

2021 Fellowship Alumni Survey Report

For Alumni of the ICANN Fellowship Program from ICANN65-
ICANN70

Public Responsibility Support
17 February 2022



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Executive Summary

In 2018, the ICANN Fellowship Program underwent a comprehensive program review to revise program practices and re-define the goal of the program. The new Fellowship Program Approach was implemented in 2019 for the ICANN65 cohort.

The goal of the Fellowship Program is to strengthen the diversity of the multistakeholder model by fostering opportunities for individuals from underserved and underrepresented communities to become active participants in the ICANN community.

In 2021, a survey was conducted to measure the engagement level of ICANN fellows since the implementation of the new program. This survey was sent to 86 fellows who participated in the Fellowship Program between ICANN65 and ICANN71. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the program did not run for ICANN67, ICANN68, and ICANN69.

Survey responses are anonymous and self-reported by the Fellowship alumni. ICANN org validated the responses where possible (i.e., number of leadership positions and participation in working groups).



Survey results are largely positive. Seventy-two fellows participated in the survey, and sixty-one fellows completed the entire survey. Over 80% of the survey participants have continued participation in ICANN Public Meetings or regional events after their fellowship and would recommend the program to others.

The respondents are also actively involved in the ICANN community work, with half having been involved in working groups, 15% holding chair or co-chair positions, and 11% currently holding leadership positions in the At-Large community (including Regional At-Large Organizations), the At-Large Advisory Committee (ALAC), and the Generic Names Supporting Organization (GNSO).

The alumni also provided a range of useful suggestions to further improve the program and increase participation of fellows in ICANN.

ICANN org will share the survey findings and suggestions broadly across the organization and community and will consider ways in which it can use this information to further improve the Fellowship alumni engagement.

About the Survey

In 2018, the ICANN Fellowship Program underwent a comprehensive program review, involving a [Community Consultation](#) and [Public Comment](#) proceeding, to revise program practices and re-define the vision for the future of the program. Significant changes were implemented, including new selection criteria, enhanced mentoring process, and mentors and Selection Committee members appointed by Supporting Organizations/Advisory Committees (SO/AC). The new Fellowship Program Approach was implemented in 2019 for the ICANN65 cohort.

The goal of the ICANN Fellowship Program is to strengthen the diversity of the multistakeholder model by fostering opportunities for individuals from underserved and underrepresented communities to become active participants in the ICANN community.

The 2021 Fellowship Alumni Survey was conducted to measure the engagement level of program alumni in ICANN since the implementation of the new program approach. Results will be used to track the program's performance over time.

ICANN org will share the survey findings and suggestions broadly across the organization and community and will consider ways in which it can use this information to further improve the Fellowship alumni engagement.

Survey Methodology

Survey questions were designed to collect metrics identified in the [New Fellowship Program Approach Proposal](#). See appendix for full survey questionnaire.

The survey was sent to 86 fellows who participated in the Fellowship Program between ICANN65 and ICANN71. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the program did not run for ICANN67, ICANN68, and ICANN69. The survey was opened from 5-25 October 2021.

Survey responses are anonymous and self-reported by the Fellowship alumni. ICANN org validated the responses where possible (ie, number leadership positions and participation in working groups).

Respondent Profile

In total, 72 individuals participated in this survey, of which 61 completed the entire survey. Survey reporting includes data from those who did not finish the survey, as responses to initial questions provided useful quantitative data and all open-ended qualitative replies are valuable. As a result, the number of respondents varies by question. Some questions were also not applicable to all respondents and only asked as follow-up questions to relevant respondents.

Over one-third (42%, 30 individuals) of survey participants were first-time fellows. Under the new Fellowship Program Approach, each fellow is limited to a maximum of three fellowships.

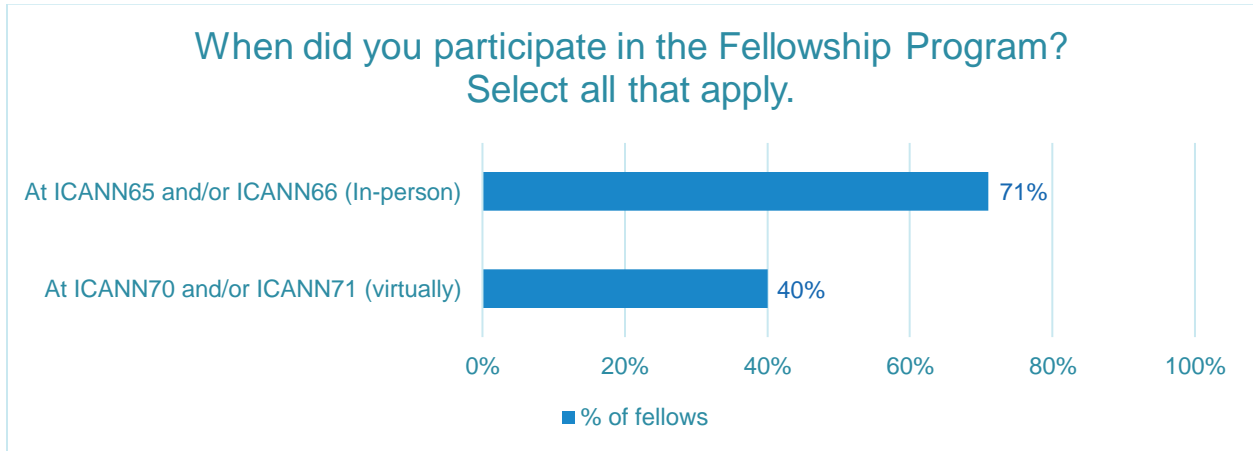


Figure 1

More than two-thirds of the survey participants (71%, 50 individuals) participated in the Fellowship Program in-person at ICANN65 and/or ICANN66; 40% (28 individuals) attended virtually for ICANN70 and/or ICANN71 (some attended both in-person and virtually).

