Fellowship Program Post-ICANN79 Report

Community Forum | 2–7 March 2024 | San Juan, Puerto Rico

Abraham Selby

Krislin Goulbourne-Harry

On behalf of the ICANN79 class of fellows from the ICANN79 Hybrid Community Forum Fellowship Program.

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Fellowship Program ICANN79 Overview

The Fellowship Program strengthens the diversity of the multistakeholder model by fostering opportunities for individuals, especially from underserved and underrepresented communities, to become active participants in the ICANN community. This report represents an overview of the experience of the latest cohort of fellows.

Fellows are exposed to the structure and workings of the ICANN community, assigned mentors, receive training across different areas of knowledge, and participate in skill-building activities before, during, and after an ICANN meeting. Travel assistance to attend an in-person meeting is also provided, where appropriate. Since its inception in 2007, the Fellowship Program has built a strong group of fellows who are actively participating in ICANN communities as well as other entities in the Internet ecosystem.

To apply or learn more about the Fellowship Program, kindly visit: http://www.icann.org/en/fellowships.

NUMBER OF FELLOWS

33

NUMBER OF COACHES

5

GENDER DIVERSITY

48% MALE
52% FEMALE

NUMBER OF LANGUAGES SPOKEN BY FELLOWS

19

NUMBER OF COUNTRIES REPRESENTED

28

NUMBER OF WORKING SECTORS AND/OR AREAS OF INTEREST

10

HOURS OF SESSIONS ATTENDED

855

NUMBER OF ICANN LEARN COURSES COMPLETED

779

NUMBER OF WORKING GROUP SESSIONS ATTENDED

124

PERCENTAGE SATISFIED WITH MENTORING EXPERIENCE

73%

ICANN79 Fellowship Participants

The ICANN79 Community Forum Fellowship Program included thirty-three fellows and five mentors. Mentors are appointed by ICANN's Supporting Organizations (SOs) and Advisory Committees (ACs).

FELLOWS	COUNTRY OR REGION OF RESIDENCE	WORKING SECTOR/AREA OF INTEREST
Abraham Selby	Ghana	Academia, Business and Commerce, Technical, Security
Alyza Josef	Netherlands	Academia, Civil Society, Security
Amina Ramallan	Nigeria	Technical Recipient of Tarek Kamel Fellowship Recognition
Caron Maria David	Trinidad and Tobago	Business and Commerce, ccTLD Operations, Internet Service Providers and Connectivity Providers, Security
Emilia Hanna Zalewska-Czajczyńska	Poland	ccTLD Operations, Civil Society, Security
Emmanuel Adewale Adedokun	Nigeria	Academia, Civil Society, Technical
Ephraim Percy Kenyanito	Kenya	Academia, Civil Society
Esau Lepa I Matangi Tupou	Tonga	Security
Fatou Sarr	Senegal	Academia, Business and Commerce, Civil Society (participated virtually)
Federica Tortorella	Dominican Republic	ccTLD Operations, Technical
Guillermo Pereyra	Uruguay	Civil Society, Technical Security
Hafiz Farooq	Saudi Arabia	Business and Commerce, Technical, Security
Heidy Hernández	Guatemala	ccTLD Operations
Ignacio Sánchez González	Chile	Academia, Business and Commerce
Jahongir Jabborov	Tajikistan	Internet Service Providers and Connectivity Providers
James Kunle Olorundare	Nigeria	Technical **Recipient of Paul Muchene Fellowship Award**
Kathleen Scoggin	United States of America	Academia
Kennedy Wangila Wabuge	Kenya	Civil Society, Internet Service Providers and Connectivity Providers, Technical, Security
Krislin Goulbourne-Harry	Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	Academia, Business and Commerce, Technical
Melchizedek Alipio	Philippines	Academia, Technical
Natalie Tercova	Czech Republic	Academia
Oier Albizuri	Spain	Business and Commerce, ICANN Contracted Party

FELLOWS	COUNTRY OR REGION OF RESIDENCE	WORKING SECTOR/AREA OF INTEREST
Pedro de Perdigao Lana	Brazil	Academia, Civil Society
Pranav Bhaskar Tiwari	India	Academia, Civil Society, Intellectual Property
Senka Hadzic	South Africa	Civil Society, Internet Service Providers and Connectivity Providers, Technical
Shanelle McPherson	Jamaica	Academia, Technical, Security
Takehiko (Russell) Harada	Papua New Guinea	ccTLD Operations, Technical
Tamara Yael Zylbersztejn	Argentina	Business and Commerce, ccTLD Operations, Internet Service Providers and Connectivity Providers
Vesmira Harutyunyan	Armenia	Civil Society, Internet End User
Waqar Ahmad	Canada	Internet End User, Internet Service Providers and Connectivity Providers, Technical
Willie/Nembo Meck	Papua New Guinea	Operations, Internet Service Providers and Connectivity Providers, Technical, Security
Yanira Zoe Filomeno Vazquez	United States of America	Academia, Business and Commerce, Civil Society, Security
Yasir Zunair	Germany	Academia, Business and Commerce, Civil Society

Note: All information above is self-reported by applicants.

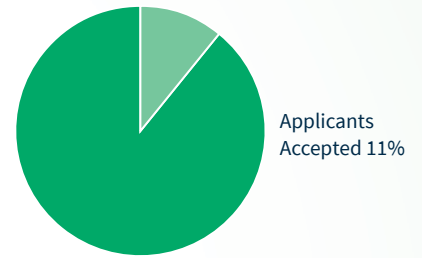| MENTORS	APPOINTED BY
Abdulkarim Oloyede	Root Server System Advisory Committee (RSSAC)
Arinola Akinyemi	Generic Names Supporting Organization (GNSO)
Jenifer López	Country Code Names Supporting Organization (ccNSO)
Laxmi Prasad Yadav	Governmental Advisory Committee (GAC)
Shreedeep Rayamajhi	At-Large Advisory Committee (ALAC)

Program Statistics

In this section, the metrics are derived from data provided by the fellows during the application process and from a fellowship post-meeting survey.

