Localizing and Strengthening Internet Policy and Governance

A proposal for regional capacity building workshops

The International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD)

- Non-profit, non-governmental research and policy institute

- 150 people operating in more than 30 countries

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A proposal from IISD to AfriNIC

Our workshop concept

- To build the capacity of the technical community to localize and strengthen internet policy and governance on the continent

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Our premise

Internet policy and governance is strengthened, and its development is accelerated, by broadening stakeholder engagement and support

- Government ministries, academia, regional economic development organizations, civil society, etc.

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Your Challenge

- "a small group can innovate rapidly and efficiently, but this produces a subculture whose concepts are not understood by others"

    Tim Berners-Lee (2001)

- Decisions being taken which advance the Internet's future are simply not on the radar of organizations outside of the technical community

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What you stand to gain

Through better engagement of public policy makers and influencers :

- public policy could be encouraged that more directly supports your objectives;

and conversely,

- Internet policy made relevant to societal objectives, and engender greater public support and engagement

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The Policy Divide

Technical Community

- basic access to ICT
- Development Internet infrastructure
- IPv6 transition
- generic Top Level Domain (gTLDs) expansion
- etc.

Public Policy

- public services
- economic development
- government revenues
- etc.

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Never the twain [two worlds] shall meet

- Lack of public awareness or concern
- Lack of capacity within the technical communities to raise awareness and catalyze support
- Lack of policy frameworks linking e-strategies with national priorities
- Finding common ground
- Terminology

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IISD's workshop concept

- Scenarios building to guide consultations on Internet policy with diverse gatherings of stakeholders

Our experience

- quickly discover common ground - even without any prior awareness of issues

- Paves the way to developing consensus positions for guiding policy makers

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Example Feedback

- "the community of environmentalists and social-policy experts and [development experts] think, by and large, that the Internet is a Good Thing; part of the solution not the problem."

- "I think someone's missing a trick here. Most people I know in the geek tribe would resonate instantly with these folks' ideas about how to go about fixing the world. If we could find them and they could find us, I suspect they'd find a few of us who'd drop everything to Help Make Something Happen."

    Tim Bray, co-editor of XML standard

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Proposal to AfriNIC

- Partner on a series of workshops for the African technical community using this concept to:

  - Develop capacity to engage public policy setting processes

  - Identify and prioritize ICT/Internet policies needing greater public support

  - Engage with broader stakeholders in developing and advocating for those policies

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Objectives

1. Advance a process to support enhanced Internet policy dialogue

2. Build the capacity of a broader community of African country stakeholders to shape Internet policy decisions

3. Build a network of partners that could help replicate this consultation and policy review process

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Next Steps

IISD has shared details of this proposal with AfriNIC staff and board members, as well as other regional partners

- Please share your feedback regarding this proposal and expressions of support with the AfriNIC team

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Thank you

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