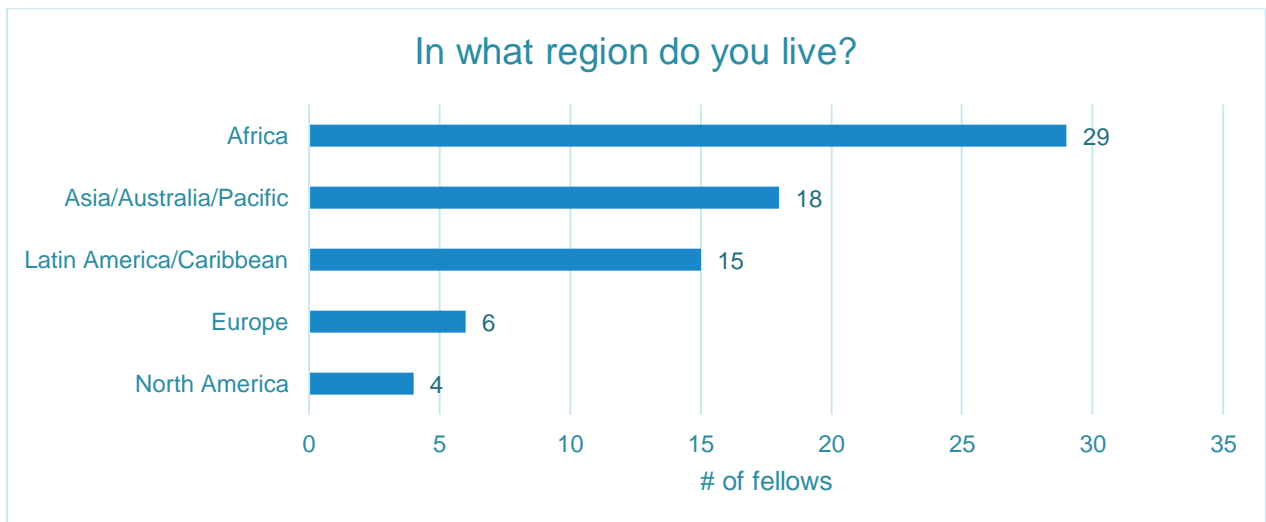


Figure 2

As illustrated in Figure 2, approximately 40% of survey participants (29 individuals) live in Africa, 25% (18 individuals) reside in Asia/Australia/Pacific, 21% (15) in Latin America/Caribbean, 8% (6) in Europe, and 6% (4) in North America. For those who have more than one residence, the survey asked that they note their primary residence.

Satisfaction with Fellowship Program

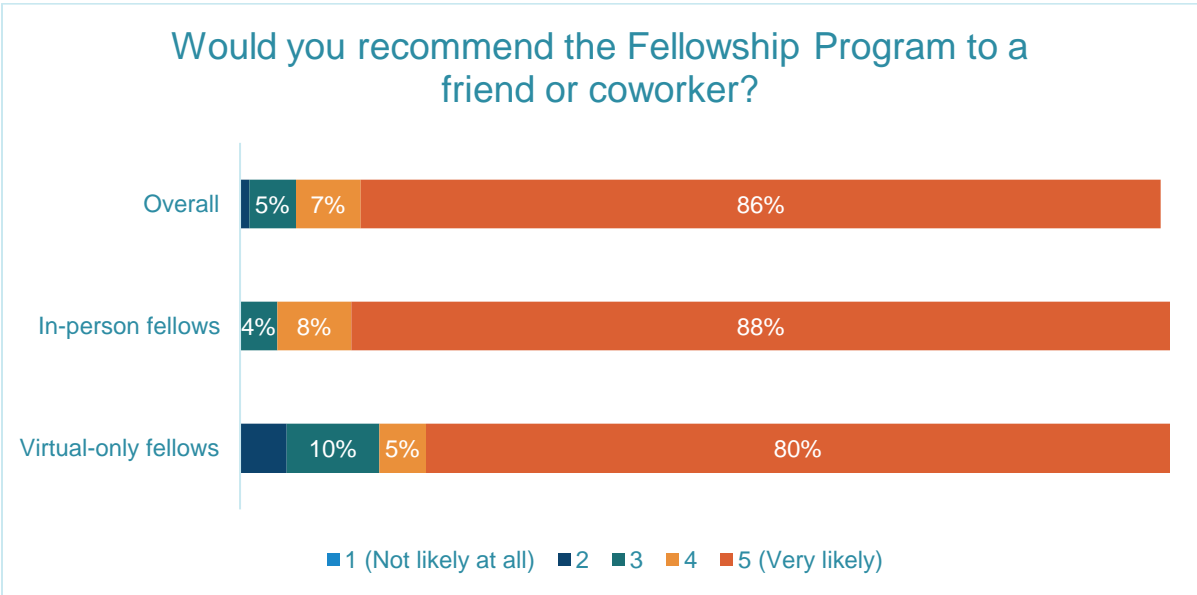


Figure 3

Participants were asked if they would recommend the program to others and were given the scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being "very likely" and 1 being "not likely at all."

As shown in Figure 3, 86% of respondents (63 individuals) indicated they that they are very likely to recommend the Fellowship Program to others. Further, 5 individuals selected 4 (7%), 4 (5%) selected 3, and 1 (1%) selected 2. Nobody selected 1. This data suggests a high level of satisfaction with the program.

Those who were fellows at ICANN Public Meetings in-person gave slightly higher rankings compared to those who participated in the program virtually. Of those who experienced in-person fellowships, 88% (44 individuals) selected 5, 8% (4) selected 4, and 4% (2) selected 3, with 0 selecting 1 or 2. For those who only experienced virtual fellowships, 80% (16 individuals) selected 5, 5% (1) selected 4, 10% (2) selected 3, and 5% (1) selected 2.

When participants were asked to explain why they selected their responses, results were largely positive and focused on the following topics:

- ① **Capacity-building and knowledge-building opportunities**
Survey participants noted gaining a better understanding of Internet governance, the global Internet as well as ICANN's mission, multistakeholder model, and policy development processes.
- ② **Future participation in ICANN**
Many respondents emphasized the important role the Fellowship Program played in helping them to engage productively at ICANN, to become involved in the ICANN community, and to grow into a leadership position at ICANN.

- ⦿ **Networking and mentorship**

Many survey participants commended the benefits of creating global connections, meeting people from other industries, and networking with specialists. They were complimentary of the experience and guidance of their mentors.

- ⦿ **Professional growth**

Many survey participants noted that the Fellowship Program afforded a great learning experience for them professionally and they met many experts who supported their professional development.

- ⦿ **Diversity and comradery of other fellows**

Some survey participants praised the opportunities to meet fellows from different regions and different industries, the friendliness and diversity of their fellowship cohort, and the support the wider fellowship community offers during regional and global events.

- ⦿ **Importance of ICANN**

Some reiterated the importance of ICANN in general, both in terms of technology and the security and stability of the Internet and in terms of allowing their community's voices to be heard.

- ⦿ **Program organization**

Survey participants mentioned that the program is well organized, well planned, and immersive, with a supportive program manager and outstanding content and support.

- ⦿ **Areas for improvement**

Some noted that a face-to-face meeting would have been more effective and that fellows could do more to engage with their communities.

Post-Fellowship Participation

The survey included several questions to assess alumni engagement after their first fellowship, including participation in ICANN Public Meetings, engagement in their regions, and participation in the ICANN community.

ICANN Public Meetings

As indicated in Figure 4, the majority of the survey participants (85%, 56 individuals) reported attending another ICANN Public Meeting after their first fellowship. For some (8%, 5 individuals), this question was not applicable, as they had only just completed their first fellowship at ICANN70.

