funding for our work. We acknowledge that sourcing multi-year funding for something like the Creative Commons Network is very difficult. As Creative Commons [Country] we have been very lucky to have been funding since 2004 for about 10 years by the [Country] Ministry of Culture, Education and Science. Since then our work, first as an Affiliate and now as a Chapter, has been on a volunteer basis. While it is possible for us to receive funding in our country for projects (such as our project Filtermeniet - Don't Filter Me) it has proven difficult if not impossible to get funding for our core work as community builders and managers. Furthermore, the activities to get funding take up a - in our opinion - too large a portion of our limited time as volunteers with full time jobs elsewhere. Time that should be spent building our community to carry out our activities.

**We would welcome a discussion on how to address the issue of core-activities funding and support within the Global Network.**

Also, while less of a burden within our own chapter, we would like to stress that the relatively small amounts of money that are needed to run a chapter add up. These costs can be things such as telephone costs, renting spaces and catering for our meetings, printing stickers. Since the chapters are now run by people, and not institutions, these costs are more difficult to cover from anywhere besides the personal accounts of volunteers.

**We would argue for a small fund, perhaps in the spirit of the deactivated 'Awesome Fund', where Chapters who need it can apply for small funding for the type of costs mentioned above.**

We would like to close by noting that this letter has been prepared from the perspective of the Chapter Lead and GNC Representative. We have asked our membership to also add their personal feedback where relevant, and hope they have done so.

## ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

(shared over listservs, discussions and meetings regarding these issues)

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[https://docs.google.com/document/d/1-PzXv\\_1Pgyqm6BvgJ6s2L-mh2n83LT9k9fKKGZrkWqw/e/dit?usp=sharing](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1-PzXv_1Pgyqm6BvgJ6s2L-mh2n83LT9k9fKKGZrkWqw/e/dit?usp=sharing)

During the chapter meeting this morning (05/10/2019), a number of immediate concerns were raised by some chapter leads and representatives. We met in the evening to lay them out and to bring them to the attention of the CC Community. These issues need to be addressed with urgency because they affect the work of currently active chapters and put the success of the Global Network Strategy at risk.

1. Chapter and Global Network membership
  1. Every Chapter should decide about their own membership
  2. The Membership Committee should only decide on membership requests from people who are not members of a chapter
  3. Membership of a Chapter automatically implies membership of Global Network
2. Legal structures: Each Chapter should decide on their legal structure
3. Funding: Resources are essential for the work on the ground, it is vital that each Chapter should be able to fundraise using the CC name

These three points outline the common concerns articulated in the meeting this morning. We are sharing them with the intention that the entire CC Community can contribute to these conversations and decisions in an open and transparent way.

### 30 -----

My name is [Name] and I am writing as both the Public Lead and the GNC representative for [Country]. I was hired into the role of Public Lead in April of 2017. Here in [Country] this role has been funded by our national government since 2007. This is not a volunteer role for me and I am a relative newcomer into the open community.

I am choosing to submit via a GoogleDoc, rather than the GoogleForm so that I and others can share and respond to my comments locally and globally. I would encourage other submitters to do the same and to share their responses on the email list and other comms channels. As a community we've struggled with open conversation and this process gives us another opportunity to develop our horizontal organising skills.

My comments are quite critical. For us in [Country], the new network structure destroyed a well-established and high functioning funded project devoted to helping [Country]ers use Creative Commons licenses. [Affiliate] had 1.5 FTE, a 7 person advisory board, and a set of established working relationships across [Country]. We were a recognised presence at conferences and in the larger community. You can read about the history and work of [Country] in our book, [Title].

In the aftermath of the new structure, we were forced to make a range of changes that have led us to transition into a small legally constituted incorporated society. The new organisation is called [Organization]. [Organization] employs me and I continue to do much of the same work that [Affiliate] did. I am also the Public Lead and the elected GNC representative. [Organization]

is transitioning away from Creative Commons work to focus more broadly on issues of digital oppression and justice, including copyright and ethical licensing.

You can read more about that transition and our motivations [\[Link\]](#).

**1. Network and Chapter Composition:** The composition of the CC Network has shifted since the implementation of the Network Strategy: from prioritizing legal experts and thought-leaders toward a more grassroots, volunteer-focused organization. For many, this means a more inclusive chapter and a more diverse membership, but it may also present challenges in recruiting and retaining key people in the region. While membership does offer organizations and individuals more say in CC decisions, the benefits of membership are not clearly articulated beyond that. The network should offer volunteers something worthy in exchange for their time.

