ICANN Pilot Mentorship Program

ICANN49 – Singapore

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Mentee's Report

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I hope I was able to bring an overarching First Nation perspective through my participation at ICANN 49. I also realize more First Nation voices are needed in all areas and at all levels of ICANN. In addition, I am so grateful for the guidance and support from Mentorship team and my mentor Eduardo Diaz, which made for an enjoyable learning experience.

The Mentorship program will be important element for newcomers. The program increased my comfort level to engage in the dialogue. It provided a great foundation to participate in the sessions' discussions. This approach will work well to engage First Nation, and other Indigenous, communities through the outreach strategies.

MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

The pre-meeting conference calls prepared me for the potential information overload that I would experience. It was good to speak with the Mentorship team, and learning more about what will happen at the meeting prior to the actual meeting.

My mentor, Eduardo, shared with insight into ICANN, particularly about ALAC and NARALO, and would many times ensured that I become comfortable with the many acronyms that makeup ICANN. He encouraged me to explore the meeting arena, and introduce me to many people in the ICANN community.

My week began in the Fellowship and Newcomer sessions. I found hearing stories from those who have already experienced one or two ICANN meetings helped me adjust and prepare for the ICANN culture. The fellowship presentation series I found to be an effective way to instill a rudimentary understanding of ICANN for newcomers. These presentations also helped me identify which sessions to attend and which areas of ICANN in need to know more about.

I also had the great privilege of meeting Mr. Fouad Bajwa. We shared a common activity, which became an opportunity to connect one on one with an experienced ALAC member, and to ask questions for a deeper understand of the work and vision of ICANN. Mr. Bajwa encouraged me to examine "what does ICANN mean to me?", and "How am I willing to assist ICANN to achieve its mission and goals". In addition, he would immediately connect me with someone, who would provide a clear response to some of my questions, and introduced me to those who would be a great network connection.

As the conference proceed through the agenda, I began to explore the question of where, within the ICANN community, can First Nations provide valuable contributions.

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ALAC

It was exciting to learn that First Nation communities have an immediate avenue to have their voice heard within ICANN through participation within ALAC.   I was also appreciative to hear that the initial idea for the Pilot Mentor Program was to invite more participation from the First Nation communities in Canada.

ALAC offers a forum that is open and easily accessible to "Civil Society". As awareness of ICANN increases amongst First Nation, their feedback, observations and stories of environmental stewardship experiences can provide valuable lessons to share with ICANN's growing global internet governance model. First Nations will be strong and natural flora presence within North American the internet eco-system, bringing with them a wealth of history and knowledge of stewardship.

As part of my invitation to the Pilot Mentorship Program, I also received an invitation to prepare a presentation as a NARALO Spotlight. In my presentation, I shared information about the work of Manitoba E-Association (MBE), focusing on the Youth Internship Program and the e-story training methodology, including the developing relationship between MBE and TELEcommunities Canada.

GAC

Another avenue for possible First Nation participation is the GAC. After hearing more about the GAC in the Fellowship presentation series, I became interest to find out if there is a way to provide First Nations with membership on the GAC, as government member. The challenge that initially arises is determining if First Nations meet the membership requirement for the GAC. First Nations are separate governments with elected officials, Chief and Councils, and govern over their own traditional territories. The main obstacle First Nation governments face is challenge of being governed by another government - in this case the Canadian Government. This can be defined as a government within a government system.

I believe that First Nations may have the distinct economies and level of self-governance recognition within Canada to be considered national governments, and could have the needed international recognition through the United Nations' "Declaration on the rights of Indigenous Peoples". As First Nations gain great understanding and awareness of ICANN and the impact it has on the communities, they will be able to explore the question of membership with the GAC secretariat.

ACCESSIBILITY TASKFORCE

Based on my past and current personal experiences within the disability community, I am glad to see a group bring a strong representation of people with disabilities to ICANN. When speaking of the internet as a eco-system, it becomes essential to raise the awareness of 'accessibility, both, physically and virtually – accessible point of access and accessible access. If the point of access –the physical space or

technology - is handicapped, or not physically accessible, then the virtual space becomes inaccessible, or virtually handicapped.

This group can be instrumental in ensuring that ICANN has the awareness necessary to ensure full and active participation of end-users with disabilities.

MY THOUGHTS

Participating in ICANN 49, I began to see the parallel between stewardship of the internet by the global community, and the stewardship of the environment by the First Nation community. When using terms, such as stewardship, environment and eco-system, it will be important hear the voices of those with a traditional history of stewardship, and to learn from the challenges they face in fulfilling their stewardship responsibilities. There is a consensus amongst First Nation that North America is referred to as Turtle Island. There is also a consensus amongst First Nations that they were given the responsibility of stewardship over environment by the Creator. This stewardship is to protect the environment - Mother Earth, which is composed of many eco-systems.

As the dialogue about Internet Governance moves forward, and the global multistakeholder model is continues to grow, I recall being participating in a similar, but smaller, process that created a multistakeholder governance model at a community level.

 In 1992, in my home community of Pimicikamak Cree Nation (PCN), I was instrumental in helping to create the first Junior Chief and Council, a mirror of the Chief and Council model. I was honoured to be appointed as their first Junior Chief to lead the first two years of development.

Over 20 years later, the PCN Youth Council is now part of the community's four council governance system, which is also comprise of the Women's Council, the Elders' Council and the Chief and Council – a multistakeholder governance model. No decision affecting the community can be made without representation of the four councils and the Women's Council has the power of veto – PCN is traditionally a matriarchal society.

It was a great privilege to participate at ICANN49 and to meet so many wonderful and knowledgeable people in the ICANN community..

I believe I can effectively continue to the contribute to ICANN through the ALAC processes.

I also look forward to bringing a First Nation perspective to the global dialogue and to expanding my own perspective and knowledge of the global internet governance process.

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ACTION ITEMS AS A RESULT OF ATTENDING ICANN49

- Manitoba E-Association as applied for ALS accreditation
- Meeting scheduled with my community Chief in early May, to discuss the best way to approach our regional and national First Nation and Aboriginal representative organizations.
- Implementing awareness and information sharing about the current Transition of NTIA's stewardship, and ICANN into MBE communications, project development and programming – particularly in the Youth Internship Program. (23 organizations host over 40 youth interns across the province)
- Connecting with Aboriginal entrepreneurs for feedback and questions about ICANN
- Work on briefing note to inform with other ICT organizations and related business in Manitoba, including the First Nation community
- Explore opportunities to coordinate ICANN awareness and information session within MBE networks and communities.