



## **African School on Internet Governance**

*June 2025*

*Participant evaluation*

*Compiled by Debbie Budlender<sup>1</sup>*

The Association for Progressive Communications (APC) hosted the 13th African School on Internet Governance (AfriSIG) in the Tanzanian city of Dar es Salaam from 14 to 19 May 2025. This report presents the findings from an evaluation of the workshop based on views of participants. The views were collected through a questionnaire that participants, including faculty or resource persons, completed online. A total of 78 people participated in the school – 52 fellows and 26 resource persons and faculty. However, many of the 26 faculty and resource persons attended only one session or joined virtually. Only six were present for much of the event’s duration. For the purpose of the evaluation, there were therefore effectively 58 participants, of whom 31 answered the questionnaire. All but one of the responses came from fellows, with the exception submitted by a member of faculty. Two of the fellows who responded said that they were also resource persons.

Of the 31 responses, 11 were from Tanzania, three each from Zambia and Zimbabwe, and two each from Nigeria and South Africa. In addition, there was one participant from each of Botswana, Cameroon, Chad, Ghana, Kenya, Madagascar and Malawi. One participant – a government official – gave their country as “Africa”. There were also participants from Uganda, Ethiopia, Rwanda, DRC, Nigeria, Benin, Egypt, Bahamas, Hungary, India, Germany, USA and Brazil attending the school, but no evaluation responses came from these participants.

There was unusually high participation from government officials in this AfriSIG School as this category accounted for 12 of the 31 participants. In addition to these government officials, there were eight staff and/or members of civil society organisations (CSOs), three participants from each of the development agency, parliamentary and technical community categories, and two business people.

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<sup>1</sup> This report is compiled by Debbie Budlender, an independent evaluation consultant. Results from the participant survey goes to her directly.

All ratings in the evaluation questionnaire were on a scale from 1 to 10, with 10 being Excellent and 1 being Terrible. The figures below show both the mean and the median score. The mean is derived by dividing the sum of the scores by the number of scorers. The median is the score given by the middle person if scores are ordered from lowest to highest. For example, if there are five people with scores 10, 9, 8, 1 and 1, then the median is 8, while the mean is 5.8. Unlike the mean, the median is not affected by one or two outliers, i.e. people who allocate a score very differently from the rest of the group.

In reporting on the open-ended questions, all responses are considered and reported on, whether through paraphrasing or direct quotes. The responses reported as direct quotes include some cases where the meaning was not clear; these direct quotes avoid reflecting a “guess” as to what the meaning might be.

