

NextGen@ICANN Five-Year Survey

Public Responsibility Support
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Introduction

The ICANN organization ("ICANN org") surveyed NextGen@ICANN program ("NextGen") alumni five years after the official launch of the program to better understand its impact on participants and identify areas of opportunity for the future.

The program aims to enable university students to participate in and learn about ICANN and the Internet ecosystem. It is intended for undergraduate and graduate students aged 18-30 studying in the region where an ICANN Public Meeting takes place.

Program participants ("NextGenners") are paired with program alumni who serve as mentors ("ambassadors") during the ICANN meeting week. The program onboarding process involves training and other learning opportunities to help enhance the ICANN meeting experience. Following the conclusion of the meeting, NextGenners are encouraged to support regional academic outreach, including presenting at local universities about their experience at ICANN.

The survey was conducted online between February and April 2019. Of the 195 people who participated in the program from June 2014 and October 2018, a total of 93 responded to the survey yielding a 48% response rate. The survey collected feedback across the following four areas:

1. Academic and Professional Development
2. Regional and Academic Outreach
3. ICANN Engagement
4. Future Participation and Engagement

This report summarizes the results of the survey and highlights key findings. Together, these will inform future plans to improve the program.

Summary of Findings

Based on self-reported data from the NextGen@ICANN Five-Year Survey:

- ⦿ All survey respondents agreed that the NextGen@ICANN program has enhanced their academic or professional development. Respondents provided many examples of how the program has had an impact, including supporting their academic research and helping them take a first step toward their engagement in Internet Governance.
- ⦿ The vast majority (96%) communicated their NextGen experiences with others; 82% indicated that they spread the word about NextGen at their local university.
- ⦿ Seven out of ten indicated they are currently involved in or following ICANN's activities or work.
- ⦿ 39% are currently involved with ICANN's regional team, and the majority (84%) of respondents indicated that they would like to be contacted by their Global Stakeholder Engagement (GSE) representative.
- ⦿ Many NextGenners have joined an ICANN community group; 42% indicated affiliation with at least one community group. Of these, half indicated that they are affiliated with the Generic Names Supporting Organization (GNSO) and 44% indicated an affiliation with At-Large.
- ⦿ Of those who reported that they are currently engaged, three-quarters indicated that they felt their participation at ICANN was acknowledged and encouraged.
- ⦿ Many program alumni noted common barriers or challenges to participation at ICANN, including lack of funding, lack of support from their university/employer, and a lack of clarity about how to become involved.
- ⦿ Respondents noted that ICANN could better support them and other program participants by providing additional funding, enhancing regional engagement, improving the post-meeting engagement experience, and providing clearer and more targeted information.

Survey Results

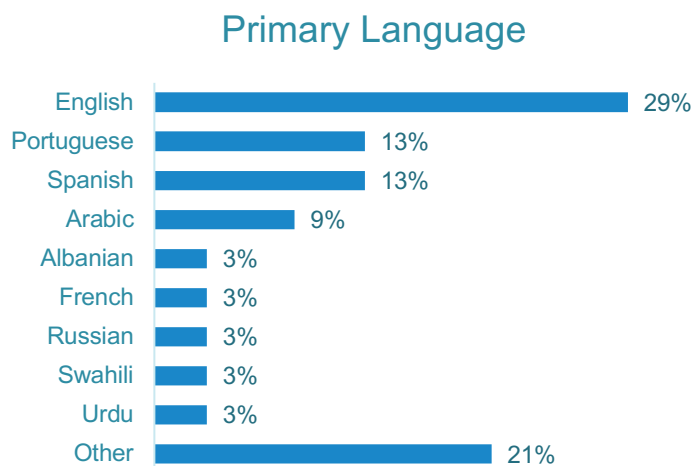
Survey Participants

The survey was conducted between 25 February 2019 and 4 April 2019. It was sent to 195 individuals who participated in NextGen between June 2014 and October 2018. A total of 93 responded to the survey (a 48% response rate). Of those who participated in the survey, 82 completed the entire survey (an 86% completion rate).

The majority of responses (82%) came from those who had first participated in NextGen between 2016 and 2018. Of the survey respondents, 53% identified as female and 47% as male. The largest group of respondents (30%) came from the European region. Tied for second-largest position with 19% of the respondents for each were Asia Pacific and Latin American and the Caribbean regions.

