[Article] Creating Local Arts Together 2.0: Building an Online Community through the Global Ethnodoxology Network

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Preface[2]

It has been a year since we wrote this article as an academic requirement for one of our courses for the Master of World Arts program at Dallas International University. At that time, the two authors and a third colleague on this project were the only three students taking the course remotely from three different geographic locations: the United States, Hong Kong, and Spain.

Back then we found the topic of online artistic collaboration an innovative idea that perfectly suited our realities. Today, with the emergence of COVID-19 around the world, what was an experiment with an interesting idea has become much more widely relevant. Almost all public life is now confined to the virtual world, but creatives yearn to be in community. With this article, we want to present the idea that artists do not have to be physically present in the same place to create together, but they can instead gather in online communities to craft pieces of art that meet their needs and provide a better future. We hope that reading this article will be of great benefit to readers who seek to explore artistic communal life online.

Introduction

As humanity dives deeper into the virtual realm, the "world is shrinking" adage continues to ring true. Obstacles such as distance, language, and cultural differences that made connecting very

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difficult 50 years ago are effortlessly surmounted today. Wireless communications and satellite phones make it possible to belong to an ideationally close community while remaining geographically dispersed. Out of this rapidly expanding net of connectivity, two independent phenomena have emerged. The first is the growth of many artistic genres in cyberspace. Creative by nature, humans have taken that impulse and applied it to ways of expressing themselves online, including on Facebook, TikTok, YouTube, and Hackaday. The second phenomenon is that our human instinct for community-making is now cast into the virtual world, where a myriad of groups united by common interests thrives. Such groups range from being mostly in-person and occasionally using online services, to communities of practice based on shared interests (Wenger 2011, 6), to groups that exist exclusively in the virtual world, where participants are concealed behind avatars and are otherwise unknown to one another.

Given this new reality of flourishing online communities expressing themselves through internet-specific artistic genres, our three-person team decided to experiment with moving the Creating Local Arts Together (CLAT) process, used to research artistry and create together (Schrag 2013, xxiv), into a virtual space. We wanted to learn whether the process would work at all, knowing that so much of it is grounded in organic human contact and conversation. Would creativity be sparked while looking at an unemotive, pixelated computer screen? Would participants feel human contact while fighting background noise, connection issues, fatigue, and real-world distractions? These questions remain open for further exploration, but following a first experimental trial, we can affirm that the way ahead has been paved with positive results from our study. This paper is both descriptive and prescriptive: it describes our specific attempt to apply CLAT online in a subgroup of the Global Ethnodoxology Network community, briefly detailing each of its seven steps; and it prescribes general recommendations to address the unique challenges faced by our team when applying CLAT in an online community.

Step 1: Meet Community Members

Our team sought volunteers for our research from a worldwide online community called the Global Ethnodoxology Network (GEN; formerly the International Council of Ethnodoxologists).[3] Its participants and activities fit the definition of an online community by Jennifer Preece, a leading academic in the field of human–computer interaction: "any virtual social space where people come together to get and give information or support, to learn, or to find company" (Preece 2001). The Global Ethnodoxology Network "envisions a future in which communities of Jesus followers in every culture engage with God and the world through their own artistic expressions." The community offers "networking, training, and resources for the flourishing of biblical and culturally appropriate arts" (worldofworship.org/about/). Across the network, individuals come together, exchange information, and offer support, while living distant from one another.

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[3] GEN originated in its founders' interest in partnership and support as ethnodoxologists. It grew to become an international network of support.

Though existing online, this group also meets the definition of a community in Schrag's *Creating Local Arts Together*: "a group of people that shares a story, identity, and ongoing patterns of interaction, and that is in constant flux" (Schrag 2013, 1). According to this definition, GEN fits the description by having:

- *Common identity.* GEN comprises arts consultants, active believers, and co-creators, all enthusiastic advocates for arts for God.
- *Patterns of interaction.* These patterns exist online through the GEN website, publications, forums, and occasional in-person gatherings.
- *Constant flux.* Perhaps the defining characteristic of GEN, the flux is observed in new members, evolving modes of communication, and changing perspectives of purpose.