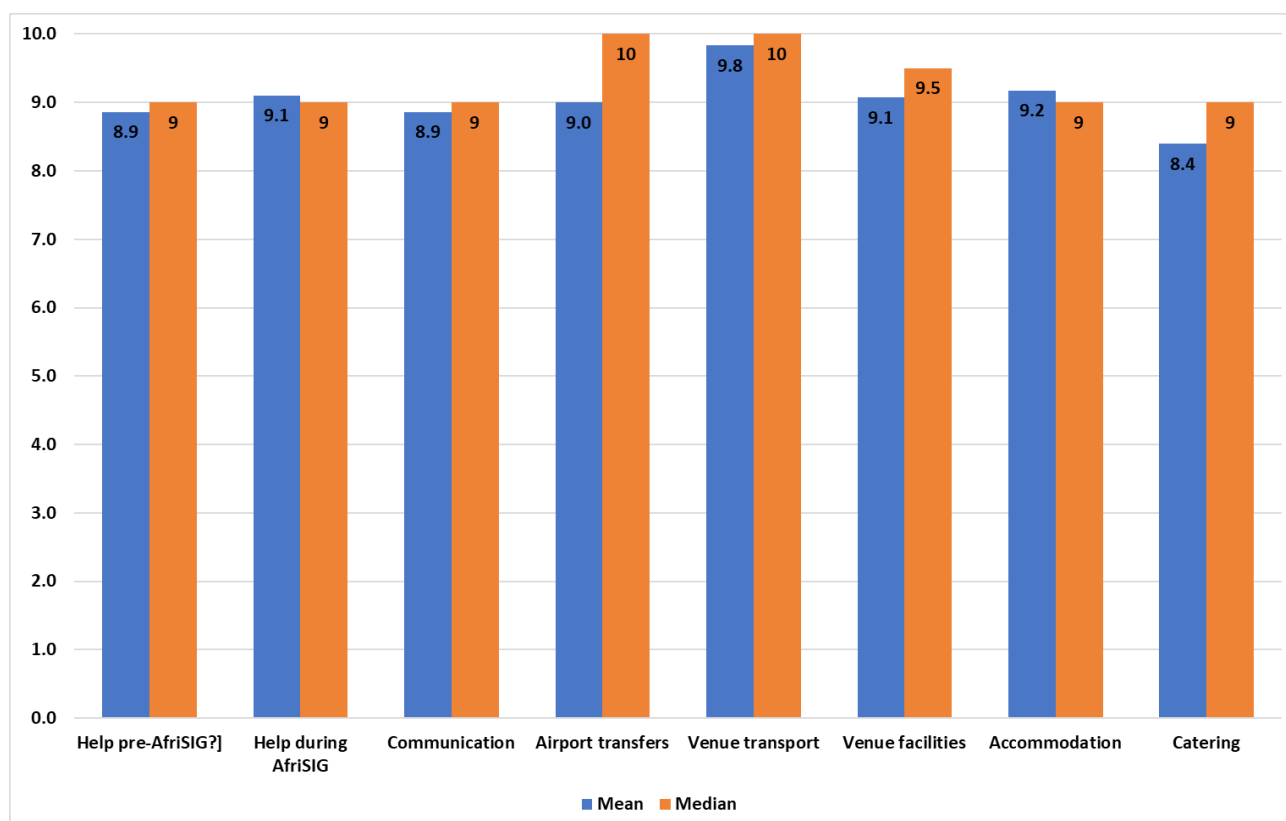
## **Organisation and logistics**

The first set of questions related to organisation and logistics. The questions read as follows:

- How would you rate the information and assistance received before AfriSIG?
- How would you rate the information and assistance received during the course?
- How would you rate overall communication with participants before and during AfriSIG?
- How would you rate the arrangement of airport transfers?
- How would you rate the arrangement of transportation to and from the venue?
- How would you rate the course facilities – venue, meeting room?
- How would you rate the hotel accommodation?
- How would you rate the catering (tea, lunch and dinner)?

Figure 1 shows high ratings for all categories, with the median at 9 or 10. Transport to and from the venue scored the highest, with a mean of 9.8. Airport transfers also had a median score of 10, but a mean of 9.0 – lower than the means for accommodation, the facilities at the venue, and information and assistance received during the school. Catering scored the least, but even that had a mean rating of 8.4.

**Figure 1. Organisation and logistics**



The section on organisation and logistics ended with an open-ended question asking for further comments. Twelve participants responded to the invitation to comment.

Of these 12, four used the word “excellent” in their response and two said it was “(very) well organised”. A seventh person opted for “good”, a response they repeated for many later questions. Some of these positive raters elaborated on their responses. One “loved the whole experience”, another complimented those responsible for the organisation and logistics, and a third highlighted a range of appreciated features, as follows:

*The organisation and logistics were excellent. Communication was clear and timely, and all arrangements from airport transfers to accommodation were smooth and efficient. The venue was comfortable and conducive to learning. I truly appreciated the attention to detail and the support provided throughout the event.*

Some of the responses included both positive and negative comments. One person felt that the logistics and communication were “great”. However, the hosting of many other activities at the same time meant that the venue facility, although “also good”, sometimes created inconvenience. One of those who described the organisation and logistics as excellent, said they suffered from food poisoning on one of the days. Another who said that AfriSIG was a “great initiative and practice” would have appreciated receiving information on the content earlier.

There were also negative comments about the “not good” lunch and tea. Others

included the attempt to reduce the number of transfers to the airport by combining people taking different flights, resulted in some organising their own transport so as to be able to check in on time; and delayed inclusion of some people on the mailing list and/or WhatsApp resulting in their not receiving information on airport pickups.

## **Workshop content**

The next set of questions were about workshop content, with a score requested for each session separately. The sessions that were scored were as follows:

### **DAY 1**

SESSION 1: What is internet governance? History, principles, concepts and institutions

SESSION 2: Data governance: Concepts, issues, challenges and opportunities

SESSION 3: The Global Digital Compact and the CSTD Working Group on Data Governance At All Levels: Introduction to the AfriSIG 2025 Practicum

SESSION 4: How the internet works: Internet architecture and core protocols

### **DAY 2**

SESSION 5: Meaningful connectivity and community-driven connectivity solutions

SESSION 6: Access and after access: Facing facts and understanding digital inequality in Africa

SESSION 7: Data and AI governance in Africa: Key frameworks and initiatives

SESSION 8: Internet names and numbers and the institutions that look after them

### **DAY 3**

SESSION 9: Human rights and digital rights: A global perspective

SESSION 10: Human rights and digital rights: A regional perspective

SESSION 11: Corporate accountability

SESSION 12: Gender and internet governance – A critical look through an AI lens

SESSION 13: Internet governance and media development diversity and freedom in Africa

### **DAY 4**

SESSION 14: Governing the digital for safeguarding the environment

SESSION 15: The World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) 20-year review  
SESSION 16: Cybersecurity and cybercrime in Africa: Challenges and opportunities

DAY 5

SESSION 17: A day in the life of an internet governance practitioner

SESSION 18: The IGF – A critical space for building knowledge, connections and policies – What to expect, how it works and how to participate

Participants were also asked to rate the daily question and answer (Q&A) sessions to review the previous day’s content, and a practicum that involved multiple sessions spread over the days of the workshop.