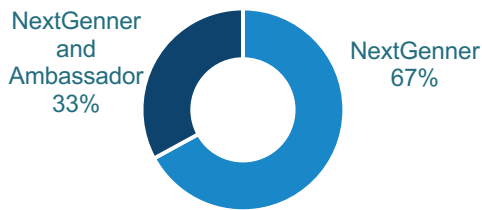


While the respondents' primary languages were very diverse with 23 different languages selected, English was the most common primary language chosen, followed by Spanish and Portuguese.

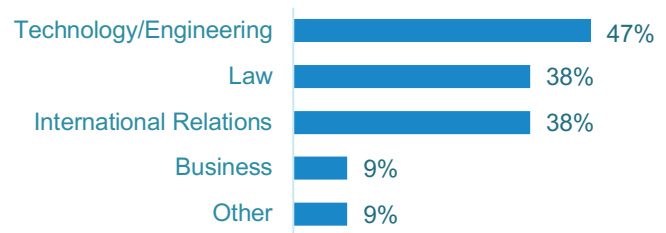


Of those surveyed, about a third had participated both as NextGenners and ambassadors (mentors) and two-thirds as NextGenners only. Nearly half (47%) of respondents reported that they were studying technology and engineering (i.e. IT, computer science, web development). Areas of study were self-selected, meaning that individuals determined how to best identify themselves.

Level of Experience with the NextGen@ICANN Program



Area of Study (Select all that apply.)

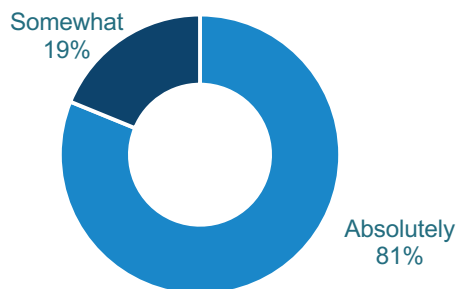


Academic and Professional Development

The NextGen@ICANN program provides opportunities for university students to better understand ICANN and the Internet ecosystem. NextGenners are assigned an ambassador (mentor), and receive training across different areas of knowledge before, during, and after an ICANN meeting.

Overall, respondents evaluated the impact of the NextGen@ICANN program positively. All survey respondents agreed that the program had absolutely or somewhat enhanced their academic or professional development. No respondents said the program had not enhanced their academic or professional development.

Has the program enhanced your academic and/or professional development?



Forty-four NextGeners provided an example of the program's impact. Below are excerpts from some of the testimonies.

Support for academic development and research

"It [increased] my research exposure to the academic community specifically about the Internet."

"I used the NextGen experience to write my thesis. My master's thesis was based on ICANN and Internet Governance."

"Such experience provided me the knowledge to do research in network engineering aware of the governance factors involved on it."

Professional opportunities

"I came back from ICANN with a clear vision of the steps I should take to achieve my career goals. [...] The overview on network operations I gained from ICANN helped through my interview in a summer internship I've applied to last summer and fortunately got accepted."

"Understanding the Internet infrastructure which has helped me in carving a niche in cyber security to aiding the growth and development of the Internet."

"NextGen became a starting point for me in the world of Internet Governance. [...]. I've established my own NGO dealing with digital human rights, IG, and strengthening multistakeholder cooperation."

Increased awareness and engagement with Internet Governance issues

"After taking part in the NextGen program I began my journey [in] the Internet Governance ecosystem participating in different forums and learning about Internet policy."

"I am more involved in Internet Governance and have since been active even in the AFRINIC community which is the continent's domains overseer."

"After my experience at Next@Gen, I have been able to have a greater impact on my local community. [...] I currently lead the Youth Group in the newly created Internet Society Colombia Chapter."

Introduction to understanding and participating in ICANN

"I am quite involved in ICANN at At-Large and [Non-commercial User Constituency] NCUC. I got my organization to join At-Large as an [At-Large Structure]."

"I am now part of the [Rights Protection Mechanisms Policy Development Process]"

"I've acted as an ICANN ambassador and shared my experience with my community by hosting meetups in order to push for more participation."