Even though the community building blocks were there, we faced multiple challenges when seeking a sufficient number of study participants for the CLAT method to work. This first obstacle demonstrated an existing phenomenon in online communities. Though many individuals may claim membership in an online group, a few of them may be described as "lurkers," functioning as read-only subscribers. Even with the passive GEN members taken out of the equation, we were surprised to find only minimal interest in direct participation. The reason for this lack of interest could be the relative novelty of the GEN community and, as a result, the fact that many members are still new. In her book on community-building on the web, Amy Jo Kim (2000) describes five stages of online participation, starting from *visitor* and moving through *novice, regulars, leaders*, and finally, *elders.* It's possible that many GEN members see themselves as visitors or novices, and as such they do not feel ready to participate actively in an experimental trial of applying the CLAT process. This should be a concern when applying the CLAT process to any online community. We recommend that the arts consultants overseeing the process learn about the maturity of the community as a whole, to evaluate the feasibility of engagement before taking further steps.

Before moving forward, arts advocates should understand whether community members believe that something can be gained from participation. "The likelihood of taking an active part in a community increases with the potential personal benefit that could be gained within that community" (Kindsmuller, Melzer, and Mentler 2015, 2900). If participant candidates see how applying the CLAT process can help them, they will be more motivated to remain engaged and contribute high-quality content. The topic of ongoing engagement demands thorough attention, as it can make or break not only the CLAT endeavor but also an entire online community. This topic also invites another question: Are the arts advocates responsible for the vitality of the community overall? In other words, should arts advocates, when possible, offer ideas and recommendations that could improve the entire fabric of the community and enable its flourishing? We believe that yes, the function of an arts advocate can comfortably include working toward the overall vitality of the community.

The foundational concepts of CLAT are grounded in coming alongside communities and helping them use their arts to reach their goals. Often these goals revolve around enabling the community to flourish. A story shared by Martin and Rebekah Neil in the CLAT manual (Schrag 2013, 23) tells about a Cambodian Christian Art Ministry school that was able to take children off

the streets following the rule of the Khmer Rouge regime, offering them a loving, supportive environment and, through this, beginning to affect the entire community. Taken into the cyber world, the goals of CLAT should not change; if arts advocates are able to work together with online community members to strengthen the community itself, then they should do so.

We had a total of seven participants, and we decided to move forward with CLAT. Briefly, this process contains the following seven steps:

1. Meeting community members
2. Specifying kingdom goals
3. Selecting the desired effect, content, genre, and effect
4. Analyzing an event containing the chose genre
5. Sparking creativity within the community
6. Improving new works
7. Integrating and celebrating for continuity

Through Step 1, we worked to familiarize ourselves with the group. At the beginning of each video session, for instance, we led an ice-breaker exercise which helped us get to know one another. We also asked open-ended, get-to-know-you questions to learn about each individual in the participating subgroup; this allowed us to find common ground and build rapport. In this way, we learned that we all shared a passion for music and worship songs. Specifically, a participant from Gambia shared that he was in the process of completing a two-year project on Fula worship music and was thrilled to witness the completion of this work. Also, some of us had a long history of ethnodoxology work—such as another participant who was a founding member of GEN and has been doing arts consulting for several decades. Another common point among us was that all of the participants were already familiar with CLAT, so we didn't need to explain the process thoroughly. The learning curve was thus less steep on the front end, but still considerable, since we were mastering a new medium through online communication.

The point of Step 1 is to get to know the group with which one is working. Because we wanted to encourage open-ended conversation, we were not always able to keep strictly to Step 1. For example, in one of our first conversations we learned about online communities of practice, which had corresponding Facebook pages. A community of practice (CoP) is "a group of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly" (Wenger 2011, 1). All CoPs have three elements in common: a domain, a community, and a practice. The domain is defined by the shared learning needs; the community results from the bonding experiences over time; and the practice is understood as the resources produced by the interactions between the members of the community that have a direct effect in their work (Wenger 2011, 2). Learning about existing CoPs organized by GEN members through closed Facebook group pages planted a seed that flourished as we began exploring our group's kingdom goals in Step 2, and genres in Step 3 and 4.

While getting to know the group, we realized that there was no strict division between facilitators and participants, as is envisioned in Schrag's CLAT process. Rather, we were a unique combination of specialists and facilitators working *through* a process while also exploring the

process itself. We also dealt with many unexpected issues that come with building and leading a community online. For example, we battled technical challenges such as bad internet connections, finding a good time to meet, and being considerate of people's time. One member almost fell asleep during our meeting because in that time zone it was late at night. Another had difficulty seeing our notes because she was using a phone with a very small screen. Other less obvious challenges were also felt and should be considered when planning to do online CLAT work. For example, we noticed that it is harder to catch visual cues and feel an individual's mood when interacting online. It is also more difficult to form the bonds that arise naturally when communicating in person, because many nonverbal messages are "lost in transmission."

