



Creative Commons Tanzania affiliate team held their inaugural CC Salon on 6th December, 2013 at the Open University of Tanzania headquarters along Kawawa Road in Dar es Salaam between 2-6

pm. The Salon was the third in Sub Saharan region following Kenya's early this year and South Africa's held in August, 2006.

Attracting over 60 diverse professionals whom included such as academics, bloggers, journalists, scientists, engineers, students, librarians and information system experts, lawyers, medical practitioners, policy makers, IT professionals, representatives of Tanzania Medical Students Association, Consortium of Tanzania University Libraries and Researchers and Coalition for Open Access in Tanzania, among other participants.

Among the prominent attendees included Ms. Doreen Sinare, CEO-Copyright Society of Tanzania, Ms. Loy Mhando representing CEO-Business Registration and Licensing Agency, Dr. Mary Mayige, Director General - St. Laurent Diabetes Centre and Alex Gakuru the Regional Coordinator – Africa, Creative Commons based in Kenya.

The event was officiated by Prof. Elifas Bisanda the Deputy Vice Chancellor Academic and Acting Vice Chancellor who delivered the welcoming remarks on behalf of the Vice Chancellor Prof. Tolly Mbwette. In attendance was Prof. Modest Varisanga the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Learning Technologies and Regional Services) and also Acting Deputy Vice Chancellor (Resources Management).

A panel discussion was co-moderated by Dr. Patricia Choguguza the Coordinator for Research at the Open University of Tanzania and Maria Augusti from the e- Learning section of the Institute of Educational Management Technology.

Panellist Prof. Bisanda whose presentation focussed on Open Education Resources (OER). He demonstrated how Africa stood to benefit from openness in teaching and learning and sharing. According to him, gone are the days when knowledge was locked up. Illustrating with world- class universities, such as, MIT, Stanford and Yale offering free learning materials under OER stressed the need for African academics to freely share their lecture notes and textbooks under OER.

He challenged academics to abandon the old thinking of hiding their lecture notes and textbooks. Emphasising on how OER increased access to knowledge and frequently updated thus improved

quality learning resources. He cited local examples on how open learning had provided hitherto in-existent opportunities.

Ms. Chausiku Mwinyimbegu shared the experience of the Open University of Tanzania Institutional Repository. She explained how institutional repository leveraged the university and the country in adding more African content online. It was noted from available data that a paltry 2 per cent of online content was African hence the need for African knowledge repositories online.

Dr. Paul Kihwelo, founder CC Tanzania and the Public Lead spoke about Creative Commons, its history in Tanzania and its activities. He explained Creative Commons was a vehicle that assists authors and creators to freely share their works through copyright terms and conditions suitable to them and easy to users. He cautioned Creative Commons is not anti-copyright but rather compliments copyright laws by further allowing authors and creators to share their Works more freely.

Alex Gakuru spoke about Creative Commons and opportunities presented by Open and collaborative creativity. He echoed the need to add more local content on the web and called upon everyone to take advantage of the Creative Commons whose philosophy, according to him, was really African – given African culture of sharing and characteristic extended family and community care.

“Creative Commons reflects our common culture and heritage of sharing,” he said.

Dr. Mary Mayige who spoke about diabetes and the need for sharing of health information. She delved into the the magnitude of the problem, courses of diabetes, early diagnosis and condition management. She amplified the importance of health information sharing for better prevention and or management.

Mr. Ayoub a student and member of the Tanzania Medical Students Association shared his study on Open Access for medical students – a paper presented in Berlin, German. He stressed the need for information to be made available to researcher and students in order for them to achieve the most out of the available knowledge in the commons, showcasing an initiative encouraging authors to free their Works.

Mr. Biswalo, President of Tanzania Medical Students Association presented their activities on Open Access initiatives. Explaining the various initiatives they were involved in.

Plenary discussions revolved around the many opportunities presented by openness with caution against misconceptions that CC was anti-copyright. In contrast, it was understood that CC was copyright-based and therefore without copyright law CC would not exist.

The salon was closed by Paul pointing out the remarkable and quite encouraging turn up by participants from various creative disciplines and backgrounds at the first-ever CC Salon in Tanzania. It was also noted to have been the very first event held at new space at the ODL Tower and a vote of thanks was extended to the university for providing the venue to the organisation. Support from the institutions was appreciated. It was followed by presentation tokens of appreciation to invited guests which included original art works, among others. After which refreshments were served.

At a “fireside chat” thereafter, Alex held an interactive conversation the CC team. Among the issues discussed included future plans for CC Tanzania, funding opportunities and projects. Team members reported were inspired by the presence of Alex whom in turn confessed was amazed by team diversity commitment and enthusiasm.

Paul.

**NB:** To know more about creative commons please visit our sites :

Facebook : <https://www.facebook.com/cc.tanzania?fref=ts>

Web:[http:// www.creativecommons.org](http://www.creativecommons.org)



*Photo taken by E.Rukantabula .*