Regional and Academic Outreach

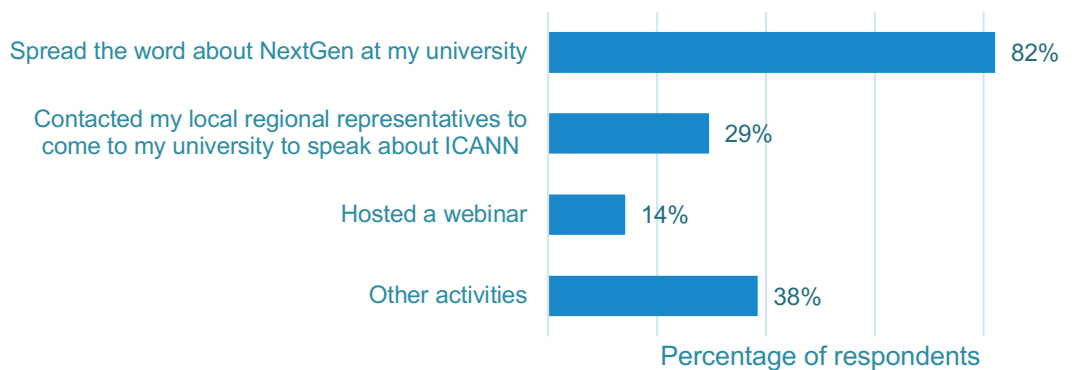
A key component of the NextGen@ICANN program is regional academic outreach. Nearly all (96%) survey respondents noted that they communicated their NextGen experiences with others.

Upon completion of the program, did you communicate your experiences with others?



Seventy-eight individuals provided further details about how they communicated to others about ICANN and their NextGen experience. Spreading the word about NextGen at their local university was the most common way, noted by 64 individuals or 82% of those responding to this question. Contacting an ICANN local regional representative to speak at their university about ICANN was the second most common way, chosen by 23 individuals or a third of those responding. Another 14% or 11 individuals hosted a webinar. An assortment of other activities, such as publishing articles and blogs, presenting in other Internet Governance fora (e.g., national Internet Governance Forums, YouthCom), and sharing their experiences over social media and with friends and co-workers was reported by 30 individuals or 38% of those responding.

Which activities have you done? Select all that apply.

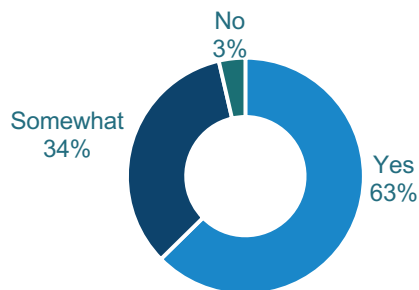


ICANN Engagement

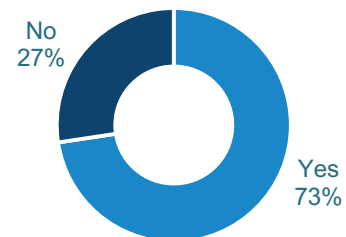
Overall Level of Engagement in ICANN

The NextGen@ICANN program ultimately aims to broaden participation in ICANN. Out of 83 respondents, 80 felt prepared or somewhat prepared to become involved in ICANN's work. Sixty-one out of 84 (73%) indicated current involvement in or following of ICANN's activities or work.

Do you feel prepared to become involved in ICANN's work?



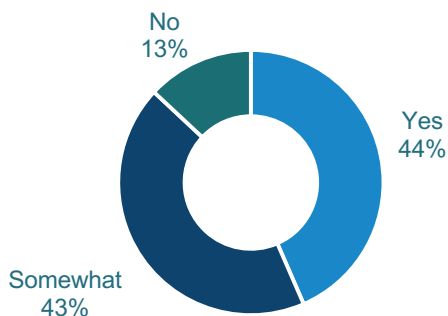
Are you currently involved in or following ICANN's activities and work?



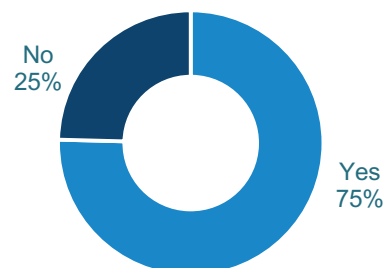
Of the 23 individuals who reported no involvement, 21 (91%) were interested in becoming involved and 20 (87%) indicated that at least to some extent they do know how to become involved.