Despite these obstacles, several key factors worked in our favor from the beginning. Our primary means of communication was Zoom, a video conferencing tool that allows real-time, visual interaction. The ability to get feedback immediately, rather than asynchronously via a forum or email exchange, increased the "attractiveness of contributing" (Kindsmuller, Melzer, and Mentler 2015, 2901), which in turn boosted participation. Another positive factor was our decision to use Google Docs to document the ideas shared and progress made in our meetings. The use of Google Docs, along with the recording function in Zoom, maintained what Kollock (1999) calls "personal identifiability": the visibility of individual contributions done without anonymity. According to Kraut's (2003) application of social theories, such as those of Karau and William (1993), such visibility connects individuals with the content they submit to the group, allows their perceived status as contributing members to rise, and places responsibility on them to contribute high-quality content. In our case, this visibility made possible the human connection vital for CLAT to work.

Step 2: Specify Kingdom Goals

For every community project it is paramount to identify people's shared goals. This is done in Step 2 through a process of identifying people's hopes for a better future. To ensure maximum community participation, it's important for leaders to avoid the natural tendency of setting their own goals for the community. The beneficiary group will then have a direct influence on the direction and execution of the project that will enhance its overall well-being (Paul 1987, 2).

Schrag identifies six categories of kingdom goals: 1) Identity and Sustainability, 2) Shalom, 3) Justice, 4) Scripture, 5) Church Life, and 6) Personal Spiritual Life. He also suggests a series of sub-steps to identify the goals that are most important for a given group. The first of these is to listen to the people and include as many members of the community as possible. The second and third sub-steps have to do with identifying and listing community strengths, aspirations, and problems, and associating them with one of the six kingdom goal categories listed above. Finally, the community chooses its kingdom goals based on the issues they would most like to address or build on (Schrag 2013, 24–51).

Participatory methods can also be used to determine the community needs and goals. We applied the appreciative inquiry method (Hasselbring 2008, 7) to help participants *verbalize* what makes them feel happy or proud about their culture and arts, *envision* those good things, and *make plans* for them to happen.

For the first part of our participatory activity with the representatives of the GEN community, we asked about the things they most enjoy about being part of this community. Their answers:

1. Meeting new people with same interests
2. Resources, both human and material
3. A special sense of fellowship
4. Connections in one's own region, and co-workers for songwriting workshops
5. A network to support others

For the next sub-step we instructed the community to "dream" (that is, explore future possibilities) about the ways they could improve the things they are proud of. Members who were not able to join the meeting (because of time differences, internet limitations, and so forth) could give input later through Google Docs. The results are listed in figure 1.

Hopes & Dreams	Anticipated Time Need
1. Geographical digital ethnoarts "Community of Practice"	soon
2. Develop ideas of worshiping and fellowship, online or in-person, regionally	take some time
3. More resources in Spanish	a lot of time
4. Create GEN app, for phone use	take some time
5. Raise awareness of GEN; and more arts workshops in Africa	take some time
6. GEN as a central place for church resources	take some time

Figure 1. Hopes and dreams—Responses

We then used the appreciative inquiry tool (figure 2) to help our community brainstorm further. The appreciative inquiry method is one of several approaches that can help a community discover the goal they would like to address by using the arts. Arts advocates can gently walk the group through a brainstorming process to help the group select one short-term goal for change that is feasible and achievable.

After working through the appreciative inquiry process, the GEN community representatives determined their kingdom goal: to foster greater closeness with those members of the GEN community who are geographically near one another. We placed this goal in Schrag's category of *Identity*, and with it hoped to enhance regional interaction and make the GEN community more stable and lively by establishing relationships among its members as they have fellowship, pray and worship together, and work together toward others' kingdom goals.

The GEN group chose a goal that directly contributes to the strengthening of online communities. Specifically, Kollock lists *the presumption of a high likelihood of a future encounter* (1999) as one of the three presumptions online members must have for successful cooperation within their community. Such an encounter is more realistic for members who live closer to one another. In other words, if GEN members gather in groups online based on their physical closeness to each other, they are setting themselves up for "successful cooperation" because of the higher

Appreciative Inquiry (Adapted by Juan Arvelo)
GEN Community

1. Describe something that makes you feel happy about being part of the GEN community. (Make a list of the "good things" happening in the GEN community.)

