

This is the second section of the Documentation.

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----- Original Message -----

Subject: Re: [Chapter-delegates] Recent Correspondence from the Cambodian Chapter

Date: Sun, 29 Sep 2013 10:59:28 +0300

From: Elver Loho <elver.loho@gmail.com>

To: ndonnang@nvconsulting.biz

CC: ISOC Chapter Delegates <chapter-delegates@elists.isoc.org>

On 27 September 2013 16:05, Victor Ndonnang <ndonnang@nvconsulting.biz> wrote:

...

...

- The community Grants programme gives priority to Chapters projects
- The Event funding programme which helps to keep the Chapter active each year
- The Web presence support
- The travel support
- Capacities Building and Leadership Program
- International Handbook for Chapters
- Management Tools ...

The problem with all of these measures you have enumerated above is that they require someone to actually sit down, type out applications, organize the people, create a structure for them to work in, and so forth. The problem with most NGOs and, I suspect, with most Chapters is NOT that there aren't any sources of funding available. The problem with most NGOs and, I suspect, with most Chapters is that there isn't money to keep even a single person on the payroll whose job it is to get that funding for all the projects. To actually run things and organize.

We can have all the meetings we want and we can decide whatever, but at some point someone actually needs to sit down and get things done.

This might sound like hyperbole, but steady funding from ISOC HQ to keep one person on the payroll to run things would very likely be **more** valuable than having access to five times more money as community grants or travel support or event funding or whatever. **There's a huge amount of money available in all sorts of grants programs all over the world. The problem isn't lack of project-based money. The problem is lack of money for administrative and organizational tasks.** You're all talking about lack of funding, but **you seem to be missing the most important aspect: the kind of funding that's actually needed.**

Here in Estonia there's a ton of project-based money available, but almost zero administrative funding. As a result there are NGOs where people apply for funding everywhere and do all sorts of crazy and ineffective and useless projects, which look good on paper, but are a waste of time. Why? Because from each project they can extract the 20% administrative overhead funding. And from that maybe a quarter is used for things that actually need to get done. For things, which are truly important. Which no funding committee really knows about or understands. Essentially of project-based funds 5% is used to do important things while 95% is wasted on ineffective and useless [insert your favorite cussword].

Here in Estonia we could get money for doing conferences on internet-related topics. We could get money for publishing. We could get money to do media projects and online education. We might even get money for doing some cool and innovative web service, which nobody will use. Lots of funding available for all of that. And it's all fairly ineffective and the results are hard to measure beyond "we did X". **So what is it that really needs to get done? In one word: lobbying. Analysing pending legislation, going to meetings, talking to politicians and civil servants. That's where the problems are, that's where you get actual measurable results. Is there money for this? Nope. Zero. No money whatsoever.**

So in essence the problems are the following:

1. **You are funding the wrong things. If you want the world to change for the better, then ISOC Chapters around the world need to be effective at lobbying their governments to adopt all the fine principles for which we joined ISOC in the first place.** If we aren't even capable of that, then why are we even here?

2. **You are funding things in the wrong way. There is no shortage whatsoever of project-based funding in the world. The way you get such funding is by keeping someone on the payroll who can get it. That payroll requirement creates a barrier of entry, which most Chapters are unable to get over.** So they languish. And nothing gets done. And people get angry and threaten to dissolve their Chapters.

We've had this discussion before. **The problem is that as Chapter leaders we are working on a voluntary basis (most of us, anyway), and we need to get things done locally and in our workplace and so forth. We are busy and we don't get paid to argue on this mailing list. So if we say that we have a funding problem, then we get a nicely worded reply from the ISOC HQ. And then we complain a bit more, and we get another nicely worded reply from the ISOC HQ. Maybe a meeting happens at the HQ and maybe someone proposes that someone look into it and maybe even a committee is formed, or a working group, where ideas go to silently die. And since we all, as Chapter leaders, have more important things to do, we give up. We understand that it's an uphill battle trying to argue with people who get paid to argue.** I've seen it way too many times trying to

convince a politician to do the right thing -- he or she gets paid and can run you around in circles all day long while you gotta worry about where your next paycheck comes from.