Of those 61 NextGeners who reported to be engaged, three-quarters said that their participation at ICANN was acknowledged and encouraged.

If not, do you know how to become involved?



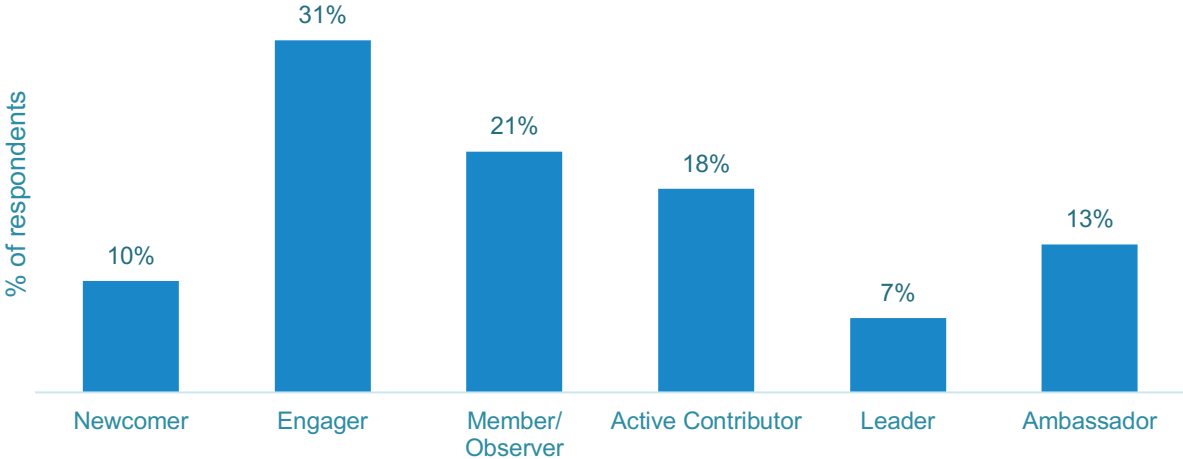
If yes, do you feel as though your participation at ICANN is acknowledged and encouraged?



Participation at ICANN

Of those who said they follow or were involved at ICANN, almost half indicated that they were engaged in a community group, have held or hold a leadership position in the community, or were regularly engaged.

How would you characterize your current involvement with ICANN?