2. What are your hopes and dreams for the GEN community? How can you make these good things even better? (Make a list of the hopes for the group.)

3. Please put the hopes in order, from those that can be done soon to ones that will take some time. (Separate the list into two columns.)

4. Chose the five hopes that you all feel are the most important for the GEN community.

5. Now we will begin making plans to make some of these hopes begin to happen. Which of these hopes do you want to begin making plans for right now?

6. As you make your plans, think about (1) **the steps** you need to take, (2) **the people** who should be involved in each step and (3) **when** you hope to start and finish that step.

STEP	PEOPLE	WHEN
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		

Figure 2. Appreciative inquiry tool

likelihood of future in-person encounters. Geographic proximity would also help members find more in common, allowing them to nurture their own culture. "The more a community values its own culture and vision, the more the kingdom of God is likely to thrive" (Schrag 2013, 25).

Having established Zoom and Google Docs as the modus operandi, we relied on it for this step, meeting on Zoom, recording the sessions, taking sharable and accessible notes on Google Docs, and using the "Share Screen" function to show the participants the exercise we wanted them to work through to establish their goal. We adhered to another key principle of maintaining a healthy online community by giving everyone access to our interaction history (Kollock 1999), recorded on Zoom. Despite our efforts, the team struggled with online-specific issues, including

finding an acceptable time to meet. As facilitators, we had to negotiate with participants who lived in vastly different time zones, excluding some by necessity.

Step 3: Select Effects, Content, Genre, and Events

Once a kingdom goal is established, the next step in the process is to connect this goal with a genre of local art that could produce an effect in the community that will move it closer to achieving that goal. Based on the community's kingdom goal, we returned to the idea of creating a community of practice. This was the desired effect: members wanted to intentionally gather in regional communities of practice to connect and support one another in their arts-related ministries. Through these CoPs, people could share information about their work and ministry. The CoP members could also network and encourage one another to explore partnership possibilities, develop ideas for fellowship online, request consultant checks on their creations, and share resources.

The question that followed was, What genre can communicate the content and produce the desired effect? The possibilities for the GEN community to get together to co-create are rather scarce, and for this reason the chosen genre must foster that "togetherness" in some fashion. Schrag defines a genre as "a community's category of communication characterized by a unique set of formal characteristics, performance practices, and social meanings" (Schrag 2013, 268). Working within the infrastructure of the internet, we looked at several possible genres, including websites, blogs, Whatsapp groups, and social media networks such as Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, and Facebook. We decided that these networks and platforms can be considered genres because each has its own set of formal characteristics, practices, and social meanings. For instance, the Twitter genre is a verbal artform which is limited in the number of symbols that can be used per utterance. People "performing" in the Twitter genre must be creative in the way they use a few words to formulate meaning. Also, Twitter use has different social implications than, for instance, Facebook. While Twitter is used primarily to share critical info-bytes, Facebook can be used to form community and create connections. LinkedIn has an entirely different set of characteristics, expressed in its look and organization, and performance practices, expressed in the way people use it predominantly for professional networking. Making your profile picture look like a dragon in a face mask would be completely inappropriate for LinkedIn, while doing so for Facebook might not raise an eyebrow. This, too, demonstrates the differences of social meaning between these two online genres.

Because there were already groups created for connecting artists in Latin America and the Philippines through Facebook, the community decided that the genre of "Facebook," and the subgenre of "geographically specific, closed Facebook group," would be the most appropriate to achieve their kingdom goal.

As we continued thinking about the Facebook group genre and how it was going to achieve the desired goal of the community, we recognized several important things. First, this genre required a local leader. Just as the genre of "string orchestra" calls for the concertmaster role, so the genre of "geographically organized Facebook group" calls for the leadership of a local facilitator

who promotes open interaction among the members of the newly formed group. Another genre detail is that the Facebook groups be open not only to the GEN community but also to like-minded people interested in networking with others in the same region.

Step 4: Analyze an Event Containing the Chosen Genre

Step 4 of the CLAT process invites participants to study previous examples of events executed in the desired genre and then discuss how the new event could play out. Toggling between exploring our chosen genre and studying instances (events) of that genre, our group decided that their specific instance of the Facebook page genre would be other geographical GEN-related Facebook groups, similar to ethnoarts communities of practice in the Philippines and Latin America. To learn more, we contacted the coordinators of the Latin American Aldea and the Philippines Ethnoarts Community of Practice Facebook pages and asked them questions to better understand their "instances" of the Facebook group genre.