Application Process

The ICANN organization (org) received three hundred and seventy-eight (378) applications for the ICANN79 Fellowship Program. Initially, forty (40) applicants from thirty-two (32) countries were selected, but due to visa issues thirty-three (33) individuals from twenty-eight (28) countries participated as fellows, with thirty-two (32) in person and one (1) virtual. All thirty-three (33) fellows successfully completed the ICANN79 Fellowship Program.
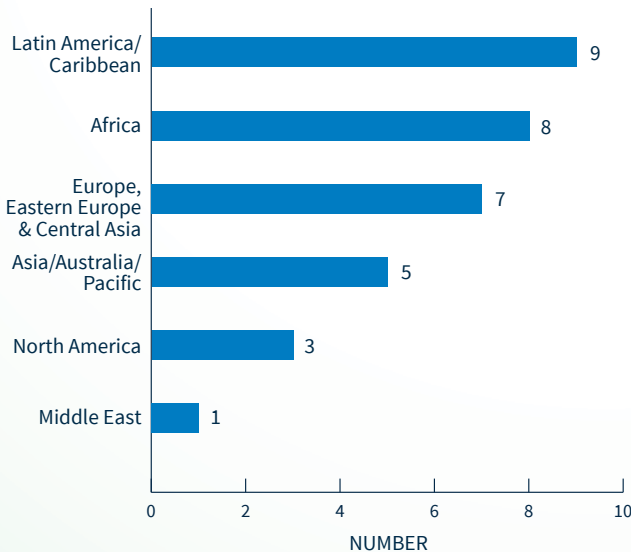
Fellowship Program Acceptance Rate

Applicants Accepted 11%
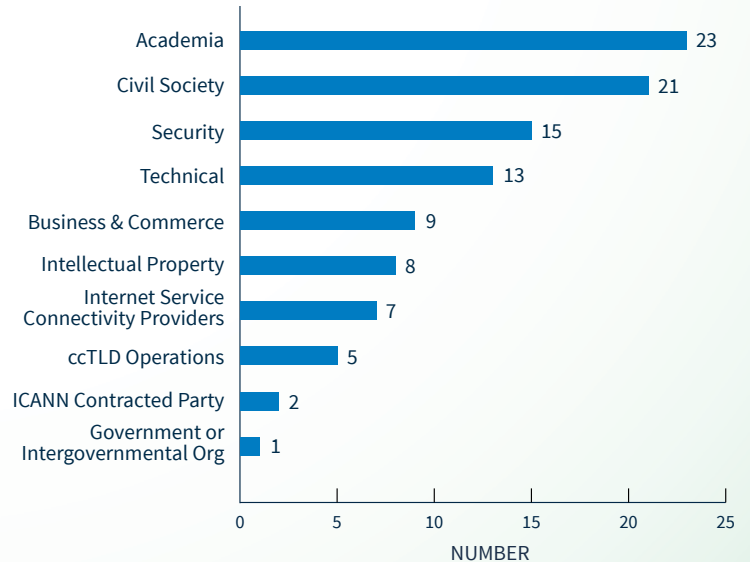
Fellowship Cohort Profile

The thirty-three ICANN79 fellows came from different regions of the world, in the following order of regional representation:

Regional Representation

Region	Number
Latin America/Caribbean	9
Africa	8
Europe, Eastern Europe & Central Asia	7
Asia/Australia/Pacific	5
North America	3
Middle East	1

NUMBER

Note: The regions reflect the classification adopted by ICANN.

Working Sector and/or Area of Interest

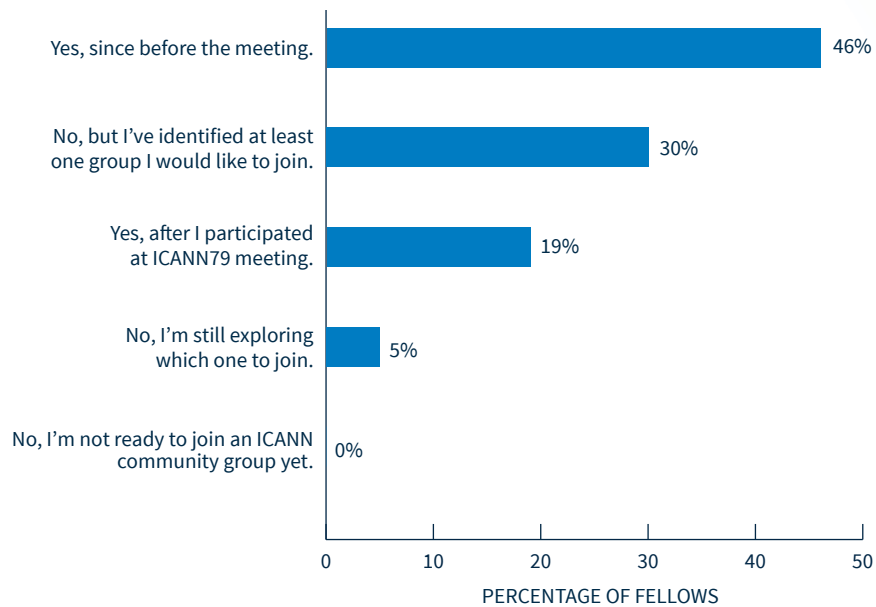| Sector	Number
Academia	23
Civil Society	21
Security	15
Technical	13
Business & Commerce	9
Intellectual Property	8
Internet Service Connectivity Providers	7
ccTLD Operations	5
ICANN Contracted Party	2
Government or Intergovernmental Org	1

NUMBER

Note: Applicants and fellows could select multiple stakeholder groups.

Community Engagement

SO/AC Affiliations

Fifteen participants (46%) reported affiliation with at least one ICANN community group (SOs, ACs, Stakeholder Group, or Constituency) before the ICANN79 meeting. Six fellows (19%) indicated that their affiliation began following participation in the ICANN79 hybrid meeting. Furthermore, ten fellows (30%) have already identified a community group to join, while two fellows (5%) are still exploring options.

Are you affiliated with at least one ICANN community group?

Response	Percentage
Yes, since before the meeting.	46%
No, but I've identified at least one group I would like to join.	30%
Yes, after I participated at ICANN79 meeting.	19%
No, I'm still exploring which one to join.	5%
No, I'm not ready to join an ICANN community group yet.	0%

PERCENTAGE OF FELLOWS

Of the thirty-three (33) fellows, fifteen mentioned their affiliation or interest for further engagement with the ALAC, six with the GNSO, out of them three indicated affiliation with the Non-Commercial Users Constituency (NCUC), five with the ccNSO, four with Security and Stability Advisory Committee (SSAC) and per two fellows with the GAC, Address Supporting Organization (ASO) and RSSAC.

Main Takeaways from the Fellowship

Below are the main takeaways from the ICANN79 Fellowship Program, as highlighted by the participants:

- Some participants found the preparatory phase enjoyable and expressed appreciation for the mentorship program and the ICANN Learn courses. The courses provided a better understanding of ICANN's structure, work, and various communities, groups, SOs, and ACs.

- Participants emphasized the effectiveness of ICANN's multistakeholder model, which involves governments, businesses, civil society, and the technical community. This collaboration fosters an inclusive decision-making process: building relationships and understanding different perspectives are identified as crucial for collaboration within the ICANN ecosystem.

