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(en) Sexuality and internet governance

Designed to increase participants' understanding of internet governance and how it relates to the activism on sexuality rights. This manual is particularly designed to encourage participants to examine issues of power, control, relationships, and to think of strategies to advance sexuality rights in the political space of internet governance.

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  - Nine reasons why we need more feminists in internet governance
  - Role of gender report cards at the internet governance forum
  - Nepal IGF 2018: Revisiting the experience

Introduction and overview

Designed to increase participants’ understanding of internet governance and how it relates to activism on sexuality rights. This manual is particularly designed to encourage participants to examine issues of power, control and relationships, and to think of strategies to advance sexuality rights in the political space of internet governance. Contributors: Developed for APC by Angela M. Kuga Thas and Serene Lim of KRYSS Network. hvale vale APC WRP contributed to the Introduction and the Input “Intersectionality and Internet Governance”. Practices and experiences from South Asia where created by Sachini Perera, Shuhbha Kayasta and Smita Vanniyar, they offer a first account of Internet Governance and Sexuality from feminist perspective

Overview

> In flesh and bones and you might want more!

Governance sounds like a very complicated abstract term! One that reminds us of formal education, sophisticated knowledge and soft yet complex skills.

The internet, meanwhile, with its billions of users, seems to be a more popular concept, yet when explored, it shows its many layers: infrastructure, protocols, content, jurisdiction and so on.

That’s why a module that addresses capacity building through feminist and intersectional lenses is so necessary. Bringing sexuality within the domains of change and dialogue of internet governance is bringing our bodies to the core of the next world which is already here.

Sexuality addresses multiple structural discriminations. It is also censored, controlled, accused and blamed for the destruction of cultural values. It is used to generate business and revenue, or to exploit. It is used to model and frame desires, and to create social acceptability, as well as hierarchy.

We have to take the challenge and unpack the conceptualisation of internet governance, link it to sexuality to move from its abstract, mental construction to an “embodied” one.

To do this, we need to re-tell many stories. We need to fill in the gaps of who is an actor, what makes an actor, and what powers these different actors can exercise, access.

We will need to re-understand how the internet works and evolved. The development of the internet as a glorious evolution of humankind is not helping us. It is looking at it through the very real bodies that enrich and live and locate themselves within specific cultures, ideologies and frameworks that matters. That will give us back the internet to our physical as well as digital personas.

Bodies reveal themselves along a layered and multidimensional spectrum of intersections of (more or less) structural privileges and/or intersections of (more or less) structural discriminations.

So to the question why a feminist, sexual rights activist, LGBTQAI person should enter internet governance, the answer is: to make visible the structural discrimination our internet is suffering and, by extension, our bodies and lives are paying for/with.

If we want to embody the internet of people, the very same feminist intersectional lenses make it easy to see how our gendered bodies, located in the continuum of our digital lives, are forced to conform to an internet that is built, developed and performed using just one lens of structural privileges.

This lens assumes itself as the norm, a dogma and self-asserted progress rooted in the positivist constructions of colonial/imperialist elites moving across time and technologies to preserve their own structural privileges extended by affinity to the ones that assimilate.

The internet, which might seem like a place of endless possibilities, is the servant of a minuscule population, accumulating on the work, desires, creations of the entire humanity. Including, excluding, exploiting while constantly imposing the one-fit-to-all as a generous gift while it is just a-white-hetero-binary-fit-to-all.

Consensus assumed.

We are our bodies and whereever we are, and our experience of internet governance is embodied. To ensure a feminist internet, we have to participate, engage and transform how internet governance takes place, and ensure that it is not the will of the few acting upon the lived reality of all.

The multistakeholder intersectionality model

This module is double-fold, and intends to make visible the intersectionality that is entrenched but unspoken in the multistakeholder model of internet governance spaces.

The assumption of the multistakeholder model is that there are these large communities of actors: the private sector, governments, media, civil society, the technical community and intergovernmental organisations, and that their interaction will generate dialogue, suggest scenarios and prompt actions.

As with the idea of the global market being enough by its sole existence to generate “benefits for all”, capacity building around multistakeholder models fails to unpack and understand the diversity and intersectionality inside each part of this community.

This module intends to address and look at internet governance bringing the perspectives and embodied lived experience of feminists, sexual rights activists and LGBTQAI communities.

Are our bodies **sitting at the most mainstreamed intersection of structural privileges: patriarchy, whiteness, capitalism, ableism and heteronormativity?**

Or are our bodies the ones at the margin, **statusless bodies that sit at the exact intersection of structural discriminations: race, gender, sex, class, caste, age, disability, sexual orientation?**

What we propose is to move from an intellectual, analytical exercise to one that tries to decolonise the internet and its governance. That’s why gender cannot be the one and only lens that addresses structural discrimination. We need to explore all structural discriminations.

Addressing gender in internet governance spaces opened the door to the entire humanity. Still it has to constantly respond to the threats of reducing gender within the stereotypical binary of women and men. And from here, to constantly respond to the threats of reducing gender to women, forgetting women have varied races, castes, classes, education, age, disabilities, locations, languages.

It is only this variety that will help to escape the tokenism trap set around gendered bodies.

The second aim of this module is to acknowledge and celebrate the experiences of advocates. The stories and insights from Sri Lankan, Nepali and Indian contributors are populating this module with their needs, their strategies and visions, and their claim on the space in its entirety and not as a residual subject for lightning talks.

Learning objectives and activities

This page will guide you through the Module's correct use and understanding. Following the Learning Paths, with activities of varying depth, should allow participants to obtain a better grasp of the studied subjects.

Learning objectives and activities

Learning objectives

By the end of this module, the participants will:

- Gain an understanding of internet governance and identify the stakeholders.
- Deconstruct governance over sexuality-related content online.
- Develop an understanding of the intersectionality between internet rights and sexuality rights.
- Gain an enhanced appreciation of the link between social capital and internet governance.
- Identify the added value of engaging in online spaces and the implications of that “power” towards strategy development and implementation.

Learning activities

The learning activities in this module have been divided into three kinds:

Starter Activities

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Starter Activities are meant to get the participants to start thinking about a topic and spark discussions. For the trainer/facilitator, these activities can be diagnostic tools to observe what levels of understanding the group has, and to adjust the workshop based on that.

Deepening Activities

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Deepening Activities are meant to expand and dig into the topics and themes.

- Who is allowed to say what?
- Mapping sexual rights activists and groups in internet governance

Tactical Activities

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Tactical Activities are meant to respond to multiple learning objectives in practical ways. These include hands-on exercises and practical strategising activities.

- Recognising your power
- Role playing game on gender and internet governance

Small Stories

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This module also contains Small stories on 3 topics with reflection questions for discussion. These are

- Feminist server
- Reclaiming expression
- Porn, sexuality and the internet

Case Studies

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Case studies, which can be used to learn, discuss and engage in groups, give deeper insight and experiences into

- Tips and tricks on how to engage in internet governance spaces
- Nine reasons why we need more feminists in internet governance
- Role of gender report cards at the internet governance forum
- Nepal IGF 2018: Revisiting the experience

Should you wish to learn more about getting started in organising an engaging, collaborative and safe workshop space, please visit – Getting Started

Intersectionality

Older than most of us think and runs from feminism, to politics and civic activism, to anti-racist struggles under different names.

Introduction

Intersectionality is older than most of us think and runs from feminism, to politics and civic activism, to anti-racist struggles under different names.

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Image source: Teaching Tolerance. 2016. Intersectionality 101. Available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w6dnj2IyYjE . Accessed on 21 June 2019.

What remains common throughout the years, continents and practitioners is the understanding of how certain bodies become the subjects of multiple discrimination because of the way cultural norms, embedded and replicated by systems of power, are translated or not translated in policies. Therefore social justice is not achieved and entire communities and individuals are left with no recourse to justice or redistributive/reparation mechanisms in our societies.

What intersectionality helps discarding, in every one of its iterations and manifestations through time and spaces, is the binary hierarchical exclusionary understanding of our worlds.

> “One core premise of intersectionality concerns the relationships between ideas, practices […]. This entailed working through and across many differences.”[1]

Intersectionality is applied and part of Savitribai Phule’s (1831−1897) feminist understanding of the social injustice of colonial India, where she named in her analysis not one cause, one root, but focused on and named several axes of social division, from caste to gender to economic status to religion.

We find intersectionality more consistently named during the social struggles of the 1960s and 1970s, when African-American, Chicana and Latina women activists together with Native American and Asian-American women “confronted the puzzle of how their needs simply fell through the cracks of anti-racist social movements, feminism, and unions organizing for workers' rights.”[2]

It was Kimberlé Crenshaw, in the late 1980s, who succeeded in making intersectionality a recognised, acclaimed, global foundational framework. Thanks to her, it became the analytical "meme" of both academic and political discourse, bridging worlds that are often unreachable silos to one another.

Crenshaw first coined the term in 1989 because she felt that anti-racist and feminist movements, where she was a theoretician and activist, were both overlooking the unique challenges faced by Black American women. The term has its roots in the Black feminist movement and it has become an essential analytical tool in feminist theorising.

As Crenshaw noted in her keynote speech at the Women of the World (WOW) Forum in 2016:

> "Intersectionality is not primarily about identity. It's about how structures make certain identities the consequence of, the vehicle for vulnerability. So if you want to know how many intersections matter, you've got to look at the context. What's happening? What kind of discrimination is going on? What are the policies? What are the institutional structures that play a role in contributing to the exclusion of some people and not others?"[3]

Understanding intersectionality

Our understanding of intersectionality is needed because it is important not only to understand the “what” of discrimination but its complexities and “why” it takes place.

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Image source: Teaching Tolerance. 2016. Intersectionality 101. Available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w6dnj2IyYjE . Accessed on 21 June 2019.

For example, Crenshaw stated that legislation about race was framed to protect Black men while legislation about sexism was understood to protect white women, and there were no provisions able to respond to the needs of subjects who were at the same time Black and women.

3_intersectionality_2.jpg
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Image source: Teaching Tolerance. 2016. Intersectionality 101. Available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w6dnj2IyYjE . Accessed on 21 June 2019.

Now that intersectionality has become this inescapable magic buzzword, is important to recognise the fact that there are multiple narratives and that it can be useful to look at it through an enriched lens, such as the one suggested by Patricia Hills Collins and Silma Bilge:

> “Intersectionality is a way of understanding and analyzing the complexity in the world, in people, and in human experiences. The events and conditions of social and political life and the self can seldom be understood as shaped by one factor. They are generally shaped by many factors in diverse and mutually influencing ways. When it comes to social inequality, people's lives and the organization of power in a given society are better understood as being shaped not by a single axis of social division, be it race or gender or class, but by many axes that work

> together and influence each other. Intersectionality as an analytic tool gives people better access to the complexity of the world and of themselves.”

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Patricia Hills Collins and Silma Bilge, intersectionality’s six key elements: social inequality, power, relationality, social context, complexity and social justice.

Intersectionality and sexuality

How would intersectionality work if we apply it to sexuality?

Sexuality, sexual orientation, gender expression: all these terms already bring us to a complex, fluid relational system. To talk of one's sexuality is to enter an intersection of self and projected embodied realities.

As activists, feminists, human rights and sexual rights activists we are interested in more than a descriptive inclusive exercise of the complexities of the world. We want change. We aim at a big structural change, which is social justice.

It is this tension between the understanding of sexuality as a right and the achievement of social justice that recognises this right in full that intersectionality displays its capacity to hold the complexity, point at the lack of responses, articulate the demands and formalise them as policy or governance asks.

