

The commons maximizes participation. Resources in the commons can be used and contributed to by everyone. Using the resources of others, contributing your own, and mixing yours with others to create new works are all dynamic forms of participation made possible by the commons. Being **Made with Creative Commons** means you're engaging as many users with your resources as possible. Users are also authoring, editing, remixing, curating, localizing, translating, and distributing. The commons makes it possible for people to directly participate in culture, knowledge building, and even democracy, and many other socially beneficial practices.

The commons spurs innovation. Resources in the hands of more people who can use them leads to new ideas. The way commons resources can be modified, customized, and improved results in derivative works never imagined by the original creator. Some endeavors that are **Made with Creative Commons** deliberately encourage users to take the resources being shared and innovate them. Doing so moves research and development (R&D) from being solely inside the organization to being in the community.³⁷ Community-based innovation will keep an organization or business on its toes. It must continue to contribute new ideas, absorb and build on top of the innovations of others, and steward the resources and the relationship with the community.

The commons boosts reach and impact. The digital commons is global. Resources may be created for a local or regional need, but they go far and wide generating a global impact. In the digital world, there are no borders between countries. When you are **Made with Creative Commons**, you are often local and global at the same time: Digital designs being globally distributed but made and manufactured locally. Digital books or music being globally distributed but readings and concerts performed locally. The digital commons magnifies impact by connecting creators to those who use and build on their work both locally and globally.

The commons is generative. Instead of extracting value, the commons adds value. Dig-

itized resources persist without becoming depleted, and through use are improved, personalized, and localized. Each use adds value. The market focuses on generating value for the business and the customer. The commons generates value for a broader range of beneficiaries including the business, the customer, the creator, the public, and the commons itself. The generative nature of the commons means that it is more cost-effective and produces a greater return on investment. Value is not just measured in financial terms. Each new resource added to the commons provides value to the public and contributes to the overall value of the commons.

The commons brings people together for a common cause. The commons vests people directly with the responsibility to manage the resources for the common good. The costs and benefits for the individual are balanced with the costs and benefits for the community and for future generations. Resources are not anonymous or mass produced. Their provenance is known and acknowledged through attribution and other means. Those that are **Made with Creative Commons** generate awareness and reputation based on their contributions to the commons. The reach, impact, and sustainability of those contributions rest largely on their ability to forge relationships and connections with those who use and improve them. By functioning on the basis of social engagement, not monetary exchange, the commons unifies people.

The benefits of the commons are many. When these benefits align with the goals of individuals, communities, businesses in the market, or state enterprises, choosing to manage resources as a commons ought to be the option of choice.

Our Case Studies

The creators, organizations, and businesses in our case studies operate as nonprofits, for-profits, and social enterprises. Regardless of legal status, they all have a social mission. Their primary reason for being is to make the world a better place, not to profit. Money is a