- Participants highlighted the opportunity to comprehensively understand ICANN's governance structure, mission, outreach programs, and policy development processes. In addition, through interactive sessions and discussions, participants gained deeper insights into initiatives within ICANN groups and their implications on the policy-making process. Furthermore, the opportunity to participate in-person allowed participants to dedicate time to the sessions and, in so doing, gained more meaningful knowledge and experience.

- The fellows expressed gratitude towards meaningful networking opportunities with the ICANN Board and staff, various ICANN community groups, alumni fellows, participating fellows, and other stakeholders. Participants were able to forge valuable connections and exchange ideas, fostering potential collaborations and mutual support within the global community. Additionally, participants expressed that they were able to increase their visibility with the ICANN community and gain new soft skills.

- In light of the dynamic cultural and geopolitical landscape, participants emphasized the need to support ICANN's work to adapt and evolve in response to emerging challenges and opportunities. Recognizing the importance of inclusivity and diversity, participants stressed the need to ensure that everyone's voice and perspective are heard and incorporated into ICANN's decision-making processes. This commitment to inclusivity is essential for promoting a stable and secure Internet that reflects the needs and values of all stakeholders, regardless of geographical location, language, or cultural background.

- Overall, the experience of the fellowship program and the ICANN79 Community Forum was incredibly positive for the participants. They gained new insights, had the opportunity to network and meet inspiring people, and felt motivated and empowered. Furthermore, some participants have already found their niche within the ICANN ecosystem. Many of them expressed gratitude for the experience and hope to stay involved in the ICANN community.

ICANN79 Fellowship Program Activities

ICANN Learn Courses

The first phase of the fellowship program consisted of the mandatory ICANN Learn courses that were offered through the ICANN Learn online platform, which is built for the global ICANN community. The courses had clear learning objectives and outcomes. They provided the fellows with a basic understanding of what ICANN does and explained how they could get involved with ICANN. The fellows were also offered courses to improve their Internet skills.

Mentoring Process

To fully engage in the fellowship program, each fellow was assigned a mentor as part of a small mentoring team. The fellows' active collaboration and timely responsiveness to the mentors were of utmost importance. During the preparation for the ICANN79 Policy Forum, fellows held joint meetings with their mentors. These online meetings were instrumental in laying the foundation of knowledge needed to make the most of the Policy Forum. They also helped in setting realistic expectations and getting to know each other better.

A virtual meet-and-greet session took place on Friday, February 23, 2024, providing an opportunity for fellows to familiarize themselves with one another. Moreover, the agenda and meeting logistics were communicated during the session.

Pre-Meeting Activities

Most fellows reported their appreciation for the sessions they attended during the ICANN79 Prep Week, which ICANN organized to prepare the community for the Community Forum. The fellows were required to attend the below sessions.

DATE	Time in Coordinated Universal Time (UTC)	ICANN79 Prep Week Session
Tuesday, 20 February	15:00 – 16:00 UTC	Universal Acceptance (UA) Community Update
Wednesday, 21 February	16:30 – 17:30 UTC	ICANN Board Engagement with the ICANN Community
	18:00 – 19:30 UTC	New gTLD Program: Next Round Implementation Status Update
	20:30 – 21:30 UTC	What to Expect During ICANN79: A Guide for Newcomers
Thursday, 22 February	15:00 – 16:00 UTC	Policy and Advice Update

ICANN79 Meeting Activities

Below are the main daily sessions attended by most fellows:

DATE	ICANN79 PREP WEEK SESSION
Day 1: Saturday, 2 March 2024	ICANN79 Fellowship and NextGen@ICANN Program, Participants Meet and Greet Event
	ICANN Fellowship Program: Consensus Playbook Training [C]
	How It Works: IROS and IANA
	Get to Know the ICANN Community: At-Large Advisory Committee (ALAC) Members Networking Event
	How it Works: ICANN Policy
	Social Event - ICANN79 Fellowship Social Networking
Day 2: Sunday, 3 March 2024	Upstander Training
	Get to Know the ICANN Community: Universal Acceptance Steering Group (UASG), Business Constituency (BC), and GAC Members Networking Event
	Get to Know the ICANN Community: Noncommercial Stakeholder Group (NCSG) Networking Event
	Get to Know ICANN Community - GNSO and ccNSO Networking Event
	Get to Know ICANN Community - SSAC and RSSAC Networking Event
	GAC 25 Anniversary Reception – Social Event
Day 3: Monday, 4 March 2024	Welcome Ceremony & Community Excellence Award
	Q&A with ICANN org Executive Team
	At-Large NARALO Town Hall Meeting
	NextGen@ICANN Presentations (1 out of 2)
	Africa Space Work Session
	Joint Session: ICANN Board and GNSO Council
	Welcome Reception hosted by the Puerto Rico Tourism Company

DATE	ICANN79 PREP WEEK SESSION
Day 4: Tuesday, 5 March 2024	At-Large Leadership Working Session on the ICANN Grant Program
	UASG Governance and Plans Work Session
	New gTLD Program Next Round: Planning for String Similarity Review Work Session
	At-Large NARALO Networking Event
	APAC Space Work and Networking Session
	GAC Discussion: WHOIS and Data Protection Policy and Accuracy
	ccNSO: Internet Fragmentation Work Session
	Joint Session: ICANN Board and ALAC
Day 5: Wednesday, 6 March 2024	UA Day 2024 Overview Work Session
	Joint Session: GAC and GNSO
	NextGen Presentations (2 of 2)
	ICANN Board Members, ICANN79 Fellowship, and NextGen@ICANN Program Participants Networking Event
	Joint AFRALO-AfrICANN Meeting
	ICANN Grant Program
	DNSSEC and Security Workshop (2 of 2)
	DNS Women: Involving the Community
	At-Large Plenary Session 2 - Building Trust on the Internet through Registrant Verification
Day 6: Thursday, 7 March 2024	ICANN79 Fellowship Program Wrap-Up [C]
	ICANN Public Forum
	Geopolitical, Legislative, and Regulatory Developments Update
	At-Large Leadership Wrap Up
	ICANN Board Public Meeting
	GAC Wrap-Up Session
	ccNSO Council Meeting
	GNSO Council Wrap-Up
	Closing Celebration

Working group sessions attended by the fellows:

- ASO AC Work Session (3 of 12)
- GDS: Subpro IRT Work Session (2 of 3)
- GAC Commonwealth Work Session [C]
- Name Collision Analysis Project (NCAP) Discussion Working Group Meeting
- UASG Governance and Plans Work Session
- ccNSO: Internet Fragmentation Work Session
- SSAC Work Session (4 of 8) [C]
- Africa Space Work Session
- ccNSO: ccPDP4 Community Update Work Session

Post-Meeting Activities

After ICANN79, participants have a variety of plans and actions they intend to pursue. These plans include deepening engagement by joining specific working groups such as NCSG, NCUC, GNSO, RSSAC, SSAC, APRALO, ALAC, UASG, and others. They plan to actively contribute to policy discussions, technical initiatives, and research activities within these groups.

