Capacity development and e-participation: indispensable elements in the IG ecosystem

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Abstract

Capacity development and e-participation are essential for achieving a legitimate and effective Internet governance ecosystem. They can contribute towards ensuring genuine multistakeholderism by closing the gap between a sheer possibility to participate and the reality of being able to do it in a meaningful way. The effectiveness and legitimacy of the Internet governance (IG) ecosystem depends on the individual and institutional capacity of actors to participate fully in global IG multistakeholder processes. Capacity development should support and facilitate policy socialisation as a way to acquire the skills and understanding necessary to succeed in an IG environment with its high diversity of professional, national and institutional cultures. Online participation should be a standard part of event design, as much as any other infrastructure specification, such as Internet access or audio support for speakers.

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Capacity Development for Internet Governance (CD IG) should build on the capacity development achievements of ISOC, DiploFoundation, ICANN, and ITU, among others. CD IG aims to inspire and support change towards a new IG framework by:

· moving beyond a simplistic view of capacity development as training, towards a holistic approach ('CD 360') involving institutional development, coaching, policy immersion and other interventions tailored for specific capacity development needs and environments;· emphasising *soft* or *social* capacities, including operational capacities (intercultural communication, leadership, organisational culture and values, problem-solving skills) and adaptive capacities (ability to analyse and adapt, change readiness and management, confidence);· ensuring local ownership of capacity development, and considering local political, social, cultural and other specific conditions in developing and implementing capacity development programmes and activities;· promoting openness to 'lessons learnt' and flexibility to modify approaches as required;· integrating capacity development within policy processes, for example by providing 'just-in-time learning' as a part of policy processes;· introducing IG and related topics in the curriculum of academic post-graduate studies; · facilitating the emergence of an enabling environment where developed individual and institutional capacities can effectively address needs (legal framework and policies).

Genuine and sustainable empowerment can be achieved thorough holistic capacity development on individual, organisational, system and network levels, as it is visualised in the capacity development 'butterfly' (methodology used by the Swiss Agency for

Development and Cooperation).

Figure 1. Capacity development butterfly

E/remote/online participation in global/regional policy meetings has evolved from an experiment to a proven method for inclusive participation. IGF, ICANN, ITU, among others, have had a pioneering role in developing online participation in global policy making, and this should now be institutionalised.

Online participation must now be offered as a standard method of attendance to all open meetings, as a possibility for the inclusion of those without access to the requirements for *in situ* attendance (funding/time/other). An effective online participation should be an important criterion for evaluating the legitimacy and policy relevance of international meetings.

Online participation should be a standard part of event design, as much as any other infrastructure specification, such as Internet access or audio support for speakers. Online participation should be a fixed part of the budget for events. International organizations should adjust procedures in order to facilitate effective online participation (e.g. role of chair, effective moderation, broadcasting translation in multiple languages, real-time text captioning).