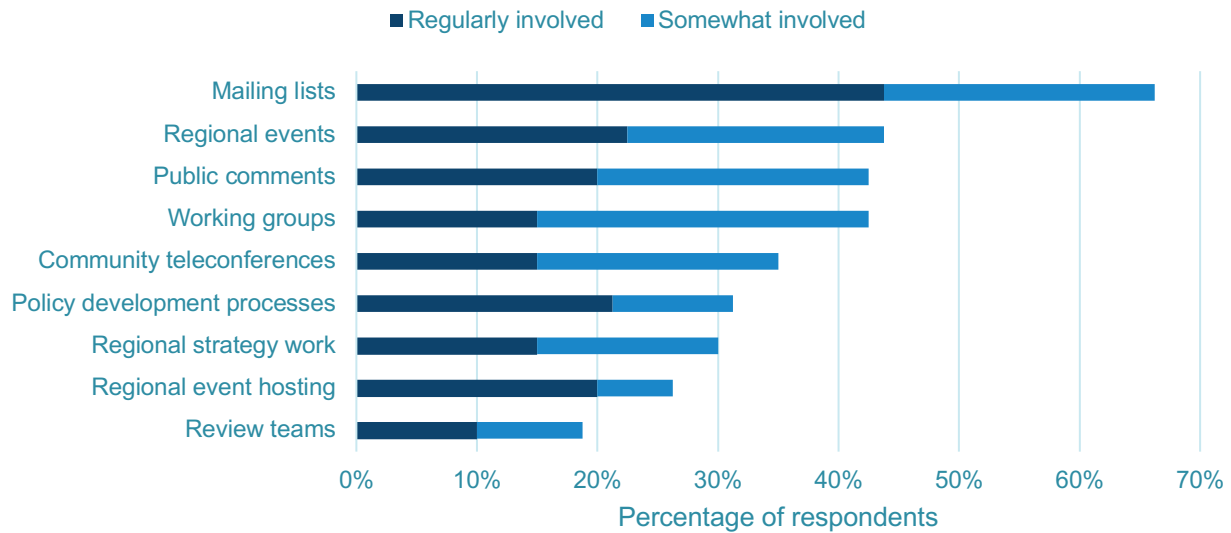


Category	Description	Number	Percentage
Newcomer	"I am new to the community"	6	10%
Engager	"I am still learning about ICANN but am interested in engagement"	19	31%
Member/Observer	"I have joined a community"	13	21%
Active contributor	"I am engaged and active in the community"	11	18%
Leader	"I currently hold or have held a leadership position in the community"	4	7%
Ambassador	"I am a current or former leader, a mentor to newcomers; I am regularly engaged and actively learn and teach others"	8	13%
Total		61	100%

Eighty NextGeners provided details on whether they participate or would like to participate in specific ICANN activities. While participating in ICANN mailing lists topped the list of most common activities for respondents, most indicated interest in participating in regional strategy work, review teams and policy development processes.

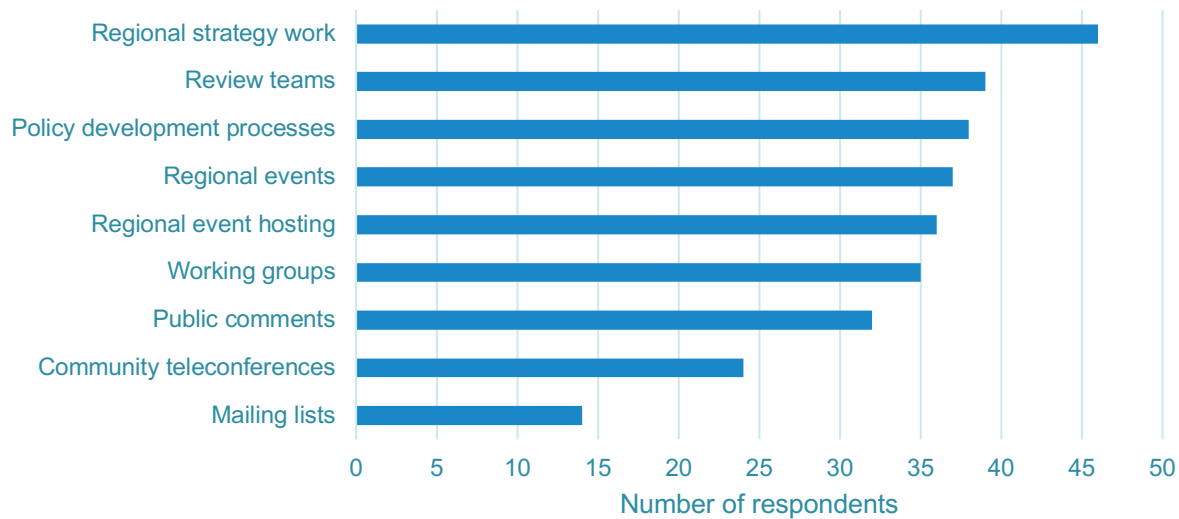
Nearly two-thirds reported regular or occasional involvement in ICANN mailing lists. Over 40% noted regular or some involvement in regional events, public comments, or working groups. Involvement in community teleconferences, policy development processes, or regional strategy work was cited by about 30%.

Do you participate in any of these activities?



Most survey participants are interested in further participation, particularly in regional strategy work, review teams, policy development processes, and regional events.

Would you like to participate in any of these activities?

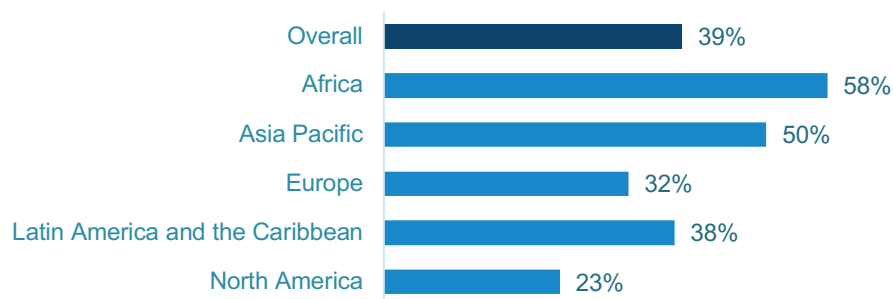


Regional Engagement

The survey asked respondents about their involvement with the ICANN org team in their region. Overall, 39% or 32 respondents to this question said they were currently involved with their regional ICANN org team.