Additionally, some participants aim to offer technical support as website administrators for various ICANN groups, ensuring the smooth functioning of online platforms and supporting research initiatives. Others express their commitment to advocating for specific issues such as Internet security, digital rights, Domain Name System (DNS) abuse prevention, and Universal Acceptance (UA) of domain names and email addresses. They plan to actively participate in policy development processes within ICANN and collaborate with relevant stakeholders to address these issues.

Many participants also focus on educational initiatives, aiming to raise awareness about ICANN's work, Internet governance, and technical aspects such as Domain Name System Security Extensions (DNSSEC) and UA. They intend to organize workshops, webinars, and courses to educate their communities and encourage participation in ICANN programs.
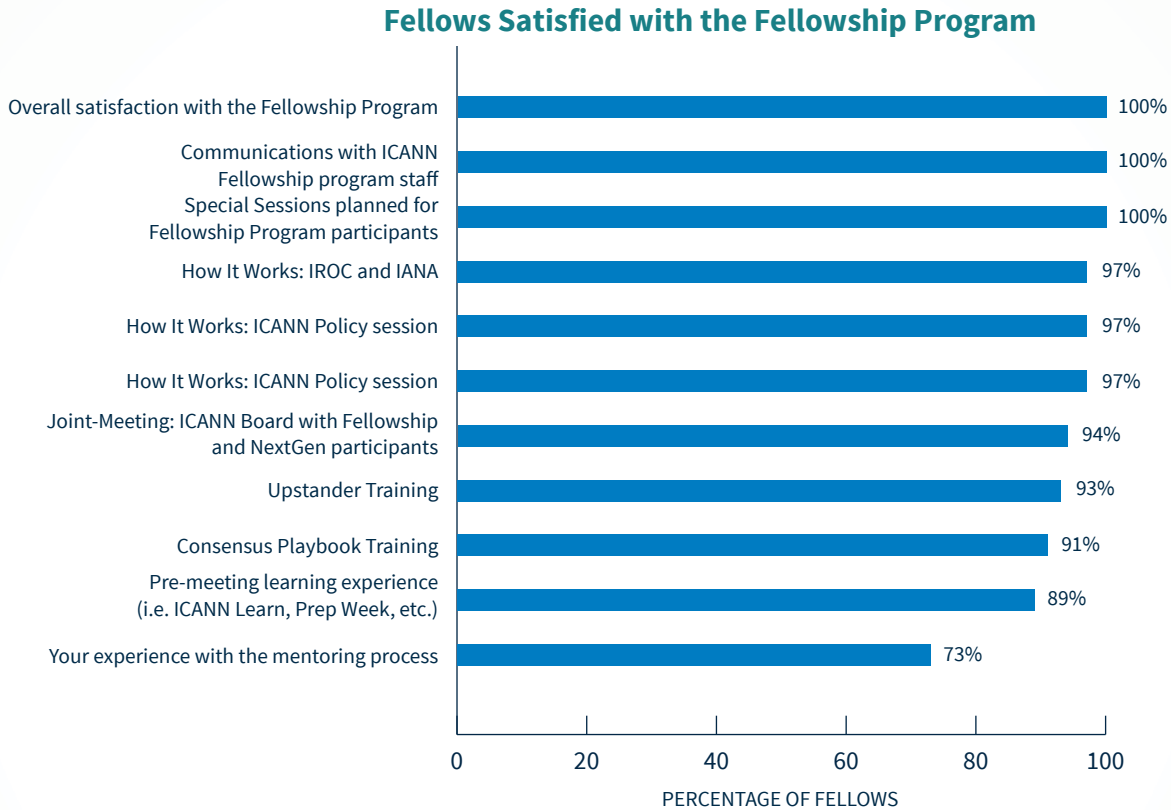
Some of the fellows also initiated a conference call with a youth group in Africa called Pan African Youth Ambassadors for Internet Governance (PAYAIG) to advise newcomers on how they can delve deeper into and apply for the ICANN fellowship. The goal is to share the insights and experiences gained from the fellowship. Additionally, the participants had an engaging session with At-Large, which proved valuable in providing an overview of the fellowship and brainstorming ways to enhance the fellowship experience.

Networking and collaboration within the ICANN community are also key priorities for many participants. They plan to build partnerships, share knowledge and insights, mentor newcomers, and contribute to a collaborative and inclusive Internet ecosystem. Some participants highlighted the importance of regional engagement, such as representing their regions within ICANN structures such as the European Regional At-Large Organization (EURALO), Latin American and Caribbean Islands Regional At-Large Organization (LACRALO), North American Regional At-Large Organization (NARALO), African Regional At-Large Organization (AFRALO) and Asia Pacific Regional At-Large Organization (APRALO). They aim to amplify the voices of underrepresented communities and promote regional-specific initiatives.

Many participants see their involvement in ICANN as a means of professional development. They plan to enhance their skills, gain expertise in specific areas, for example, Internet governance, cybersecurity, and technical operations, and pursue leadership roles within the different ICANN structures. Overall, participants are committed to advancing ICANN's mission to ensure a stable, secure, and unified global Internet.

Fellowship Feedback

As depicted in the chart below, the fellows expressed strong appreciation for the hybrid format of the ICANN79 Community Forum, particularly the chance to participate in in-person sessions.

Fellows Satisfied with the Fellowship Program

Overall satisfaction with the Fellowship Program	100%
Communications with ICANN Fellowship program staff	100%
Special Sessions planned for Fellowship Program participants	100%
How It Works: IROC and IANA	97%
How It Works: ICANN Policy session	97%
How It Works: ICANN Policy session	97%
Joint-Meeting: ICANN Board with Fellowship and NextGen participants	94%
Upstander Training	93%
Consensus Playbook Training	91%
Pre-meeting learning experience (i.e. ICANN Learn, Prep Week, etc.)	89%
Your experience with the mentoring process	73%

PERCENTAGE OF FELLOWS

Feedback on Prep Week Meeting Activities

The ICANN Prep-Meeting leading up to ICANN79 provided fellows with a valuable platform to share their perspectives and insights. Fellows expressed appreciation for the opportunity to engage in meaningful discussions and exchange ideas on various topics relevant to Internet governance and ICANN's upcoming activities. They found the sessions to be informative and conducive to building relationships with fellow participants. Fellows also highlighted the significance of mentorship in their learning journey. Mentors played a crucial role in guiding them through unfamiliar concepts and providing valuable insights into the inner workings of ICANN and Internet governance. The personalized support and encouragement from mentors enabled the fellows to navigate challenges and gain confidence in their abilities.