Figure 2 gives the ratings for sessions on days 1 and 2. All except Session 6 on digital inequality in Africa had a median score of 10, with Session 6 having a median of 9. There was also limited variation in median scores, which ranged from 8.5 (for Session 6) to 8.9 (for Session 2, data governance and related concepts and issues). Data governance’s relatively high score is noteworthy as this was the core issue around which the practicum revolved.

**Figure 2. Rating of sessions on days 1 and 2**

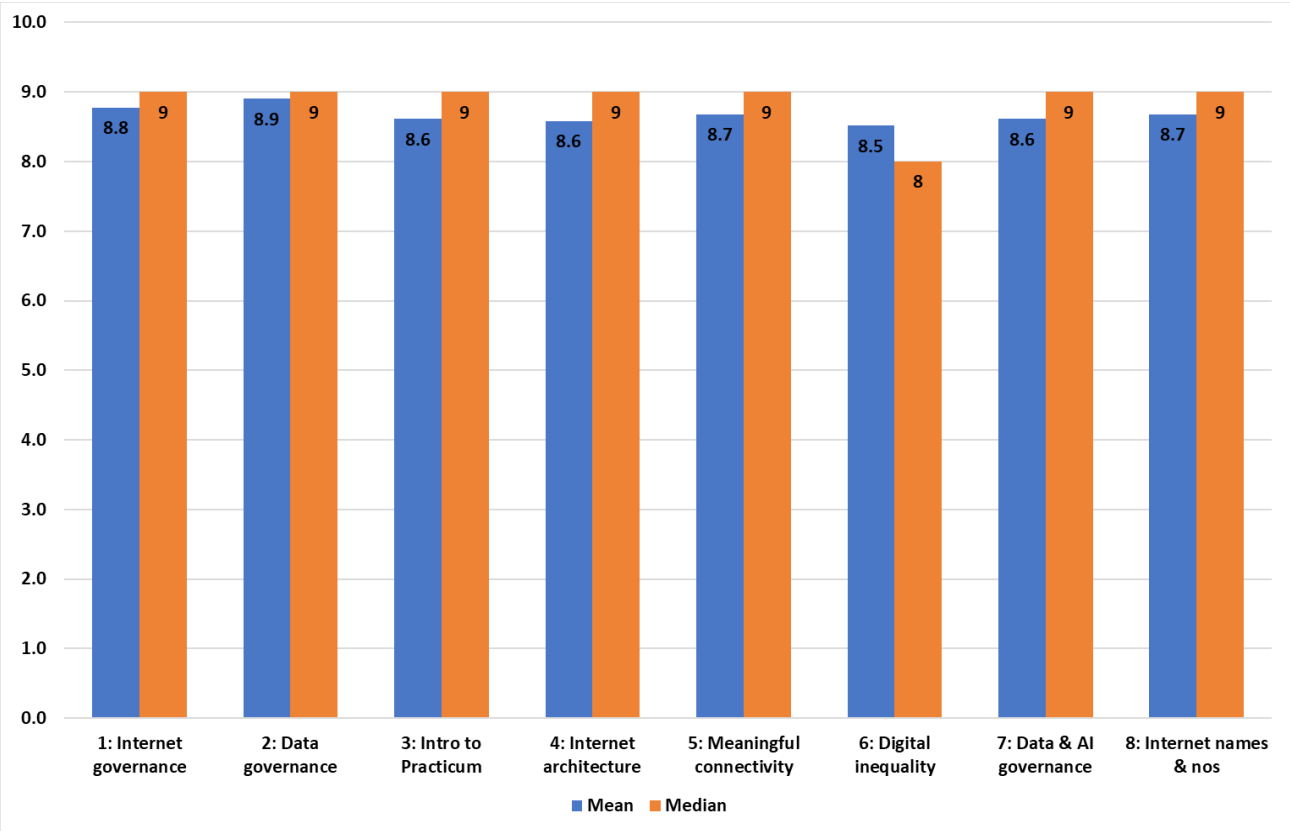


Figure 3 gives the ratings for days 3 and 4. Again, most of the sessions had a median score of 9. The two exceptions – Session 11 on corporate accountability and Session 14 on safeguarding the environment – had a median of 8. Both of the exceptions were presented virtually rather than in-person. The mean scores ranged between 8.2 for corporate accountability and 8.8 for Sessions 2 and 3 on digital rights and Session 16 on cybersecurity and crime.

