



*UbuntuNet Connect 2019*

**A Collaboration for the Search  
of Innovative Ideas  
Monthly R-  
Hackathons/Hackfests at  
Ethiopian Universities as an  
Example**

Presented by:  
Margareth Gfrerer  
Higher Education  
Strategy Centre, Addis  
Ababa, Ethiopia



# Overview

- Background
- Research Question
- Methodology
- Findings
- Analysis & Evaluation
- Experience of the monthly R-Hackthons/Hackfests
- Summary & next Steps



# Background

Digital literacy efforts in Ethiopia

- Carpentry Trainings since August 2017
- 1,300+ Trainees
- 8 Certified Trainers



# Background

R-Ladies Addis Ababa are used as an umbrella for coding activities such as

- 'Code your Future'
- NASA Space Apps Challenges Addis Ababa
- Ethiopian Carpentry Day on Feb. 20
- Monthly R-Hackathons/Hackfests since 2018



# Background

## Concept of the monthly R-Hackathon

- is to invite previous Carpentry Trainees to code in groups in search of specifics and odds worth to explore more in-depth and
- is structured in the following:
  1. Provision of Data Base with the explanations to the variables
  2. Instructions:
    - Visualisation of the data
    - Definition of the problem statement
    - Presentation of the draft of a potential call for proposals or pitch of the project idea
  3. Time constraint: 6 hours



# Research Question

Can R-Hackathons/Hackfests be used as an instrument for the strategic search for innovation?



# Methodology

Analysis of the problem statements and call for proposals/pitches published on Slack platform provided by the R-Hackathon participants



# Findings

Topics offered for R-Hackathons/Hackfests on remote:

- Migration (latest Ethiopian Data from the World Bank)
- Status of Ethiopia and its Role Models in Africa (National Economic Indicators and Human Development Indicators)
- Religion and Water Management (Ethiopian Data from the World Bank)
- Health Topics in Ethiopia (Ethiopian Data from the World Bank)
- Micro Finance, SACCO, ATM and Insurance in the regions (Ethiopian Data from the World Bank)
- Access to secondary schools and TVET colleges (Ethiopian Data from the World Bank)
- Ethiopia as player in the African ICT-trade (World Bank Indicators on 'The Information Society')



# Findings

## *Preliminary information:*

- Each team has its different approach
- Many teams don't register
- Not all registered teams share their results

Monthly R-Hackathons are voluntary events coordinated by the R-Ladies Addis Ababa group



# Findings

## *Some selected results:*

- *Religion & Water Management:* religious leaders as facilitators between rural population and government organisations to get water issues solved
- *Health Topics in Ethiopia:* access to medicine
- *Micro Finance, SACCO, ATM and Insurance in the regions:* financial system to back home industries and SMEs in rural areas
- *Access to secondary schools and TVET colleges:* road conditions and access to secondary schools and TVET colleges
- *Ethiopia as player in the African ICT-trade:* positioning Ethiopia's ICT sector in the African context



# Analysis & Evaluation

## Coding for purpose

- *Practising stage:*
  - Practising coding
  - Creating ideas for research activities at the faculty and at the university at large
  - Opening a call for proposals
  - Contributing to other R-Hackathon groups
  - Search for shortcomings that can lead to innovations
- *Business approach* (sound of the future):
  - Preparing data bases for coding
  - Coding on demand



# Experience

- The provision of the instructions, the data base and the platform is not sufficient to attract coders
- “Practice makes perfect” does not work in the monthly R-Hackthon/Hackfest context
- Sharing of results is not a culture
- Using the outcomes of R-Hackthons/Hackfests is not considered by the participants
- Using R-Ladies groups at Ethiopian Universities to organise monthly R-Hackathons at the Campus



# Summary & Next Steps

- Offering coding opportunities and possibilities for the previous The Carpentries trainees - is important
- Dissemination of the effect of coding for the search of innovation - is important
- Bringing university management on board to understand what coding could do for research - is important
- Increasing visibility of the monthly R-Hackathons/Hackfests - is important
- Business like approach in promoting Coding for Purpose - is important



# Summary & Next Steps



<https://www.facebook.com/hackathonethiopia/>



# Thank you

Contact:

[margareth.gfrerer@cimonline.de](mailto:margareth.gfrerer@cimonline.de)