To use intersectionality using sexuality as an entry point means to address the complexity of our identities, move away from the minorities framework of representation politics, explode and expand the understanding of identities to their structural belonging/referencing to other elements of identities such as class, age, ability, race, caste, not to build a hierarchical system of discrimination but to denounce and make visible how power in its various social dimensions from cultural, to interpersonal, to structural is reflected and results in systematic access to privileges or in systematic discrimination.

Sexuality, as one of humans' central dimensions, can only benefit from an intersectional lens that, paraphrasing Simla Bilge[1], refuses to separate "questions of gender, sexuality and queerness, from any other questions."

> To use a feminist intersectional lens means to acknowledge the complexity in which people, in relation to one another and the system(s), experience the power of social inequality in their specific social context and use this acknowledgment/evidence to achieve social justice.

It means to put at the centre the lived experiences and struggles of people, and to have critical conversations that unpack and address rights violations and discrimination suffered by people because of the way their sexualities and genders are defined by themselves or are given/passed down by society.

Many of us who work on sexuality issues have met lesbian women who come from an upper-class background and who have faced different forms of discrimination but with lesser severity because of their perceived social status.

Some people tend to think that applying an intersectional analysis or lens to the different forms of discrimination and human rights violations faced by a person is to compare or judge the severity of that discrimination and those human rights violations against the discrimination and human rights violations faced by other peoples.

Intersectionality is not meant to dismiss the harm that discrimination and human rights violations cause anyone. It is not meant to say, “Your pain is less than mine” or “Your pain is nothing compared to mine.” It is also not meant to say that your privileges make you less vulnerable to discrimination and human rights violations. We understand and appreciate privilege through experience and observation of lived realities. Hence, why many would consider a white, heterosexual male having more privileges and access to opportunities compared to a Black woman.

Intersectionality is meant to help us remember that all of us suffer disadvantages and enjoy privileges, not only because of the many social elements and characteristics that make up our identity, but also because of the specific systems of power and social context we can benefit from or are discriminated by.

While at any one point in time, we may find ourselves able to leverage the privileges to access justice or seek redress better than another in a given system, in the case of discrimination, it is a completely different scenario. The person(s) suffering the discrimination is/are asked to collect and

provide evidence of the discrimination, raise awareness, develop alliances, create and produce language that describes the discrimination and suggest solutions both in terms of practices and policies and in the longer term change cultural norms that reside in the collective unconscious.

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Image source: Teaching Tolerance. 2016. Intersectionality 101. Available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w6dnj2IyYjE . Accessed on 21 June 2019.

For example, we understand that rich people can suffer racial discrimination like anyone else if they are part of a discriminated racial minority/community. However, a rich person has a social network that poorer people may not, and could leverage that in order to access justice or to seek redress.

Our intersectional lens tells us that at any one point in time, we may suffer disadvantages in more ways and forms than others because of the multiple structural social elements and characteristics of power that are reflected and enacted through and because of our sexuality.

To exemplify, the capabilities of a Muslim lesbian who is visibly masculine or “tomboyish” may not be as well appreciated compared to a heterosexual woman who is feminine, yet both may suffer gender discrimination in terms of job promotion, training opportunities and salary scale.

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Image source: Teaching Tolerance. 2016. Intersectionality 101. Available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w6dnj2IyYjE . Accessed on 21 June 2019.

Intersectionality particularly helps us to build a map of relationships between the elements of our self-defined or socially perceived identity and the structural acceptance and resonance within the system, being it a country, a family, a university, a street.

Intersectionality particularly helps us to link and realise not only why but how someone experiences various degrees of economic, social, political and technological discrimination compared to someone else who might at first sight otherwise appear to share a similar “identity”.

For example, a Chinese woman from a rich family may be forced to marry someone she does not love in order to increase or protect the family’s wealth, whereas a poor Chinese woman may be sold off as someone’s wife or slave in order to pay off the family’s debts. Here, both suffer gender discrimination as women, but the assumption here would be that the rich Chinese woman should

be able to get out of her predicament better than the poor woman, and yet this is not necessarily so.

Having an intersectional lens will force us to look at both the social contexts and the power of these two women much more closely and to understand the reasons for their discrimination and human rights violations.

It is important that we use our intersectional analysis not to place blame or guilt on each other to the point that conversations become defensive or impossible, but to make visible both individual privileges and discrimination as well as systems of privilege and discrimination.

One of the practices that intersectionality brings is about interaction, about using a both/and framing instead of either/or. It is not about establishing if sexuality or gender matters more than caste or race, it is about looking at their relationship, at where they intersect, augment and reinforce discrimination and/or privilege. Exploring, questioning and making visible the simultaneous, dynamic intersection of one's positionality works for social, cultural and economic context, as well as for understanding power.

1. Privileges and how those privileges can be used to help bring about a more socially, politically, economically and technologically just society.
2. Disadvantages and how those disadvantages are reinforced both structurally and systemically.

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1 Developing Intersectional Solidarities: A Plea for Queer Intersectionality, Sirma Bilge, in Beyond the Queer Alphabet: Conversations on Gender, Sexuality & Intersectionality, edited by Malinda S. Smith and Fatima Jaffer.

Intersectionality of sexuality and internet governance

Intersectionality has been present in international policy spaces since 2001, as proved by Article 119 of the NGO Forum Declaration at the World Conference Against Racism definition applied to discrimination:

[It] acknowledges that every person be it man or woman exists in a framework of multiple identities, with factors such as race, class, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, disability, citizenship, national identity, geo-political context, health, including HIV/AIDS status and any other status are all determinants in one's experiences of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerances. An intersectional approach highlights the way in which there is a simultaneous interaction of discrimination as a result of multiple identities. (WCAR NGO Forum 2001)

The forum signed a turning point for the use of intersectionality, which moved from a national civil and social rights context to become an international human rights framework applied by global institutional actors.

At the same time, the emphasis on identity contained in the declaration contributed to a wrong perception of intersectionality as just another “identity politics” theory. To avoid this misunderstanding, it is important to go back to the strong focus on social justice that Kimberlé Crenshaw had formulated and reiterated through the years, including in the keynote presentation at the WOW Festival in 2016.

If we look at use of and access to technology and the internet, intersectionality immediately becomes a tool to help us not only make sense of the situation but to achieve social justice. The purpose of intersectionality is transformative.

How many people have access to the internet? What are the conditions and quality of their access to technology? How safe are they in their use? How visible and respected are their

voices/positions? By whom and how is technology designed?

All these questions have their place in the governance of the internet.

All the questions around the “who”, from access to content creation and moderation, surveillance, artificial intelligence and so forth, are exactly the questions that intersectionality can help to make sense of. That’s why the way we think and use “identities” is in terms of relationships, as a way of understanding how the existing/perceived linkage(s) between gender, sexuality and all the other elements of our identities (multiple fluid contextual selves) need policies to make the internet and digital technology a welcoming, open, accessible and affordable place/space for everyone.

It is the interplay of our perceived and self-defined identities in a given space (internet) that we want to address in national, regional and global spaces where the governance of the internet is discussed by all stakeholder groups, from the powerful private corporations and national governments to women’s rights, sexual rights and digital rights activists, to academia and the technical community that develops and approves the standards and protocols of this global critical resource.

Our policy/governance work starts from the understanding and denouncing of the interplay of our multiple identities to address the complexity of social inequalities, existing powers and specificity of contexts, aiming to achieve social justice.

Access to the internet for the majority of people in most parts of the world is in itself a privilege – how often you have access to it, how fast your access may be, who controls your access, and so on. This issue of access (and affordability) falls under internet governance.

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Reading materials

Primary reading materials

The Politics of Sex

https://www.genderit.org/politics-sex

In Plain Sight: Sexuality Rights and the Internet in India, Nepal and Sri Lanka

https://genderit.org/articles/plain-sight-sexuality-rights-and-internet-india-nepal-and-sri-lanka

Big Data and Sexual Surveillance

https://www.genderit.org/resources/big-data-and-sexual-surveillance

Additional resources

The False Paradox: Freedom of Expression and Sexist Hate Speech

https://www.apc.org/en/blog/false-paradox-freedom-expression-and-sexist-hate-speech

Anonymity, Accountability and the Public Sphere

http://gigx.events.apc.org/2015/06/23/anonymity-accountability-and-the-public-sphere/

How crucial is anonymity for sexual exploration and promoting sexual rights activism?

https://www.apc.org/en/blog/how-crucial-anonymity-sexual-exploration-and-promoting-sexual-rights-activism

Freedom of Peaceful Assembly and of Association and the Internet

https://www.apc.org/en/pubs/freedom-peaceful-assembly-and-freedom-association

Data 101–Privacy International

http://gigx.events.apc.org/2015/06/23/data-101-privacy-international/

Gender, Sexuality and Access to Rights Exercise: Trainer's Notes
http://gigx.events.apc.org/2015/07/14/gender-sexuality-and-access-to-rights-exercise-trainers-notes/

Women's Rights, Gender and Internet Governance
http://gigx.events.apc.org/2015/06/24/womens-rights-gender-and-internet-governance-issue-paper/

Freedom of Expression and Opinion
https://prezi.com/n-geute8wpfp/freedom-of-expression-and-opinion/

Kimberlé Crenshaw: On Intersectionality – keynote at WOW 2016
https://youtu.be/-DW4HLgYPlA

Developing Intersectional Solidarities: A Plea for Queer Intersectionality, by Sirma Bilge, in Beyond the Queer Alphabet: Conversations on Gender, Sexuality & Intersectionality, edited by Malinda S. Smith and Fatima Jaffer
https://www.ryerson.ca/content/dam/equity/documents/Beyond_the_Queer_Alphabet_20_March_2012.pdf

Intersectionality, Patricia Hills Collins and Sirma Bilge, Polity Press, 2016

Starter activities

Designed to help participants think about their first-time excitement that they experienced with the internet, and the reasons for this excitement

Starter activity

About this learning activity

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This learning activity is the suggested starter activity for the module “Sexuality and internet governance”. It is designed to help participants think about their first-time excitement that they experienced with the internet, and the reasons for this excitement. It is also meant to get participants to start thinking about who could be watching their online activities, and who could control what they have access to/are able to do online.

Learning objectives

1. To increase participants’ understanding of internet governance.
2. To identify who the stakeholders are and how they shape the internet we have today.

Who is this activity for?

For participants of all levels of experience.

Time required

45 minutes (dependent on number of participants).

Resources needed

- Sticky notes (about 4 inches x 2 inches wide). If not possible, A6 coloured paper and masking tape.
- Marker pens.
- White board or flip chart paper.
- Two to three sheets of flip chart paper stuck together to draw out the “Whose Internet Is It Timeline”.
- Handout of timeline (diagram and notes).

Mechanics

Ask the participants to individually think about/recall the first time they felt excited using the internet (*for those born with ready access to internet*).

This is to get participants to remember the excitement they felt, or the power or control that they may have felt. It will also likely touch on what they had access to for the first time (e.g. computer games, chat rooms, safer environments for socialising as LGBTIQPA or to talk about their sexuality, pornography, banned books or censored films, etc.).

Participants are asked to write one experience on a sticky note (same colour for all participants) and to do so **anonymously.**

Facilitator collects these sticky notes and sticks them on a white board/flip chart.

Facilitator then categorises the notes based on content (e.g. porn and sexually explicit pictures as one category).

