This document is an adaptation of a brochure prepared for a series of workshops planned in 2005. This version is shared here for educational purposes in the hope that the ideas will be taken further in future (or in the present by you, the reader, from now on :-).

Libre Communities

Knowledge for all – Education for all

Empowering Communities to Empower Themselves with Knowledge

Towards Collective Wisdom

Libre knowledge

Libre (or free) knowledge implies freedom to read, listen to, watch, or otherwise experience explicit knowledge[1]; to learn with, copy, adapt and use it for any purpose; contribute new insights and share the work (unchanged or modified) for the common good; and all of this with libre software[2].

Libre Communities Manifesto

Libre communities value:

- the members and their diverse perspectives,
- the libre resources produced and the associated freedoms (above),
- the ability of communities to collaborate on managing the quality of shared resources, and
- the opportunity this freedom offers for networked communities to make a difference collectively, towards a sustainable world.

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1 "Explicit knowledge" is knowledge that has been captured in a form representable on a computer (e.g. text, sound, video, animation, executable program, etc.).
2 Libre: free as in freedom and free speech:
        cf free/libre software https://www.gnu.org/philosophy/free-sw.html

Libre Communities

In Africa, and much of the developing world, access to knowledge is limited on account of a lack of Information and Communications Technology (ICT), infrastructure and connectivity, low levels of literacy and awareness of what is available and how to utilise it, and a lack of localised and locally relevant resources.

The broad vision of this movement includes lowering barriers by providing basic building blocks to empower communities to empower themselves with knowledge.

The idea is to augment efforts to provide access to ICTs in developing regions/areas by convening international workshops for targeted collaboration, supporting priority projects addressing gaps in available libre resources and offering pedagogical support and collaboration facilities.

Ultimately, it should be possible for anyone, anywhere, to gain or collaborate in the provision of knowledge resources required for any purpose via the web or other media appropriate to the context.

The intention is to stimulate, facilitate and catalyse the growth of communities of shared knowledge to feed innovation systems, and enable a wiser global networked society.

The movement embraces a holistic sustainability ethic, highlighting social, economic and environmental concerns, and expresses this vision by encouraging related initiatives and events. Ultimately, the emergent communities sustain themselves through natural community life cycles.

Building Blocks

To address the needs in the developing world[3], the movement promotes and enables access to localisable frameworks and multi-media tutorials on how to:

- read (in a chosen language)
- use a computer
- use office software
- localise existing and create new knowledge resources
- share these resources
- use modern e-learning environments
- collaborate with others in learning, knowledge generation and application, and
- select libre software for learning and research at all levels.

Operating Principles

- Freedom
  - openness and transparency
  - free access to explicit knowledge
  - non-restrictive licensing[4]
  - free/libre/open formats
  - libre software
- Open standards
  - permitting freedom of technology choice
  - diversity (of implementations)
  - co-opetition (a healthy balance between cooperation and competition)
- Quality
  - Pervasive peer review, commons based peer production[5]
- Collaboration
  - address the gaps and facilitate synergies among similar initiatives
  - collaborative decision making
  - individual and community empowerment
- Sustainability Ethic (economic, environmental, social - long term, quality of life ideals).

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3 The original proposal was focused on Southern Africa and the "developing world" where levels of literacy and access to knowledge were low at the time. Adapt to context.
4 e.g. GPL, GFDL (gnu.org/licenses), selected Creative Commons (creativecommons.org), etc.
5 http://www.benkler.org/CoasesPenguin.html
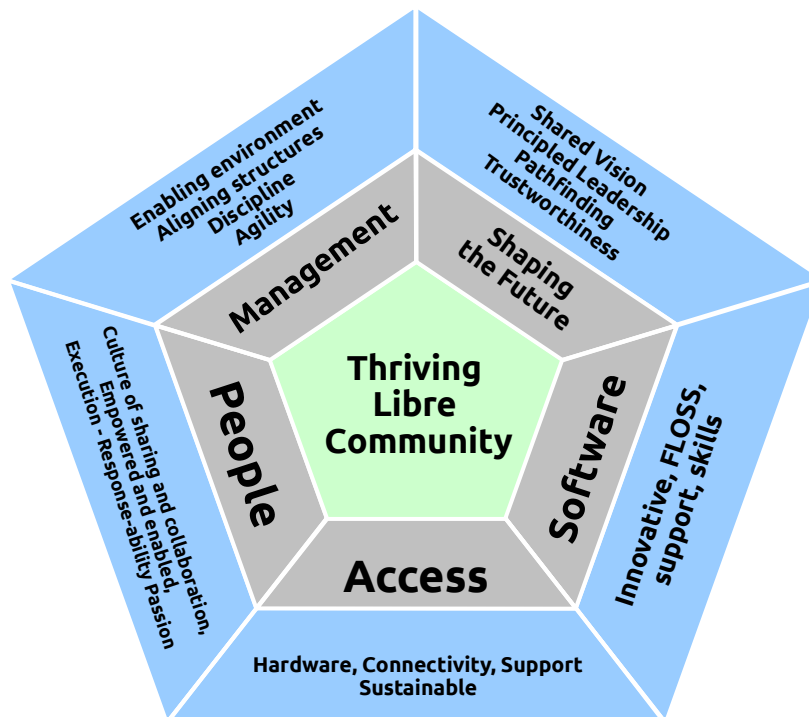
Outcomes

Contribute to:

- raising levels of literacy and computer literacy
- lowering barriers to certification and qualification
- enabling wider access to libre software
- inspire and enable communities to create easily accessible, locally relevant and localised knowledge resources
- enable, informed, knowledge-enriched collaborative decision making and action.

