2nd DH COLOQUIUM

Resources, scholarship and DH practice: Reflections on resilience and coping strategies of an African scholar

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DIGITAL HUMANITIES:
What it is not?

DIGITAL HUMANITIES is not:

- always quantitative research in its methods
- always expecting technology to be a tool to make humanities research easier and faster
- a theoretical framework
- computer science

What, then, is
DIGITAL HUMANITIES?

Humanities
In the digital age

- Large amount of information

- Digital skills to humanists

- Use of **information technologies** as an auxiliary collection of techniques to help solve humanistic problems.

- Humanistic objects of study and of humanistic relevance, rather than being related to information technologies.

- Interdisciplinary-based

Resources, scholarship and DH practice

Digital Humanities

Methods, Processes, and Activities

- Recording source materials into a database, usually from an archive.

- Digitising and preserving archives.

- Conducting interviews and ethnographic studies, usually coded for thematic and discourse analysis.

- Transcribing manuscripts, letters etc for a digital scholarly edition, including variorum and genetic editions.

- Coding data for qualitative and distant reading methods, including codebooks and domain ontologies.

- Analysing large archives, such as newspapers, journals and picture libraries.

- Compiling and analysing social media content.

- Compiling and annotating audio-visual databases (audio, images and video).

- Immersive technologies, such as 3D virtual reconstruction, augmented reality, and virtual worlds.

- Crowd-sourcing (sometimes called citizen science).

- Web apps, mobile apps, websites, virtual exhibitions, online research resources, user-generated content.

- Map-based approaches, such as historical GIS and walking tour apps.

- Corpus linguistics, dialectology, stylometry, translation studies, and other approaches to language study (written or verbal).

- Data visualisation of humanities content, such as social network diagrams and cluster diagrams.
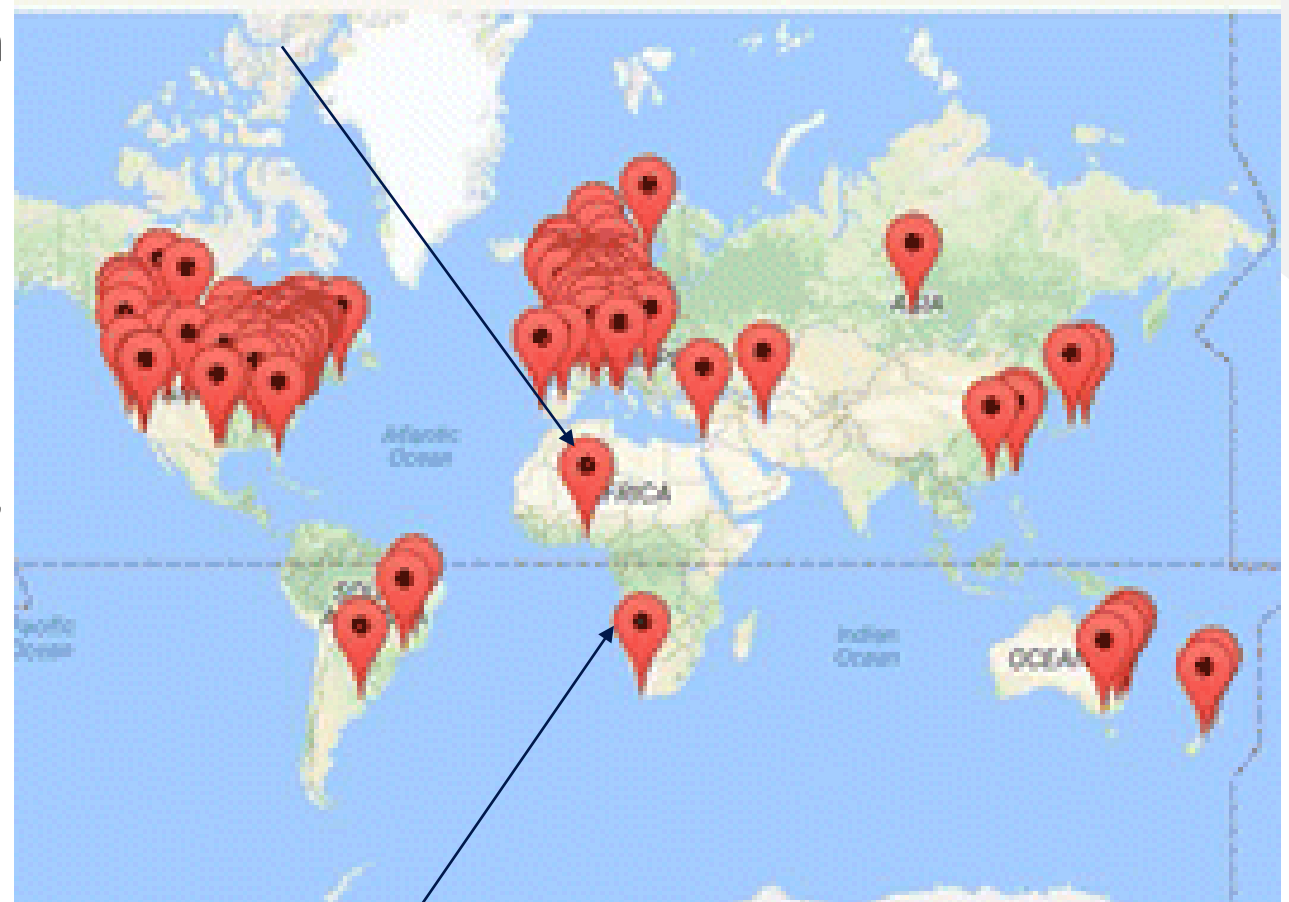
DH in/of Africa