Get participants to share WHY they felt excited:

- It could be about sudden access to something or someone (to a marginalised community, to banned material, to someone far away, etc.)

NOTE: Facilitator should find out what platforms were used, if applicable, and also try to better understand the reasons for the excitement, e.g. about finding out for the first time

that there’s such a thing as the women’s march on International Women’s Day. Facilitator should also talk about what the internet was originally supposed to bring about: ease of communication and sharing, equalising access to knowledge, information and resources, distributing power to create content, etc.

- It could be about the feeling of control or power [Facilitator needs to find out what kind of control or power].

Alternative instruction

If the above instruction is too broad and participants need more prescriptive guidance, the facilitator could ask questions that more narrowly focus on sexuality or freedom of expression on sexuality, like:

1. The first time you flirted with someone online.
2. The first time you sought information online about someone you are interested in.
3. The first time you sought information on sex and/or sexuality online.
4. The first time you had virtual/video cam sex.
5. The first time you watched porn online.
6. The first time you posted/shared digitally a partial/fully nude picture of you.
7. The first time someone you like sent you a nude picture of herself/himself.
8. The first time you met someone who shared your sexual preferences/sexuality.
9. The first time you joined an online community who didn’t judge your sexuality.
10. The first time you could talk to someone about your sexuality.

The facilitator asks if, at the time, they ever felt that someone else could know what they were doing, that someone else could actually stop them from doing what they did.

Some participants will say “NO”, if not all of them.

Some participants may say “YES” but referring to parents, guardians, teachers, etc. The facilitator then asks, “What about now? Are you still doing the same activities? Do you think people are able

to know what you are doing online?”

Some participants will say “YES”.

If the participants are not still doing the same activities, the facilitator should find out the reasons why. Some may have just grown out of the activity, but some may talk about how unsafe they felt, or that they didn’t feel secure about their privacy and so on.

The facilitator now asks HOW these “others” will know what they are doing online. Who are these people? How come they are able to do so? What control do they have? What power?

At the end of the sharing by participants, share the history of the internet with the “Whose Internet Is It Timeline” by stages (if possible, draw out the timeline) and explain what happened at key stages, the point of entry for each stakeholder, and the changes they made to internet governance (e.g. ARPANET). Where possible, facilitators should include key events regionally and/or nationally, i.e. Myanmar Internet Forum or African Development Forum.

Facilitator’s preparation notes

The facilitator must be able to draw out participants’ “first-time” excitement with the internet. Some participants may feel shy about talking about very private activities, especially since it may have to do with their sexuality.

It helps to set some rules before the activity: that people only share what they are comfortable sharing, that there is no judgement as to what they share (e.g. the first time they stalked/doxxed someone).

Allowing for anonymity and ensuring all participants use the same colour paper/sticky notes will help (see instructions/mechanics).

The facilitator should collect the sticky notes/papers so that participants do not give themselves away if they share something very private or something that makes them vulnerable to judgement.

Another way to encourage participants to open up is for the facilitator to share her/his first-time excitement with the internet. Something funny, honest and related to sexuality will help break the ice.

The facilitator should also be aware of any unequal power dynamics among participants because of:

1. Gender – mixed composition of male and female participants
2. Experience with internet governance – more experienced activists with less experienced ones.

The facilitator must be familiar with the "Whose Internet Is It Timeline" and the key events as well as the background information.

Additional resources

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Whose internet is it anyway? Shaping the internet – feminist voices in governance decision making
https://www.giswatch.org/institutional-overview/womens-rights-gender/whose-internet-it-anyway-shaping-internet-feminist-voice

Internet governance: Who sets the rules?
https://www.genderit.org/feminist-talk/internet-governance-who-sets-rules

Various books, papers and policy briefs related to internet governance and internet governance institutions
https://afrisig.org/recommended-materials/various-books-papers-and-policy-briefs-related-to-ig-and-ig-institutions/

Deepening activities

Activities that are meant to expand and dig into the topics and themes.

Deepening activities

Who is allowed to say what?

Designed to bring to the surface how certain voices are privileged while others are censored despite them speaking about the same content.

About this learning activity

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This learning activity is one of two suggested deepening activities on “Sexuality and internet governance”. This activity has two parts. It is designed to bring to the surface how certain voices are privileged while others are censored despite them speaking about the same content. It is also meant to raise awareness that the internet is not merely a tool, but a political and public space for occupation and advocacy.

Learning objectives

1. To deconstruct governance over sexuality-related online content (information and expression).
2. To impart understanding on the intersectionality between internet rights and sexuality rights.

Who is this activity for?

Participants of all levels of experience.

Time required

1.5 hours

Resources needed

- The content as stipulated in the facilitator’s preparation notes is to be placed on standard sized cards (5 cm x 10 cm or 7.5 cm x 12.5 cm).
- Stickers (4 colours, e.g. red, green, orange, yellow) to mark content (round, square or rectangular, but small enough to fit in the top right-hand corner of the content).
- (NOTE: If stickers are not available, you may allow people to mark the content in the top right-hand corner, BUT it will mean that the content is not reusable for other trainings).
- Marker pens
- Blank cards for identification of content by participants.

Mechanics

Part 1

Role play groups

Advertisers, Community, Government, Platform owners

- The majority of participants will act as the Community
- 3 persons or fewer will act as Government (depending on the number of participants)
- 2 persons or fewer will act as Platform owners
- 5 persons or fewer will act as Advertisers

Stickers

(round, square or rectangular, but small enough to fit in the corner of content)

- Green stickers mean approved by government.
- Red stickers mean censored or banned content and the government wants it out of circulation.
- Orange stickers mean approved by platforms.
- Yellow stickers mean banned by platforms.

The stickers are to be placed beginning at the top right-hand corner of the content. That way the top sticker and subsequent stickers are known, to be able to track who approved, who banned, and in which order.

Set the rules for each group

Community begins with all content cards

Community may write their own content cards. [Facilitator should give them some time to do so OR could allow the community to do so while the game is ongoing.]

Community to share freely with all but decide when to be conservative or liberal. Community can decide when they want to flag the content or complain to government or platforms.

Community can only complain and repeatedly complain about a specific piece of content, but not pester platform owners.

Community can complain and repeatedly complain about a specific piece of content to government. They can try to lobby to persuade the government to ban or to not ban.

Community cannot have full-on conversations with government or platform owners.

People who act as government are known

When it approves certain content, Government puts green stickers in the top right-hand corner of the content (all advertisements to be approved).

When it bans certain content, Government puts red stickers in the top right-hand corner of content.

Platform owners are known

Platform owners use yellow stickers if they approve content.

When Platform owners receive content with red or green stickers, they can decide if the content still remains with a red or green sticker or they can approve or ban, using an orange sticker to ban content and a yellow sticker to approve.

Advertisers will send out their advertisements and share all around

Advertisements NEVER get stopped/censored/banned.

Discussion

Facilitator should stop role-playing game after 20 minutes, collect the content, and share how the content was censored or banned and by whom, and which content had no censorship/banning.

Ask those who played conservatively which content they flagged and to whom, and then see if their “complaint” remained respected and upheld by the stakeholder concerned. Discuss if there were any changes. Discuss which content directly relates to sexuality rights (bodily autonomy, sexual expression, privacy, consent, safety, fantasy, sexual desire, sexual pleasure, sexual preferences, etc.). It may be all, it may not be all.

It is important to ensure that participants understand sexuality as not merely sexual violence or harm, and not merely sexual orientation and gender identity, but the many elements of sexuality.

Discuss similarities of content that is banned and not banned. This is to show that similar content is allowed over the internet by certain stakeholders, dependent on issues of revenue, power dynamics, etc.

Discuss how their observations relate to human rights and internet rights, emphasising the intersectionality between these two rights with sexuality rights. The facilitator may also want to hand out or draw the EROTICS Valentine diagram (Love in the Time of the Internet), which also

shows the intersectionality between sexuality rights and internet rights.

“So we see these things happen in real life”: To close the discussion, ask participants about their understanding of internet governance, what have they heard, what they know about it, what they think they know. Put what participants say on a sheet of flip chart paper to revisit after Part 2.

Participants should identify from their own context what is banned and what is allowed and by whom (PART 2).

Part 2

Divide participants into groups of 4 (maximum) each and get them to think about when nudity is allowed online. They are to draw from their own experiences and observations. Mini case studies would be best. They have to be as specific as possible, and provide background information if they can (including context), to think about who created the content, or who the content originated from; how the content on nudity/sex/sexualisation is obtained/accessed; how nudity/sex/sexualisation is presented; who gets to see it (e.g. women, children, men, etc., the more specific the better); who gets to share it or forward it; and who gets to complain about it.

Each group to share their reflections

Were there new insights? A-HA moments.

Were there any new realisations about power dynamics and relationships between stakeholders?

There are also assumptions that conservatives manage to get sexually explicit content banned/censored, what about liberals?

Were there times when complaints were successful, and what facilitated that? (Ask for context and background information).

To **close the discussion**, review what the participants said about internet governance. Clarify any points that were unclear, and provide information where necessary.

Get the participants to talk about the challenges of balancing the protectionist approach and the empowerment approach.

Is there a need for the protectionist approach? Yes, for children? Yes, against the exploitation of children and women?

Facilitator’s preparation notes

Part 1

Content preparation: The facilitator needs to prepare examples of sexuality-related online content – for instance, “sexy” advertisements like the Gucci ads included here, a website on LGBT issues, a website on women’s sexual and reproductive rights, a website of an abortion rights group, body positivity photos, child pornography, gay pornography, a nudist camp, a photo of a woman in a swimsuit doing yoga, articles on how to masturbate for women, information on transgender bodies, men’s articles on Viagra, erections and penis enlargement, a Facebook page for LGBT people, a news report on violence against women with a photo depicting the violent scene, a rape video that looks like porn, etc.

> **NOTE:** 50 pieces of content should be prepared. The content does not all need to be images. Some can just be descriptions, or the (sensationalist) headlines of an article. Encourage participants to also create their own examples with their understanding of sexuality rights content.

All content should be placed on standard-sized cards, as described above. The important thing is to ensure that any images can be clearly seen.

Examples from Gucci advertisements

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deepening_a1-3.jpg Image not found or type unknown

> **NOTE:** The advertisement with the pubic hair did receive backlash. But it could be important to explore who had the moral high ground to reject the advertisement.

Other advertisements

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deepening_a1-6.jpg Image not found or type unknown

> **STICKERS:** The reason why there's a need for four colours is to help track who said what.

Part 2

Prepare mini case studies just in case participants do not have their own experiences to draw from, or in case their experiences are not rich enough for deeper discussions. Case studies need not all be about negative impacts of internet governance over sexuality rights. Try to identify positive case studies, too.

To prepare on intersectionality of sexuality rights and internet rights, have a look at APC's training curriculum on "Internet Rights are Human Rights": https://www.apc.org/en/pubs/internet-rights-are-human-rights-training-curriculum.

Surveillance issues may come up from the case studies/experiences.

Observe if any of the case studies suggest a change in social norms. These may come from more positive case studies.