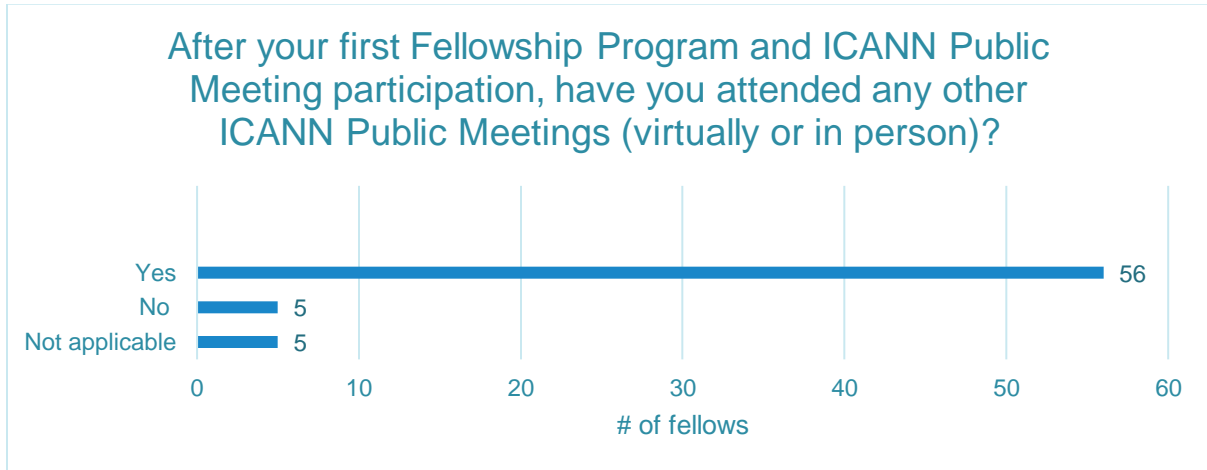


Figure 4

On average, survey results illustrated that participants attended 3 meetings virtually and 1 in-person meeting after their initial fellowship. Figure 5 shows the number of ICANN Public Meetings that fellows have attended since their first fellowship.

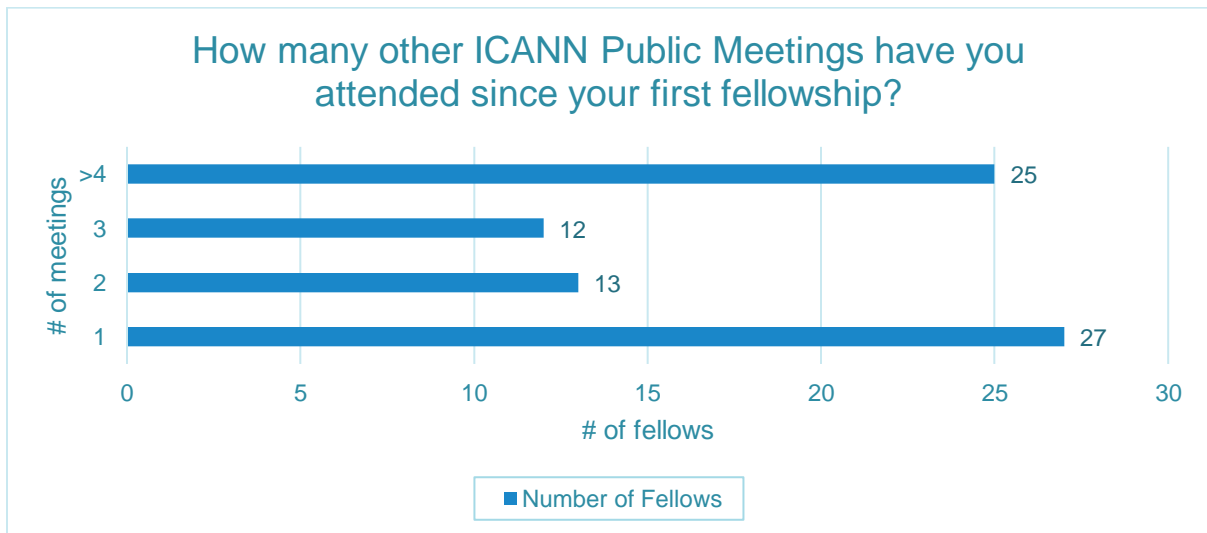


Figure 5

Regional Engagement

Majority of the respondents (95%, 61 out of 64 respondents to these questions) reported participation in global or regional ICANN events and/or webinars in the past three years. Most of the survey participants (70%, 45 individuals) noted that they are currently engaged with the Global Stakeholder Engagement (GSE) team in their respective regions.



Figure 6

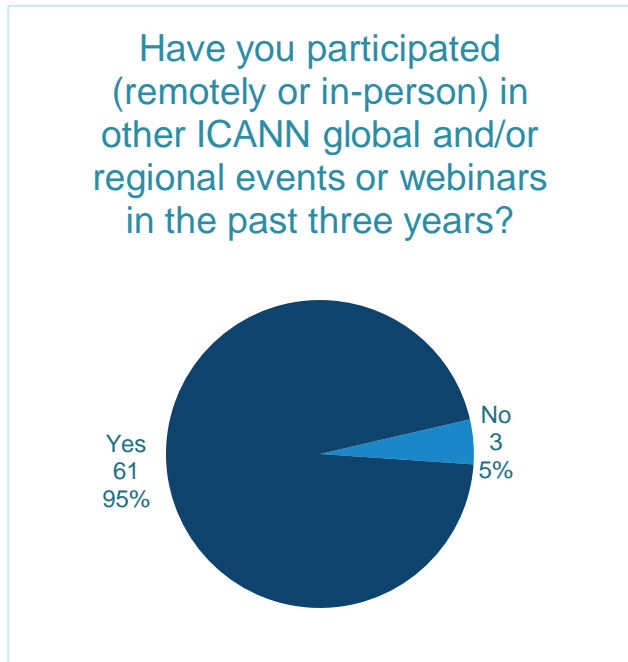


Figure 7

As shown in Figure 7, the majority of the survey participants (82%, 37 individuals) are on ICANN's regional mailing list; approximately two-thirds (64%, 29 individuals) noted that they have attended a regional event. Nearly one-third (29%, 14) are involved in ICANN's regional strategy work, and 22% (10 individuals) have organized or co-organized regional events.

