

Deirdre Williams, St. Lucia

Dear Raul,

I was glad to see the issue of older people appearing among the agenda suggestions for LACIGF, and have been thinking of ways that remote participation might be improved. Is there a way to "add value" so that the remote participant feels equal to those in situ? Remote participation is one of the HUGE positives of the virtual world, and yet somehow this value is neglected. I think it has to come as an awareness in the remote participants themselves but how to trigger it? This is an issue that has a lot in common with the debates about women – the women themselves have to perceive themselves as equal to achieve real progress. Really I suppose this is the same for all groups who are perceived as "other" (I don't want to use the word oppressed, although sometimes the oppressed are party to or even agents of their own oppression.)

My big wish for LACIGF has always been for greater inclusion/integration of the anglophone C, but as with the remote participants in the previous paragraph the anglophone C needs to do something about that themselves. LACIGF has tried very hard to be welcoming, but fear of foreign languages always seems to get in the way. I am so very grateful to Daniel (Pimienta) for getting me to join MISTICA all those years ago, and insisting that I used English. That was such a good lesson.

I always look for more inclusion of persons with disabilities, ideally as equal partners. I discovered this year that the Caribbean Telecommunications Union (CTU) has so far included this group that they are invisible, or at least difficult to see, because they are so thoroughly integrated into the process!

The issue of culture and cultural penetration is becoming more and more important. The technology facilitates the infiltration; we could unite on finding ways to use the technology for resilience.

Most importantly we need to keep insisting that the virtual world must remain human-focussed. Are you aware of the current attempt to bring back together again the civil society groupings – IGC, Bestbits, CSCG etc.? I keep reminding them of the 2003 WSIS Civil Society Declaration <https://www.itu.int/net/wsis/docs/geneva/civil-society-declaration.pdf> I don't think they are really paying much attention to me, but really ALL OF US, not only civil society, are human beings, and we need to keep fighting to maintain a user/tool relationship with the technology. I think LACIGF has always been one of the leaders in respect of this; it can make a good rallying call for a way forward. And it is relevant to ALL of the "stakeholders"

Thank you for this opportunity.