DH in Africa

How far have we gone?

South Africa: Govt. Involvement & foreign partnership
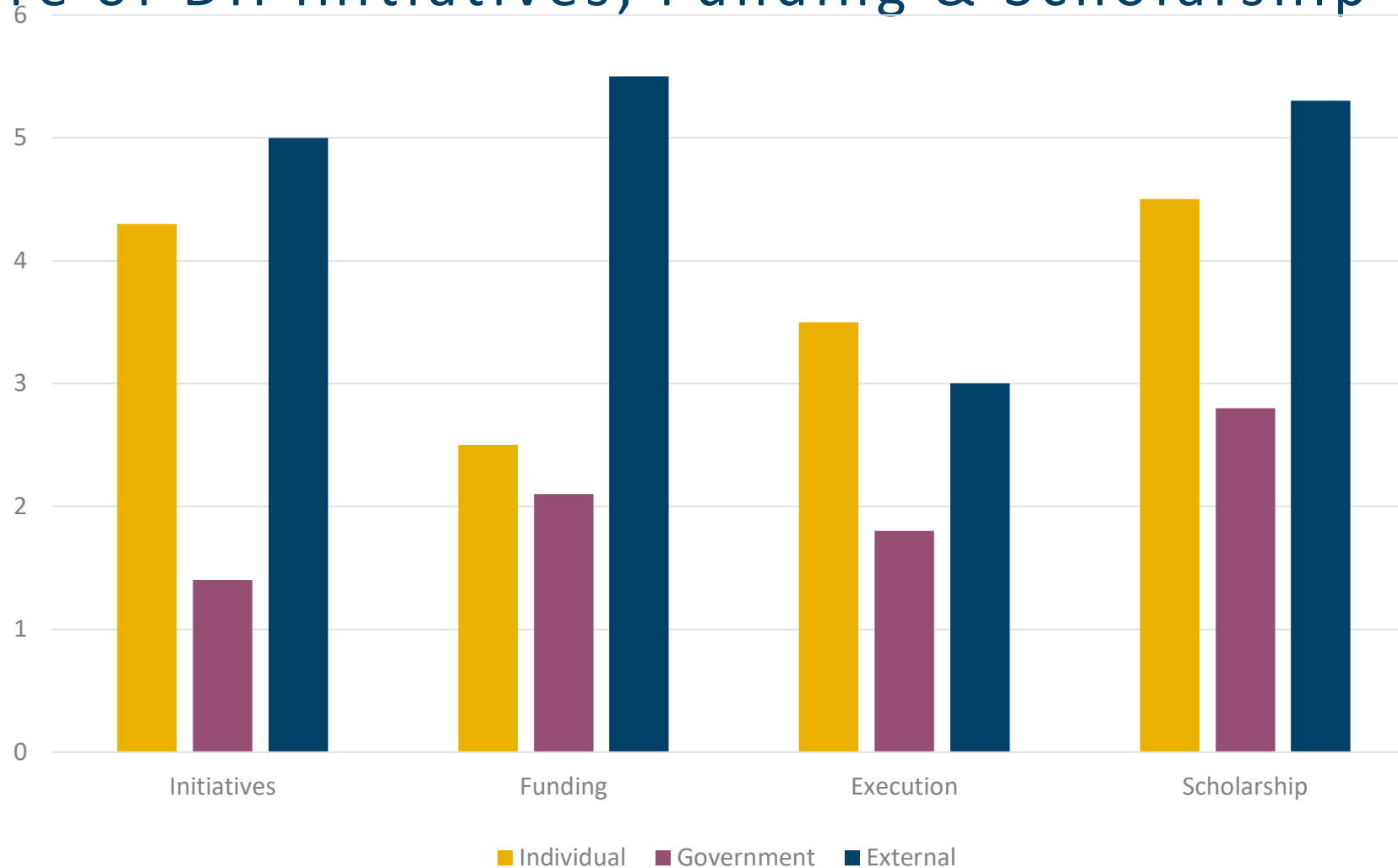
Nigeria: Institution & foreign partnership