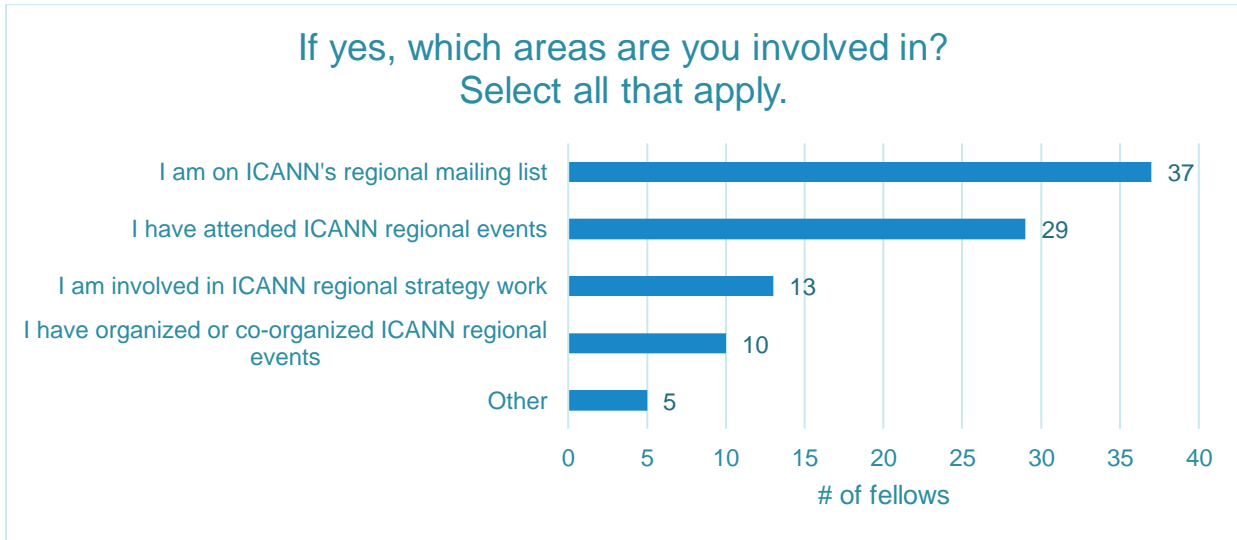


Figure 8

Of those who have attended ICANN's regional events over the last three years, on average, they attended three events. Of those who have organized or co-organized regional events with ICANN in the last three years, on average, the fellows have been involved in two events.

Barrier to Engagement in Regional Activities

For those who are not engaged with their regional GSE team, the most common reason cited (selected by 63% of participants, 12 individuals) was a lack of clarity on how to become involved. This was followed by a lack of clarity on how to find content relevant to their region, and challenges related to the COVID-19 pandemic (32%, 6 individuals).

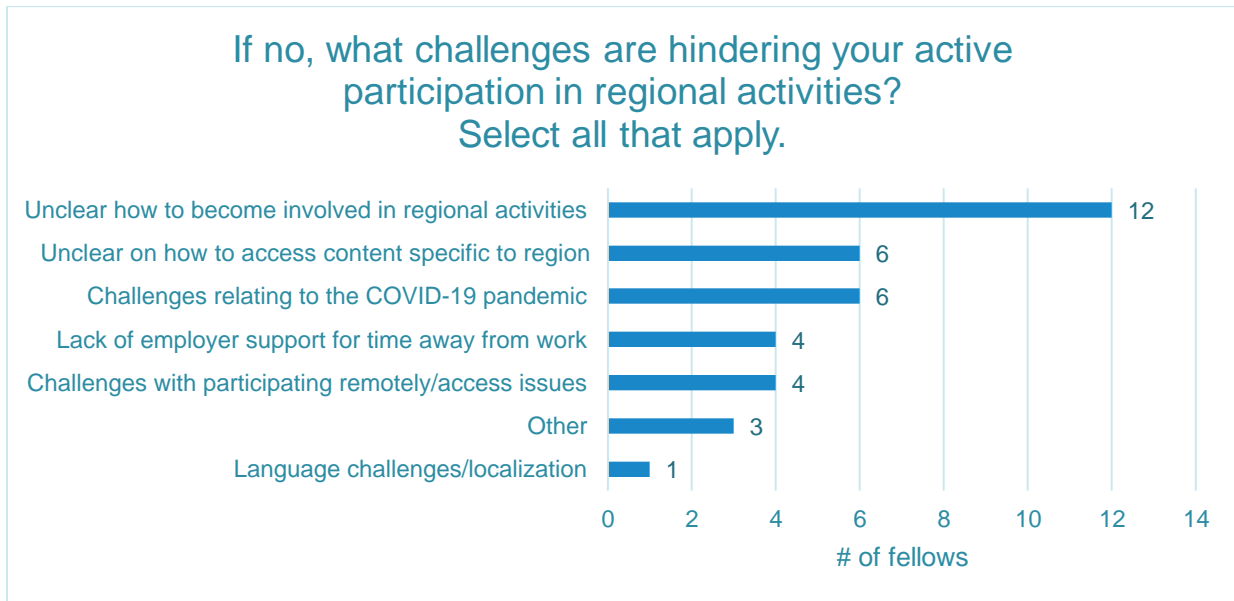


Figure 9

ICANN Community Involvement

Most of the respondents (84%, 52 individuals) reported that they are currently involved in the ICANN community. The level of involvement (84%) is the same for fellows with in-person or virtual fellowship experiences.

