



Innovation linkages between formal and informal sectors

ABOUT OPEN A.I.R.

Managed by the IP Unit in the University of Cape Town Faculty of Law and by the University of Ottawa Faculty of Law, with additional hubs in Egypt, Nigeria and Kenya and teams in 14 African countries, the **Open African Innovation Research and Training Project (Open A.I.R.)** is investigating ways in which innovation and intellectual property (IP) can combine in African settings in ways that (1) maximise networked, collaborative knowledge governance; (2) balance objectives of openness and protection; and (3) enhance the livelihoods of small-scale entrepreneurs.

OPEN A.I.R. VIDEO CHANNEL

To see Open A.I.R. researchers Prof. Jeremy de Beer and Dr. Dick Kawooya discussing the Uganda informal-sector case study, and to view videos on Open A.I.R.'s three scenarios for the future of knowledge and innovation in Africa, go to the Afrinnovation YouTube channel, www.youtube.com/user/Afrinnovation

Uganda's Kiira EV electric car Makerere University collaborates with informal-sector artisans

KAMPALA, UGANDA – Informal-sector artisans in Kampala with no formal education or training made parts for Makerere University's celebrated Kiira EV electric vehicle prototype (pictured below at its launch).



Photograph © Makerere University

"I was fascinated" says Open A.I.R. researcher Dr. Dick Kawooya of his discovery of the prominent role played by the informal sector in Makerere's landmark piece of high-tech work.

The Kiira EV prototype, a later version of which is scheduled to go into production in 2018, was designed by professors and students at Makerere's College of Engineering, Design, Art and Technology (CEDAT).

"CEDAT designed the car, but a lot of parts were actually fabricated by informal artisans," Kawooya explains. "It is an important innovation, that these guys who have no formal engineering training would be able to interpret those designs and translate them into a product."

Also of interest for Kawooya was the fact that intellectual property (IP) rights matters were not central to the collaboration between

CEDAT staff and the workers from the informal economy (IE).

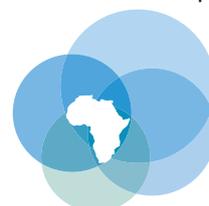
"The artisans are not interested, indeed not even aware, of what formal intellectual property is as we know it, in terms of patents, copyrights and trademarks," says Kawooya. "What they are interested in, or what they're fascinated about, is the idea that professors with formal training, PhDs in engineering and design, are coming to them to translate their ideas into a product. That for them is captivating."

At the same time, however, IP is to some extent involved because, as Kawooya explains, the pros seek to make sure their designs are not misappropriated, so Makerere gets the artisans to sign memoranda of understanding "whereby IP is one of the issues addressed, and the artisans are expected not to share this information or designs with other people."

Kawooya made his discoveries when speaking to Kiira EV project management in the course of his Open A.I.R. case study of informal-formal sector interactions at the CEDAT-managed Gatsby Garage in Kampala. Kawooya found that the Gatsby Garage, funded by the overseas Gatsby Trust, operates as a kind of "semi-formal" go-between entity – where formal-sector researchers from Makerere and informal-sector workers can collaboratively innovate.

Kawooya has also been a leader in Open A.I.R.'s scenario-building research, which generated three scenarios for the future of knowledge and innovation in Africa in the year 2035. The scenario led by Kawooya is entitled "Informal – the New Normal."

The Kampala case study is covered in the Open A.I.R. book *Innovation and Intellectual Property: Collaborative Dynamics in Africa*. The "Informal – the New Normal" scenario is outlined in another project book, *Knowledge and Innovation in Africa: Scenarios for the Future*. Both books are available for free download at www.openair.org.za/content/open-air-publications





RECOMMENDATIONS	
To African informal enterprises	To African policymakers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ seek informal-formal sector innovation linkages of mutual benefit ■ engage in collaborative innovation, and adopt balanced approaches to intellectual property (IP) that do not block innovation transfers and collaborations ■ lobby policymakers for measures to support the informal sector and informal-formal sector linkages 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ involve your informal sector enterprises in policy consultations related to IP, innovation and small-business development ■ generate policies and programmes to support the informal sector and to support informal-formal sector interactions ■ support innovation exchange between publicly funded research bodies (e.g. universities) and the informal sector, and ensure openness-oriented approaches to the IP that emerges from these interactions

Join the Open A.I.R. Community

The Open A.I.R. network currently has representatives in 14 African countries. To find out how to share ideas and collaborate with the network, visit www.openair.org.za and click on the "Join the Open A.I.R. Community" button.

OPEN A.I.R. HUBS

Cairo: Access to Knowledge for Development Center (A2K4D), The American University in Cairo

Lagos: Nigerian Institute of Advanced Legal Studies (NIALS), University of Lagos

Nairobi: Centre for IP and IT Law (CIPIT), Strathmore University

Cape Town: IP Unit, Faculty of Law, University of Cape Town

Ottawa: Faculty of Law, University of Ottawa

Contact information for Hub Coordinators is available at www.openair.org.za

WIPO INVESTIGATES IP IN THE INFORMAL ECONOMY (IE)

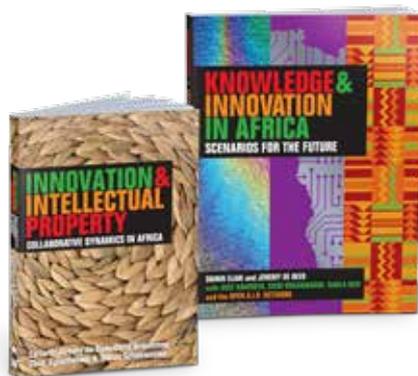
In line with Recommendation 34 of its Development Agenda, the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO) in 2012 established its Project on Intellectual Property (IP) and the Informal Economy (IE). Open A.I.R. researcher Prof. Jeremy de Beer is one of the authors of this WIPO Project's 2013 concept paper. The core of the Project is a set of case studies that look at relationships between IP and innovation in three African IE contexts: herbal medicinal services in Ghana, metal manufacturing in Kenya, and the informal chemical sector in South Africa. For more on the project, see www.wipo.int/edocs/mdocs/mdocs/en/cdip_8/cdip_8_3_rev_study_inf_1.pdf

FURTHER READING

De Beer, J., Fu, K., and Wunsch-Vincent, S. (2013), "The Informal Economy, Innovation and Intellectual Property – Concepts, Metrics and Policy Considerations", *WIPO Economic Research Working Paper No. 10*, www.wipo.int/export/sites/www/econ_stat/en/economics/pdf/wp10.pdf

De Beer, J., Sowa, I., and Holman, K. (2013), "Frameworks for Analysing African Innovation: Entrepreneurship, the Informal Economy and Intellectual Property," in De Beer, J., Armstrong, C., Oguamanam, C. and Schonwetter, T. (Eds.), *Innovation and Intellectual Property: Collaborative Dynamics in Africa*, UCT Press, Cape Town, www.openair.org.za/content/open-air-publications

MORE OPEN A.I.R. PUBLICATIONS



Open A.I.R.'s books (pictured above) and Briefing Notes are available for free download at www.openair.org.za/content/open-air-publications

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