Impact

- Re-emergence of a culture of collaboration and sharing for the common good in society
- Universal adoption of a strong community-based sustainability ethic
- Establishment of a knowledge society equipped to partake effectively in shaping the future
- Enhanced innovation, general knowledge and 'commons sense' at all levels leading to enhanced quality of life
- Sustainable development through wise decision-making and community action.

Realising the vision

- A Strategic Funders Forum prioritises[6] and supports projects and activities which:
    - establish or extend the basic building blocks (above), and other relevant knowledge resources
    - accelerate successful use of libre software and libre knowledge in capacity building
    - catalyse minimally invasive interventions[7] which facilitate libre knowledge communities
    - facilitate and enhance institutional collaboration
    - support on-going activities such as monitoring, evaluation and research.

- Establish nodes to support libre communities, generally using existing infrastructure
    - ingredients of a successful node and its communities:

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6 Prioritisation seeks to maximise impact with keen sensitivity to sustainability.
7 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Minimally_invasive_education – e.g. Digital Doorway: http://www.digitaldoorway.org.za/index_main.php?do=concept and Hole in the Wall: http://www.hole-in-the-wall.com/Beginnings.html

- Provide the required building blocks (above) – a portfolio of projects.
- Facilitate and catalyse championship in education institutions, public, private and civil organisations.
- Convene workshops to facilitate the type of collaboration required to realise the vision.
- Engage national education authorities, policy makers, organisations and other stakeholders.

Extending the impact of Libre Communities involves growing the number and range of people and communities which share the vision and values, and sowing the seeds of collaborative action.

Invitation

Join us on an exciting journey into the world of libre knowledge
- to facilitate and catalyse the bid by the "developing world" to be part of the emerging libre knowledge society, and
- to enable citizens to empower themselves with knowledge for a better and sustainable quality of life (in all its diversity).

Libre resources may be indicated by including the following logo/emblem and links[8] on the web site, page or other knowledge resource.

By attaching this emblem I confirm that all associated content is libre in the sense described, and is supplied, and may be used in the spirit intended.

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8   N.B. The above logo, emblem and licences (below) were not formalised, and other options were offered for discussion.

The logo would link to a web site, see for example:
   https://wikieducator.org/Libre_knowledge

and the emblem to a description of a libre license, see for example/thoughts:
   https://wikieducator.org/Libre_emblem

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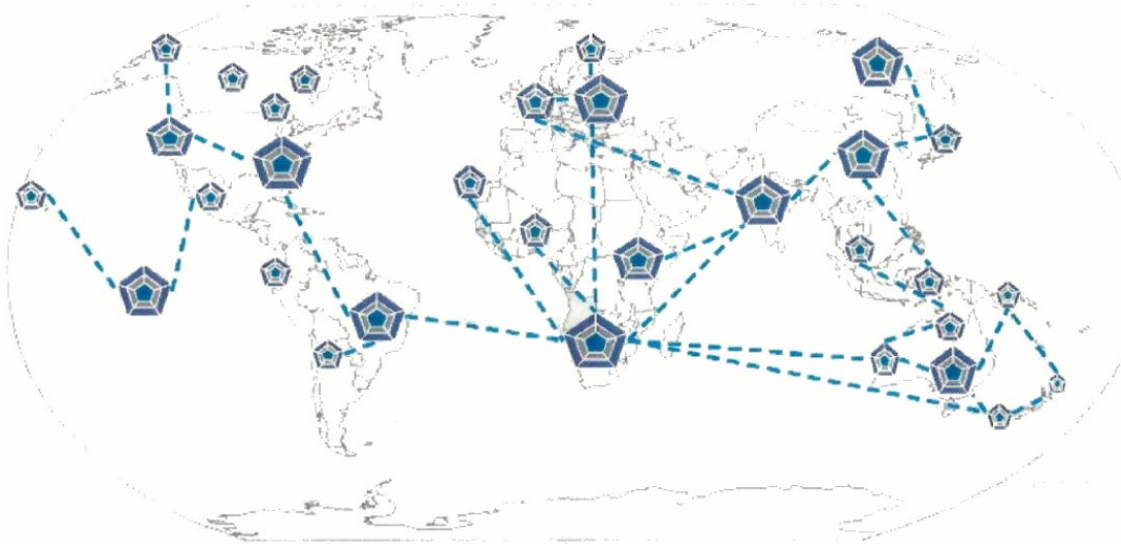- to empower citizens to empower themselves with knowledge for a better and sustainable quality of life.

URLs
https://wikieducator.org/Libre_knowledge
https://wikieducator.org/Libre_licence
https://wikieducator.org/Libre_Puro_Emblem

"We should never forget as a community that we are the vanguard of a knowledge revolution that will transform the world. We are the leading edge innovators and leaders of what is becoming a global movement to free knowledge from proprietary constraints." Jimmy Wales[9].

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9   http://blog.jimmywales.com/index.php/archives/2004/10/21/free-knowledge-requires-free-software-and-free-file-formats/