Become familiar with the research and cases which can be found at https://genderit.org/taxonomy/term/294 as well as APC's EROTICS research: https://erotics.apc.org/news/sexuality-and-the-internet/

Additional resources

blue-yellowplants.png
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Gender, Sex and Internet

http://irtx-jakarta.events.apc.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/9/2015/05/GSI_Jakarta2015.pdf

Freedom of Expression: Where do we set the lines?

http://gigx.events.apc.org/2015/06/22/freedom-of-expression-where-do-we-set-the-lines

Media brief: Censorship, sexuality and the internet

https://www.apc.org/en/node/10262

Mapping sexual rights activists and groups in internet governance

Developed for APC by Serene Lim and Angela M. Kuga Thas of KRYSS Network

About this learning activity

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This learning activity is one of two suggested deepening activities on “Sexuality and internet governance”. This is the second of the two deepening activities, and should ideally follow the first. This activity is designed to get participants to examine more closely the link between social capital and internet governance, and to critically assess to what extent “support” has actually advanced sexuality rights in internet governance and through what kind of framing.

Learning objectives

1. To demonstrate the link between social capital and internet governance (by looking more closely at the multistakeholder approach, the power/influence that each stakeholder has, and the men in internet governance who claim they are feminists).
2. To impart understanding on the intersectionality between internet rights and sexuality rights.

Who is this activity for?

Participants of all levels of experience.

Time required

1.5 hours

Resources needed

- Flip chart paper
- Marker pens

Mechanics

Individual reflection or group reflection if they come from the same organisation.

Get participants to locate themselves as sexuality rights activists and groups in internet governance, based on the following questions:

- Where are they in internet governance spaces, globally, regionally and nationally?
- Who facilitated them entering and engaging in these spaces?
- Who are they able to speak with to influence and bring about the change they seek?
- Why do they think that engaging in internet governance is important?
- How long did it take for them to realise that internet governance is critical to advance sexuality rights? What convinced them?
- How much can they talk about sexuality rights in internet governance spaces or to what extent is the subject prioritised vis-à-vis other internet governance issues?
- What issues do they raise in internet governance spaces that relate to sexuality rights?

Get participants to identify online movements related to sexuality rights.

Then, based on these movements, divide them based on an issue they are most familiar with or by country to work in groups of 4 (maximum) to think about why the issue of sexuality rights has not advanced in internet governance, looking specifically at what kind of social capital they have access to in relation to movements, mobilisation or initiatives that they have been involved in online or taken online, and allies.

Examples:

- #MeToo
- #TakeBackTheTech
- #WomensMarch
- #LoveWins
- Dehijabbing/hijab
- Women’s bodily autonomy
- Sexual respect
- Consent
- Privacy.

Discussion and sharing

Reflections

- What changes/advances were made?
- What are the ongoing obstacles/challenges?
- Who is in this internet governance space as civil society but not taking up or reluctant to take up sexuality rights (specific identification)?
- Are there men in internet governance who support these movements/initiatives?
- Why is having men as allies not enough?
- Are all initiatives around sexual abuse and harassment? Why the heavier focus on fear and harm?
- How do we talk about the positive aspects of sexuality?

Facilitator’s preparation notes

The idea is to get participants to recognise their social capital but also to recognise the limitations of their social capital, and to further think about which framing works better with allies and supporters of sexuality rights who are not necessarily fully invested in promoting the issue of sexuality and sexuality rights in internet governance. It would help if the facilitator is familiar with some case studies that relate to participants (if the profiles of participants are known beforehand, i.e. which countries they come from, etc.).

Additional resources

Freedom of expression, the role of intermediaries, and misogynist hate speech: Security in exchange for rights?
http://gigx.events.apc.org/2015/07/21/freedom-of-expression-the-role-of-intermediaries-and-misogynist-hate-speech-security-in-exchange-for-rights/

Turning from Tumblr: Where is sex positivity on the internet going?
https://genderit.org/feminist-talk/turning-tumblr-where-sex-positivity-internet-going

Gender and internet governance
https://afrisig.org/recommended-materials/gender-and-internet-governance/

Possible related deepening activity: Social movements: What’s in a tool? What’s in a space?
https://ftxreboot.wiki.apc.org/index.php/Social_movements:_What%E2%80%99s_in_a_tool%3F_What%E2%80%99s_in_a_space%3F

Tactical activities

Activities that are meant to respond to multiple learning objectives in practical ways. These include hands-on exercises and practical strategising activities.

Tactical activities

Recognising your power

Developed for APC by Serene Lim and Angela M. Kuga Thas of KRYSS Network

About this learning activity

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This learning activity is the suggested tactical activity for “Sexuality and internet governance”. This activity is designed to encourage participants to revisit existing strategies and to think of new strategies to advance sexuality rights in internet governance.

Learning objectives

1. To identify where participants’ power lies in relation to their activities over the internet in order to be better able to strategise and advocate for sexuality rights in internet governance.

Who is this activity for?

Participants of all levels of experience.

Time required

1.5 hours

Resources needed

- Flip chart paper
- Marker pens

Mechanics

Get participants to work in groups to think about why they remain engaged online and the difficulty of negotiating online spaces.

What is the added value of remaining online? Ask them to be specific (which spaces, why, what purposes, etc.) and to think along the terms of networking or connections, information/news, quality of interaction and building on relationships, ability to create content and distribute content, herstory/memory, having access to new contacts/networks, etc.

With the knowledge of what keeps us online and what empowers/disempowers us, get the participants to think of strategies – either improving existing strategies or thinking of new ones – to advance sexuality rights in internet governance

To encourage participants that sexuality rights can be taken up in internet governance spaces, share the following information:

- APC’s Take Back the Tech! campaign was able to build upon the visibility of sexuality rights to broaden the reach of work on digital safety and security for women and girls, gaining mainstream coverage from CNN, the Washington Post, Time magazine and Reuters, among others.
- The EROTICS research was able to provide a deeper spectrum to the analysis and strategising around the campaign for changing the reporting policies of Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube by bringing LGBT experiences into the discourse of online violence, thus making inter-movement linkages and connections.

Facilitator’s preparation notes

To try to help participants think outside the box, suggest the following:

1. Feminist digital labour (or work) in mobilising, calling out, content creating and criticising sexism, misogyny and patriarchy remains predominantly unwaged and emotionally draining and is often received with violence. How can we ensure the sustainability of the movement?
2. How can we rethink empowerment and responsibility when we operate on the very technologies (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, Google Docs, Gmail) that functionally surveil us and are used to obstruct our rights?
3. What does free and autonomous consent look like on the internet? What aspects of our privacy and personal data are we surrendering in exchange for access to resources – and how are they gendered and sexualised? An example of this would be how many women are sharing/commercialising their private life, i.e. their relationship with family, in exchange for viewership and advertising income. Or how a woman remains on Facebook for professional networking purposes, but in exchange, Facebook has access to the woman’s personal data, and because Facebook knows she is a woman, they push certain advertisements to her.
4. What if there is no privacy and privacy is illegal? [This question is just meant to play devil’s advocate and to provoke deeper thinking, especially in relation to the double standards that we so often witness.] Could that help advance sexuality rights in internet governance? Would it help us have a different perception of nudity and sexualised content? If there is no privacy, will it be easier to know if someone is being sexually coerced and exploited? Will it mean the non-existence of anonymity, and how will this help or worsen advocacy?
5. Is there a bystander syndrome over the internet that we need to eradicate or reduce in terms of its impact? Why are online harassment, surveillance and policing of sexuality tolerated by online communities? How do we encourage more active/wider engagement online and how will that relate to internet governance?
6. What does people power look like over the internet? Was the closest example the uprising in Egypt (2011)? How would such people power affect internet governance?

Encourage participants to think from the desired outcomes and what's needed to get there. Attempt different approaches so that participants are better able to think differently about strategies.

Become familiar with the following APC initiatives

Feminist Principles of the Internet
https://en.ftx.apc.org/books/ftx-safety-reboot-english/chapter/feminist-principles-of-the-internet

Take Back the Tech! campaign
https://www.takebackthetech.net/

EROTICS research
https://erotics.apc.org/

Sexual Rights and the Internet Training Kit
http://gigx.events.apc.org/2015/06/23/sexual-rights-the-internet-training-kit/.

Additional resources

Possible related starter activity: Introductions of internet love
https://en.ftx.apc.org/books/ftx-safety-reboot-english/page/introductions-of-internet-love-starter-activity

Possible related starter activity: Develop your internet dream place
https://en.ftx.apc.org/books/ftx-safety-reboot-english/page/develop-your-internet-dream-place-starter-activity

Tactical activities

Role playing game on gender and internet governance

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The idea of the role playing game is to think and learn together about intersectionality and internet governance in an embodied way rather than have speeches or debates which can be more analytical and not relatable.

> **Aim:** To get participants to think about different lived realities, identities, and intersectionality in relation to internet governance and policy spaces through temporary embodiment of different identities.

Prep

Based on the space, create a set of ‘person’ cards. The cards will have an one line description of the person. For example, “**You are** a lesbian woman from Dhaka, Bangladesh, who uses a wheelchair,” or “**You are** a non-binary person from Beirut, Lebanon, who works on LGBTQ rights and digital security.”

Step 1

Participants will be divided into groups with equal number of members in each group.

Step 2

Each member will get a ‘person’ card. This will prompt them to think about what internet governance means to them and what they want to bring to the space. It will also prompt them to think about the physical space itself, and the challenges which may arise here.

Step 3

One member in each group will be chosen as the ‘moderator’.

Step 4

Each group is assigned one session from the agenda.

- Moderator will outline the session and what they will be covering the session through various hypothetical speakers.
- Others in the group will answer the following question:
    - What are some interventions which you would make in this session? Please bring in perspectives based on your ‘person’ card.

After the initial round of discussion, the group will collectively answer the following:

- What would have been missing in the session without the interventions from the group members?
- How does this affect the larger dialogue on internet governance?

Step 5

Each group will share their discussions and answers in brief with the room.

Optional

The person running the game can also intervene with ‘crisis’ moments which can bring in current affairs and situations from real life to each group which can escalate the discussion.

To remember

Self care and collective care is essential to this game. The person running the game needs to be careful and watch out for trigger points. Outlining care principles and requesting people to provide trigger warnings if needed can be one way to address possible trauma in the room. Ensure that there is space for people to exit the room immediately if needed. In case someone is affected badly at any point, make provisions to pause the game and ensure their well being first.

Note: This game is a work in progress, and is yet to be tested out. Please let me know about any suggestions and/or points of concern which you may have regarding this. It can be modified accordingly to

Small stories

Small stories on 3 topics with reflection questions for discussion: Feminist server; Reclaiming expression and porn, sexuality and the internet.

Small stories

Feminist server

Developed for APC by Serene Lim and Angela M. Kuga Thas of KRYSS Network

The current internet is not a safe space for everyone. Stories of feminists and LGBTIQPA persons targeted with online violence and discrimination are common. We also hear of how their work and expressions are controlled, forgotten, censored and deleted on corporate platforms – these are rampant and everyday occurrences. Sometimes these acts, which are considerably hostile, are done by the government, private actors or corporations or by any of them jointly. However, feminists and LGBTIQPA persons do push back. Some of the responses include self-organised campaigns to provide counter and alternative narratives, informed by feminist research and documentation, advocacy for law reforms and in mainstreaming human rights into corporate policies. These push-back actions online as well as offline are pivotal to our everyday resistance. There is a need to be proactive and to remain persistent in realising the feminist internet that we want.

An informal group of feminists have been imagining a more autonomous infrastructure that puts human well-being at the core of technology and governance, to ensure that the data, work and memory of feminists are better accessible, preserved, managed and controlled in ways that allow for the promotion of human rights and the exercise of online freedoms of opinion and expression, and of assembly and of association, of rights to information and privacy, and of how the concept of consent is clearly defined (that it is not assumed or permanent). It is important to have access to and control of the server hosting your content; where it is located; what laws and terms are in place that affect the services provided and to which the server is subjected; the digital security protection in place; and so on[1].

