



Dynamic Coalition on
Accessibility and Disability

Dynamic Coalition on Accessibility and Disability (DCAD) 2024 Fellowship.

Fellow Name: Ngwa Jolenta
Rose Afanwi

DCAD Fellowship Report

The DCAD fellowship IGF 2024 travel support Application stands out to be very unique and flexible in it's approach, most especially with it's e-visa processing.

My trip to Riyadh, Saudi Arabia was a thrill from start to finish. The check-in and immigration processes were very friendly, with special attention paid to my mobility needs from one stop to the next till I finally got to Riyadh.

THE IGF 2024 ACCESSIBILITY

The 19th IGF 2024 Venue choice was outstanding. The king Abdulaziz Conference Center is a master piece design, providing a beautiful view and scenario. Accessibility was made very easy with shuttlers that transported everyone from the main gate to the hall where all the activities were unfolding. Being my first time to live such an inclusive event I would say the accessibility standard were quiet outstanding.

However, at the Venue it self there were a couple of accessibility challenges; some of the ramps were manually placed and they were shaking which could lead to an accident.

Most of the sessions talked about inclusion but the inclusion was focused mostly for Women and Children, living out Persons with disabilities.

The IGF Sessions on Inclusion and those Covering Specific aspects related to Persons with Disability were very few:

[Social media effects on students with disabilities](#)

The session focused on the importance of the multi lingual nature of the internet and its inclusive social effects on students with disabilities. It exposed the challenges that students with disabilities are prone to like cyber bullying, misinformation and disinformation. Dr Mohammad Shabbir gave very strong submissions noting that website developers should be sensitized on how to develop accessible websites and social media apps, also, users creating content must make sure that the content is accessible.

[DCAD Annual Meeting](#)

It was the session that stood out for me at the IGF because for the first time in life I saw and was part of a forum that was ready to make access and inclusion for persons with disabilities perfect. The concerns we raised in several areas like the issue of badges being issued in a separate Venue from the event ground as well as no distinction for Persons with Disabilities on the badges plus the need to involve persons with disabilities in the IGF planning especially at checking accessibility needs at event grounds that we addressed, I was amazed that this were the two main suggestions that the Leadership Panel and Chair of the IGF Panel Vint Cerf made during the closing ceremony as suggestions for the WSIS+20 Agenda.

[Disability and Data protection for Digital Inclusion](#)

Dr Shabbir Coordinated the discussions, focused on enhancing accessibility. He emphasized on the responsible use of technologies and the ethical use of the AI. They session stood as a spring board for change, calling on stakeholders to act as educators, while providing open technology designed for access by all.

These sessions on Disability and digital accessibility gave me a new focused on my reporting as a journalist, assisting me in writing my report on the **Hilltop Voices** Online News paper on the IGF and my report on "Digital accessibility and inclusion in the workspace for journalist with disabilities in Cameroon" inspired by these sessions can be read on this link:

<https://www.facebook.com/share/p/Co3YTkikg2f54CRD/>

<https://www.hilltopvoices.com/2025/01/journalist-with-disability-and-digital.html>

This Sessions have also spurred my desires to intensify my Advocacy for digital inclusion to a different dimension and through the Organization I work with, I have begun writing out a proposal guide to be presented to the Minister of Social Affairs in Cameroon. The write up is focused on:

“ the Necessity for Digital Access and Inclusion in Schools in Cameroon for Students with Disabilities”

Other sessions that caught my attention included:

[2024 Year of All Elections: Did Democracy Survive?](#)

The session being my first session at the IGF was very interesting as it looked at elections held across the world in 2024, the influence of AI in this elections and how the social media has been used as a tool to spread hate speech, misinformation and disinformation to the population.

[IGF 2024 Opening Ceremony](#)

I followed the address of Ms Doreen Bogdan-Martin, Secretary General of the ITU(International Telecommunication Union). she addressed the journey of the IGF since 2005. She also talked about the three key issues:

Affordability: bring cost down, noting that the cost of the internet and it's infrastructure remains very expensive in African Countries.

Digital Resilience and challenges like cyber tax increase which makes the internet not affordable, with Climate and natural disasters that are increasingly damaging internet infrastructure, which all have to be addressed through connectivity, redundance and security.

WHAT WAS YOUR ACTION PLAN GOING TO THE IGF AND WEITHER AND HOW HAVE YOU ACHIEVED IT

Coming to the IGF after having completed the online course from the internet Society on “Disability Leadership Training on Internet Governance and Digital Rights” Organized by DCAD, which I must use this opportunity to say thank you. The expectations I had could not be measured with what I saw attending the IGF for the First time.

The IGF has changed my prospective and drive in life, to advocate for inclusion from a more broader perspective of the internet.

Attending the IGF in Person and not remotely I would say is the best decision. thanks to the assistance of the DCAD financial Scholarship that has opened me to the world, with networking opportunities.

From the IGF,I have a whole lot to impact my Organization and Community as a whole. First I am in a discussion with the board of the Organization proposing ways to improve the Education level of Persons with disabilities especially in the digital field.

SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

- Persons with Disabilities make use of a lot of assistive technologies for their day to day existence, yet this technology is very expensive to afford. Thus the IGF has to organize a session to see how this cost can be moderated.
- To DCAD, I would suggest that an alumni forum for DCAD fellows be created. This forum will enable all DCAD fellows to raise suggestions to improve on the activities of DCAD and give it wider publicity.
- To DCAD, I would also suggest that a DCAD fellowship be awarded two times at most to every fellow. This limits the number of repeated fellows coming over and over and also opens the opportunity for many more persons with disabilities.

The IGF is in a nutshell, an interesting open dialogue forum, very Educative and an open avenue for growth and development.

The DCAD fellowship was also an incredible opportunity to advance my advocacy for persons with Disabilities.