**Figure 3. Rating of sessions on days 3 and 4**

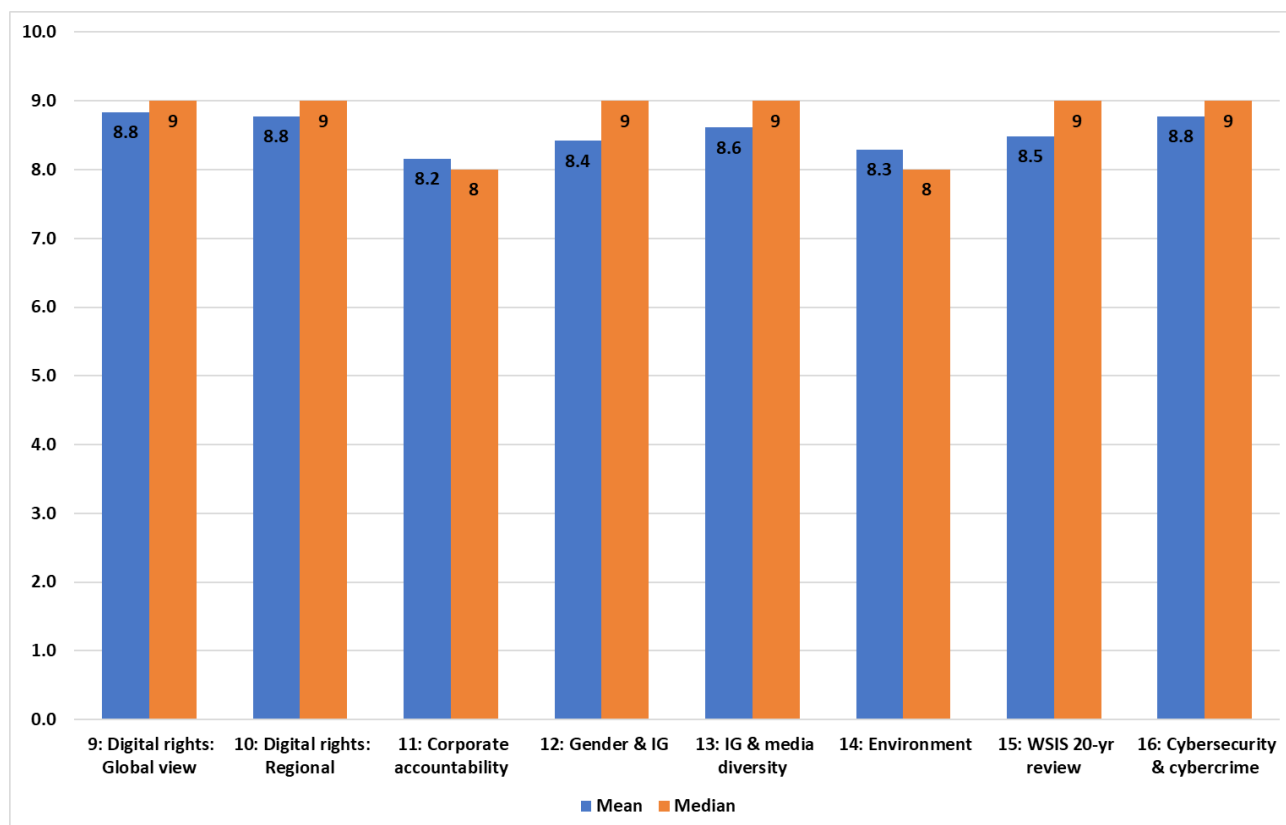
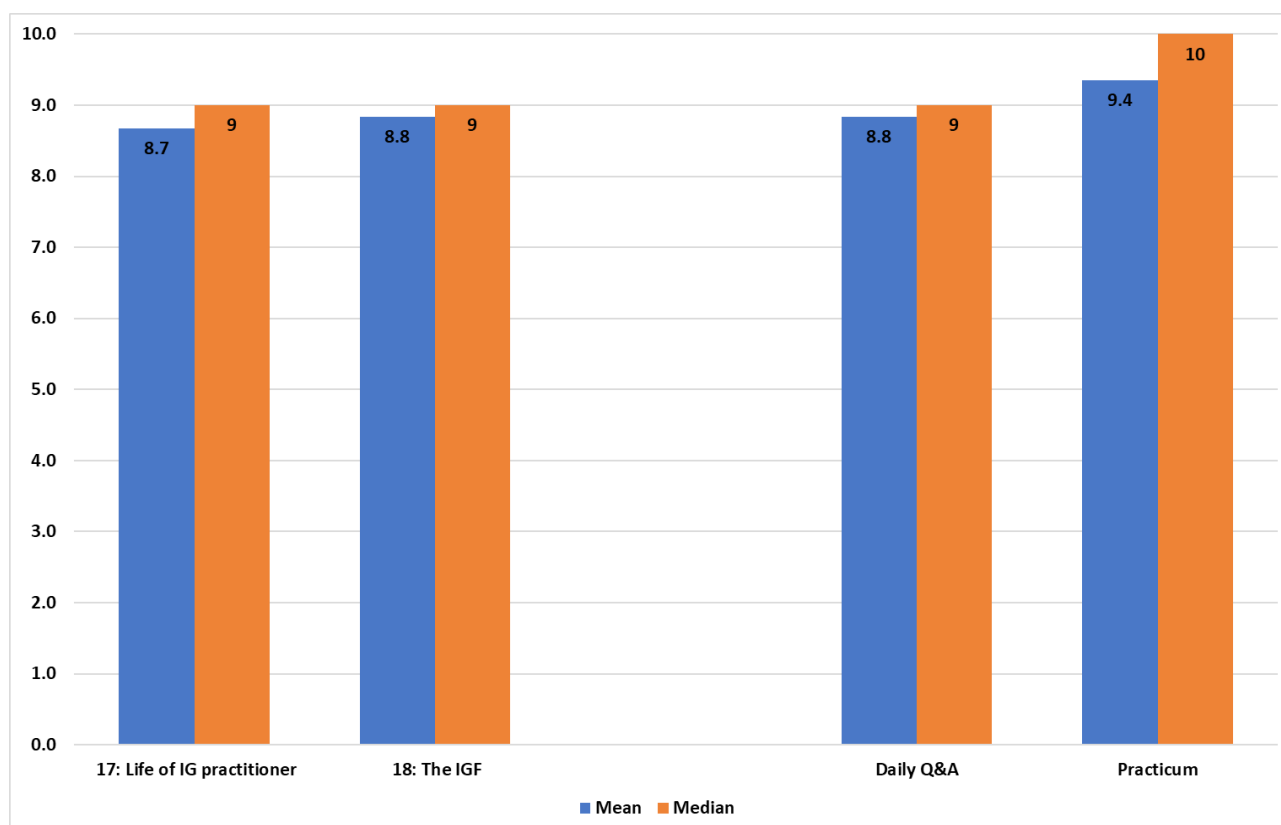