A server can be defined as a computer connected to a network that provides services such as hosting files, websites and online services. Because all online resources are hosted on servers, they constitute a base for the internet as we know it. All servers are ruled by different terms of service, governance models and national legislation in relation to privacy and access to data by third actor

parties (or “trackers”) and are dependent on a variety of business models. This somewhat technical definition can obscure the possibilities for understanding the political aspect behind the setting up and management of a server[2].

The feminist server is a response to “the unethical practices of multinational ICT companies acting as moral and hypocrite censors; gender-based online violence in the form of trolling and hateful machoists harassing feminist or women activists online and offline; the centralization of the internet and its transformation into a consumption sanctuary and a space of surveillance, control and tracking of dissent voices by government agencies among others.”[3][4]

What would be the purposes and principles of a feminist server? This was discussed by a group of people interested in gender during the first Feminist Server Summit in December 2013 and at the first TransHackFeminist (THF!) Convergence held in August 2014. As a result of the convergence, two feminist servers were rebooted:

1. The Systerserver project which was originally launched by Genderchangers and the Eclectic Tech Carnival and which focuses on hosting online services.
2. Anarchaserver which was launched by Calafou inhabitants and people involved in the organisation of the THF! and which focuses on hosting living/dead/transitional data.

These feminist servers are composed of a loose coalition of women, queer and trans* people from around the world, with some explicitly interested in hacking heteronormativity and patriarchy[5]. They are also about demonstrating that it is possible to create safe(r) spaces where the harassment of women, feminists and LGBTIQPA persons is not allowed and where all can learn about technology in a non-hierarchical and non-meritocratic way[6].

However, even if these server initiatives are inspiring to many, they still remain at the embryonic stage. Moreover, they do not consider themselves service providers; neither have they clearly decided to become stable and sustainable tech collectives providing hosting and online services to women, feminists and LGBTIQPA groups. In any case, they show that feminist servers are possible and that they should become a political aim for any organisations working in the field of gender social justice and LGBTIQPA persons’ rights. The concern should be about achieving autonomy in communication and technological infrastructures, in addition to securing their privacy, data, social networks and historical memories on the web[7].

Reflection questions

1. What is the purpose of a feminist server?
2. What makes a server autonomous and feminist?
3. How is a feminist server relevant to myself and my community?
4. How can we make sure the model is sustainable and there is proper transference of knowledge?

Annex 1

A FEMINIST SERVER MANIFESTO 0.01

A collective, embryonic manifesto for a feminist server initiated by participants in the Feminist Server Summit (2013)

Source: https://areyoubeingseArved.constantvzw.org/Summit_afterlife.xhtml

A feminist server…

- Is a situated technology. She has a sense of context and considers herself to be part of an ecology of practices.
- Is run for and by a community that cares enough for her in order to make her exist.
- Has an awareness of the materiality of software, hardware and the bodies gathered around it.
- Treats network technology as part of a social reality.
- Is able to scale up or down, and change processing speed whenever resources require.
- At the risk of exposing her own insecurity, opens up processes, tools, sources, habits, patterns.
- Does not strive for seamlessness. Talk of transparency too often signals that something needs to be made invisible.
- Radically questions the conditions for serving and service; experiments with changing client-server relations where she can.

- Avoids efficiency, ease-of-use and reliability because they can be traps.
- Knows that networking is actually a parasitic, promiscuous and often awkward practice.
- Is autonomous in the sense that she tries to decide for her own dependencies.
- Takes control because she wants networks to be mutable and read-write accessible.
- Faces her freedom with determination. Vulnerability is not an alibi.
- Is a paranodal (we did not mean: paranoid) technology. A feminist server is both inside and outside the network.
- Does not confuse a sense of false security with providing a safe place.
- Tries hard not to apologise when she is sometimes not available.

References

Sophie Toupin and Alex Hache, “Feminist autonomous infrastructures”, in Global Information Society Watch 2015: Sexual rights and the internet, APC and Hivos, 2015. https://www.giswatch.org/en/internet-rights/feminist-autonomous-infrastructures

Anarchaserver. https://anarchaserver.org/

Notes taken during the Feminist Server Summit in December 2013. https://pad.constantvzw.org/p/feministserver

Nadège, “Feminist autonomous infrastructure in the internet battlefield: From zombies to ninjas”, GenderIT.org, 22 February 2017. https://www.genderit.org/articles/feminist-autonomous-infrastructure-internet-battlefield-zombies-ninjas

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1 Anarchaserver. https://anarchaserver.org

2 Sophie Toupin and Alex Hache, “Feminist autonomous infrastructures”, in Global Information Society Watch 2015: Sexual rights and the internet, APC and Hivos, 2015. https://www.giswatch.org/en/internet-rights/feminist-autonomous-infrastructures

3 History of Anarchaserver and Feminist Server: https://anarchaserver.org/

4 See Annex 1: A Feminist Server Manifesto 0.01.

5 To disrupt the belief that heterosexuality, the alignment of biological male and female, is the norm; and a social system where males hold primary and decision-making powers.

6 Extracted from Sophie Toupin and Alex Hache (Op. cit.). Meritocracies tend to promote those who not only have the skills/experience, but are also outspoken enough to let everyone know about it. This pushiness/ego/self-aggrandisement is something that women are generally discouraged from doing. Meritocracy therefore is a gendered concept.

7 Extracted from Sophie Toupin and Alex Hache (Ibid.).

Reclaiming expression

Developed for APC by Serene Lim and Angela M. Kuga Thas of KRYSS Network

Social media companies generate huge profits from our expression and interaction, including those of feminists and LGBTIQ individuals or organisations. Feminists and LGBTIQ persons, in varying degrees of contribution and effort, intervene in sexist, misogynist and heteronormative discourse online by engaging in Twitter conversations, producing counter-narratives on YouTube, sharing an article on abortion rights, etc. To some extent, these efforts have resulted in robust online conversations and networks of like-minded people. However, the authors and advocates of these contents are also often devalued and face harassment, trolls and threats on social media platforms and other digital communications channel.

These incidents of online harassment share the same logic of offline gender-based violence (GBV) like cat calling, sexual harassment, etc. They are seen by the male perpetrators as a form of punishment, as a consequence of transgression and behaving outside of socially determined binary gender roles, of going against the social expectations and accepted norms of some men. The violence inflicted is never merely physical but motivated by a power structure that seeks to control and silence women and LGBTIQ persons, and to keep these voices outside the social media (perceived) public sphere.

However, instances of gendered harassment and violence online have also prompted more women, queers and allies, in all their diversity, to speak up, to exchange stories, to show support and solidarity, and to resist the trivialisation and normalisation of online GBV. The following are initiatives and efforts in our collective resistance and in reclaiming our expression online:

Building solidarity

Sharing stories is a form of feminist activism because it creates a network of experiences between women and acts as a storytelling process that others can learn from if they so choose.

Consciousness raising, thus, provides an alternative to the dominant public sphere.

Digital technology has enabled the continuation of such consciousness-raising spaces into online spaces. Most of the respondents [of in-depth, semi-structured interviews conducted with 13 respondents from India] explain that sharing narratives of personal experience is an important feminist practice in online spaces, especially on social media. Archana talks about how the inbox of their page “Being Feminist” often receives messages from users around the world who request the administrators to share their stories on the page. She explains that such narratives also prompt important discussions on gendered violence and acts of resistance.

Meera talks about how online spaces, especially blogs or Twitter, afford people the option of anonymity. This allows them to talk about issues that might be considered sensitive, or even dangerous, in face-to-face conversation and facilitates the sharing of personal narratives without censure or judgment. The ability to control information about one’s self, by revealing certain aspects while withholding others, also allows for radical acts of identity construction.

> Extracted from: Sujatha Subramanian, “From the Streets to the Web: Looking at Feminist Activism on Social Media”, *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. L, No. 17, 2015. https://www.genderit.org/sites/default/files/from_the_streets_to_the_web_1.pdf

Rejecting victimhood

In 2018, the Dalit-Bahujan women in Kerala, India led a speak-out movement, mainly through Facebook, to narrativise the experiences of sexual harassment that these women face.

The campaign began as one involving revelations on Facebook about sexual harassment incidents that happened in progressive circles and activist spaces. Dalit-Bahujan women came out to speak using various methods such as detailed Facebook statuses, live video and so on, and they shared detailed narrations and evidence about the instances of molestation along with the identity of the predators. Mainstream media further covered this movement and this received a lot of attention amongst the politically sensitive public. This moment of revelation on social media was termed as a second #MeToo campaign; however, it was different from that. The Indian academic #MeToo campaign revealed the names of predators and subsequently the details of the incident in public, while not revealing the identity of the survivors.

One of the important aspects of this campaign is that these women assert themselves as survivors because victimisation is a normalised thing under due process. Generally, in India, women suffering from sexual harassment face long-term trauma since justice is normally delayed, or never provided in the case of Dalit-Bahujan women. These women expressed that the brief and momentary support they received from social media was quite relevant, and also functioned as a relief to overcome the stressful time that followed the act of revelation. It can be read as a form of social justice provided by a sensitive public through Facebook, though it is relative.

> Extracted from: Praveena Thaali, "Rejecting victimhood: The online speak-out campaign in Kerala against harassment", *GenderIT.org*, 9 October 2018. https://www.genderit.org/feminist-talk/rejecting-victimhood-online-speak-out-campaign-kerala-against-harassment

Take Back The Tech!

Take Back the Tech! is a collaborative campaign to reclaim information and communication technologies (ICTs) to end violence against women (VAW). The campaign calls on all ICT users – especially women and girls – to take control of technology and strategically use any ICT platform at hand (mobile phones, instant messengers, blogs, websites, digital cameras, email, podcasts and more) for activism against gender-based violence.

Take Back the Tech! accompanies the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence (25 November-10 December each year) with daily actions that explore different aspects of violence against women and ICT tools.

"Map it. End it. Demand change." was the core of the Take Back the Tech! campaign for 2011. Take Back the Tech! used Ushahidi to map forms of violence against women, to name, point out, show as related, and denounce – and in that way changed the mapped territory into one that respects the rights of women and children. To map violence the platform receives information sent online, through cellular phone text messages or videos from smartphones.

> Extracted from: Margarita Salas, "Women's freedom of expression in the internet", *Critically Absent: Women's rights in internet governance*, APC, 2015.

https://www.genderit.org/node/3548

Alerta Machitroll

The Alerta Machitroll project is a campaign led by a Colombian-based organisation, Fundación Karisma, to identify sexist expression by self-proclaimed macho defenders identifiable as trolls, labelled as machitrolls (macho+troll). The campaign has classified trolling into different categories: Incurable Machitroll (Machitroll Incurable), Recoverable Machitroll (Machitroll Rescatable) or Machitroll Alert (Alerta Machitroll). This initiative seeks to tackle gender-based online by articulating the idea of macho and trolling with humour as a way of communicating and promoting awareness.

Source: IFEX, “Campaign snapshot of Alerta Machitroll: Using humour to tackle gender violence online”, 9 November 2018. https://ifex.org/campaign-snapshot-of-alerta-machitroll-using-humour-to-tackle-gender-violence-online/

Reflection questions

1. Based on your observation, what values do feminist and LGBTIQ people bring to the discourse on online (public) spaces?
2. Do you think current responses by government, private corporations and policy makers on online gender-based violence (GBV) arbitrarily shut down freedom of opinion and expression? Why do you say so?
3. What strategies and approaches have worked for you during an incident of online GBV? Why do they work (or not work)? What more is needed to ensure that everyone has equal access to the right to freedom of expression?