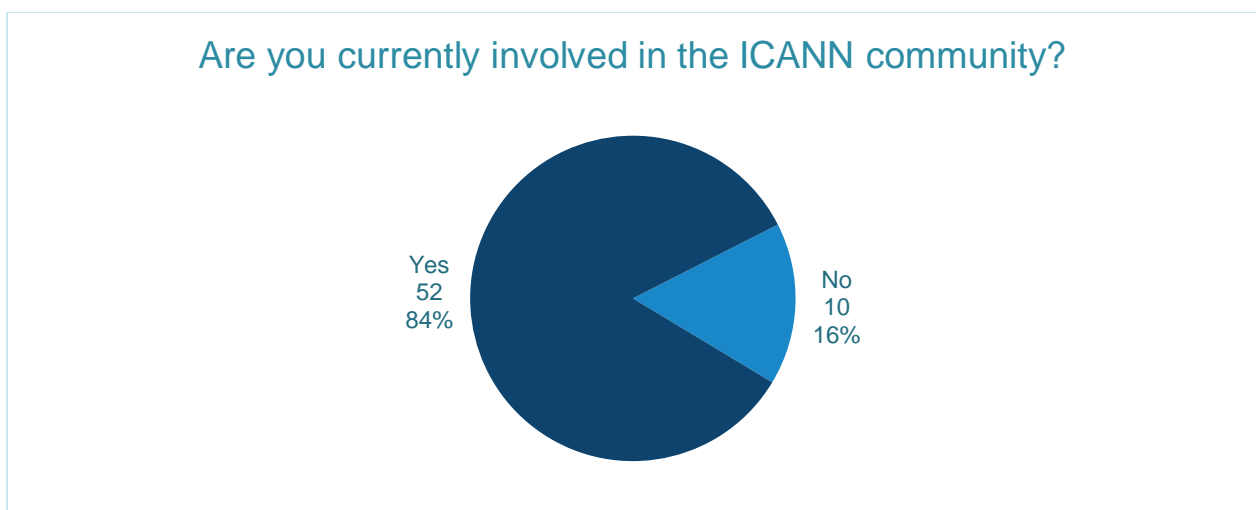


Figure 10

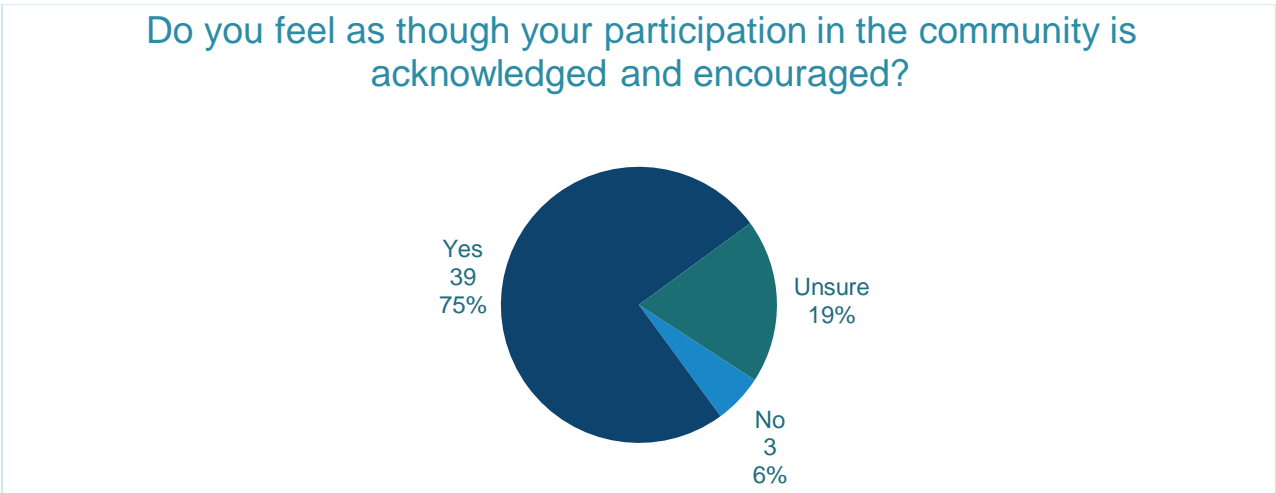


Figure 11

Of those who are involved, most of them (75% 39 individuals) feel that their participation is acknowledged and encouraged.

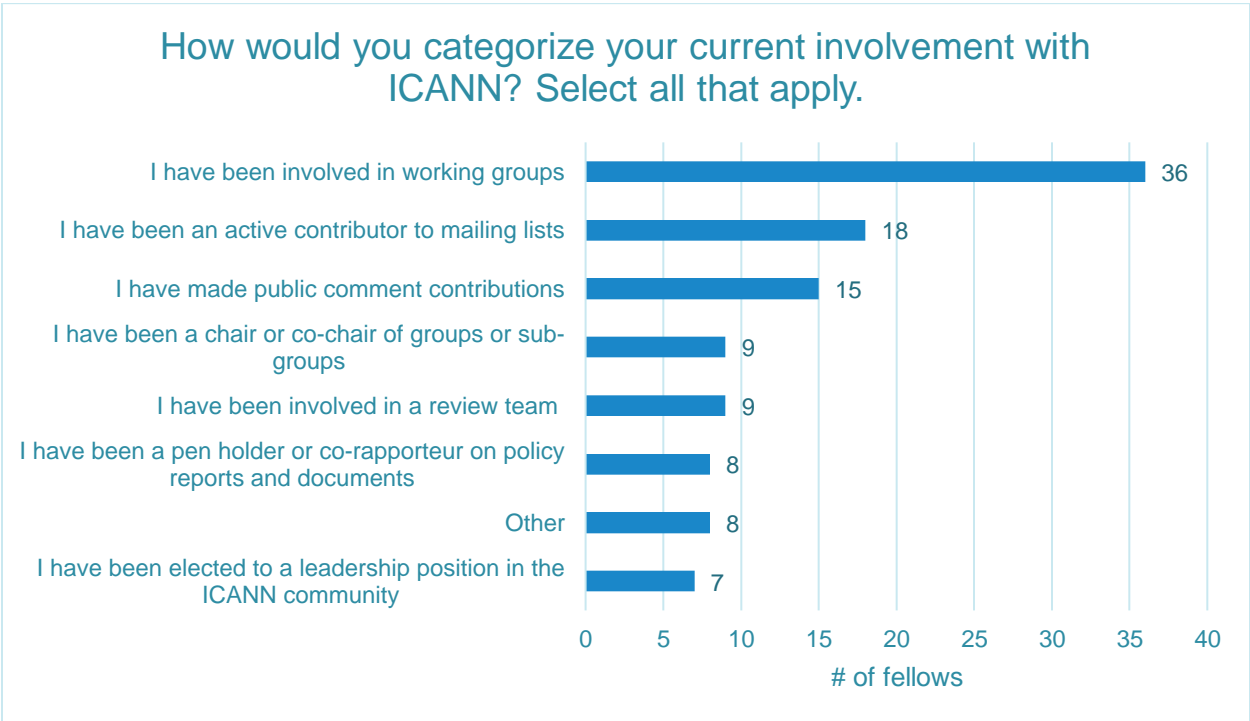


Figure 12

As shown in Figure 12, over two-thirds of those who are involved in the ICANN community (69%, 36 individuals) reported being involved in working groups, and over one-third (35%, 18 individuals) indicated that they have been active contributors to mailing lists.

The survey participants currently hold a range of leadership positions, including African representative to At-Large Advisory Committee (ALAC), the Noncommercial Users Constituency (NCUC) Executive Committee Chair, the Generic Names Supporting Organization (GNSO) Council Vice Chair, the Noncommercial Stakeholder Group (NCSG) Policy Chair, the Not-for-

Profit Operational Concern's (NPOC's) Communications Chair, the African Regional At-Large Organization (AFRALO) Secretariat, and NPOC's Membership Chair.

Fellowship alumni also hold chair or co-chair positions in the following groups At-Large Social Media Working Group (SMWG), Universal Acceptance Steering Group (UASG) Communications Working Group, At-Large Subcommittee on Outreach and Engagement, GNSO Council, NCSG, Governmental Advisory Committee (GAC) Human Rights and International Law Working Group (HRILWG), AFRALO Operating Principles Review Working Group, AFRALO Operating Principles Working Group, and NCUC Executive Committee. Some also mentioned former positions including Latin America and the Caribbean Regional At-Large Organization (LACRALO) Communications Working Group and the Middle East 2016-2020 Charter Update.