Figure 4 shows the ratings for the sessions on the final day as well as for the daily Q&A sessions and practicum. The practicum scored the highest, with a median of 10 and mean of 9.4. The last two sessions and the daily Q&A sessions all had a median of 9 and a mean of 8.7 or 8.8.

**Figure 4. Rating of sessions on day 5, Q&A and practicum**



The figures above reveal remarkably little variation in rating of sessions across the whole school. The lowest rating given to any session was 4, and was given by one person each to Sessions 8 on internet access, 11 on corporate accountability, 13 on internet governance (IG) and media diversity, 15 on environment, and 16 on cybersecurity and cybercrime.

Twelve people elaborated on their rating of the practicum, although one again simply wrote "good". Three said that this was the best part of the programme, naming it as the "key highlight" or "most valuable and immersive component of the school" or what made AfriSIG "unique". The last of these participants commented that the practicum should cover at least two issues in future. Three participants commented on the careful curation, "seamless" delivery, and well-coordinated and well-organised nature of the practicum. One of these ended the comment with the words: "Kudos to the organisers, Anriette and her team." Another person observed that the opportunity to apply theoretical knowledge in practical scenarios "fostered collaboration and critical thinking" and allowed participants to "gain new perspectives from working with peers from diverse backgrounds." A second referred somewhat similarly to the practicum being "a useful exercise in co-creating solutions for democratic internet governance." A third described it as a "wonderful opportunity to learn and experience how multistakeholder processes work."

Two of those who expressed their high valuation of the practicum nevertheless referred to some weaknesses. One observed that the preponderance of government participants and paucity of technical participants meant that there were few people

who understood the exercise. The second said the initial instructions were not clear, although by the second day participants had a better understanding. The person suggested that there could be more time allocated for team collaboration and research, especially early in the process. They felt that this “would allow participants to explore their assigned areas more deeply and refine their recommendations more thoroughly.” Another participant suggested more generally that more time was needed for the practicum.

The session-rating questions were followed by an open-ended question asking for **further comments on the workshop sessions.**

Sixteen people responded to this question, although one again simply said “good” and another that the training was interesting. The overwhelming majority of the responses included a variety of very positive adjectives, such as informative, engaging, helpful, insightful, well-structured, excellent, comprehensive and relevant. Several also commented positively on the presentation, citing the participatory approach and the knowledge of the presenters knowledgeable, as well as the diversity of the presenters. A few particularly liked the practical components of the training. Four commented on how their knowledge and understanding had increased as a result of their participation. At least two of the four appeared to be people with limited or no previous exposure to the topic of internet governance. Another participant noted that the school “has provided me with a paradigm shift in the way I see data governance and data privacy with digital rights. Also, how to engage with a multistakeholder engagement with the civil society, government, business community, parliamentarian, the private sector, and academia.”

On the negative side, three people felt that the time allocated for the workshop was too short for the amount of information provided. Another participant suggested that the workshop include additional experiential learning activities in sessions. They gave examples such as simulations, role plays, interactive audio-visual materials, field visits, and case studies.

Participants were asked if they had any **suggestions for additional topics** beyond those covered in the school. Sixteen people responded, some of whom had more than one topic to suggest.

- Five people suggested that there be more on cybersecurity. Some of these participants made specific suggestions as to what should be added in this respect. The suggestions included regional cybercrime cooperation frameworks, practical tools and strategies for digital self-defence, and real-world case studies.
- Three people suggested including content on artificial intelligence (AI), including AI governance, AI and democracy, AI and innovation, and AI tools being developed in Africa.
- Two people wanted more on gender, with one seeking focus on gender and online safety and the other on gender and technology.



- Two wanted more in respect of online protection of children.
- Three participants were concerned about equality, one in respect of information, the second in respect of digital literacy and capacity-building strategies for underserved communities, and the third requesting additional coverage of affordable access and inclusion.