The project that was [\[Affiliate\]](#) grew out of the work needed to port the licenses into [\[Country\]](#) law. Because the [\[Country\]](#) government chose to adopt the Creative Commons licenses as the basis for the [\[Country\]](#) Government Open Access and Licensing framework, there was and remains a need to educate civil servants and the general public about the Creative Commons license suite. There also was and remains a need to ensure that the interests of [\[Country\]](#) are represented within the Creative Commons community. This was the role of [\[Affiliate\]](#).

The change in the network structure made both of those much more challenging. With the transition to individual membership, [\[Affiliate\]](#) lost its MOU and its role as an affiliate. With the loss of affiliate status came additional challenges that relate to legal structures and membership. Those will be discussed under the appropriate sections.

The [\[Country\]](#) chapter is not actively soliciting new members and is no longer engaged in educational or advocacy projects. Without a legal structure it's not possible for the chapter to fundraise, indemnify organisers for events, or employ staff. This is part of why the chapter is no longer an active part of the [\[Country\]](#) community.

Most of the work that [\[Affiliate\]](#) did was professional development, policy advising, and compliance & risk management. This is not work that lends itself to a social club, which is how the 2017 Network restructure forced us to organise ourselves.

The work of [\[Affiliate\]](#) required informed copyright practitioners, public policy expertise, and skilled educators. It also benefited from a close relationship with the larger Creative Commons community and a formal recognition of its status. Without that, we do not have the authority to speak as 'Creative Commons [\[Country\]](#)' to government, which was crucially important for our work.

Another important local context is that the work we do has been compensated since 2007. There are chapters whose work is subsidised by universities and other institutions but that model does not make sense in our local context. While other institutions did historically provide

support in exchange for the payment of large overheads, [Affiliate] has always been responsible for providing its own funding, which it did via Outcome Agreements with the national government.

**2. The Membership Process:** Under the old CC Network structure, CC HQ signed memoranda with organizations and institutions which would serve as the primary affiliate in a particular region or country. This model was relatively restrictive to new or interested individuals or parties, and the degree of effectiveness activities between chapters varied significantly. To address this, CC transitioned to an individual-level membership model, where people apply to a centralized, global membership board, and local chapters are now required to include anyone from their jurisdiction as long as they receive approval. Since the membership process is handled centrally, it can create a disconnect between members and their local chapter.

The membership process laid out in the Network Strategy is colonial, disrespectful, and disruptive for chapters. It needs to be reformed by devolving control and autonomy to each chapter. Having an American charity determine the membership of our [Country] based organisation is not a good practice and would be hard to explain if we were to do local recruitment and to our local funders. It also isn't the kind of praxis that builds healthy global collaborations or communities.

The problems with the current system have manifested themselves over and over. Early on, we had an important, long standing, and locally beloved member of our community rejected for membership. We are a small country with a small population and this rejection created a serious breach within our community. CCHQ and the Membership Committee didn't even have enough respect for us or for me to speak directly with the Chapter before the decision was made. I found out when the rejected member reached out to me to ask why their application process was delayed.

We also struggled to get enough local members approved so that we could begin vouching members ourselves. [Organization] staff were rejected despite their role doing the day to day work of teaching about the licenses and promoting them. The idea that our staff and Council needed overseas contacts to be approved for membership in the local Creative Commons chapter *when they were the primary [Country] based Creative Commons educators and promoters* was deeply offensive to them and to me as the Public Lead and their manager. Our governance board, staff, and community were being excluded by a clique who were controlling our local membership based on overseas connections and relationships.

We now have enough vouched members to get our staff approved, but the breaches of trust between our chapter and CCHQ and the Membership Committee have led us to discourage new applications. [Organization]'s Council haven't joined and new staff have also not initiated the process. Because I don't know who might be rejected, or why, I've chosen to discourage people from engaging with the process. CCHQ and the Membership Committee have a lot of work to do if they want to rebuild trust with our chapter. Their various rejections and poor

communication have burned their bridges with us. Rebuilding them is going to take time and real effort on their part.

We have also had people accepted for membership *even though they were not known by anyone locally*. This is a serious safety risk. Without direct local control, there is real room here for a takeover by rightsholders, open community misogynists, White supremacists, or others. There is no way for the Membership Committee to know enough about our local context to understand the risks that a potential new member presents, nor are there adequate provisions for safety when someone needs to be excluded from the group. A Code of Conduct set and administered by a committee thousands of kilometers away is little relief for those here in [Country].