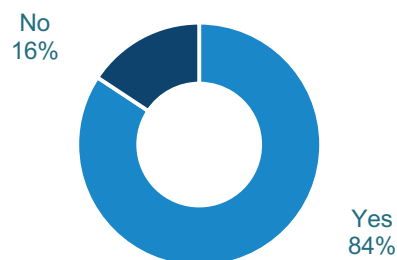
Of each region. Africa had the highest percentage of respondents from the area reporting involvement with the regional ICANN org team, with seven of 12 respondents saying they were involved. Half of the 16 respondents from Asia Pacific said they were involved with the regional team. In Latin America and the Caribbean, six of the 16 respondents were involved. In Europe, eight out of 25 reported involvement and in North America, three out of 13 or just under 25% did.

Are you currently involved with the ICANN regional team in your region?



Additionally, the majority (84%) of respondents indicated that they would like to be contacted by their regional Global Stakeholder Engagement (GSE) representative, indicating one opportunity for increased regional engagement.

Would you like to be contacted by your regional GSE representative to learn more about engagement opportunities?

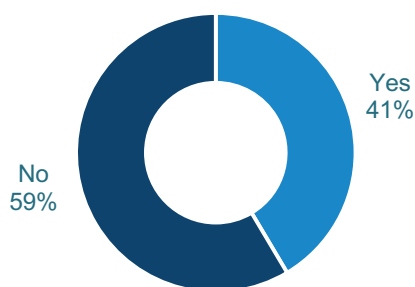


ICANN Community Affiliation

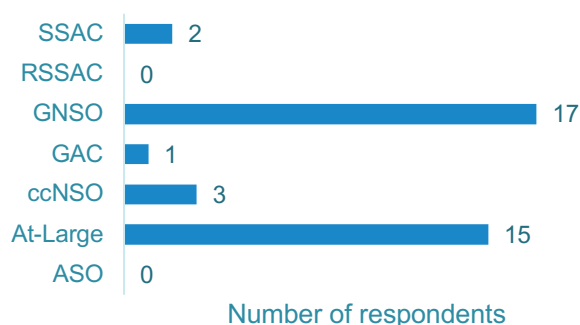
In addition to preparing university students for regional engagement, the NextGen@ICANN program also provides opportunities for program participants to become more familiar with ICANN community groups. Throughout each ICANN Public Meeting, NextGeners are introduced to community leaders and exposed to a variety of topics.

Of the 82 respondents to this question, 34 (42%) reported affiliation with at least one community group. Of these, half indicate that they are affiliated with the Generic Names Supporting Organization (GNSO) and 44% (15) with At-Large.

Are you affiliated with at least one ICANN community group?



Which ICANN group(s) are you affiliated with?
Select all that apply.



