Internet Inclusion: Advancing Solutions

Working Group Outcome Document

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Working Group Name: Partnership for Public Access (P4PA)

Working Group Chair(s): Don Means

Individual Participants (including name and affiliation):

- Christina Ayiotis, Cybersecurity Consultant

- Katie Watson, Internet Society

- Emir Sfaxi, Fulbright

- Anna Slomovic, Consultant

- Justin Caso, IEEE

- Other P4PA WG active members not present: Mei Lin Fung, PCI; Stephen Wyber, IFLA; Jane Coffin, ISOC; Melissa Sassi, Microsoft; Janet Sawaya, EIFL

Achievements to date including launches, agreements, and commitments:

- P4PA has been convening participant calls over past 2 years on bi-monthly basis.

- Sharing information about projects and linking various in-country resources to support multi-stakeholder collaborations

- Published formal PA declaration*: (see below)

- Advance existing exemplar collaborative actions in Africa (Tunisia, central Africa) and initiate new actions in Latin America (Colombia, Mexico, Argentina) and in South East Asia (Malaysia, Vietnam, India)

- Build out knowledge-base and database to create a toolset that can be utilized globally to help local communities launch PA initiatives.

- P4PA agrees that public access is supportive of, relevant to, and should be integral with strategies of all other IIAS working groups.

Key Discussion Points:

- "Public Access" means different things to different people. In context of P4PA, it means publicly- or community-funded, facility-based ICT access on no fee or low fee basis.

- Public ICT Access facilities can be: libraries, schools/universities, post offices, clinics, community centers, government buildings…but open to all including skills training and support services.

- Infrastructure connecting public access facilities is a build-out process, while community networks are complementary build-in process.

- Trust the private sector when it's working. Use public access service points as government intervention when market fails and as low/no cost supplement to commercial services.

- Importance of understanding cultural differences:

    o What does "public access" mean in various countries?

    o Could we use religious buildings as access points?

        ▪ Risk of censorship or intimidation

    o Are public institutions trusted enough for users to want to access Internet through them? Can they be autonomous local community co-op models?

- Commercially provided "Free" Internet isn't free – users either pay with their data or by buying goods (e.g., Starbucks coffee). Public Access facilities are supported as gov't obligation to provide access to public services or through small membership fees (e.g., some public libraries)

- Opportunity for public investment in infrastructure (fiber to the region, e.g., India) (open shared spectrum)

    o Shared infrastructure and public/private partnerships

- Opportunities to leverage for IoT and smart infrastructure

    o Street lights, dig once, build once, solar/WiFi structures, satellites

Outcome of Discussion including Key Messaging points:

- P4PA WG to reevaluate name "Public Access" E.g. alt. "Publicly Funded Internet Access"

- Working locally and encouraging public/private partnerships will make a big difference

Notable Projects and Upcoming Events:

- Public Access Declaration* (see draft below); Ongoing bi-monthly calls; Submit proposal to IGF

Next Steps:

- Advocacy: Gather success stories, case studies, anecdotes, recommendations. – Include output from all IIAS groups: Evidence-based Research, Skills, Gender, Finance & Community Networks. Need local, personal stories to show first-hand accounts of the impact of public access. Finalize and publish policy positions advocating urgent USF and spectrum reform. Advocate PA strategy through participation in IGF (DC-PAL session) and other venues/events.

- Develop case for shared infrastructure to serve both public sector and commercial systems. E.g., "Open middle mile" "Fiber to the Region"

- Publish draft USF "Principles" template for general discussion, development, publishing and advocacy. (**1st cut pasted below)

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** P4PA Working Group **Statement**:*

There are multiple and complementary benefits from providing connectivity to public access facilities like libraries or other trusted community centers.

Libraries typically add support/ training services, access technologies and a deep understanding of local needs to make raw access more meaningful to new users as well as to experienced users who may otherwise lack more advanced equipment; a safe, comfortable space; or even simply a faster connection.

Connecting and adequately staffing libraries, schools, colleges, health clinics or other community anchors for public access provides government with simple, inexpensive ways to fulfill universal service programs: access to public information, educational content, and e-gov services for an entire population.

Connections at these community anchors can serve as infrastructural "intermediate endpoints" that not only by provide valuable end user access at and around facilities, but also as potential interconnect points to extend "last (first) mile" networks further into communities (markets) via technologies such as TV white spaces.

To maximize such investments, a multi-stakeholder approach is required to not only look at access, access technologies and necessary digital literacy skills, but also to foster favorable regulatory environments that allow the use of innovative technologies like TV white spaces to serve as catalysts for last (first) mile deployment implementations, including community built networks.

Additional value can be derived from libraries' /centers' capabilities to host /cache, as well as facilitate creation of local-language and relevant content of special value in each community.

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*** USF Draft Template: **Principles***

- Access to communication and information is a fundamental right of all citizens;
- Mandatory, equitable contributions to the Fund from all licensed telecom operators (with some exceptions);
- Market-orientation and non-discrimination in use of funds;
- Autonomous management of the Fund, separate accounting from other Regulatory, Ministry budgets;
- Competitive neutrality and transparency; and
- Focus on four main objectives:
    1. Universal access to basic communication;
    2. Increased access to advanced ICTs;
    3. Support for economic and social development;
    4. Support for public and community institutions.