Each of the following topics was suggested only once:

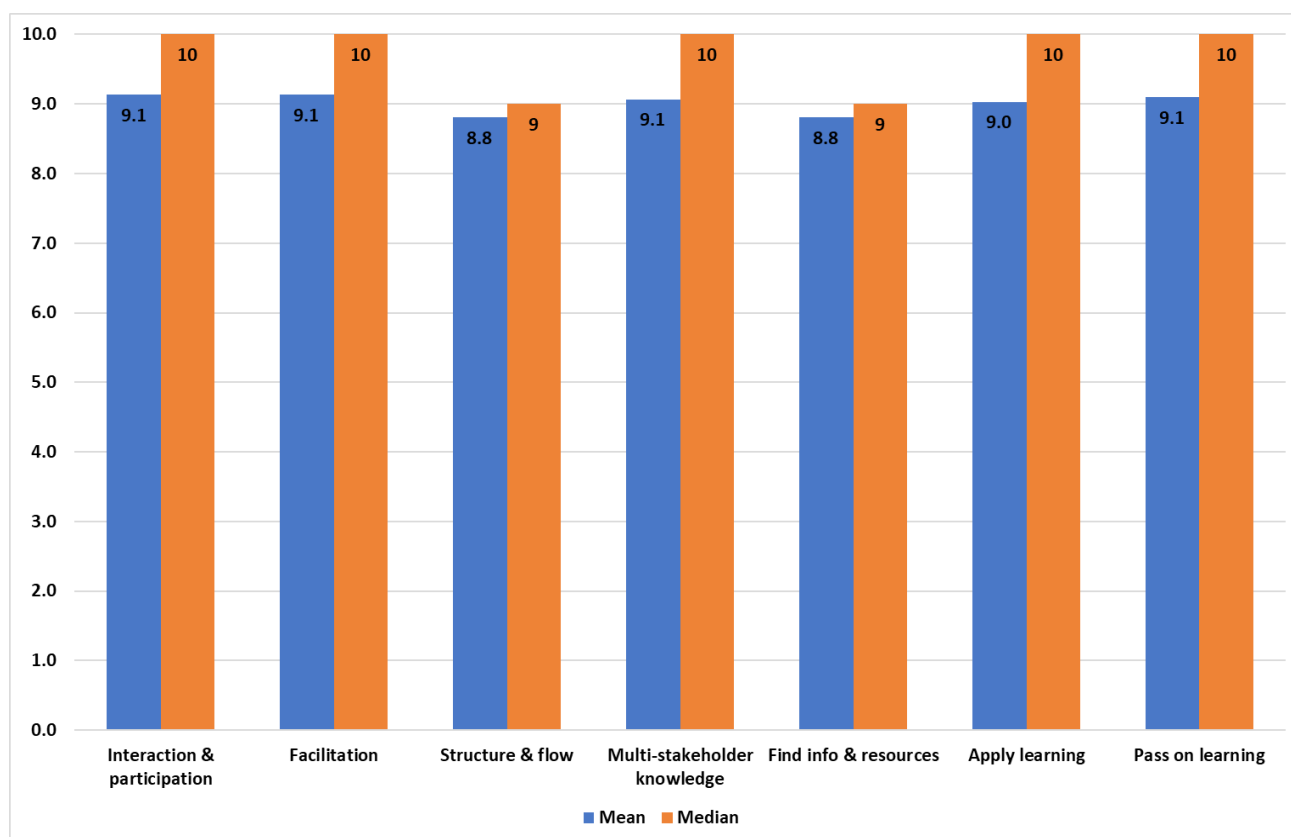
- Digital surveillance and spyware
- Disinformation and electoral integrity
- Emerging technologies such as blockchain and their impact on governance
- Implementation of policy and laws relating to internet governance in African countries
- Multilingualism
- Content moderation
- IXP.

The final set of ratings related to the **process and impact** of the school. The questions asked were:

- To what extent were you satisfied with the level of interaction and participation in the sessions?
- To what extent were you satisfied with the facilitation and facilitators?
- To what extent were you satisfied with the structure and logical flow of the sessions?
- To what extent has the workshop increased your knowledge of multistakeholder processes for internet governance?
- To what extent did you find the information and resources on the AfriSIG website useful?
- To what extent will you be able to apply the learning obtained?
- To what extent will you be able to pass on the learning obtained to your colleagues?

Figure 5 illustrates the very positive views that participants had of the process and impact of AfriSIG. The median rating on five of the seven items was 10, meaning that more than half of participants gave the highest rating. The exceptions were structure and flow and locating information and resources, both of which had a median of 9, and a mean only marginally below this. The other five items all had means of either 9 or 9.1.