We learned that the Philippines Ethnoarts Community of Practice has had a presence on social media since 2009 as a communication tool for like-minded Filipino artists, musicians, and missionaries. The Facebook group is followed by 319 people and is open to anyone who does missions using their God-given talents in music and arts (Frias 2018). We also learned about Arts in Mission: Korea and EtnodoxologiaBrasil. The vision of Arts in Mission: Korea involves bringing the Kingdom of God to Korea through music, drama, dance, storytelling, and other arts. EtnodoxologiaBrasil is an informational site for ethnodoxology topics in Portuguese. Its purpose is to encourage the church in Brazil to incorporate local, traditional arts in their outreach of indigenous and Brazilian communities, as well as to strengthen believers in indigenous communities to use their authentic expressions in worship.

Aldea's page is an online collective that connects Spanish-speaking Christian artists across Latin America to keep them informed about what's happening regionally in ethnoarts. The group was created in September 2008 as a way for participants of the "Ethne to Ethne" conference to keep in touch. Instead of recruiting people, they are often contacted by those who share the same interest in arts and mission, especially those who have completed the Arts for a Better Future workshop.[4] The group also offers training courses such as "Community Well-being with Ethnoarts," "Ethnoarts: Transcultural Communication Methods," and "Arte para un Futuro Mejor," the Spanish version of Arts for a Better Future. Currently, the group is open to anyone who wants to join the 706 people who are already part of it (Anderson 2018).

After learning about a few instances of the chosen genre in greater detail, participants of our group decided to create their own informal digital network of people involved in ethnodoxology, based on geographical region. Each group would be a central virtual location where participants could post announcements, resources, and invitations. The regional communities of practice embodied by the Facebook group framework would also be a place where people can exchange

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[4] Workshop available at Dallas International University (https://www.diu.edu/cewa/courses/)

ideas, have conversations, see one another's work, pray for one another, and organize face-to-face gatherings. In our group, there was interest to form two CoPs: one for the Chinese region and Chinese diaspora, and one for Europe.

Step 5: Spark Creativity

Step 5 is the heart of the C in CLAT: *Creating*. This step allows the arts consultant to initiate, encourage, and "spark" creative action within the community. Here the actual artistic product is molded to effect positive change and help the community move toward its defined goal. A dynamic, spontaneous step, "sparking" can be particularly challenging online because of the mechanical, delayed, somewhat limited nature of virtual communication.

By the time we arrived at this step, the participants had already decided what they would like to do, so there was no need to spark their creativity in this regard. As a side note, through our exploratory process of doing CLAT online we experienced what Schrag suggests throughout the CLAT manual—that the steps are not clearly distinct phases, but rather conversations that the consultant and community will circle around repeatedly. By the time we got to Step 5, we realized that we had inadvertently been creatively thinking about how to take action all along and had already come to a solution.

Nevertheless, we intentionally went through the sparking creativity process together, because as researchers we were curious how it would work in a virtual setting. We discovered that although some of the spontaneity may be lost, group members can draw on the asynchronous aspect of communicating across the globe to establish a sustained flow of energy and enthusiasm. For example, a collaborative story in Google Docs can begin in one time zone. When the first writer finishes writing, another member a few time zones behind picks up and continues the story. A third signs on to Google Docs as the first goes to bed. A fourth may chime in upon waking up the following day. When the initiator of the story returns to Google Docs, the story has evolved into something new—richer, fuller—and the first person can continue building on that. Thus, in asynchronous co-creation, we reduce the possibility of "writer's block."

For our target group, we did three simple activities to spark creativity. The first was an invitation for the six group members on that call to find a local piece of fabric and share it with the rest of the group (figure 4). An image of multinational community encouraged all of us to continue working through the challenges of online communication.

Another uplifting and creative exercise was closing each conversation in prayer, in all of the languages represented by the participants. Like seeing the fabrics, hearing the diversity encouraged all of the members to be creative with the wealth of international "material" that we brought to the situation. Our last sparking activity was to write a poem about the CLAT process and the community of practice. One person received input from everyone else about the content,

Figure 4. Fabric screenshot

wrote a draft in English, and all community members were encouraged to translate the poem into their respective languages, as free a translation as they like. Below is the English version of the poem about launching new online communities of practice:

> Communities around the world are painting, writing, singing
> To praise the Lord, the King of Kings, with one's entire being.
> Though sometimes groups can meet and learn each other's worship styles
> At times creatives feel alone, held separate by the miles.
>
> Communities of practice can be based around a place
> Where people play and dream and pray, discuss things face to face.
> But sharing, talking on the net, through Zoom is also fine
> Creating local arts together but doing it online!
>
> Such online groups are being launched today, as we are speaking,
> In Europe, Asia, Africa—like-minded artists seeking
> New ways to share ideas, news, their projects, musings, too
> Through G-E-N, but all are welcome! Yes, friend, they want YOU!