As the fellows progressed through the learning course, they were encouraged to actively participate in discussions, ask questions, and seek clarification on any concepts they find challenging. The course provided a structured approach to learning, with modules covering various aspects of Internet governance, ICANN's role, and relevant policy developments.

Below are some fellows' suggestions for improvement:

Areas of Opportunity to Improve the Newcomer Experience

With a profound emphasis on equipping participants with the necessary tools and engagement procedures, the ICANN Fellowship program aims to deeply immerse fellows in the operational intricacies of ICANN and its affiliated groups and communities. Recognizing this imperative, ICANN is committed to cultivating a diverse and vibrant community of stakeholders who can collectively address the complex challenges and opportunities facing the Internet. Therefore, the fellows put forward the following recommendations for consideration:

- Fellows with experience in ICANN should be given the opportunity to choose sessions they are interested in, instead of being required to attend mandatory newcomer sessions, especially in the case where sessions clash.

- Create a space for second and third-time fellows to share their accomplishments and encourage newcomers to work towards achieving the same and more.

- Newcomers should receive guidance by their mentor about which group they should join.

- Review the logical and effective continuity of the ICANN Learn courses to avoid repetition.

- Second- and third-time fellows should be given a research topic based on what ICANN is working on ("hot topics") and be given a session to present their findings at the meetings.

- Implementing a buddy system where newcomers are paired with an alumni fellow could give newcomers a chance to gather information and confidently ask questions while forging relationships.

- Mentors could have more assignments and periodic evaluations of their mentees, even in the preparatory phase, so that they could have time to help them before meeting.

- The fellowships team should consider introducing live virtual sessions with relevant SOs and ACs before the meeting. This could provide a more interactive and in-depth understanding of the complex ICANN ecosystem, making the meeting experience even more enriching for newcomers.

- Preparatory work should begin earlier, or alternatively, fellows should have the option to arrive a day or two in advance to acquaint themselves with the surroundings. This would facilitate meetings with their mentorship teams and allow discussions on how best to engage throughout the week.

- During onboarding, it would be beneficial to inform the fellows that they should always pick up their headphones when entering a room and they should also receive instructions on how to use them effectively.

- Improving the newcomer experience at ICANN meetings requires offering comprehensive orientation sessions, hosting interactive workshops, facilitating networking opportunities, encouraging feedback for continual improvement, and developing online resources to supplement learning.

What is Next?

The ICANN79 Fellowship program brings together a dynamic group of alumni with diverse backgrounds and interests. Many of our fellows are keen to continue their engagement in policy development initiatives. They actively participate in various ICANN community groups at regional levels and maintain close communication with ICANN's regional engagement team. A significant number of fellows have already pinpointed specific groups they wish to join, while others are enthusiastic about becoming involved in local chapters of the Internet Society.

Furthermore, some fellows are actively contributing to policy development discussions through mailing lists and holding memberships in Regional At-Large Structures. They are expecting that At-Large leadership should engage the fellows in any new upcoming policy related project within their respective regions, enabling fellows to contribute to the development of such policies from scratch. Moving forward, here's a glimpse of the plans our ICANN79 fellows have for further engagement within ICANN and the broader Internet governance ecosystem:

ABRAHAM SELBY

Drawing from my background in public policy, Internet governance (IG) and web development, I've been actively involved with various stakeholder groups as a volunteer, leveraging my expertise to assist them. My contributions extend to engaging in discussions pertaining to IG, domain name policies, and technical standards. Looking ahead, my commitment to ICANN remains steadfast, with a focus on deepening my comprehension of global IG matters and actively contributing to the formulation of inclusive and effective policies. Additionally, I aim to offer technical support as a website administrator for the NCUC, AFRALO, UASG, and other working groups, ensuring the smooth functioning of their online platforms and supporting research initiatives. As a member and faculty of the Pan African Youth Ambassador for Internet Governance, I aspire to enhance the participation of our peers by encouraging them to join ICANN through initiatives like the ICANN Learn and Newcomers program.

ALYZA JOSEF

My participation at ICANN has consisted of observing as well as active engagement during the sessions. This has allowed me to learn about the multistakeholder model in practice, engaging with all types of stakeholders from different sectors and countries. The fellowship program has allowed me to explore the various ICANN Constituencies and their missions. My future plans with regards to ICANN are therefore to further explore these constituencies to find the one that fits me best. Additionally, I would like to continue to participate in ICANN meetings and e-mail discussion lists to keep up with ICANN's tasks, discussions, and accomplishments. At last, I would like to mention the warm, open community that is ICANN. I was surprised at how the bottom-up approach is implemented in practice, demonstrating that all ICANN members were open to questions and discussions about certain topics. This has really helped me in the fellowship process.

AMINA RAMALLAN

As a second-time fellow of ICANN, I have come a long way since my first ICANN meeting in 2018. I have had the opportunity to learn about the critical role ICANN plays in IG via a bottom up multistakeholder approach. Going forward, I will play a more active role within the community as a role model and mentor for newcomers and also increase my participation in policy making within the ICANN community by joining the GNSO NCUC.

CARON DAVID

My participation at ICANN79 as a fellow presented me with many learning opportunities on the structure of the community. I intend to take the opportunity to read more about the community, particularly the GAC, ALAC, GNSO, and ccNSO and learn more about how I can participate. I also intend to share my learnings from the ICANN Community Forum with my work colleagues.

EMILIA ZALEWSKA-CZAJCZYŃSKA

After an engaging preparatory phase, I was waiting with excitement to participate in the ICANN79 Community Forum. Now, once it has finished, I can honestly say that my expectations have been fully met. First of all, I had the opportunity to get to know the various constituencies within ICANN in more detail and find out specifically what their area of focus is. I also learned what they are currently working on and what issues require. This allowed me to identify which ones would be closest to my interests. For now, I plan to engage with two structures, ALAC and NCUC. I have already participated in the first meeting, ReadOut organized by EURALO, where I also had the opportunity to share my insights from ICANN79. During my ICANN79 attendance, I also tried to follow some activities of the ccNSO for the sake of my work at the Polish National Research Institute NASK, which among other roles is ccTLD manager of .pl. My goal is to share my knowledge about ccNSO's activities with my colleagues who work in the relevant department and help them to get a better understanding of how they could get involved. Moreover, I found the regional sessions and those dedicated to IG very interesting. I have been already engaged in the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) and related forums before, but I hope that the experience gained during the fellowship program and future involvement with ICANN will help me to get a new perspective on this area. For that reason, I signed up for the ICANN's mailing list dedicated to World Summit on the Information Society+20. In conclusion, my experience of the fellowship program and the ICANN79 Community Forum was incredibly positive. In addition to new knowledge, it also provided me the opportunity to meet extraordinary people. During this week I have had plenty of inspiring conversations that will stay with me for a long time. I felt motivated and empowered. Therefore, I am very grateful for this experience, and I really hope to stay involved in the wonderful ICANN community.