**Figure 5. Rating of process and impact of the school**



Ten people responded when asked if they had anything to add on the facilitation. There was the usual “good” as well as a “top notch” alongside a range of more specific adjectives. Some of the common ones were knowledgeable, approachable, and various terms that related to the participatory approach. Two commented on the good organisation and structure. One noted that facilitators “did an excellent job of creating a safe and inclusive environment for discussion.” Only one person was not completely complimentary in that they suggested that the course content “can increase in difficulty and deep dive.” While this does not seem to relate directly to facilitation, the 10th person noted that they had been selected for a course in digital democracy in China, and the knowledge gained from the “prestigious” AfriSIG would be helpful when embarking on it.

Only seven people offered comments on the process and impact of the school. One of these was the usual “good”, while a second repeated that the school was “insightful and well-organised”, adding that it would continue to have an impact on their daily activities. A third said that the impact was “huge”, noting that there was therefore a need for more funding for AfriSIG “so as to pull in more young Africans to gain the necessary skills needed in this digital age.”

A fourth also commented on the well-organised and -structured nature of the school. This person noted that the mix of “foundational” learning and “in-depth exploration”, the mix of presentation, discussion, group work and panels, and the diversity of perspective and case studies helped “translate theory into action.” Somewhat similarly, a fifth person appreciated the way the structure of the workshop “promoted active

learning and reflection.” The sixth participant was more specific in that they planned to use the lessons on community mobile networks to develop a parliamentary motion for their implementation in Zimbabwe, as well as for the domestication of internet governance in the country.

Finally, one person provided a long and very appreciative response to this question, as follows:

*The Africa School on Internet Governance (AfriSIG) 2025 was a transformative experience. The School successfully created an inclusive, intellectually stimulating, and multistakeholder environment that allowed for deep engagement with some of the most pressing issues facing Africa’s digital ecosystem.*

*From a law enforcement and cybersecurity perspective, the balance between technical, policy, legal, and rights-based dimensions was particularly impactful. The practicum was one of the most valuable aspects of the School, offering a rare opportunity to simulate real-world negotiations and advocate for pragmatic policy approaches that protect both security and digital rights.*

*The key impact was the renewed understanding of how regional collaboration and harmonized policies are critical to tackling cross-border cybercrime and improving digital trust. I leave AfriSIG 2025 better equipped to contribute meaningfully to national and regional internet governance conversations.*

*Overall, I am grateful for the opportunity to participate and look forward to contributing to the ongoing development of Africa’s digital governance frameworks.*

Participants were then asked what the **most valuable learning experience or outcome** of the event had been for them. Everyone responded to this question, although one simply gave their usual “good”. Several others also provided one-word responses, namely “nice”, “practical”, “discussion”, and “networking”. There were several other short responses that related to a particular issue, such as “cybersecurity and AI”, “how the internet works”. One participant gave two short responses to the question, the second of which was: “And Madam Katherine's session. Loved it!!”

The majority of longer responses related to multistakeholderism. Participants appreciated the diversity of participants, especially in relation to sectors, although one or two also commented appreciatively on the cross-country mix. Many of the participants who found the multistakeholder aspect most valuable explicitly cited the practicum. Others did not specifically name it, but what they said suggested that the practicum had been key – especially for this aspect, as also for other learnings. In particular, some said that learning about data sovereignty and other data-related issues had been very valuable, probably reflecting the focus of the practicum on data governance.

The following quotes give a sense of participants' enthusiasm in respect of the value of the practicum. The first quote consists of three paragraphs of the four in a single response:

*This experience brought everything we had been learning to life. It wasn't just about discussing theory or listening to lectures, it was about putting knowledge into action. We had to listen to each other, understand different perspectives, and find common ground.*

*What I learned most was how powerful multistakeholder collaboration can be when everyone is focused on building a better, more inclusive digital future for Africa. It also helped me sharpen critical skills like teamwork, negotiation, and writing clear, balanced policy language.*

*More than anything, AfriSIG reminded me that shaping internet governance is not just for governments or tech companies, it is for all of us who care about how the internet impacts our rights, lives, and communities.*

The second example was shorter but spoke to the perceived benefits of an inclusive multi-stakeholder approach:

*Getting to live and experience the fact that everyone in the room has something to contribute when it comes to solving our own challenges and that this is what makes the solutions developed more meaningful and impactful.*

The third example illustrates the practical lessons that one of the participants drew from the practicum:

*One of the most valuable things I learned during this School was the idea of data sovereignty and how it connects to Africa's digital future. I now understand that it is important for our data to be stored and managed locally, to protect privacy, build trust, and reduce our dependence on foreign systems. This learning made me think differently about how we run our community networks at Step Network. I now see that data sharing in local communities must be done in a safe, informed, and responsible way.*

In addition to those who placed high value on the practicum and multistakeholderism, other aspects named as very valuable were as follows:

- Realising that one did not need to be a technical expert to be an IG practitioner
- The value of including the technical community
- The intersection between internet governance, digital rights and policy making in the African context
- Establishment of "new networks of solidarity and lesson sharing"
- How community networks operate in different African countries
- Increased knowledge about technology

- Engagement in action promoting the extension of internet access to all
- Post-training networking and mentorship opportunities
- “Very passionate” facilitators with “very relevant” examples.

