

Testimonial ICANN Community Onboarding Pilot Program

Louise Marie Hurel

I am grateful to be a part of the Community Onboarding Program. Over the past few months, I have been able to experience one of the most welcoming cross-constituency working space; full of energy, dedication and people who, despite their different backgrounds, have found a place where they can learn, share and develop ways of: (i) critically assessing in-reach and (ii) enhancing outreach with a particular structure that is suited to communicating with their respective members (and potential members).

During our last meeting in Johannesburg, Janice talked about the "newcomer journey" and the importance of understanding that each person has a unique path of engagement. I would like to take part of this testimonial to share my personal experience in this program.

I myself am trailing this not-yet-drawn path, and as a newcomer that has started understanding ICANN through the Onboarding Program I have to highlight its relevance to the effective engagement of individuals in their respective constituencies. Prior to the program, my vision was restricted to what I could follow on the mailing lists or through my successive attempts to understand the topics being discussed in monthly policy calls. Working with, and learning from, the Onboarding Program resulted in two main lessons. Firstly, it broadened my understanding of ICANN. The "bite-sized pieces" approach spearheaded by Kathy Kleiman and Ayden Férdeline places NCUC "in perspective", helping newcomers to rapidly connect with the main policy processes and how inter-constituency dynamics work. Secondly, as soon as I joined the team, I saw that I was also able to contribute with my reactions and perspectives to the material being developed. On the other hand, I was positively challenged to "walk the talk" and put this experience into practice as I became more involved in GNSO Working Groups.

These lessons do not come uncoupled from the fact that I am thrilled and privileged to take part in such a qualified team as the one that I'm in. Both Kathy Kleiman and Ayden Férdeline have been mentors down this road, helping me find my way of meaningfully contributing to the NCUC and the broader ICANN community.

Navigating ICANN can sometimes feel like "peeling off an onion"; one goes through layers and layers of knowledge, skill-building, time, dedication and processes. The program has taught me to value my experience and to be more confident, knowing that it takes one step at a time to find my own voice within this ecosystem.