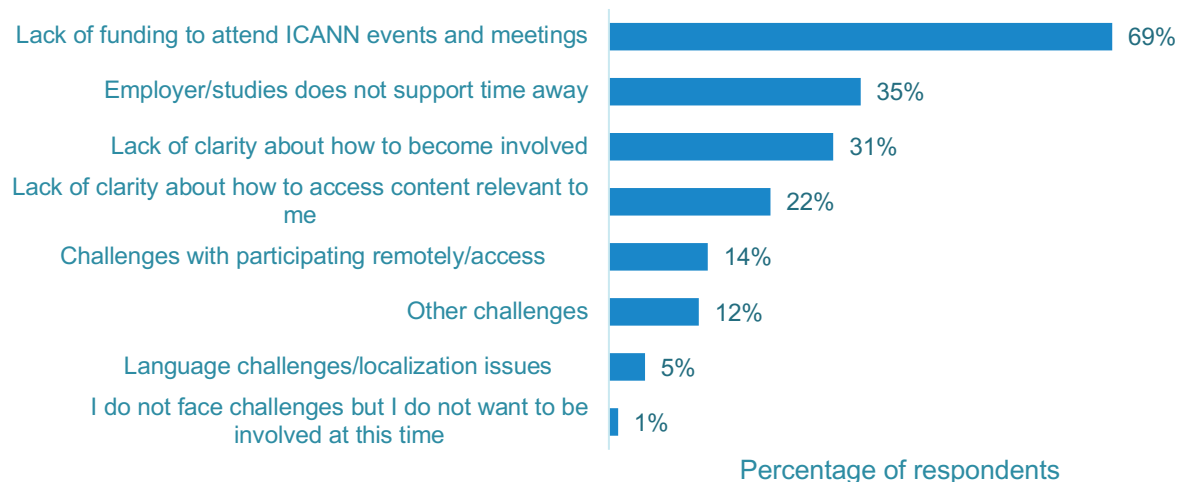
Affiliations of those reporting involvement in At-Large	Number responses
AFRALO - African Regional At-Large Organization	5
EURALO - European Regional At-Large Organization	5
NARALO - North American Regional At-Large Organization	3
APRALO - Asian, Australasian and Pacific Islands Regional At-Large Organization	2
LACRALO - Latin American and Caribbean Islands Regional At-Large Organization	0

Affiliations of those reporting involvement in the GNSO	Number responses
NCUC - Non-Commercial Users Constituency	14
NCSG - Non-Commercial Stakeholder	6
ISPCP - Internet Service Providers & Connectivity Providers Constituency	3
BC - Commercial and Business Constituency	1
IPC - Intellectual Property Constituency	1
NPOC - Not-for-Profit Operational Concerns Constituency	1
RySG - Registry Stakeholder Group	0
RrSG - Registrar Stakeholder Group	0

Challenges to Participation

Many NextGen program alumni face similar challenges to participate or further their engagement in ICANN, including a lack of funding, a lack of support from their university/employer, and a lack of clarity about how to become involved.

What challenges prevent your participation (or further participation) at ICANN? Select all that apply.



Future Participation and Engagement

NextGeners were asked how ICANN could better support them and others in order to increase participation regionally and globally. Below are summaries of the comments, as well as selected testimonies.

Provide additional financial support

Many respondents noted that lack of funding was an issue for them, indicating that more funding and support to participate in ICANN events in person would help them to become more engaged.

"One of the main obstacles is the lack of funds to participate in the meetings. This lack of funds applies to both global and regional events. Although remote participation is very beneficial, the difficulties of working schedules create some obstacles for this purpose."

"Being able to attend ICANN meetings in person would help me participate more and engage with other members."

Multiple participants recommended increasing the number of slots for the Fellowship and NextGen@ICANN programs, and two participants noted an interest in increasing funded

participation for specific communities, including the non-commercial and non-governmental community.

"Offering more opportunities for newcomers to attend the meetings. Fellowship and NextGen Ambassador programs are highly competitive and maybe allocating more places would be helpful. Also, it seems that certain constituencies like NCUC and NPOC are really tight with funds that would enable their members to attend ICANN meetings."

Enhance regional engagement

Many survey respondents emphasized the importance of regional engagement. Some suggested that ICANN increase their regional events and local programs, invite NextGen alumni to attend local meetings and involve them in regional events, provide funding for participation in regional activities, increase awareness-raising efforts at the regional level to increase global participation, and establish regular online workshops to discuss national, regional, and global issues related to ICANN activities.

Some respondents highlighted regional issues in their areas:

"Central America is almost one of countries that have less participation about it because the majority of the things (activities, workshops, jobs etc) are available for Europe, USA or some countries from South America."

"ICANN in Latin America and the Caribbean is seen as very distant, there is no clarity regarding the scope of its functions and the people of the region are afraid to get involved because it looks like an organization established in the first world [...]. My experience in Next@Gen was nurtured by the guide of Spanish-speaking collaborators that I found in [the ICANN Meeting], without a doubt the idiomatic factor is important to motivate new actors. After there is mentoring or experience within the local community, it is likely that new actors will be motivated to engage with content in other languages."

"Asia is the next key factor to better Internet Governance as conflicts between eastern and western collide. If ICANN still believes in 'One world One internet', focusing on welcoming more Asian contributors is essential."