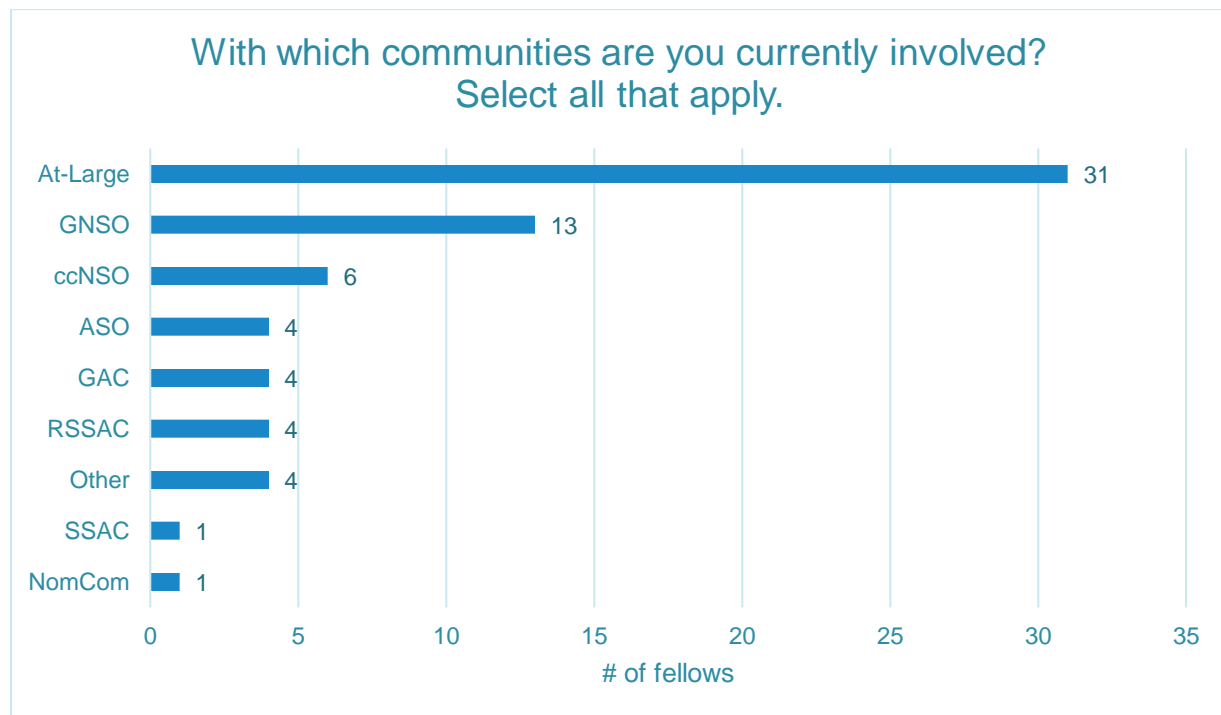


Figure 13

Figure 13 shows the breakdown of alumni involvement in ICANN community groups. Over half (60%, 31 individuals) of the active fellows reported participation in At-Large (which includes Regional At-Large Organizations (RALOs) and/or the At-Large Advisory Committee (ALAC)). Within At-Large, 16 indicated that they are involved in AFRALO (the RALO for the African region), 6 in LACRALO (for Latin America and the Caribbean), 5 in APRALO (for Asia, Australasia, and the Pacific), 3 in EURALO (for Europe), and 1 in NARALO (for North America). Five fellows are involved in ALAC. A quarter reported involvement in the GNSO. Within the GNSO, 7 indicated that they are involved in NCSG and NCUC (each), 5 in NPOC, and 1 (each) in Intellectual Property Constituency (IPC), Internet Service Providers and Connectivity Providers (ISPCP), and Registries Stakeholder Group (RySG).

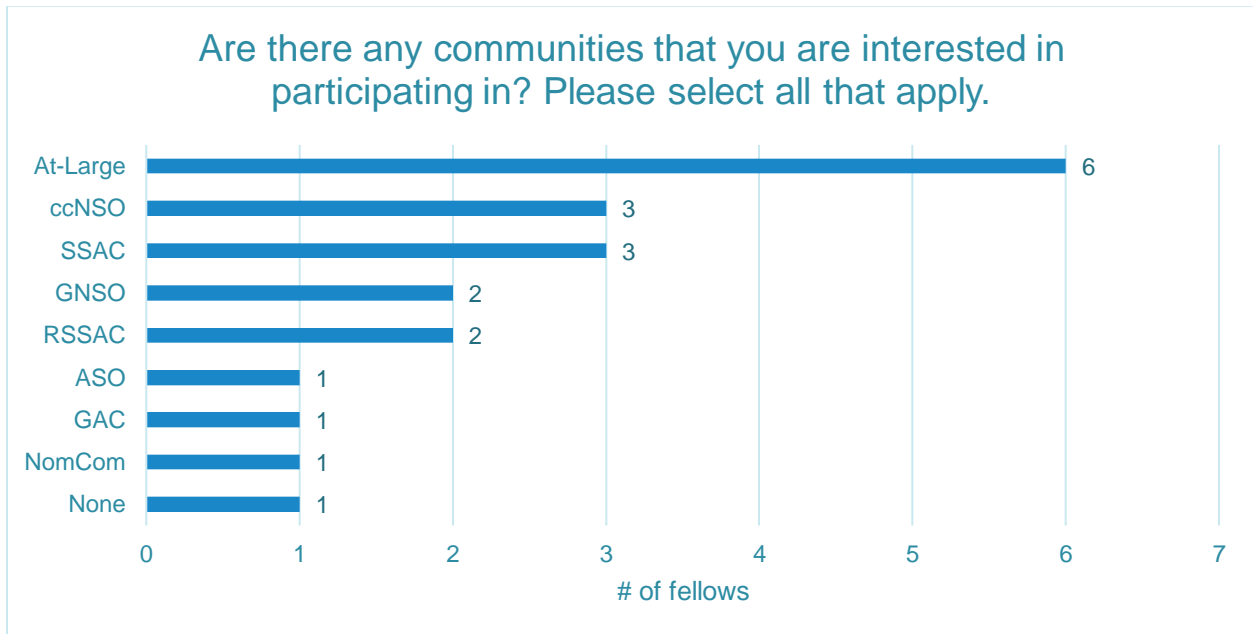


Figure 14

Of those 10 alumni who are not currently involved in the community, 9 indicated that they are interested in participating in at least one community group as reflected in Figure 13.

Barriers to Participation in the ICANN Community

For those not currently involved, lack of funding and lack of clarity on how to access community-specific content pose the largest barriers to participation in the ICANN community.