All survey participants also answered the question on how they were **planning to use the learnings** from the school in their work.

The responses clustered around several themes. Some responses focused on a single theme while others encompassed more than one. Often the themes overlapped, and the division below is therefore not exact. The themes were as follows:

- **Sharing knowledge:** This was the most common response, with 17 people referring to one or other type of sharing knowledge. Some participants planned to share knowledge with their colleagues. Colleagues were the most common target, but other participants aimed to share beyond this, whether with particular roleplayers or “stakeholders” or broader and often disadvantaged categories within the general population. The categories envisaged for targeting included young people and women, and “underserved communities”. One participant planned to fund sub-regional internet governance schools and also support partners to attend AfriSIG.
- **Advocacy:** Five participants planned to engage in advocacy. Most planned to advocate for inclusive digital policies. One specified that they would focus on issues where civil society voices were often under-represented, and another that their advocacy would be effected through media articles, opinion pieces as well as participating in internet government policy dialogues. One person hoped to focus their advocacy on multistakeholderism.
- **Policy engagement:** Seven people planned to engage in different ways in the policy sphere. Specific policy areas on which they planned to focus include multistakeholder internet governance, data protection, digital rights, cybersecurity, and regulation of the IT sector.
- **Multistakeholderism:** Three people mentioned other plans in respect of multistakeholderism. One planned to convene quarterly roundtables with law enforcement, regulators, the private sector and civil society to exchange threat intelligence and best practices, as well as to track progress through regular reports. These reports would measure training delivered, memoranda of understanding signed, and policy milestones, and allow for adjustment of initiatives based on feedback. Another participant planned to work towards the inclusion of members of the technical community in multistakeholder forums. Others referred to engagement in multistakeholder forums, or more intentional cross-sector collaboration.
- **Daily work:** Four people planned to incorporate what they had learned into their daily work.

- **Increasing own knowledge:** While several participants noted that they felt more confident and better equipped to take action, at least two reported that they planned to increase their knowledge further.
- **Regional engagement:** Three people explicitly referred to plans to engage in regional forums, including Southern African Development Community (SADC) and African Union working groups. A fourth said they would be in contact with those they had met through the school so as to be able to take advantage of opportunities for collaboration. Another wrote more generally about “transforming my society” and “uniting the continent with resources and information.”
- **Standards:** Finally, one participant wanted to ensure that the digital devices used by community members met the appropriate standards for safety and performance.

The penultimate question asked participants how they had experienced the **networking during AfriSIG** and how this might be of value to them in their future work. Again, all survey participants answered the question, although one simply wrote “great”, and another “It was good.” In contrast, many participants answered at some length.

The responses were all positive. Several people said that networking was one of the most valuable and enriching aspects of AfriSIG. Despite the number and relative length of responses, they clustered around a small number of themes, as follows:

- **Sharing experiences:** Participants appreciated the opportunities they had had to share experiences and related knowledge during the school, and were also looking forward to future sharing as they continued with AfriSIG-related work in their different countries and roles;
- **Collaboration:** Participants were keen to find ways to collaborate with their new friends in the future. One said that they had already collaborated (in the Africa Internet Governance Forum), while several others also had definite plans for specific collaboration.
- **Cross-sectoral networking:** Many participants were particularly pleased with the opportunity to engage with a diverse group of participants. They commented, in particular, on the opportunities this provided for cross-sector exchanges across policy makers, civil society actors, technical experts and private sector players. This had, among others, helped participants understand the significance of multisectoral initiatives. One participant observed that the cross-sectoral trust established during AfriSIG would contribute to more effective interventions going forward. Another said that the cross-sectoral engagement had helped clarify the direction they wanted to take in their further studies. Business people noted that they had gained business “leads”.
- **Expanded networks:** Several participants commented that AfriSIG had allowed

them to build or expand their networks.

The final question offered space for **additional comments, feedback and suggestions** for future improvement. Thirteen people responded. One simply wrote, "Fantastic." Others reiterated their appreciation of the diverse mix of participants and its contribution of "rich cross-learning", the practicum's bridging of theory and practice, and the excellent organisation. One person commented that AfriSIG was "a necessary and important initiative that should carry on." Another expressed their appreciation as follows:

*The School exceeded my expectations in terms of content, organization, and impact, overall, it was a transformative experience and I highly recommend it to others in the field.*

The suggestions were as follows:

- Addition of topic on technology and gender
- Expansion of content on gender-based online harms and protective measures.
- Inclusion of a fintech fraud module (mobile money, crypto risks)
- Increase in case studies from different African countries
- Including AfriSIG alumni who are doing good work in the area to facilitate sessions.
- Interactive workshops to further enhance practical learning
- Compression of some materials so as to strengthen understanding
- Improvements in terms of time (management?) and early communication on logistics and attire.
- Provision of more time for training (including a suggestion that AfriSIG should be at least 10 days so as to cover more topics).
- Further engagements and networks in respect of technical issues
- Continuing towards sustained development of the planet.