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**Letter of Motivation Cumulus Executive Board VI 2016-2019.**

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As an African designer and design educator, I have come to realise what poor ties we have with other design education institutions in Africa. I believe that an opportunity for dialogue between African design institutions, and conversations between African and non-African institutions is often somewhat missed. Through Cumulus we can change this.

As a member of the international Cumulus network, we introduce Africa to a greater world platform. My aim to get at least 1 design school from every country in Africa talking to each other about the state of design in their respective countries, and how it can be used to improve political, environmental, and social-economic affairs in Africa. I also want to get a better dialogue happening about design thinking between Africa and the rest of the world.

I believe that open dialogue and networking will be beneficial, not only for the future of our African design industry, but more immediately, for our institutions - and more importantly - our respective communities. I also believe that the inclusion of an African network in the Cumulus sphere is important because:

1. We get to better understand and support our neighbours – in a macro (or global) as well as a micro (African) context. We also get to better understand the role that design/design education plays, as well as the value that it adds (or could add) to the communities in our neighbouring countries, and the role that design/design education offers in these contexts.
2. We get to share our resources, such as curriculum planning, resolved assessment platforms, projects, learning guides and materials, networks etc, - to better understand the needs of our neighbours, as well as how our neighbours may be able to benefit us.
3. We get to share our research (and contribute to, as well as learn from an Afro-centric research platform)
4. Dialogue helps us to better understand the problems and issues that we face as a continent: Ebola, water scarcity, financial colonialism, poverty, food shortage, xenophobia to name a few
5. International dialogue also helps us to share experiences and insights into geographically and culturally specific problems, and exchanges allow us to provide contextually relevant insights into those problems, and to kick-start solutions
6. We can co-develop design curricula to address problems that are pertinent to Africa.
7. We can collectively learn to understand how design can improve as well as sustain Africa - financially (to support local business and economic growth) – socially (to improve the lives of Africans), and environmentally (to ensure that the Africa we love today, will be around for our children tomorrow)
8. We can use a united African design mentality (we are a resourceful and innovative people) to discuss and address larger world issues
9. We can improve lecturer and student exchange programmes between counties – to cross pollinate and promote current, relevant and healthy design attitudes

In conclusion, I believe that it is important that design education in Africa has representation on a global scale, and that Africa has access to reputable design educator forums such as Cumulus so that fair dialogue Africa and the rest of the world can take place.



Robin Turner

Declared candidate Cumulus Executive Board VI 2016-2019

