



## **BEST PRACTICE FORUM GENDER AND ACCESS 2016:**

### **LACIGF**

#### **INFORMAL MEETING AND SESSION (FRIDAY 29 JULY 2016)<sup>1</sup>**

#### **44% WOMEN ATTENDANCE AND VIEWS ON INTERNET ACCESS**

*Background context: in May 2016, at the first open consultations and multi-stakeholder advisory group (MAG) meeting of the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) in Geneva, Switzerland, input was gathered and feedback was given on the progress and outputs of the 2015 best practice forums (BPFs), including the 2015 BPF on online abuse and gender-based violence against women. At this meeting,<sup>2</sup> the need was stressed for continuing to dedicate an intersessional<sup>3</sup> effort to the study of gender-related challenges where the Internet is concerned. It was decided to continue the BPF Gender in 2016 and, more specifically, to a) build on and improve the outcomes of the 2015 BPF Gender: online abuse and gender-based violence against women, and b) to dedicate the work of the BPF in 2016 to women's access to the Internet (or the gender digital divide).*

1. The participation of BPF Gender and Access on LACIGF 2016 took place on 27 to 29 July 2016. During those days, preparation for Session 7 in the morning of 29 July and an informal meeting 1h before it, gathered participants from the BPF and interested in gender and access themes. Renata Aquino Ribeiro led the informal meeting, and participated as one of the speakers in Session 7. Anri Van der Spuy representing the Secretariat joined online on the informal meeting. Both meeting and session were recorded. The agenda for the meeting was focused on barriers to women's access to the internet, participation in IG debates and initiatives of empowerment. The meeting lasted approximately 50 minutes<sup>4</sup>. The session lasted 90 minutes<sup>5</sup>. A report of Session 7 was also registered<sup>6</sup>.
2. To prepare for Session 7, participants could send questions online previously<sup>7</sup>. Coincidentally, the session at LACIGF happened in the same day as another session on APriGF with similar theme, and participation of Jac Sm Kee, chair of BPF Gender and Access. This simultaneous opportunity for contributions was registered via a blog post at one of the

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1 Session recording is available at <https://intgovforum.webex.com/intgovforum/ldr.php?RCID=85de64e71dd4c6395a7db357140938e0>

2 A transcript of the relevant session is available online: <http://www.intgovforum.org/cms/3063>.

3 'Intersessional activities' at the IGF refer to activities that take place throughout the year, and that thus continue in the period between annual IGF meetings.

4 A meeting recording is available online: <https://intgovforum.webex.com/intgovforum/ldr.php?RCID=0c86b82965dab195e219b9eca2efdb20>

5 The recording of the session can be seen at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HwDsF0OPtNw&t=38m44s>

6 Session report can be seen at <https://www.lacigf.org/docs/lacigf9/007-en.pdf>

7 Questions sent to LACIGF Session 7: <https://app.sli.do/event/i6i9kn1e/ask>

speakers online space<sup>8</sup>. An online address for questions had also been setup previously for APriGF and the same app was used for the questions in LACIGF<sup>9</sup>.

3. To invite participants for the session, the space used was the Facebook Group Governança da Internet (with almost 1000 participants) founded and moderated by Renata Aquino Ribeiro and other interested parties in Internet Governance in Brazilian School of Internet Governance 2014. Regular posts were sent to group members.
4. Before, during and after LACIGF session, a mobile messaging group was set up on Telegram to discuss themes related to the general idea of the BPF. The group was titled “Gender and Internet Governance” and messages were exchanged mainly in Portuguese. The group is formed only by women and has 31 participants. It is moderated by Renata Aquino Ribeiro. After LACIGF, Spanish speaking participants joined.



*Gender and Internet Governance Telegram Group created to support the session.*

5. The online meeting was setup with the support of LACNIC organization and its partner onsite, Sula Batsú. The BPF Gender and Access was presented to participants and a brainstorming session about barriers to women's access to internet, IG and related debates concerning empowerment.

Some of the participants were:

Nikole Yanez – Fundación Acceso – Costa Rica  
Firuzeh Vale – Researcher in Gender in LAC/Sula Batsú - Porto Rico  
Alejandra Erramuspe – MAG IGF 2016 member – Uruguay  
Angelica Contreras – ISOC and Youth Observatory – Mexico  
Nathalia Sautchuk Patricio – NIC.br – Brazil  
Kathy Kleinman – NCUC/ICANN and Filmmaker – USA  
Louise Hurel – FGV – Brazil  
Kimberly Anastácio – IBIDEM – Brazil  
Patricia Peña – Investigadora – Chile  
Maricarmem Sequera – TEDIC – Paraguay  
Dafne Sabanes Plou – APC – Argentina  
Bruna Santos – EGI.br graduate - Brazil