The Cambodian Chapter figured out how to turn the tables. By threatening dissolution of their Chapter, they don't have to fight anymore. Now it's the ISOC HQ that needs to find a solution and needs to do it quickly. Maybe we all need to join the Cambodians out of solidarity. After all, **administrative funding is an issue for most of us, if not all.**

Best,
Elver
.ee [Estonia]

----- Mesaj original -----

De la: "Grigori Saghyan" <gregor@arminco.com>

Către: chapter-delegates@elists.isoc.org

Trimis: joi, 26 septembrie, 2013 3:07:04

Subiect: Re: [Chapter-delegates] Recent Correspondence from the Cambodian Chapter

-----BEGIN PGP SIGNED MESSAGE-----

Hash: SHA1

Dear All,

from the formal point "chapter" is a part of one large structure. I think it is to have clearly defined relations between "Chapters" (or local ISOC structures) and whom? I use "ISOC Global" term, but may be "Management" or "HQ or "Board" is better? For each of proposed terms there is some uncertainty.

After Cambodian declaration it looks, that there only one real way to draw attention to Chapter problems.

Btw, why it is such strong negative reaction for direct financial support? And as we see, there is an expression "The issue of the lack of direct financial transfers is currently not among the solutions the Internet Society can offer".

Here we see the author: it is the "Internet Society". Not the Board, not the staff, not the management, not ISOC Global, but the "Internet Society"

Logically, I can understand, that as a Chapter, our Chapter was involved in some kind of discussion on that point, there was a voting procedure, and such decision was approved by majority? But we do not participated in such procedure.

On the the other hand, if the Chapter is real "chapter" - a part of a large structure the "Internet Society" - it is not necessary to ask Chapter's opinion.

Clear definition of terms is one of the strongest requirements everywhere, I think it is one of the most important points today for ISOC community (also undefined term).

Grigori Saghyan
ISOC.AM [Armenia]

> elver.loho@gmail.com +372 5661 6933 skype: elver.loho

>

> On 25 September 2013 22:56, Dave Burstein <daveb@dslprime.com>

> wrote:

>> Cambodian colleagues

>>

>> I'm a board member in New York and respect your decision but urge

>> you to keep working to resolve this. The board of ISOC is

>> strongly committed to working with chapters and directed staff to

>> improve things. If that's broken down here, as it seems, several

>> board members are surely willing to help. They are dedicated,

>> committed people who make a point fo responding to ISOC chapter

>> members. I or a dozen others on this list can connect you if

>> that makes things easier.

>>

>> They are all strong and independent thinkers, most with a no

>> b_____ attitude.

>> Ted

>>

>> Thanks for addressing this; leaving it without response would

>> have been painful. This is a crisis for the goverance model of

>> ISOC that needs to be resolved at the highest level. **As you saw**

>> **from this list, a dozen other chapters think this crucial to**

>> **solve.**

>>

>> But **"The issue of the lack of direct financial transfers is**

>> **currently not among the solutions the Internet Society can offer"**

>> **doesn't seem to the point. Is there anything in the ISOC charter**

>> that makes this impossible? If so, please point to it and people
>> can bring it to the board.

----- Original Message -----

Subject: Re: [Chapter-delegates] Recent Correspondence from the Cambodian
Chapter

Date: Sun, 29 Sep 2013 11:37:39 +0300 (EEST)

From: Eduard Tric <eduard.tric@isoc.ro>

To: ISOC Chapter Delegates <chapter-delegates@elists.isoc.org>

I subscribe to this piece of estonian wisdom.
We also strongly support direct chapter funding. It will allow a wise
distribution between leadership and management for each chapter.
The role of a chapter leader is to provide leadership , not to do
paperwork.

Nobody likes to do paperwork , unless it is a paid task. The problem
in the relationship Isoc-chapters is the guvernance structure (who is
in charge of this decision , do chapters vote for direct funding ,
ammount ..).

Regards,
Ed

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----- Original Message -----

Subject: Re: [Chapter-delegates] Recent Correspondence from the Cambodian
Chapter

Date: Sun, 29 Sep 2013 10:15:58 -0400

From: Veni Markovski <veni@veni.com>

Reply-To: veni@veni.com

To: Christian de Larrinaga <cdel@firsthand.net>

CC: ISOC Chapter Delegates <chapter-delegates@elists.isoc.org>

...There is a moral duty I think for ISOC to develop local Internet communities and the not for profit sector use of Internet and the .org revenues are very much part of that opportunity. The chapters who supported the .org bid for ISOC would seem a great place to focus on to deliver that mission. ISOC Trustees have emphasised the broad thrust of this intent but so far implementation has not been strong.