Small stories

Porn, sexuality and the internet

Developed for APC by Serene Lim and Angela M. Kuga Thas of KRYSS Network

Porn and “deviant” sexuality are often at the centre of arguments to tighten content regulations online, inevitably implying a perceived harm and threat to social order and the minds of the “vulnerable” – children, young people and women.

The problem is, when it comes to law and policy, women are still stuck in the passenger seat for anything that has to do with sex, sexuality and sexual expression. It imagines the hubby coming home, all pumped up, and asking the missus to go beyond the missionary position. Just like he saw on his iPad mini. (Dirty, dirty.) You see? Man, driver. Woman, passenger.[1]

Porn is always assumed to be not in women’s interest or of interest to women, and some feminists believe porn to be an objectification and commodification of women. Pornhub’s 2018 survey on its viewership showed that 29% of the viewers are female, and the percentage of female viewership has seen a gradual increase over the years.[2]

Long before the internet, the porn industry had already realised the potential of the female consumer. According to Ross (1993), there has been “pornography from a woman’s point of view” since the mid-1980s, but the internet is giving the niche a strength it never previously knew. Not only is the content female friendly, but so is the access to it: from the privacy of one’s home, anonymously and securely – at least comparatively, since before the internet sex and porn were only commercially available in men-dominated public spaces (cinemas, video stores, bars, brothels, [bookshops]).[3]

Anonymity, security and privacy are all issues taken for granted on the internet. Although they are relative, dependent on legislation and [trust for] service providers, for instance, the perception of

their effectiveness has improved the comfort zone for accessing porn. Changes in how porn is produced, with an emphasis on amateur videos and exhibitionism (the success of cam4cam comes to mind), also brought women closer to porn[4]. When porn grows closer to the domestic sphere, the home, then it grows closer to women, since this is traditionally the sphere of life associated with the feminine. Furthermore, access to pornographic narratives can have a positive impact on an individual's life: the EROTICS-Brazil research established porn as an important medium of sexual knowledge transmission and socialisation, and porn can help a person come to terms with sexual desires, in realising or expressing them[5].

Porn that women like

> Extracted from: Bruno Dallacort Zilli, "A Star is Porn? Internet and a kind of porn women like", *Critically Absent: Women's rights in internet governance*, APC, 2012. https://www.genderit.org/node/3548

James Deen is the screen name of porn actor and director Bryan Sevilla. In his mid-20s and with a "guy-next-door" charm, his performances in heterosexual hardcore scenes have become quite popular among women who consume porn. On 25 July 2011, blogger Emily Heist Moss interviewed Deen, discussing the issues of misogyny in porn and the female attention he has been receiving. Later, on 15 November 2011, he was interviewed in depth by Amanda Hess for the Good Magazine website, which inspired another article about him. Internet communicators had already realised there is something unique about Deen and the attention he is receiving from the female audience. A search for his name on Tumblr shows an interesting aspect of this attention – that many women, some of them young teens, like to watch his scenes and state that this is their first enjoyable porn-watching experience.

Online, women declare that they would like to have sex with the actor, among other fantasies, such as wishing to cook for him. They say they get excited not (only) by his appearance, but by his performance. In the movies, Deen can be seen whispering into actresses' ears, holding them tight in amorous embraces while he penetrates them, and enjoys giving oral sex. On the other hand, he also does a lot of BDSM-themed scenes, where he dominates women and performs rough sex. In some scenes, his partners are "older" women, "cougars" in their 30s and 40s. He has also appeared in at least one scene where the actress performs oral sex on his anus ("rimming"), which is very unusual for male actors in heterosexual scenes.

The diversity Deen brings to porn is that he is neither the “disembodied” penis blindly penetrating female orifices, his physique is not an exaggerated mass of muscles, nor is he afraid to go beyond the boundaries of mainstream heterosexuality, though he doesn’t escape them. He presents a more “romantic” persona – even if his scene partners or the scenes themselves are not intentionally romantic. In this regard, it’s interesting that it is not always his physical attributes that are the focus of feminine attention, even though he is young and comely. It is the alternative his scenes represent to the “grammar” of porn, “speaking” a different language which is attractive to the women who like him.

One way of interpreting what these women are saying is that they are enjoying the subversion of the gender language used in most pornographic narratives. They enjoy the novelty of this women-friendly narrative, a form of resistance to the usual gender hierarchy which is simply rehearsed in mainstream porn. Usually, women are the main focus of objectification and sexualisation. While the male body is just a stand-in for the (presumed) male viewer, the female body is the object of desire around which the narrative is built. But as the “Deen phenomenon” shows, there is porn in which men can be objects of sexual desire for women as well. This fruition of sexuality online is a novelty that cannot be ignored.

Reflection questions

1. What can and should be done to enhance safety online, but at the same time, ensure the facilitation of women’s expression and agency over their sexuality, desire and fantasy?
2. How can we change the way policy makers see porn as harmful and dangerous for women?

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1 Extracted from: Bishakha Datta, “Porn. Panic. Ban”, Global Information Society Watch 2015: Sexual rights and the internet, APC and Hivos, 2015. https://www.giswatch.org/en/sexual-rights/porn-panic-ban

2 Pornhub 2018 Year in Review. https://www.pornhub.com/insights/2018-year-in-review

3 Extracted from: Bruno Dallacort Zilli, “A Star is Porn? Internet and a kind of porn women like”, Critically Absent: Women’s rights in internet governance, APC, 2012. https://www.genderit.org/node/3548

4 There are issues, however, of being able to recognise porn and being able to recognise sexual violence. Video posts on gang rapes or rapes are sometimes mistaken for porn and it is important that we have discussions on what are the tell-tale signs of online content that is in fact sexual violence.

5 Extracted from: Bruno Dallacort Zilli, op. cit.

Case studies

Case studies, which can be used to learn, discuss and engage in groups, give deeper insight and experiences into Tips and tricks on how to engage in internet governance spaces; Nine reasons why we need more feminists in internet governance; Role of gender report cards at the internet governance forum and Nepal IGF 2018: Revisiting the experience

Case studies

Tips and tricks on how to engage in internet governance spaces

Over the years, it’s becoming increasingly that we need to work together to bring in gender and sexuality and diversity into the internet governance spaces. This is not different from how we work in other spaces and other rights issues. Here are some tips and tricks learnt through trial and error from the past global, regional, and national IGFs which can help us work better and more systematically together:

Connect with your allies before you meet them

Prior to the meeting itself, ask around and find out who else is going to be present in the space. This will help in planning ahead in terms of collaboration, meetings which can be organised around the IGF, and simply to have fun.

Read the schedule

The schedule with the session briefs will tell you a lot about that particular IGF. How many sessions on gender will be happening there? Are there any sessions looking at sexuality? What about accessibility and disability? Spending some time with the schedule will help in strategising better on the interventions around gender and sexuality.

Strategise together

Have open conversations on who is attending which session so that people can bring in gender and sexuality in sessions where they are sidelined or ignored. People can also team up and attend sessions so that it is not the same person making several interventions which may be seen as taking up too much space. This will also be very useful for those attending the IGF for the first time and are still figuring out how to intervene.

Fill in gender report cards

The very first time when Gender Report Cards were introduced by APC, they were filled in by APC staff, partners and members. This can be done in the regional, national, and local IGFs were Gender Report Cards are not yet formalised. Through this, we can ensure that there is some data available on gender diversity and inclusion from the space. Distribute the Gender Report Card format well in advance through email, text messengers, or even bluetooth.

Use tools

Use technology and tools to your advantage. In the past, groups on Telegram and Signal have been very helpful for immediate coordination at the IGF spaces. For example, in case someone wants additional support in a session, they can message on the group and request for it. Questions which need to be raised can be shared on the group so that it is not just one person who keeps intervening. Several sessions, especially main sessions, also use tools like Slido to take more questions from the audience. Make maximum use of this. For example, in a main session on human rights which did not have any conversation on gender and sexuality, someone used Slido to ask a question on the rights of LGBTQ persons online. When this question was ignored by the speakers, others in the room reposted the question and brought it to the panel’s attention. The anonymity afforded by tools like this is also helpful. The remote participation platform can also be used efficiently.

Debrief and connect at the end of a day

Set aside 30min at the end of each day to debrief and connect with each other on the day and sessions from that day. This will help in addressing any concerns from that day, and also in planning for the next day, including changing strategies. This time can also be used to remind

everyone to send in their Gender Report Cards from the day to the person collating the same.

Ask for help

The IGF spaces can sometimes seem very formal, and it can be intimidating too. Remember that you have friends and allies with you, and you can always reach out for any help or support. And this is not restricted to only those who are physically present there.

Have fun!

Case studies

Nine reasons why we need more feminists in internet governance

By Sachini Perera

As someone who is always excited by the prospect of influencing policy making (yes I'm a policy geek who has accepted this identity), I have for the last few years been trying to encourage other feminists and queers to get involved in internet governance in our countries, regions and globally. It is not always easy to make the case for why internet governance is a feminist issue (only because there are so many interconnected reasons and it can sometimes turn into a confusing ramble), so I decided to make this listicle that will help articulate it better.

1. The struggle

> If the internet is a continuum of the public space, then our collective struggle exists here too.

While meaningful access to the internet continues to be affected by various factors such as gender, income, education, age, geographical location, class, etc., it is evident that the line between online and offline is increasingly blurring. The internet is a space for expression, exploration, play, activism and community building, especially for those who are marginalised, discriminated against

and disenfranchised in society. We also see the same structural inequalities and challenges we fight on-ground manifesting on the internet in various ways and sometimes being amplified. Therefore, it is no longer possible to clearly demarcate where our struggle happens and dismantling capitalist patriarchy must include the internet. And if the internet is part of the commons, then feminist politics of reclaiming and defending the commons must be extended to the internet. One of the ways we can actively ensure this is by engaging with internet governance.

Geek out:

- https://www.awid.org/reclaiming-commons
- http://wealthofthecommons.org/essay/feminism-and-politics-commons
- http://gutsmagazine.ca/feminism-and-the-commons/

2. Early adopters

> Feminists are not new to the internet and the internet is not new to feminists.

Feminists and queers have always been interested in exploring the internet, playing with it, critiquing it, building and challenging theories on it, and remaking it. From Donna Haraway's Cyborg Manifesto to CyberFeminism of the early 1990s that emerged simultaneously but separately from the UK’s Sadie Plant and Australia's VNS Matrix's “Cyberfeminist Manifesto for the 21st Century”, feminists have been engaging with the internet and information and communications technologies (ICTs). The Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995 recognised ICTs as critical for achieving gender equality, as reflected in Section J of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPfA). It is in fact one of the first consensus human rights documents by UN member states to mention ICTs. Feminists and queers have always been on the internet and we must continue to be a leading voice in internet governance.

Geek out:

- https://www.apc.org/en/node/34116/

- https://www.vice.com/en_us/article/4x37gb/we-are-the-future-cunt-cyberfeminism-in-the-90s
- https://study.sagepub.com/sites/default/files/Ch17_Cyberfeminism.pdf

3. More than numbers and protocols

> Internet governance is about many areas of policy, not just domain names and IP addresses.