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8 Sessions at APriGF and LACIGF <https://pesquisaeducacao.wordpress.com/2016/07/27/igf2016-lacigf9-aprifg-same-day-bpgender-sessions-participate-online-and-onsite/>

9 Questions and comments for session at APriGF <https://app.sli.do/event/qu1l1bs5m/ask>

6. The meeting followed the following structure:
  - a. Presentation of Participants
  - b. Presentation of IGF by Alejandra Erramuspe
  - c. Presentation of BPF Gender and Access – Renata and Anri
  - d. Presentation of BPF Gender and Access 2016 Survey<sup>10</sup>
  - e. Brainstorming identifying barriers in women's access to internet
  - f. Expectations for IGF 2016 Guadalajara debates
  
7. The brainstorm identified the few barriers to women's access to internet connectivity
  - a. Rural connectivity
  - b. Women without access to educational institutions, and creation of online habits
  - c. Language barriers
  - d. Women in social economical vulnerability
  - e. Valuing the empowerment angle, creating meaningful access
  - f. Existence of public or community networks to access internet and maintainment of these spaces via public policies
  - g. Becoming a creator or an author of technology solutions
  - h. Viewing online environment as a safe space, including to women's bodies
  - i. Finding out what one wants with technology, how can it change your society
  - j. Ageism – both elderly and young populations feel excluded from an internet which focuses on them
  - k. Principles for a feminist internet – the network should follow principles for women's access
  - l. Mothers and the internet – they have to be guided to understand technology and use it for their empowerment, maybe even changing their economical status
  - m. Identify all layers of access – youth, mothers, elderly, rural communities and try to tailor access to each one of them
  
8. Nathalia Sautchuk Patricio mentioned that CGI.br is conducting a study in partnership with FLACSO Argentina to map gender issues and internet in Latin America. This study due date is end of 2016. Also, communities for women studying engineering could be a great help to overcome barriers.
9. The Session 7 followed the informal meeting and happened in an adjoining room. In the programme, it read as follows:

Session 7: Persistent and emerging challenges faced by Internet access - Connecting the next billion.

Moderator: Kemly Camacho - Cooperativa Social Sulá Batsú, Costa Rica

Panelists:

Alexander Riobó - Telefónica, Colombia

Comunidad Técnica: Carlos Afonso - CGI.br, Brasil

Gobierno: Carla Valverde - Ministerio de Ciencia, Tecnología y Telecomunicaciones, Costa Rica

Sociedad Civil: Nicolás Echániz - Delegado del IGF Best Practice Forum on community networks / Altermundi, Argentina

Academia: Patricia Peña - Universidad de Chile, Chile

Youth IGF: María Angélica Contreras - Observatorio de la Juventud

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10 Survey at <http://bit.ly/surveybpgen> and other links at <http://bit.ly/bpglinks>

10. The session began with a preview by the moderator on the goals of the debate. Latin America has advanced notably in the last few years in internet access, but the challenges remain crucial in the region, above all to ensure equitable and stable access that can be an enabler of fundamental human rights and support human, social and economic development. The access digital divide presents itself heterogeneously in the region with notable differences between states and also in the countryside. While some subregions present connectivity rates way high, there are notable population pools where access is still limited. On the other hand, the population which remains without access coincides with that of less economic resources and less favored groups (including women) . In this sense, when it comes to Latin America, the reality means demanding to examine beyond who is connected and who isn't and reflect upon the distinct levels of population connectivity, with groups which are completely disconnected until those which already have limitless broadband connection, with the majority of people with low quality, high cost, broadband connection.

Digital exclusion persists and it may create new divides. The region demands improving mobile and home broadband services and connections coverage, the technical and human capacities for internet use, including those to extend local networks at a low cost.

The challenges are high and the goal of closing the digital divide, connecting the 50% of the population which still doesn't use the internet and improve the conditions of those which have low quality connection requires a great collective effort and innovative solutions.

11. Next, speakers began to present their point of view on closing the digital divide and Connecting and Enabling the Next Billion. The video of the session and the report were registered in the LACIGF website.
12. When the issue of women and access was mentioned, panelists and audience examined the following points:
  - a. There are over 600 million women without access in the world, which makes them the majority in a Connecting and Enabling the Next Billion plan.
  - b. While Gender is one aspect of the digital divide, it can potentially revolutionize the digital economy, specifically in LAC where women are the responsible for a family economy.
13. The issues surrounding Gender and Access were presented also in an infographic during the session<sup>11</sup>.

### **Next steps**

14. The mailing list of the BPF Gender and Access address was reinforced among participants as well as the #IGF2016 and #BPGender tags.
15. Participants continued on to interact via mobile and email messages and participate on the online meetings of BPF Gender.

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11      Infographic <http://bit.ly/bpgeninfo>