Agree.

Bearing that in mind I would expect rather more than 2-3% of ISOC budget for chapter led activities. But I was not talking about that content led mission. I was limiting my comments to bootstrapping a shared secretariat resource that Chapters could tap into so volunteers are supported. I would be very disappointed if chapter funding became dominated by "secretariat" or "admin" issues. Ideally we need to try to keep overheads to a very small level as proportion of overall spend. We should certainly be aiming to be in the top 10% of NFP bodies in this regards.

Well, 2-3 % would have been a good start - it's abot \$ 1 million. Someone else suggested it. I was suggesting actually much bigger change - \$ 10 Million, distributed among 100 chapters.

v.

[Bulgaria]

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----- Original Message -----

Subject: Re: [Chapter-delegates] Recent Correspondence from the Cambodian Chapter

Date: Sun, 29 Sep 2013 18:34:22 +0300

From: Elver Loho <elver.loho@gmail.com>

To: Veni Markovski <veni@veni.com>

CC: ISOC Chapter Delegates <chapter-delegates@elists.isoc.org>

Two points.

1. Global decisions are made on the local level. If a body such as ITU convenes to vote on something, then ISOC HQ is just another organization at that global round table. As such, its influence is limited, if not entirely nonexistent. The people that actually vote on the important issues do so based on the guidelines of their local government. By the time the vote reaches the international body (where ISOC HQ is at the table), every government has already made up its mind. How does a government make up its mind? Based on local and international lobbying in the months leading up to the event. Before the last controversial ITU event, we lobbied the hell out of Estonian representatives and everyone can check the record to see how Estonia voted.

If anyone at the ISOC HQ thinks that shipping representatives to such events can actually influence the outcome of the vote, then **I'm worried that you don't quite understand how governments and diplomacy work. Decisions have already been made on the local level weeks or months earlier. If you actually want to influence the outcomes of international votes, you need to invest in building strong and cooperative local Chapters, which can lobby the issues locally, for a global outcome.**

2. As for the worry that Chapters will become dependent on ISOC HQ and therefore ISOC HQ gains too much influence over the local Chapters, then I think that's just absurd. ISOC is a values-based organization and these are values we all share. HQ can't afford to issue guidelines or directives, which conflict with the basic values of ISOC, or with local laws. There would be too much stink and finger-pointing on this mailing list, as the issue of Chapter bylaws guidelines shows.

If anything, I'm worried that there will be too much red tape associated with getting this basic administrative funding.

Requirements and guidelines and whatnot. Not out of intent to influence, or malice, but **out of a misguided belief that Chapters can't be trusted with money without excessive oversight.** Local Chapters know best how to use the money locally for maximum effect. For example, there's a letter from the Ministry of Communications in our inbox right now asking us to give feedback on the EU net neutrality legislation by October 1st. I'm 90% certain that if we provided an opinion, then it would be used as the basis of the Estonian government's position on the issue. I'm also 90% certain that nobody on our board, nor outside, will be able to put together an opinion by that deadline, because we're too busy with making ends meet.

And I'm 90% certain that people at the ISOC HQ think that this legislation should be tackled by the ISOC European HQ, and ignored by the local Chapters. Which, as I said above, is not how things actually work. Decisions are made on the local level, before representatives are sent to the international forum. Having an ISOC lobbyist sitting at that international table is about as effective use of funds as just taking the ISOC money to a strip club.

How much is it worth to ISOC HQ that one country out of the 28 European Union countries continues to hold positions, which are in line with ISOC's values? How much would it be worth if all 28 EU countries had strong local Chapters capable of convincing the local legislators to keep internet free? **How much are you currently spending on ineffective international lobbying and press releases, when the actual decisionmaking happens on a level, which you can't reach and which you stubbornly refuse to fund?**

Funding local Chapters is not a question of whether you trust the locals to do the right thing. Or whether the HQ will get too much influence over them. **Funding local Chapters is a question of how effective ISOC is around the world in upholding its values.** The internet is a global entity with decisions made around the world - in every country, every day. Thinking that you can somehow influence these decisions on the global HQ or regional HQ level is an absurd and wasteful mismanagement of the ISOC budget and it needs to stop.