As Public Lead, I cannot be responsible for ensuring a safe, inclusive, and diverse membership if I cannot implement membership policies at the local level. And I will not recruit, organise, or do other community building without the authority to develop those policies. These are legal and financial risks that I am being asked to shoulder without any corresponding benefit. Our membership and CoC policies should be developed and enforced locally so that they are responsive to local contexts and have the active participation and consent of those to whom they apply.

**3. Structure and Legal Standing of Chapters:** Under the old structure, a legal agreement existed between the local affiliate and CC HQ. Affiliates were often granted use of the CC trademark or could carry out fundraising activities on behalf of CC. Organizations, often with legal standing in their home country, acted as ‘bases’ or affiliates and operated under the CC trademark. Under the new structure, the CC chapters themselves have no official standing in their jurisdiction and neither is this a requirement. Chapters are given general permission to develop their own organizational structures, but no entity holds responsibility for the chapter.

As an affiliate that employed on paid staff, not being able to have a legal structure was the death blow for [Affiliate]. Employing staff, holding events, fundraising, banking, managing taxes, indemnifying individuals engaged in our work--there are a wide range of reasons to incorporate a legal entity. The work done by [Affiliate] required all of the things in that list. Trying to do them without a legal entity is simply not possible, or legal in some cases. Legal recognition is a prerequisite for our work.

The affiliate model was not perfect, but it did give us room to do what we needed to do. Without the prestige, funding, and name recognition of being able to be the “host organisation” and with the loss of the MOU, which gave us a direct relationship with CCHQ, [Affiliate] had little to offer our hosts or our funders. We were not even allowed to continue using variations of the [Affiliate] brand, which we had worked to establish and promote for 10 years.

I was fortunate that our local hosts and funders were patient while I did the work needed to transition [Affiliate] into [Organization]. The work included the incorporation process, fundraising,

policy development, rebranding, and high level strategy development to define what we were actually going to be and what we were going to do. But it was work that never should have been needed and it distracted from our core business of license education and promotion. We had a working model and a brand identity that was thriving. It was taken from us under protest and without anyone from CCHQ treating us with care or respect.

This issue in particular--the right to legally exist--is absolutely core to every single other issue. Without that right no real work can happen because we can't handle money or manage liability. Providing what amounts to legal education around copyright and licensing, alongside substantial policy work, is not something that should be left to an unincorporated social club. It's highly skilled professional labour that deserves compensation and the protections that come with incorporation.

**4. Navigating the Different Tiers of the Network:** Replacing the affiliate/headquarters structure, there are a variety of tiers in the new CC Network structure. There are chapters, platforms, and the Global Network. Within those, there are members, contributors, leads, and representatives. These tiers often overlap, and the boundaries of each may not always be clear.

I have absolutely no clue how any of this is supposed to work, despite having been active and engaged since the new strategy launched. Working globally on issues is important, but education and policy work are deeply localised. While I appreciate the perspectives and collegial relationships I enjoy with my overseas colleagues, our work happens in a specific place and context. The current structure is so byzantine and so removed from what happens locally that I doubt it has value or relevance to us, even if were I able to figure out how to navigate it.

**5. Grants and Scholarships:** Under the network structure, CC has indicated an interest in offering travel scholarships to the CC Summit, and grants to chapters or members for organizing activities. The process for these should be transparent - and informed by the community.

I don't disagree with the prompt, but I also have no evidence of transparency in the way funds are distributed or a sense of what it means to be "informed by the community." Right now, I do not have enough trust to ask for or accept funding from CCHQ.

**6. Broadening the CC and Open Movements:** The CC network structure was intended to build a more diverse coalition of individuals and organizations in the copyright and openness spaces. Systemic economic, racial, gender, and other barriers persist in the world at large, so without an intentional strategy to broaden the community, the structure risks reinforcing the status quo.

The new structure in no way accomplishes this goal. Interested readers can find my reflections on calls for diversity within the CC community in this document [\[Link\]](#). To summarise, I have found the calls for diversity by CCHQ and the open movement generally to be self-interested attempts to spread the gospel of "open" and present a progressive face to the larger world. It

seems to me that CCHQ has made a strategic choice to align itself with leftist politics even though its underlying theory and praxis are fundamentally grounded in the [neoliberal project](#).