One of the common misconceptions about engaging with internet governance is that it is just heavily technical discussions full of jargon. This is not entirely untrue. Names, numbers and protocols used to be the main focus of internet governance, with academics and technologists leading the way, and as the internet became commercialised, these became contentious issues that led to the formation of the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN). However, internet governance has since evolved into what UNESCO defines as “the complementary development and application by governments, the private sector, civil society and the technical community, in their respective roles, of shared principles, norms, rules, decision-making procedures, and activities that shape the evolution and use of the Internet,” and it is critical that feminist perspectives, analysis and praxis are brought into this. This is not to say that feminists are not engaging with the numbers and protocols or that we should not. Becoming a member of Internet Society is one great way to strengthen our capacities, as is attending schools of internet governance that happen prior to Internet Governance Forums in our countries.

Geek out:

- https://feministinternet.org/en/principle/governance
- https://www.internetsociety.org/learning/
- https://www.intgovforum.org/multilingual/content/dynamic-coalition-on-schools-of-internet-governance-dc-sig

4. Corporate and state capture

> Internet governance is by all of us, for all of us.

While national-level policy making has an impact on how the internet is used and shaped, it is undeniable that governing the internet cannot be business as usual due to the dynamic nature of the internet. Extraterritoriality and transnational cooperation are essential, as is the participation of all those who have a stake in using the internet in free, rights-based, affirmative and pleasurable ways. Essentially, all of us. However, the internet has not been immune to the impact of neoliberal economic policies and the corporate capture of states, public institutions and decision makers, with private companies and states taking up more space in internet governance. And “governance” gives immediate connotations of states, governments, laws, hierarchies, etc. which give the indication that there is no place for people in these processes. The Internet Governance Forum (IGF), which is the key policy dialogue forum on internet governance, actively challenges such hegemony through the core principles of the IGF: open and transparent, inclusive, bottom-up, non-commercial and multistakeholder. While the effectiveness of these principles in practice can be varied, the bottom line is that internet governance spaces and processes are open to all.

Geek out:

- https://www.genderit.org/articles/who-governs-internet
- https://www.internetsociety.org/blog/2011/09/global-principles-in-internet-governance/
- https://www.genderit.org/feminist-talk/%E2%80%98governing%E2%80%99-my-internet

5. Solidarity

> Feminists are already engaging with internet governance but we need more of us.

Burnout is real, including in activism. And work in policy spaces can often feel very lonely and disengaged from ground realities. This can be especially true for feminists who are already active in internet governance spaces. Often it feels like the same group of people with the occasional new face once in a while, and this is why we need more feminists, especially from the global South and

developing countries, to engage with internet governance. Policy advocacy is not everyone's cup of tea and many feminists are rightfully sceptical about the value of policy spaces. However, there are a couple of things we can do to show our solidarity: identifying and supporting feminist and queer activists who have an interest in policy to join internet governance processes, following and contributing to IGF discussions remotely, and disrupting the monotony of policy dialogue by introducing exciting topics and methodologies, to name a few. It is also important to note that increasing breakdowns in multilateralism mean we need different avenues to have nuanced and multistakeholder policy dialogue. IGFs, where there is no negotiated policy document or decisions, is such a space that we could consider engaging in.

Geek out:

- https://www.genderit.org/feminist-talk/trials-confused-feminist-internet-governance-school
- https://www.giswatch.org/institutional-overview/womens-rights-gender/whose-internet-it-anyway-shaping-internet-feminist-voice
- https://genderit.org/feminist-talk/what-do-women%E2%80%99s-rights-have-do-sdgs-and-internet

6. Feminists at IGFs

> Let's occupy our national, regional and global IGFs.

From red tape to resources, usually there are many challenges in accessing policy spaces. It can be very frustrating and it often feels like it is unworthy of the labour and effort. The core principles of IGFs have managed to remove some of those obstacles and IGFs are fairly easy to access, especially at national level. For an example, in Sri Lanka all I had to do to participate in and speak at the national IGF in 2017 was to reach out to the organisers (the Internet Society of Sri Lanka) and share my interest. While the experience in other countries might be different, on principle IGFs are meant to be open to anyone with an interest in internet governance, and this is something we can leverage. While regional and global IGFs are not as accessible due to travel costs, there is limited funding support provided for activists. The Asia Pacific Regional IGF (AprIGF), for example, tries to prioritise women in its fellowship programme, though still from very much a gender binary

approach. The global IGF, depending on the host country, will provide limited travel support to attend the forum. It is also important for donors who support feminist initiatives to recognise IGFs as a potential advocacy space for feminists and introduce funding opportunities accordingly. Some other ways to occupy IGFs are to engage with them remotely, apply to join the Multistakeholder Advisory Group (MAG) of the IGF, and provide input to the priorities of the IGFs each year.

Geek out:

- http://www.intgovforum.org/multilingual/index.php?q=filedepot_download/3568/480
- https://www.aprigf.asia/remote-participation.html
- http://www.intgovforum.org/cms/dynamic-coalitions/77-gender-and-ig

7. Feminist feedback loop

> Bridging the gap between internet governance and ICT policy making.

While we see increasingly robust and dynamic discussions in internet governance spaces, especially through a feminist, queer and sexual rights framework, the nuances of these discussions often don't find their way to national policy making on ICTs. One topical example can be found in TikTok. It is currently the fastest growing social media app for short-form mobile videos and is experiencing a surge of popularity worldwide. It is a platform which is primarily focused on pleasure for the sake of pleasure (while of course making profit for the parent company). And policy makers don't know what to do with a platform like that, as shown by the recent ban on it in India, which was reversed almost immediately. This disconnect is also evident in policy responses to technology-related violence, and not just by states but also by the advocacy asks of some rights groups that are focused on demanding new laws rather than approaching the issue holistically and addressing the structural causes. So an important reason why we need more feminists in internet governance is to create a feminist feedback loop between feminist internet discourse and national-level policy advocacy. Such a feedback loop is also important in order to ensure that local and national priorities are reflected in the regional and global IGFs and that the learnings and outcomes from those spaces are brought back to our communities. We can also ensure that internet governance conversations are transmitted to human rights advocacy spaces we are active in and

vice versa, so that there is more cohesion.

Geek out:

- https://www.worldpulse.com/community/users/marietta64/posts/8946

8. Intersectionality

> "My feminism will be intersectional or it will be bullshit." - Flavia Dzodan

The more feminists and queers we have in internet governance, the stronger the intersectional analysis of all things pertaining to internet governance will be. Of course, this also impinges on how well we exercise our feminist accountability practices to ensure that people with varying degrees of privilege are able to access these spaces and not the same group of people. This module on internet governance will be one way of ensuring that more people, especially feminists and queer people, feel better equipped to access, occupy and influence internet governance processes. Another is to localise and/or make our own feminist principles of the internet that make it easier to see the links between our work and priorities, and internet governance issues.

Geek out:

- https://feministinternet.org/en/principles
- http://resurj.org/post/our-feminist-accountability-practice

9. Cross-movement building

> Connecting the dots, breaking the silos.

The final point brings us back to the very first point. If the internet is a continuum of the public space, then our collective struggle is also here. Therefore, it is essential that feminists and queers

who are active in various movements are making links and working strategically and in solidarity. This applies to those engaged in internet governance as well. Almost every feminist priority makes an appearance in internet governance discussions: sexual and reproductive health and rights, LGBTIQ rights, freedom of expression, education, work and labour, corporate accountability, privacy and surveillance, etc. And in return, ICTs and the internet are increasingly coming up in all these priority areas. So there's a strong case to be made for more feminists, regardless of their area of focus, interest or expertise, to engage with internet governance. This is also critical towards more feminist knowledge creation.

Case studies

Role of gender report cards at the internet governance forum

Gender Report Cards (GRCs) are a mechanism introduced in the 2011 IGF by APC as means to determine gender representation among the speakers, moderators, and participants at the Internet Governance Forum. The report cards also help track the inclusion of gender in various dialogues here. The GRCs have four questions on them:

case-studies_gender-report-card.jpg
Image not found or type unknown

With the process being formalised and included at the global IGF, all workshop session organisers now have to fill this in when reporting back on their respective sessions. With years of data from the gender report cards, one can track the role and inclusion of gender at the internet governance spaces. They recognise Article 12 of the WSIS Declaration of Principles which states that:

> “We affirm that development of ICTs provides enormous opportunities for women, who should be an integral part of, and key actors, in the Information Society. We are committed to ensuring that the Information Society enables women’s empowerment and their full participation on the basis on equality in all spheres of society and in all decision-making processes. To this end, we should mainstream a gender equality perspective and use ICTs as a tool to that end.”

Why do we need the gender report cards

- Without specific numbers and data on gender at the policy spaces, it would very difficult

to advocate for explicit inclusion of women and other marginalised genders at the table.

- Knowing which discussions and dialogues have a gender perspectives and where this is absent will help us plan on interventions to actively bring in the gender lens in spaces which are absent.

- This will also help push for bringing speakers who are women and persons of marginalised genders and a gender angle to dialogues and sessions where this is absent, for example in sessions which are heavily technical, sessions on human rights where gender may get left by the side etc.

- More often than not, gender enters the internet governance discourse through online violence. The fourth question in the gender report cards helps in understanding if gender enters the content of the various sessions and dialogue, and also which aspects of gender, internet, and internet governance are given spaces. And what is left behind.

- Is simply using the names of the speakers listed in the online schedule sufficient? A research comparing the information online and that in the report cards says no. This is due to the following reasons:
    - Those who actually speak at the sessions are often different from the speakers listed on the schedule. This could be due to last minute cancellations due to visa, travel issues, or clash of sessions for the speakers etc., but this means that the Gender Report Cards would provide the most recent and accurate data on this.
    - There are no gender pronouns in many of the schedule listings. Each speaker may needed to be searched for online to determine their gender. And this too can be problematic in case of a speaker who may not conform to the norms of binary gender presentation and expression.
    - There is no way to determine if gender was discussed at the session unless the gender report card is filled in after the session takes place.

When it is clear that the usage of Gender Report Cards will truly help in measuring the progress of gender diversity and inclusion at the IGF spaces, there are also several challenges to this which are yet to addressed.

- When workshop session organisers have to fill in the Gender Report Cards as a part of the post session reporting process, several of the organisers skip the questions related to this. In the 2017 Geneva IGF, Gender Report Cards were available only for 40% of the workshops, which is a decline from the 2016 IGF.

The gender reporting section of the report should be mandatory and the same should be stressed for all session organisers.

- Currently, gender reporting is not done for all the DC sessions, and the main sessions. With these being a very important part of the IGF and essential spaces of discussion on larger emerging topics, the lack of data on gender in these sessions is concerning.

Gender reporting should be mandatory for all sessions and not just the workshop sessions. This includes the question pertaining to the inclusion of gender in the session topic and discussions.

- The Gender Report Cards currently focus on gender diversity in terms of bringing in more women to the table. With gender being much more than the binary of man and woman, it is time that we started bringing in the gender spectrum to the internet governance spaces. A concentrated effort should be made to include other genders into the IGF spaces and the sessions.

One way of doing this in an inclusive and non-presumptuous manner would be to give a form to the moderator of the sessions at the beginning of the session which will allow them and the speakers to fill in their names with self-identified gender. The form should make it clear that speakers and moderator can fill in their self-identified gender and need not restrict themselves to the binary of woman and man.

We also need to push for the IGF registration portals and forms on the need to expand the

gender options available in order to accommodate people of diverse gender identities. This will help in accurately determining the gender diversity in the space. An option of “Prefer not to disclose” is also essential.