The problem we all face right now is that the ISOC budget is already being spent on the upkeep of the global and regional HQs. Any reallocation of funds to Chapters will mean cutting funds to the various HQs. Which means that some people will likely need to be fired or have their salaries or benefits reduced. These are people who either decide whether to reallocate the funds to Chapters or they are friends with these decisionmakers. **It's sort of like lobbying members of parliament to reduce their own salary or reduce the size of the parliament. I'm worried that Chapter funding will not happen, no matter how much we write about it on this mailing list, unless we show that we are serious.** It has been said before that those who make peaceful revolution impossible, will make not-so-peaceful revolution inevitable. The Cambodian Chapter's decision to dissolve might just be the first drop of a thunderous rainstorm.

Best,
Elver
.ee [Estonia]

----- Original Message -----

Subject: Re: [Chapter-delegates] Recent Correspondence from the Cambodian Chapter

Date: Sun, 29 Sep 2013 11:48:41 -0400

From: Veni Markovski <veni@veni.com>

Reply-To: veni@veni.com

To: Elver Loho <elver.loho@gmail.com>

CC: ISOC Chapter Delegates <chapter-delegates@elists.isoc.org>

Elver,
very well said. Happy to hear a familiar voice here!

v. [Bulgaria]

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----- Original Message -----

Subject: Re: [Chapter-delegates] Recent Correspondence from the Cambodian Chapter

Date: Sun, 29 Sep 2013 17:34:21 +0100

From: cdel.firsthand.net <cdel@firsthand.net>

To: veni@veni.com <veni@veni.com>

CC: ISOC Chapter Delegates <chapter-delegates@elists.isoc.org>

Yes it is hugely important to put money into hands where the local content can be produced. Policy starts and stops with the local chancelleries. If we don't submit recommendations or conduct policy work locally on regular and dependable basis then the perspective will default to local industry incumbency lobby groups who do. We have an opportunity to broaden this and deepen current skin deep commitment to Internet bottom up multi stakeholder Model.

As things stand in UK government this could be lost even as soon as 2014.

The need is NOW..

Christian de Larrinaga

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----- Original Message -----

Subject: Re: [Chapter-delegates] Recent Correspondence from the Cambodian Chapter

Date: Sun, 29 Sep 2013 04:59:10 -0400

From: Veni Markovski <veni@veni.com>

To: Elver Loho <elver.loho@gmail.com>

CC: ISOC Chapter Delegates <chapter-delegates@elists.isoc.org>

Elver, and all,

Replace Estonia with Bulgaria , and I can sign it.

Isoc-Bulgaria had several projects running at the same time, and we were having paid staff (many here know Julia and Dessi /Dragoslava/), as well as GOOD stuff to achieve, among which:

- Creative Commons inBulgarian
- changes in the Bulgarian telecom laws to become internet-friendly
- contributions to the ITU
- participation and reporting from ITU big events
- get rid of licenses and regulations of Internet services in the country
- using free and open source software for e-government
- etc

Isoc has contributed a tiny little fraction of our budget, and two years ago, when we most needed support for fighting with the bad stuff at the ITU, 3 chapters - Bulgaria, Poland and Armenia - asked for 7500 \$. The request was turned down because "it has been too international"

I rest my case.

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----- Original Message -----

Subject: Re: [Chapter-delegates] Recent Correspondence from the Cambodian Chapter

Date: Sun, 29 Sep 2013 07:04:47 -0400

From: Veni Markovski <veni@veni.com>

Reply-To: veni@veni.com

To: Christian de Larrinaga <cdel@firsthand.net>

CC: ISOC Chapter Delegates <chapter-delegates@elists.isoc.org>

Christian,
we have a similar saying in Bulgaria, but the thing is that actually since the foundation of the chapters, ISOC HQ has been benefiting much more from them, then the chapters from the HQ.

One example only - if it wasn't for the chapters to drive the support from around the world towards HQ in somewhere 2000, ISOC may have not received the .org, with all consequences. One must remember, that ISOC had very strong competition, which was technically equally or more skilled, and the thing they missed was the overwhelming support from chapters, governments, academia, non-profits around the world.

Some time ago someone here suggested that ISOC allocates 2-3 % of their budget to support chapters. I haven't heard any progress on that proposal. You?

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End of the second section of the Documentation.