EMMANUEL ADEWALE ADEDOKUN

I have participated in a couple of virtual ICANN meetings but my physical participation as an ICANN79 Fellow was a lot different, very educational, and insightful. The event gave me a better understanding of the inner workings of the various stakeholders/working groups. It clearly shows that there is a lot to do and there is a place for everyone to contribute to the development of the Internet. I am looking forward to joining the NCUC, RSAC, SSAC, and also contributing to the UASG.

EPHRAIM PERCY KENYANITO

I hope to continue my involvement in the ICANN community, especially focusing on my people from the Global South and to ensure that the DNS remains pro individual users and pro human rights.

ESAU TUPOU

I was an ICANN79 Fellow, I am very grateful and humbled to be selected as an ICANN79 Fellow and to be selected to participate in the ICANN79 Community Forum. I am planning to either attend as a fellow or as Alternative GAC National Representative for my country. I am still very much interested in the ccNSO and policy making as a ccTLD manager and my personal goal in the future is that I would love to be part of the SSAC.

FATOU SARR

Being an ICANN79 Fellow empowered me with more insight about the different ICANN working groups. The fellowship output provided me more inspiration on my IG impact brief project about online safety and digital rights. As a member of the AFRALO and Operations, Finance and Budget Working Group (OFB WG), I will enhance my engagement in volunteering for ICANN.

FEDERICA TORTORELLA

ICANN79 was my first meeting that I was able to attend in person. The ICANN Fellowship is demanding, but by completing the mandatory courses and sessions, the fellows end up with a much clearer understanding of the organization and how it works, as well as with ideas on how to stay involved in the ecosystem and what to do to achieve it. In addition, the incorporation of practical sessions on topics such as Consensus and the Upstander training are an added value that I personally appreciated. I cannot forget to mention the willingness of everyone at ICANN to help every fellow navigating this complex ecosystem without hesitation. My plans in the short and medium terms are to follow up on the work of the ccNSO and its working groups, and possibly in a personal capacity to approach LACRALO and its initiatives.

GUILLERMO PEREYRA

This was my first participation in an ICANN meeting, and the fellowship program helped me understand the ICANN ecosystem. My future engagement aims to further strengthen Internet security and contribute to collaborative efforts for a safer and stable Internet.

HAFIZ FAROOQ

I am going to work with the GNSO Business Constituency on behalf of Saudi Aramco and will also work with RSSAC and SSAC. I am also working on a UA Day session with Saudi Aramco to continue to work in this area as well.

HEIDY HERNÁNDEZ

Following the completion of the ICANN79 Fellowship, I aspire to delve deeper into the nuances of governance and take an active role in the ccNSO. I aim to contribute valuable insights and proposals. Coming from a developing country and having the privilege of working at a university, I am particularly interested in educational programs for end users. Part of our mission as the ccTLD of Guatemala (.gt) includes assisting with the nation's digital transformation. Hence, I am eager to leverage my experience and knowledge acquired thanks to ICANN to foster a more digitized and connected Guatemala.

IGNACIO SÁNCHEZ GONZÁLEZ

I participated in many live and face-to-face sessions, and then was able to review recordings of other sessions of interest, which I was unable to attend because they were on the same schedule as my mandatory sessions. I was able to talk with key players in the ecosystem, ask questions relevant to my field of work, and identify some issues that merit research. In this sense, I have identified two areas of future engagement with ICANN: On the one hand, I have applied to join two ICANN community groups, where I intend to actively participate in discussions, activities, and comments to policy development processes. On the other hand, I intend to develop research and teaching activities to raise awareness of ICANN's work and contribute meaningful results to the ecosystem. Along the same lines, I want to help consolidate in Chile the School on Internet Governance that we have initiated at the University of Chile, together with other stakeholders already participating in ICANN.

JAHONGIR JABBOROV

I am a first-time fellow who is also an active member of the ALAC, GNSO, RSSAC, APRALO and SSAC. In the future, I plan to engage in DNSSEC, DNS abuse, and security, RSSAC and Root Server Governance, while also actively contributing to the ICANN Fellowship Program.

JAMES KUNLE OLORUNDARE

Being an ICANN79 Fellow allowed me to learn and network with professionals from different walks of life. It was an eye-opener to SSAC and RSSAC, which I have decided to join. I have always been a member of UA-Measurement and UA-EAI Working Groups and I hope to do more. Right now, I am planning a UA Day Awareness Webinar while leveraging knowledge gained at ICANN79 vis-a-vis my post as the President of the Internet Society, Nigeria Chapter. I hope to be more involved in ICANN activities by bringing my knowledge of engineering, IG, project management, and research to bear as deemed applicable.

KATHLEEN SCOGGIN

Within the ICANN ecosystem, I look forward to engaging with NARALO and the At-Large community as a whole. I plan to work within my university to increase North American ICANN engagement and encourage our students to apply for the fellowship and NextGen Programs to provide legal insights on issues related to the DNS. I look forward to putting on UA Day 2024 at American University and continuing to work with the UASG.

KENNEDY WANGILA WABUGE

Following my participation in the ICANN79 Fellowship, these are my next steps: 1. Engage local Internet service providers, community networks, and data centers that run their DNS, for the need of securing their DNS, by implementing the Knowledge-sharing and Instantiation Norms for DNS and Naming Security (KINDNS) initiative. 2. Engage tech companies and developers about UA. 3. Apply for ICANN grants for my community network initiative that I founded in 2021. 4. Looking into volunteering for the ALAC and the technical community in ICANN.

KRISLIN GOULBOURNE-HARRY

As an ICANN79 Fellow, I had the exceptional opportunity to experience the ICANN ecosystem from a bird's eye view. This immersive experience provided me with invaluable insights into ICANN's functions, policies, and community dynamics. Throughout the meeting, I engaged with various stakeholders, participated in policy discussions, and gained a deeper understanding of the challenges and opportunities within the domain name industry. Building on this exceptional experience, my future plans for engagement at ICANN include advocating for UA, increasing involvement in the At-Large community, and paying closer attention to the ccNSO. By leveraging my fellowship experience and expanding my participation within the ICANN community, I aim to contribute to the One World, One Internet vision.