"As you may know, Iranian[s] faced many economical problems in past few years. So, traveling abroad for conference is something very difficult. Also attending meetings in some countries like USA is difficult because of VISA issues."

Improve the post-meeting engagement experience

Many respondents noted that the engagement experience after the program's end could be improved. Suggestions included following up with alumni and helping them to engage, defining specific projects and tasks for alumni as a "starting point" for their engagement, and increasing the mentors' role in directing alumni towards involvement. In addition, respondents suggested sending alumni more information on opportunities to participate and posting success stories from program alumni on the ICANN website to provide more of a presence online.

"Direct support is only provided in relation to the meeting the candidate is selected for. This is not enough to ensure a smooth transition into the community, and a resources person or department to follow up on alumni is long overdue."

"Discourage newcomer bullying in the community mailing list and encourage support. Make use of mentors/ambassadors to follow through people's involvement. Conduct academic studies [...] that involve the next gen."

Provide clearer and targeted information

Many respondents noted that further information would be helpful, including clear and targeted information about how to get involved directly in specific topics, information explaining the process to join working groups, and enhancing ICANN Learn to explain current and ongoing policy development processes and show clear paths for newcomers to participate. A few respondents noted that acronyms are confusing and should be reduced. Information in other languages was also requested, and one respondent suggested that ICANN create an Internet Governance degree or certificate.

"I believe that explaining such ICANN cultural aspects to newcomers might increase participation. Because it might establish confidence for past participants to reach ICANN senior members open to support the engagement of newcomers and develop their ideas/participation."

"Clearly there are plenty of things for one who wants to be involved to get to know. Acronyms make everyone's life easier but for first timers takes time for associating terms to processes or groups. I would suggest a pocket-book version of a glossary with hints, tips, quick reminders or explanations on subjects and the way ICANN operates."

"I would love to receive direct and clear information about the various ways to engage with ICANN to enable me decide what would best suit me and where I can best utilise my skills. post meeting debrief, in the form of teleconference or face-to-face meetings."

"Speaking for NextGeners with a technical background, it would be wonderful if there is a clarification of what roles can we take to be of benefit for ICANN; that's because I found myself getting very good experience in the program but yet not of much benefit to ICANN as an organisation."

Revise Fellowship and NextGen selection criteria and processes

Multiple respondents noted suggestions relating to the Fellowship Program. For example, one suggested having a quota for fellows from the region in which the meeting is held; another suggested creating more slots for NextGen alumni in the Fellowship Program or other programs. One mentioned the lack of a suitable follow-up program for NextGeners, as the Fellowship Program appeared to focus on those in developing countries rather than all newcomers. Another noted that feedback for rejected ambassadors would be helpful.

Conclusions

Formed five years ago, the NextGen@ICANN program has achieved its goal of bringing to ICANN individuals in undergraduate and postgraduate programs from the region where each ICANN meeting is held. Between June 2014 and October 2018, 195 students from 67 countries have participated in the program, representing a wide diversity of genders, regions, and areas of study. Today, many NextGeners are active in the Internet Governance ecosystem and the ICANN community, and many are involved in regional academic engagement.

Overall, respondents to this survey affirmed the impact of the NextGen@ICANN program on their progress toward academic or career goals. All respondents said the program had absolutely or somewhat enhanced their academic or professional development. Nearly all communicated to others about their NextGen experiences and eight-of-ten said they did so at their local university, indicating the program's success in reaching and inspiring its target audience.

The program also seems to have prompted many NextGeners to stay active in ICANN. Seven out of ten respondents said they are currently involved in or following ICANN's activities or work, most commonly through affiliation with At-Large and the Generic Names Supporting Organization. It is good news that of those who are currently engaged in ICANN, three-quarters say they feel like their work is acknowledged and encouraged.

Finding the time and resources to participate in ICANN activities is an obstacle for many program alumni. Securing travel funding and time away from school or work were two common challenges. The third most common difficulty cited was a lack of clarity about how to get involved.

This survey has helped to identify potential areas for improvement, including enriching NextGeners' post-meeting experience and facilitating engagement with ICANN and relevant regional groups. ICANN org will continue to work with the ICANN community to further increase the success of the program in the future.



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