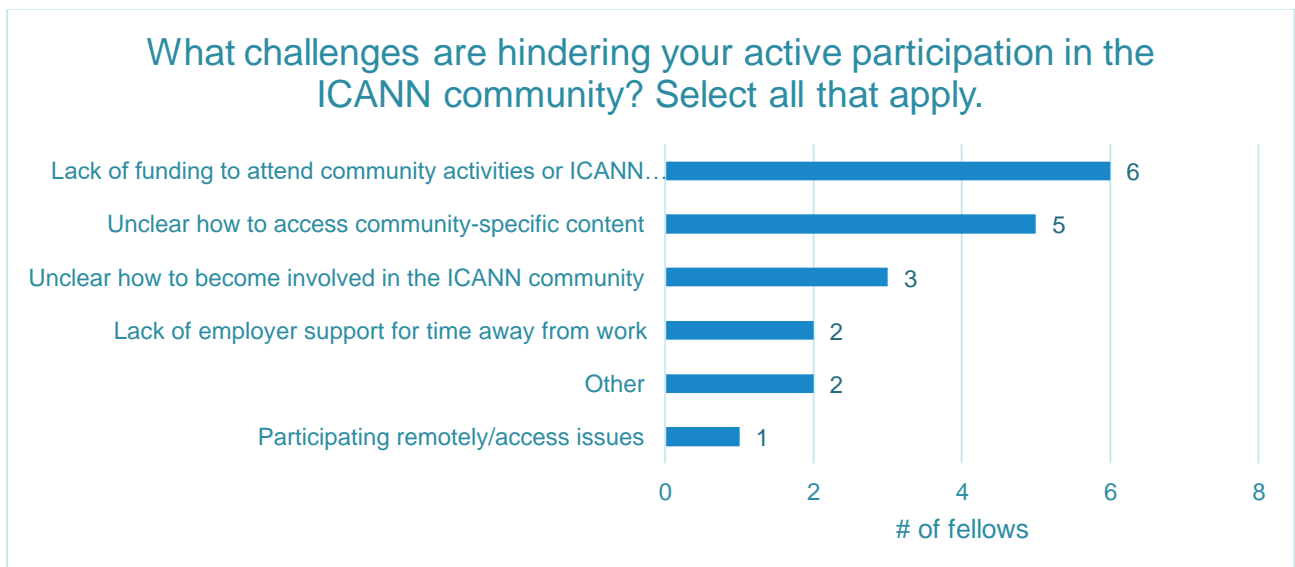


Figure 15

Suggestions to Increase Participation of Fellows in ICANN

Fellows were asked, "How can ICANN better support you, or others, in the future to increase participation in ICANN regionally and globally?" Below are some of the suggestions provided by them (note that some answers have been shortened for brevity).

⦿ **Communications**

- Inform about events and activities going on globally and regionally.
- Inform about open positions and working group activities open for involvement.
- Provide clarity about concrete actions or paths for someone new to follow and join the ICANN community; the current communications lack sufficient information.
- Make it clearer how community members can access funding.
- Provide clear criteria for how to find discussions across the ICANN community that are relevant to various interests.

⦿ **Regional opportunities**

- Actively engage alumni in the regions to provide opportunities to lead in local communities, encourage alumni to form local hubs, advocate ICANN's mandate and Internet governance-related issues, and give alumni more visibility.
- Follow up with regional leaders or community leaders to ensure they are supporting and engaging ICANN community members in their countries; do not limit regional activities to leaders only and ensure newcomers are welcomed.
- Use local communities to reach the participants, considering language barriers.
- Have a local support team ambassador in each country to create awareness.
- Reinstate remote hubs.
- Host sessions at regional Internet Governance Forums (IGFs) with ICANN leaders so that young people and those in information and communications technology (ICT) can become more aware of ICANN and its role in the Internet ecosystem.
- Organize regional events: organize more physical and/or hybrid events in developing countries to increase engagement, offer support (in any means possible) to host seminars especially in tertiary institutions around underserved regions, collaborate to organize regional conferences so that people who cannot afford international travel can learn about ICANN and easily participate and get more involved (such as through workshops at universities), encourage local meetings, as meeting in-person is more efficient for networking and sharing and travelling presents challenges for many.
- Give underserved regions more voice and space to participate in the different ICANN groups.
- Enlarge the Global Stakeholder Engagement (GSE) team.
- Visualize how the local interests of certain groups should be discussed and brought into the ICANN space.

⦿ **Inclusivity**

- Make greater efforts to allow participation in multiple languages for non-English speakers and offer more language support.
- Offer better pathways for young people to enter the community and stay engaged, including more mentorship and opportunities after the fellowship.

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- Create inclusion platforms for newcomers: encourage them by creating activities for them to integrate them and providing a mentoring service to serve as a guide for their effective integration into ICANN.
 - Take into account the political and financial situation of those from poor countries with instability and problems with electricity, connectivity, etc.
 - **Capacity development**
 - Offer leadership and chairing training sessions.
 - Offer more capacity building for the community on the DNS.
 - **Fellowship Program changes**
 - Add special fellowships for professionals who are active in ICANN.
 - Continue to encourage youth participation and onboard new people into policy work.
 - Provide financial support for Internet connectivity.
 - Extend the mentoring process beyond ICANN Public Meetings.
 - Provide slots in the program specific to the specific underserved regions.
 - Offer funding to those fellows who only attended the Fellowship Program virtually so that they can attend one ICANN meeting in-person.
 - Contact alumni after participation in the program and offer support for how to participate more actively and become more involved.
 - Strengthen the support of the alumni network and do a peer review of alumni engagement within ICANN.
 - During the presentations each ICANN community delivers to fellows, include the procedures on how to become a member and contribute to that community.
 - **Funding**
 - Offer research or project grants.
 - Renumerate ICANN participation rather than have it based on voluntary work.
 - Help alumni to get funding for projects on Internet issues in their communities.
 - Help active fellows to find footing by supporting their travels.
 - Provide financial support to organize local events related to open data, Universal Acceptance, and Internationalized Domain Names.
 - Helping the community on-the-ground with funding.
 - Offer support for travel funding and participation, increase the volunteer stipend.
 - Fund national schools on Internet governance.
 - Provide funding to participate in regional and global events to foster diversity in discussion and experience, and to allow more under-privileged individuals to be invited to participate in ICANN events.
 - **Virtual format**
 - Recognize the difficulties relating to time zones.
 - Arrange regional events for those who only participated in the Fellowship Program virtually so they can meet in person and gain comfort with ICANN processes and people.
 - When possible, offer in-person opportunities to further enhance the experience and allow networking among fellows and in different constituencies etc.
 - Return to face-to-face meetings.
 - **General suggestions for ICANN**
 - Focus on outreach.
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- Make leadership teams more open to newcomers (there is the perception that leadership teams feature the same few people in rotation).
 - Figure out how to incentivize volunteers with no financial benefit, since there are too few incentives to continue participating once there is burnout.
 - Keep virtual participation open for those who have difficulty traveling and participating.
 - Encourage the participation of more fellows in working groups.

Feedback on the Experience at ICANN After a Fellowship

Primarily, survey participants focused their suggestions around enhancing the post-meeting follow-up, to ensure fellows find a place in the community, have sufficient guidance, and are motivated to participate actively.