Others: (Ethiopia, Kenya, Cameroon, Mali, Ghana): Extremely limited or no support. Support were based on individual dint of hardwork.

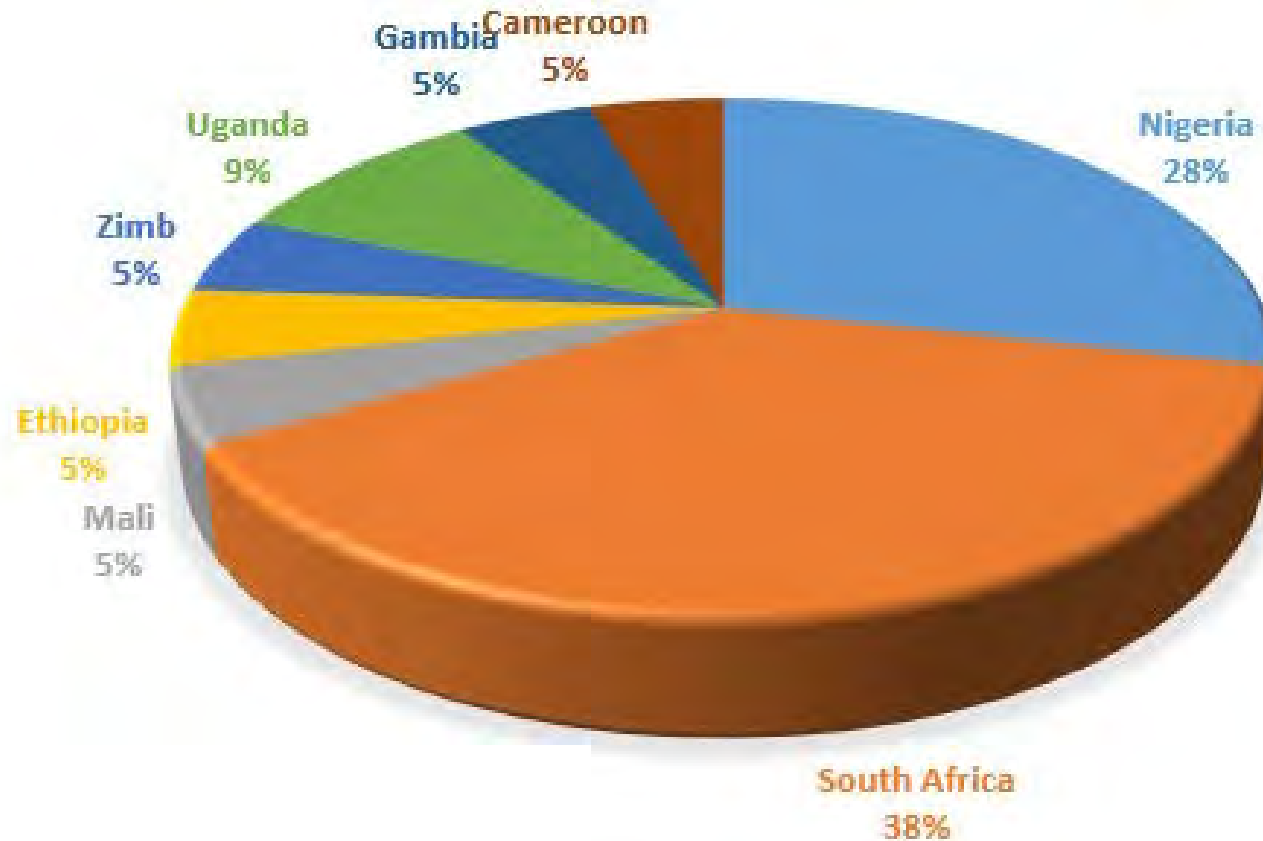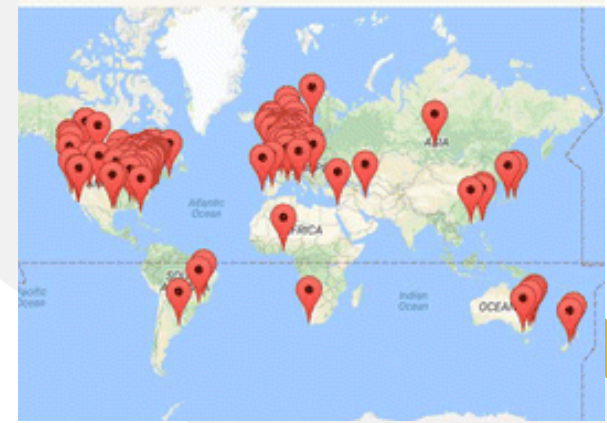**Source: http://dhcenternet.org/centers**