- Currently, the Gender Report Cards are only mandatory at the global IGF. There is no formalised way of tracking gender diversity at the local, national or regional IGFs.

Gender Report Cards must be mandatory for all IGFs and not just the global IGF. Gender inclusion at the global IGF is only so meaningful if this is not reflected in the local, national or regional IGFs.

Case studies

Nepal IGF 2018: Revisiting the experience

We have seen two national Internet Governance Forums (IGFs) in Nepal, in 2017 and 2018. During Nepal IGF 2018, around 150 people were gathered from different sectors, including people from public offices, lawyers, techies, civil society groups and students, out of which approximately one fourth or less were female and queer people. The event lasted two days, with a couple of plenary sessions and two consecutive parallel sessions, and was held in a hotel in Kathmandu. The forum included a total of 15 sessions out of which three were moderated by women and two were specifically focused on women and queer people. Below is a group conversation facilitated by Shubha Kayastha among six women and queer participants who had participated in Nepal IGF 2018 to collate their experiences and reflections through face-to-face interaction and email conversations. Although the discussion was carried out more than six months after the forum, the conversation below captures the essence of how each of them understood and experienced being in the forum, along with some suggestions and recommendations. Below, you will hear views from Dikchya Raut (bureau chief, Nepali24hours.24), Pushpa Joshi (former staff, LOOM), Rita Baramu (programme manager, Body & Data), Salina Chapagain (law student), Shiwa Karmacharya (former Internet and Sexuality Unit team leader, LOOM) and Shubha Kayastha (co-founder and executive director, Body & Data).

If you have to explain to someone what the IGF is, how would you do it, especially if they are a newcomer to this area of work?

Pushpa: The IGF is a space where different stakeholders related to the internet come together to talk about innovation, tech-based solutions and pursue networking.

Shiwa: It is a multistakeholders' platform which includes people from technical and non-technical groups to share and exchange information about their respective areas of work so as to come up with a new kind of programme or solution to problems related to the internet for the betterment of society, including policy-level discussions.

Salina: The IGF is the forum where all the stakeholders related to the internet come together to discuss issues relating to the internet, maximise internet opportunities, and addresses challenges and risks that arise. It provides an opportunity to the private sector as well to input on policy formation.

How did you find the IGF as a first-time goer in 2018?

Rita: It was a very new issue for me, so it was difficult to grasp everything that was going on. I didn't know such a conference happens in Nepal. To be honest, I found it quite formal.

Shiwa: As someone who has been to the national IGF twice, I feel it is more like a gathering of a selected group of people who are already familiar to one another.

Salina: Simultaneous sessions on various different topics made it difficult to catch up with everything. However, it was a good learning experience. It also gave me an opportunity to get acquainted with people working in diverse areas related to the internet.

Dikchya: The IGF in 2017 was quite fruitful for me as I got familiar with new people in important positions around internet-related businesses, thus it was a good networking opportunity. However, in 2018, when I saw the gathering of the same people with similar approaches and beliefs on their take on internet issues, I was quite disappointed.

What was missing? What would have made it comfortable and safe, as you said it is quite formal?

Pushpa: It would have been nice if the setting and discussion were informal. In addition, the sessions are always repetitive, and intersectionality is missing in the sessions. Like for example: sessions such as “how are sex workers using the internet” bring intersectionality between two movements.

Rita: Now when I reflect, I feel like there was lack of diversity. Everyone looked corporate and formal. Most people were even dressed in black! There were very few women. I didn’t feel like [it was] the space for discussion around human rights advocacy.

Shiwa: I moderated a session on “Using internet for empowerment” where we discussed women’s access to technology, use of the internet for movement building and for accessing information. I was a speaker in another session about the participation of youths in internet governance spaces.

Shubha: I was trying to attend technical sessions because I wanted to learn, however those sessions were quite technical and I could not relate it to my work. There was also limited space to get clarification.

Pushpa: They use a lot of jargon in the sessions, the moderators needs to simplify the terminologies for non-techies.

Dikchya: Since I knew people in in the forum, it was easier for me to get around people, but I imagine how a newcomer in the space might have felt, as seeing people “trying to look important all the time” might be overwhelming the first time. I wish there was an orientation for the newcomers to explain internet governance process, that would have been better. Honestly, it would have been helpful to lessen the pressure of “having to pretend to know important stuff”.

Shubha: I felt distant from most of the crowd there and found it difficult to assimilate because of the limited number of activists at the forum, and we didn’t feel welcomed in that space. Despite understanding the importance of networking, the environment wasn’t favourable or comfortable.

Salina: The participation of women was very low, and this kind of forum should encourage more participation of women. In a country with a patriarchal society like ours, the impacts that the internet has upon women are more severe, thus the voice and opinions of women are to be heard compulsorily, which the organisers seem to have missed out.

What were your roles during the IGF 2018?

Dikchya: In the IGF 2017, I was a moderator in the session on “Grassroots level initiative in Nepal” that witnessed youth in the panel. Since I was member of the multistakeholders group (MSG) and programme committee, I provided inputs during the meetings and managed sponsorship proposals. In the IGF 2018, I was again a moderator in a workshop, “Importance of participating in local, regional and national IGFs”, which brought together youth involved in internet governance forums at the global and national level.

Shiwa: In the Nepal IGF 2017, it was even difficult for our session to get accepted when we wanted to share findings from research on women and ICTs in Nepal by LOOM. We were told that the IGF is not a platform to share research outcomes by a few in the MSG. I think it is because of the reluctance to have issues related to sexuality in such spaces. In the Nepal IGF 2018, I was a youth representative in the programme committee, it was difficult for me to negotiate at many levels. We had proposed a Youth IGF, but most of our voices were ignored despite having a few supporters in the committee. Ultimately the Youth IGF did not happen. I had also proposed fundraising for the Youth IGF, as we were shown lack of funding being a reason, but my proposal was completely ignored. Being part of the programme committee, it sometimes felt we, as youths or as women, were being tokenised and our ideas were not implemented.

Shubha: As a member of the hosting committee, I was supposed to support logistical activities, but I wanted to input more into the programme. So I drafted a code of conduct and got it approved by the hosting committee and programme committee which was shared during the forum. I facilitated an interactive workshop on “How can we make internet governance friendly to women and LGBTIQ individuals?”.

Pushpa: I was mostly a participant in both the national IGFs.

Salina: Since I represented one of the organisers, I was involved in rapporteur work, and later contributed to the initial drafting of the report of Nepal IGF 2018.

What did you like about the IGF?

Salina: The concept of this platform itself is fascinating to me. The ideas and opinions from multiple sectors are brought together in a common forum, thus, we get to understand diverse perspectives.

Shiwa: Compared to 2017, there were more women in Nepal IGF 2018 as participants as well as in organising committees. And the realisation that women's rights groups should be part of internet freedom conversations seemed to have increased.

Rita: More than specific sessions, to have such an event where different aspects of the internet are discussed in one space is something very important. And incorporation of issues of marginalised groups such as women, youth and the disabled, though as tokenism, is something appreciable, though I am sure there has been a lot of background work that must have gone into it.

Shubha: I felt that the sessions by Body & Data made people very curious. As we had the word "queer" mentioned in the title and we started the presentation with terminology related to queerness, people did listen carefully. It felt like intervening in a new space that is not a usual feminist space that we normally go to.

Shiwa: I felt the same last year, I felt rebellious to be in a different space talking about our issues (gender and sexuality).

Pushpa: I liked the session on youth and the IGF in 2017. I also liked how there were many young people.

Dikchya: I like the fact that I am able to interact with especially representatives of the government sector and get updates from their work in progress. I feel that it makes them accountable to the common people and also makes them incorporate in their policies the feedbacks which are inclusive of the perspectives from other sectors as well.

Why do we still need to engage despite all the challenges?

Pushpa: To make the internet friendly to women, queer people, those with disabilities, etc., their voices need to be incorporated. And in platforms like the IGF, such voices could be missed, thus we need to go.

Rita: Yes, yes, we definitely need to engage so that our perspective on various issues around digital rights is not missed out. So even if the space might not feel inclusive and conducive for us, we need to continuously intervene. In addition, as civil society actors, we have our own agenda towards governments as well as the corporations, and the IGF provides an opportunity to advocate our issues with both the sectors.

Dikchya: Giving up is not a solution, rather working on the challenges will make things better for good. We should keep going in order to make the forum inclusive of women, youth and other minority communities. The IGF is a new concept all around the world, and I feel personally responsible to make it familiar to more of us, as I see the relevance and importance of this forum at the present day and time.

Shiwa: The internet is not only used by those who make it. So going to places to tell people who build technology and develop programmes about its impact among different groups is very important.

Shubha: As the IGF is a multistakeholder process, and it is different to UN processes, thus it becomes imperative for different stakeholders to engage and be part of the discourse. We also need to reflect on who within civil society is getting to participate. Civil society groups working with marginalised communities should get space in such platforms to raise the issue that concerns them.

Salina: Being an end-user or representing certain gender group or academic groups, we should actively participate in such forums, and voices from our respective sectors are to be raised.

What could be done to make the space more open and inclusive?

Dikchya: To promote the forum, it should be advertised in newspapers and social media along with articles and news. Ensuring funding to bring people living in under-representative districts will make the programme inclusive, or these forums could be taken to them. A webinar/online course a week ahead of the forum might also be a smart idea. We need to reach more allies.

Pushpa: Also the event application should be shared widely along with the clear objectives and how could it be useful for people from different communities. The application form should be in both Nepali and English language. There is no follow-up, output to be shared and its impact on policy change and advocacy.

Shubha: If the call for applications also clearly mentions different stakeholders who can be part of such processes, the space will be more diverse than the usual suspects. I did not see many techie women either, the representatives from tech companies were mostly men, women's participation was not pushed much. There have to be sessions around digital rights, linking information technology innovation and human rights, which were missing.

Salina: Some sessions should be allocated for marginalised peoples and issues that are usually left out in such forums, for example, for women-related issues, legal issues and such.

Shiwa: The internet governance spaces have to be widened to more people across different fields of work, which doesn't seem to be of interest to the organiser at the moment.

Rita: The IGF is a big event so there could be some kind of advocacy that could be taken forward after it, which could be related to the policies against internet freedom and digital rights.

Shubha: For most of us, our first experience with internet governance spaces was confusing and full of questions, so to make it easier for newcomers, some sessions around what the IGF is and its mechanisms could be included. Probably, a youth IGF and women's IGF are other ways to incorporate the agendas of various groups.

Shiwa: The sessions could be more qualitative as there were not many applications that were submitted.

Salina: Providing handouts from the sessions will also be useful. Further, the simultaneous sessions confuse the participants, having to choose, to decide on one out of many. The forum should encourage more discussions from the audience.

What do you think about the physical space?

Shiwa: If the forum was organised in a university space or some bigger space, it would be better, so that a number of parallel sessions could be organised.

Shubha: It would be good to have display tables and booths for people to present their work, including technology innovation, creative work, etc. There was no space to rest and for networking at the last Nepal IGF. The space could be more colourful and vibrant.

Rita: The IGF was organised in a three-star hotel which makes it less welcoming at least for me, it creates a rigid culture. If it were done in a less fancy space, it would be a less corporate space.

Dikchya: I liked the place, because they had technologies that a forum like the IGF needs. Simple things like working mikes, lighting, a sound system and the on-site translation systems are a challenge in almost all the programmes organised in Nepal. At least that was handled well.

The conversation was wrapped up with bowls of momos (Nepali dumplings).

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