A few suggested that it would be helpful to offer the means for alumni to connect with each other, either through an ICANN platform, specific regional/local groups, or in sessions where they could exchange experiences and learn about how to collaborate with the community.

One participant wrote, "There is a feeling of 'slight abandonment' after the final report is published - designate someone to teach fellows how to use the ICANN wiki, help them find their footing with a community group, make sure they are invited and reminded to attend meetings, encouraged to contribute to working groups and public comments; a bit more hand-holding, encouragement, pushing and mentoring would help fellows to connect, engage, and participate as it can be overwhelming to find one's footing and try to navigate through the different communities, time zones, and meetings."

When asked about the program in general, alumni spoke highly of the ways in which the program helped them to become involved in ICANN, in working groups and review teams, in related Internet governance areas within their region.

They were grateful for the opportunities to network and engage with professionals and learn from experts, as well as the openness of the global community. They spoke highly of ICANN and the ICANN Public Meetings; and the way in which the Fellowship program propelled their careers and allowed them to share their knowledge from ICANN to their local communities.

Appendix: Full Survey Questionnaire

Fellowship Alumni Survey 2021

This survey aims to help measure the engagement of ICANN Fellows on national, regional, and global levels both within and outside of ICANN. Your input will help us better understand how ICANN can be more proactive and supportive of your engagement as ICANN Fellowship Program alumni.

We appreciate your continued support for the ICANN Fellowship Program.

1. What region do you live in? (Unsure? Visit <https://meetings.icann.org/en/regions> to determine which ICANN region applies to your country of residence.) If you have multiple residences, please select your primary one.
 - Africa
 - Asia / Australia / Pacific
 - Europe
 - Latin America / Caribbean
 - North America
2. How many times have you participated in the Fellowship Program?
 - One time
 - Two times
 - Three times
 - Other: _____
3. When did you participate in the Fellowship Program? Select all that apply.
 - At ICANN65 and/or ICANN66
 - At ICANN70 and/or ICANN71
4. Would you recommend the Fellowship Program to a friend or coworker? (1= Not likely at all; 5= Very likely)
 - 1-5 scale
5. What are the primary reasons for the score you gave us?
 - Write-in / free response

ICANN Meeting Participation

6. After your first Fellowship Program and ICANN Public Meeting participation, have you attended any other ICANN Public Meetings (virtually or in person)?
 - Yes
 - No
 - Not applicable - I was a fellow at ICANN70 and have not yet had the opportunity to attend more meetings.
7. [Follow-up to previous] How many other ICANN Public Meetings have you attended since your first fellowship?
 - Remotely: Add number
 - In person: Add number

Regional Engagement

8. Have you participated (remotely or in-person) in other ICANN global and/or regional events or webinars in the past three years?
- Yes
 - No
9. Are you currently engaged with ICANN's Global Stakeholder Engagement (GSE) team in your region?
- Yes
 - No
10. If yes, which areas are you involved in? Select all that apply
- I am on ICANN's regional mailing list
 - I have attended ICANN regional events
 - I am involved in ICANN regional strategy work
 - I have co-organized ICANN regional events
 - Other. Please specify. [write-in]
11. Follow-up: Please specify:
- Number of regional events attended in the past 3 years
 - Number of regional events organized or co-organized in the past 3 years
12. If no, what challenges are hindering your active participation in regional activities?
- Unclear how to become involved in regional activities
 - Lack of employer support for time away from work
 - Challenges with participating remotely/access issues
 - Unclear on how to access content specific to region
 - Language challenges/localization
 - Challenges relating to the COVID-19 pandemic
 - No challenges - I do not want to be involved at this time
 - Other. Please specify. [write-in]

Community Participation and Engagement

13. Are you currently involved in the ICANN community?
- Yes
 - No
14. How would you categorize your current involvement with ICANN? Select all that apply.
- I have been a pen holder or co-rapporteur on policy reports and documents
 - I have been an active contributor to mailing lists
 - I have made public comment contributions
 - I have been elected to a leadership position in the ICANN community
 - I have been a chair or co-chair of groups or sub-groups
 - I have been involved in a review team
 - I have been involved in working groups
 - Other: _____
15. [Follow-up to previous] What leadership positions do you currently hold?
- Free response/write-in

16. [Follow-up to previous] What chair or co-chair positions do you currently hold?

- Free response/write-in

17. [Follow-up to previous] With which communities are you currently involved in? Select all that apply.

- ASO - Address Supporting Organization
- At-Large - including RALOs (Regional At-Large Organizations) and ALAC (At-Large Advisory Committee)
 - ALAC - At-Large Advisory Committee
 - APRALO - Asian, Australasian and Pacific Islands Regional At-Large Organization
 - AFRALO - African Regional At-Large Organization
 - LACRALO - Latin American and Caribbean Islands Regional At-Large Organization
 - EURALO - European Regional At-Large Organization
 - NARALO - North American Regional At-Large Organization
- ccNSO - Country Code Names Supporting Organization
- GAC - Governmental Advisory Committee
- GNSO - Generic Names Supporting Organization
 - BC - Commercial Business Users Constituency
 - IPC - Intellectual Property Constituency
 - ISPCP - Internet Service Providers and Connectivity Provider Constituency
 - NCSG - Non-Commercial Stakeholder Group
 - NCUC - Non-Commercial Users Constituency
 - NPOC - Not-for-Profit Operational Concerns Constituency
 - RySG - Registries Stakeholder Group
 - RrSG - Registrars Stakeholder Group
- RSSAC- Root Server System Advisory Committee
- SSAC - Security and Stability Advisory Committee
- NomCom - Nominating Committee
- ICANN Board
- Other

18. Are there any communities that you are interested in participating in? [Follow-up for those who indicated that they are not involved.]

- ASO - Address Supporting Organization
- At-Large - including RALOs (Regional At-Large Organizations) and ALAC (At-Large Advisory Committee)
- ccNSO - Country Code Names Supporting Organization
- GAC - Governmental Advisory Committee
- GNSO - Generic Names Supporting Organization
- RSSAC- Root Server System Advisory Committee
- SSAC - Security and Stability Advisory Committee
- NomCom - Nominating Committee
- ICANN Board
- None

19. What challenges are hindering your active participation in the ICANN community?

- Lack of funding to attend community activities or ICANN meetings
- Unclear how to become involved in the ICANN community
- Lack of employer support for time away from work
- Participating remotely/access issues
- Unclear how to access community-specific content
- Language challenges/localization
- No challenges - I do not wish to be involved at this time
- Other: _____

20. Do you feel as though your participation in the community is acknowledged and encouraged?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

21. How can ICANN better support you, or others, in the future to increase participation in ICANN regionally and globally?

- Free response/write-in

22. Please provide any other feedback or comments you may have regarding your experience at ICANN after your fellowship.

- Free response/write-in