MELCHIZEDEK ALIPIO

The ICANN 79 Community Forum has been a transformative experience, providing invaluable insights and networking opportunities within the global IG landscape. Particularly, my engagement with esteemed bodies such as the RSSAC, the SSAC, and the Asia Pacific Regional At-Large Organization (APRALO) has significantly shaped my vision for future involvement. In this essay, I delineate my strategic plans for continued engagement and contribution within these critical spheres. RSSAC: The RSSAC plays a pivotal role in ensuring the stability and resilience of the Internet's DNS by providing guidance on the operation, administration, and evolution of the root server system. Inspired by the expertise shared during ICANN 79, my future engagement with RSSAC will be multifaceted. Firstly, I aim to deepen my understanding of the technical intricacies surrounding root server operations, leveraging educational resources, and engaging in relevant working groups. Secondly, I aspire to contribute actively to policy discussions aimed at enhancing the robustness and scalability of the root server infrastructure, drawing upon my background in network engineering and cybersecurity. Lastly, I plan to foster cross-community collaboration by bridging RSSAC's efforts with other stakeholders, facilitating knowledge exchange, and collective problem-solving. SSAC: As a vital advisory body within ICANN, SSAC is tasked with providing expert advice and recommendations on matters pertaining to the security and integrity of the DNS and broader Internet ecosystem. Post-ICANN79, my engagement with SSAC will be characterized by a proactive commitment to bolstering cyber resilience and mitigating emerging threats. To achieve this, I intend to actively participate in SSAC's research initiatives, contributing insights gleaned from my academic background in cybersecurity. Additionally, I aim to advocate for the adoption of best practices and standards across the DNS community, leveraging SSAC's platform to disseminate actionable guidance and promote a culture of cybersecurity awareness. By fostering collaboration with other advisory bodies and stakeholders, I endeavor to foster a holistic approach to addressing cybersecurity challenges and safeguarding the Internet's integrity. APRALO: As a vibrant regional community within ICANN's At-Large structure, APRALO serves as a conduit for the voices and concerns of Internet users across the Asia Pacific region. Inspired by the diverse perspectives and collaborative spirit showcased at ICANN79, my future engagement with APRALO will be centered around amplifying grassroots participation and advocating for inclusive IG practices. Firstly, I plan to actively engage with APRALO's outreach and capacity-building initiatives, leveraging my communication skills to facilitate dialogue and knowledge-sharing among diverse stakeholders. Additionally, I aspire to advocate for the interests of underrepresented communities within the Asia Pacific region, amplifying their voices within ICANN's policy development processes. By nurturing partnerships with regional stakeholders and fostering cross-regional collaboration, I seek to advance APRALO's mission of promoting a bottom-up approach to IG and fostering digital inclusion across the Asia Pacific region. The ICANN79 Community Forum has served as a catalyst for my future engagement within the global IG ecosystem, particularly with the RSSAC, the SSAC, and the APRALO. Guided by a commitment to technical excellence, cybersecurity resilience, and inclusive governance principles, I am poised to contribute meaningfully to these critical spheres, leveraging insights gleaned from ICANN79 to chart a path towards a more robust and inclusive Internet for all.

NATÁLIE TERČOVÁ

In the past I have participated as a NextGen at ICANN78, and now I have been selected as a fellow at ICANN79. I very much appreciate the warm welcome from the whole community and the opportunity to network and engage, either at EURALO level or in the DNS Women group. I want to continue to participate in EURALO activities and ideally wish to be more involved broadly in ALAC. I will continue to educate myself so that I can also target leadership positions where I can give something back to the community.

OIER ALBIZURI

As an ICANN79 Fellow, I gained valuable insights into ICANN's role in IG. It was a real pleasure to get to know the different functionalities and bodies within ICANN and to be able to interact with those in charge. My future engagement includes collaborating with the GeoTLD Group. It represent the interests of geographic top-level domains identifying a city, region, language, or culture.

PEDRO DE PERDIGÃO LANA

My participation in ICANN79 was very productive. It also provided me with a level of learning that was exponentially greater than during the first onsite experience during ICANN76. It was the first real opportunity I had to do substantial work in this space, especially on behalf of non-commercial groups. I plan to continue this work, especially trying to bring in more people from Latin America and the Caribbean, but I also want to get more engaged in At-Large activities through LACRALO, to which the Internet Society of Brazil has applied as an At-Large Structure (ALS). I also plan to help strengthen the ICANN Wiki, which is an initiative that I have found extremely interesting since the Edit-a-Thon in Cancun.

PRANAV BHASKAR TIWARI

At ICANN79, I embarked on an enlightening journey into the technical intricacies of IG, a field pivotal yet often overshadowed in broader discourse. This experience has galvanized my commitment to raise awareness within my network, across India, and beyond. Collaborating with the Office of the Chief Technology Officer, I plan to roll out educational courses, initially targeted at public policy students, to demystify the indispensable work of ICANN. Parallel to this, I'm dedicated to advocating for UA, championing the cause to enable seamless Internet access for the next billion users. As I deepen my understanding, I also look forward to contributing meaningfully to the policy work of APRALO, marking my journey from an ardent learner to an active participant in shaping the future of the Internet.

RUSSELL DEKA T HARADA

There are many interesting topics during the ICANN79 Community Forum, including participating in ICANN Learn Programs. I fully understand and appreciate the ICANN multistakeholder model. It brings together different backgrounds and different people. Before and after the six days of the ICANN79 Community Forum, I met a lot of people not only from the Asia Pacific Region, but from all over the world. I also met a lot of academics during the meeting. Through my ccNSO News Session presentation, I gave inspiration to the other ICANN Fellows. I also would like to send our students and youths to participate in the next ICANN Fellowship Program or ICANN NextGen Program.

SENKA HADZIC

ICANN79 was my first fellowship and a valuable learning experience, providing insights about ICANN's work, structure, and the policy making process. I plan to be involved and attend future meetings. I find myself drawn to the work of NCSG and NCUC.

SHANELLE MCPHERSON

Before ICANN79, I used to have phone calls with Global Stakeholder Engagement team member from LAC region, discussing engagement opportunities for Jamaica. However, upon attending the meeting, I realized that ICANN doesn't focus on individual countries but rather on regions. This helped me truly understand ICANN's mission, where the board does not create policies governing the DNS; instead, they speak on behalf of the end users. With its bottom-up approach, which is unique, I found ICANN's work fascinating and fell in love with it. I also made lifelong friends and made sure to share my knowledge with the NextGen community. The work doesn't stop here. As a fellow, I have a purpose to fulfill, which includes sharing and positively contributing to the community. Thank you, ICANN, for this experience.