DH in Africa
Nature of DH initiatives, Funding & Scholarship

DH in Africa

AFRICAN PARTICIPANTS AT A DH WORKSHOP IN LEIDEN

DH in Africa

Emerging Affordances & Opportunities

- International training, workshop & scholarship

- Summer Schools

- DH communities: ADHO, Humanistica, DHASA, DHAN*, NetDHA*

- DH Centres: SADILAR, CEDHUL, others

- Collaborative research

Doing DH in Africa

A Personal reflection…

Sample Study

Digital Humanities and the discursive complexities of colonial "letterature"

Introduction

❖**Colonial letters**

- a means of communication among colonial masters in major parts of the world, especially Africa between 1870 and 1900 (Iweriebor, 2011).

- served as a medium of exchanging thoughts, feelings, or information between the ruling colonial masters and the colonised subjects or vice versa.

- a reliable source for analysing Africa's encounter with Europe owing to the letters' historical and cultural values (Korieh, 2014)

Backdrop

- Colonial historicity and its antiquities have attracted the interest of scholars (Anchimbe, 2011; Teke, 2014; Ranjan, 2017; Vazquez-Aroyo, 2018; Hannaford, 2018, etc) in the field of digital humanities.

- Though scholars (in this field,) have observed that colonial *letterature* is one of the very important antiquities of the colonial times.

  - Yet, **their linguistic complexities remain understudied**, and

  - **Digital documentation in developing nations is still a mirage**

Objectives

a. Collect archived colonial letters in and/or relating to Nigeria,

b. Identify the various discursive or pragmatic patterns that shape the complexities, and

a. Examine how they assist in the understanding of colonial thoughts,

b. Interrogate the effectiveness of these letters to modern-day pedagogy and their potentials for the description of African socio-cultural cum linguistic values in the study locations

Experience

- **Institution-based DH Projects**

  - South west: **Centre for Digital Humanities, University of Lagos**

  - North Central: **Centre for Digital Archive of African Mother Tongue Languages, Kwara State University**

Experience

- **Economy/infrastructure**
- **Government Policy**

- **Politics of employment**
- **Obsolete archival culture**

- **Practitioners**

- **Lack of standard methods of access to the public**

- **Attitude to work (at some archival centres)**

- **ALL THESE ARE CHANGING FAST**