If CCHQ is committed to building a diverse movement, it needs to let go of centralised power and open agenda-setting authority to a much larger group. Rather than treating diversity as a representational challenge that can be solved by adding more Black and Indigenous people, the existing lack of diversity should be recognised as a sign that the underlying community and policy agenda is itself problematic. Build a community where Black and Indigenous people feel comfortable and can exercise power, and diversity will follow.

Creative Commons also needs to acknowledge and solve its severe harassment and abuse problem, both the internal one and within the larger open community. This community and the international organisation that sits at the centre of it are interpersonally toxic. Recruiting new people and groups into this toxic environment, particularly those who have been subject to structural oppressions, would be cruel and exploitative.

As a community, we have still not reckoned with the misogynistic public comments from Lawrence Lessig, the enabling of sex trafficking billionaire Jefferey Epstein by Joi Ito, or the harassment and threatening behaviour of Ryan Merkley. This is a dangerous community for many of us and we haven't even begun the process of talking through how we build safety for each other, much less new people.

**7. Additional Comments:** This is a community whose leaders habitually reframe dissent as harassment. Critical voices are regularly subject to false accusations of harassing behavior, while known abusers are protected by people with formal and informal authority. Powerful men are protected and vulnerable women are subject to misogynistic consequences designed to silence them. Interested readers can engage with a longer explanation [Link] of this ongoing community challenge.

Until we deal with our abusive community leaders, none of the structural changes matter.

## 31 -----

One issue that was raised by many members in LATAM and, as far as I'm concerned, in other places too, is the elusiveness of Slack as a community building tool, besides the open/proprietary discussion. Do any other chapters have a clear stance regarding this?

Another issue raised by LATAM chapters has been that of language. If the network or even CC as a whole had a Spanish speaking page for people that speak Spanish and not English, the whole Spanish-speaking community could get more visibility and at the same time recognition of a community dynamic that already exists. I can imagine the same for chapters of other countries speak the same tongue.

One last issue, one of those mentioned in the [letter](#) some chapters signed during last summit, is that of the membership approval process. Some previously existing chapters haven't had the chance to form again after the transition to the new strategy. There have been cases of "open movement credentials" being asked to people that basically lead the copyright reform process in their own countries.

Deliberate complexity in the signup process basically demotivates anyone not previously connected to the active CC community in their country. Obscurity in the communication with those trying to become members gives the final blow to anyone interested in joining the movement. The letter proposes the following change to avoid these bottlenecks:

1. Chapter and Global Network membership
  - . Every Chapter should decide about their own membership
    1. The Membership Committee should only decide on membership requests from people who are not members of a chapter
    2. Membership of a Chapter automatically implies membership of Global Network

What do you think? Communications tools, language, almost-red tape: should the network be designed with these many checkpoints before finally getting "somewhere"? Where exactly does the road get I think is another issue.

## 32 -----

1. CC certificate: there is the need to consider the recognition of the CC Certificate title to who has the legal expertise in copyright law and CC licenses acquired in many years of training as a volunteer member of a local CC legal working group;
2. Chapter Local Funding: accordingly with Network Strategy Individual and Institutional Members must have the express support of their CC Chapter to solicit funding for their project as a CC country initiative. A clarification is needed about how the Chapters can receive local funding for its national projects if the Chapter itself is not a juridical body. Can an individual member of the Institutional member receive the funds for Chapter project?

## 33 -----

The points below are my views as a member of GNC and a volunteer for MC:

Re. Membership process

- Not giving any role to local chapters in the membership process => Processing membership centrally with the aim of being inclusive and free of decision only from local entity/institutions is a good approach to me but the new structure left local chapters out completely in the process. I believe that if chapter leads have a say/role in the application review process, most of the



problems raised will be resolved. How to do this is another topic but I am sure we can come up with some solutions.

- problem of becoming a legal entity in a country => I understand that the problem arises when the local entity can't choose their own members and legally this is binding. I understand this point, not happened to be in my experience and I don't have a constructive suggestion on how to resolve it.
- Incompetence of a central body to be able to review applications => Locally or globally, if the criteria to become a member is clear and the form is designed to accommodate this information, anybody looking at the application should be able to make a decision without knowing the person. I say this by still referring to my item #1 about the need for involving local chapters in the process. The same issue can easily become a local chapter's problem too.
- Long-waits for the review of applications - I'll try to give you an update later in the call but this period must have been shortened significantly because MC members process the applications regularly. At least, we try to do our best.

Re. CC Certificate: I completely agree that the pricing is unacceptable and this prevent us to promote it locally. Though having the content freely available is a good approach. I use them and encourage everyone else to use the content by adapting their local context.