The creativity tasks were simple, and the goal was not to produce a masterpiece but rather to "get the creative juices flowing." A shared sense of awe and humor stimulated by the sparking activities helped move our community in that direction.

STEP 6: Improve New Works

In the CLAT process, Step 6 is a conversation that an arts advocate or consultant can have with the community about how to improve new artistic works that were created via Step 5. In our unique inquiry into the feasibility of doing CLAT online, we chose to apply Step 6 to see how we can

improve the work of virtual CLAT implementation, rather than working to improve our actual product (the Facebook group), since its startup and growth would take time. Drawing on that discussion among the group members, we now propose several recommendations to people interested in continuing CLAT work online:

- Engage a community that's already active, in which you are accepted as a "local." If entering a foreign community, as in real life you first have to work hard to be accepted, and only when you've built the necessary rapport can you move onto sparking and engaging. Becoming an accepted member of a community online has unique challenges because of the nature of the virtual world: people are transient, participants come and go, and sometimes there is no other, real-world relationship to hold onto.
- Study the community's preferred online tools and devices. For instance, detailed work on artistic texts may not be feasible if all participants are using small, handheld devices. Pay particular attention to the "interactive elements" of each tool, as such elements "increase the attractiveness of contributing" (Kindsmuller, Melzer, and Mentler 2015, 2901).
- While giving everyone from the online community the opportunity to become an active participant in CLAT, make a distinction between "members" and "non-members," as this "facilitates the togetherness of the group" (Kindsmuller, Melzer, and Mentler 2015, 2902) and helps participants feel more cohesion while retaining personal responsibility for the group's activities.
- Create groups based on time zones. This is critical for consistent participation and enthusiasm.
- Have active and technologically adept arts consultants play the role of moderator. "Moderators can enhance group activities and increase the efficiency of the group" (Kindsmuller, Melzer, and Mentler 2015, 2902).

Step 7: Integrate and Celebrate for Continuity

As creative work is in progress, the last conversation—or maybe the first of the next iteration of the CLAT cycle—is where the arts advocate discusses how the new works can be celebrated and integrated into community life. For our work with GEN, we generated several ideas for how to integrate and celebrate the fruits of our labor:

- Introduce new geographically based Facebook groups dedicated to ethnodoxology communities of practice at GCoMM 2021.
- Create a GEN app to enable ethnodoxologists in close geographic proximity to connect, exchange, and share together.
- Use GEN as a clearing house for workshop lesson plans, worship music, and arts ideas.

To integrate the CLAT process into online communities in general, and to ensure the viability of such work over the long term, the arts advocate can consider several factors for discussion among the online community already familiar with CLAT. An important point is that online communities coalesce effectively around problem-solving. As more enthusiasm builds toward a possible solution—for example, in response to the kingdom goal—"others join the project [and] the work becomes even more effective" (Kindsmuller, Melzer, and Mentler 2015, 2902). Another important consideration for integration is the possibility of group members meeting face-to-face.

Such a possibility will enable participants to take ownership of their explorations and feel more responsibility and enthusiasm about the outcome.

For our case study, all of the members were visibly enthusiastic about the possibility of meeting in real life for partnerships or commission work, whether in long-term professional relationships or at a conference or meeting. And so we envision that eventually the celebration portion of what we've done will happen with together-in-person humans, hugs, contagious laughter, and palpable joy at sharing in the Kingdom of God today, right now, with our brothers and sisters from around the world.

Conclusion

Applying the CLAT process to online communities is feasible. As is verified in this paper, each of the seven steps can be adapted to the virtual realm. This innovative approach confronts arts and mission practitioners with the fact that a community can have different expressions. This variety challenges arts advocates to think outside the box and creatively apply the CLAT model to any gathering that fits the parameters of a community. From this new perspective, the possibilities of helping communities reach a better future as they see aspects of the kingdom of God flourishing are endless. Supporting in-person and virtual communities in this manner allows arts consultants to spread the gospel of Jesus Christ to diverse groups of people around the world.

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