TAMARA YAEL ZYLBERSZTEJN

It has been a wonderful experience being part of ICANN79. Professionally, it was a week of intensive learning about the structure of ICANN. I gained a better understanding of the organization's functioning and its working methods. The governance model is based on respect and inclusion, two very important values, especially in today's world with its diverse challenges. Additionally, I had the opportunity to meet people from other parts of the world, from whom I learned not only about work methods but also about life experiences. Moreover, on a personal level, these were days of significant growth, pushing me to break barriers and to grow in self-esteem and confidence. From now on, I feel more prepared to participate in working groups, especially the ccNSO, with comments, ideas, and contributions that allow me to bring the region's voice to various debate topics. I also know that I still have much to understand, learn, and discover, but I am deeply grateful for everything I experienced in San Juan, Puerto Rico.

VESMIRA HARUTYUNYAN

In addition to actively engaging in At-Large meetings following ICANN78 and ICANN79, I plan to join the ccNSO to contribute to policy development processes and working groups. In order for people to be informed and able to actively engage in ICANN's activities, I want to raise the knowledge about and the comprehension of the organization's work in my community.

WAQAR AHMAD

It was a great honor for me to be a part of the ICANN79 fellowship and through this fellowship, I gained a deep understanding of ICANN's multistakeholder model and the pivotal roles played by different constituencies under the organization's umbrella. My involvement in the fellowship program has fueled my desire to actively contribute to the ICANN community. I would like to contribute more efficiently and will effectively represent the voice of the Internet community. I am an individual member of NARALO under the ALAC. I am dedicated to advocating for the interests of end users and promoting inclusivity in ICANN's decision-making processes. Furthermore, following my ICANN79 fellowship experience, I have also registered to join the Universal Acceptance Steering Group (UASG), reflecting my commitment to advancing universal acceptance of all domain names and email addresses. By consistently being involved and working together with these groups, my goal is to make a positive impact and play a valuable role in the global Internet community.

WILLIE MECK

As an ICANN79 Fellow, I gained valuable insights into ICANN's role in IG and fostered global connections. The collaborative spirit among participants was inspiring. My future engagement includes contributing to technical initiatives related to DNSSEC, APRALO, APAC, ISPCP, UASG/UA, and the growing Internet space in the Pacific region. I'm committed to engaging with the technical community, sharing knowledge, and actively participating in technical discussions to promote a free and open Internet, contributing to a positive Internet future.

YASIR ZUNAIR

My participation at ICANN revolves around active engagement within EURALO and various ICANN sessions, focusing on advancing UA and sustainability in IG. Looking ahead, I plan to elevate my involvement by joining the ICANN sustainability team to deepen my understanding of sustainable practices and contribute to ongoing initiatives. Additionally, I aim to leverage upcoming ICANN fellowships as opportunities to expand my knowledge base and forge connections within the global IG community. This strategic approach ensures continuous professional growth while enabling me to make meaningful contributions to the advancement of IG principles and practices.

ZOE FILOMENO

Serving as a fellow at ICANN79 was a transformative experience that illuminated the potential of my interdisciplinary background to benefit the end user. My aim for participating was to obtain a clear response from IANA and the executive board on several fronts: the advent of emerging technologies, historical hacking incidents at ICANN, and neural implants with Internet accessibility and protocols. This inquiry builds upon my prior presentation at the ICANN77 Policy Forum, titled "Examining Neurotechnology and Neuro-implants: Implications for ICANN's Emerging Technology Policies," which sought to reconcile cutting-edge neurotechnological innovations with the dynamic realm of technology policy. Since my initial involvement starting at ICANN61, I observed a pronounced discussion on ICANN's neutral stance towards geopolitical conflicts, marking what I perceive as a pivotal moment at ICANN79. I wish to quote Khaled Fattal's remarks "Moving forward, the world is on the cusp of a seismic change in the way global politics and geopolitics is embarking and a serious need for a mindset change within ICANN and the expertise within ICANN Board to figure out how to navigate this space. The world is no longer run by a single superpower. They're now emerging superpowers, and they all have a stake. For ICANN to remain relevant in this space, it has to reinvent itself and be relevant in the New World order. This is a challenge. I'm putting it to you, because this is my family, I want to see it succeed." Throughout my journey, the opportunity to interact with luminaries such as Dr. Vinton Cerf and Dr. Robert Kahn, made me realize I had come a long way from just being a 90's kid end user. I am grateful for the thoughtful responses to my queries from Göran Marby (former CEO), Sally Costerton (current Interim President and CEO), John Crain (CTO), and Maarten Botterman (ICANN Board), as well as the kind words exchanged with my peer, Alfredo Calderon (NARALO/ISOC-PR). Reflecting on the legacy of Marilyn Cade, a remarkable mentor, I aspire to honor her memory through my endeavors. Moving forward, I am committed to championing an Internet and technology that is universally open and accessible to all end users without a digital divide. Ergo, I plan to pursue this goal through my distinct approach, which may involve challenging some established norms and rules along the way.

Acknowledgement

On behalf of the ICANN79 Fellows, we extend our heartfelt gratitude to all those who have been instrumental in making this fellowship journey a truly enriching experience. To the esteemed members of the ICANN Board and Executive team, your guidance and vision have been the cornerstone of our learning journey. Your commitment to fostering an inclusive and collaborative Internet governance ecosystem is truly commendable.

We express our deepest appreciation to our mentors, whose invaluable advice and support have been a guiding light throughout our fellowship. Your dedication to nurturing the next generation of leaders within the ICANN community has left an indelible mark on us all. We extend our sincere thanks to the community stakeholders whose engagement and collaboration have enriched our fellowship experience. Your willingness to share knowledge, insights, and perspectives has broadened our understanding of IG and policy development.

To our Fellowship Manager Siranush Vardayan, your tireless efforts in orchestrating this program and ensuring its success have not gone unnoticed. Your passion for empowering fellows from diverse backgrounds is truly inspiring, and we are grateful for your unwavering support.

Last but not least, we extend our gratitude to the travel support team for their logistical support and assistance, which enabled us to fully immerse ourselves in the ICANN79 experience.

Together, you have all played an integral role in shaping our journey and empowering us to contribute meaningfully to the ICANN community and the broader IG landscape. As we embark on the next phase of our journey, we carry with us the lessons learned, the connections forged, and a deep sense of appreciation for the opportunities afforded to us through the ICANN79 Fellowship Program.

"ONCE A FELLOW, ALWAYS A FELLOW!"