

Fellowship Report – APRICOT 2025, APNIC 59 – Petaling Jaya, Malaysia

My name is Mery Henrica, and I am from Timor-Leste. I am incredibly honored and proud to be the first-ever APRICOT Fellow from my country. Among many talented applicants, I was fortunate to be selected, and I truly appreciate this amazing opportunity. Being part of this fellowship is not just a personal achievement but also a chance to represent Timor-Leste on an international stage.

One of the most impactful sessions for me was the APRICOT Fellows Skills Workshop on February 23, 2025. This intensive full-day soft skills training provided valuable knowledge and hands-on experience in key areas, including presentation skills, overcoming the fear of public speaking, community leadership, scenario-based incident management, and role-playing to demonstrate leadership.

The session was led by an exceptional group of facilitators, including **Mr. William Stockbridge, Mr. Aftab Siddiqui, Terry Sweetser, and Robbie Mitchell**, who shared valuable insights, guidance, and interactive exercises to enhance our skills.

I learned important public speaking techniques, such as maintaining strong eye contact, using confident body language, and structuring presentations effectively. Additionally, the workshop emphasized the importance of teamwork, collaboration, and leadership in challenging situations.

This experience was truly transformative, equipping me with essential skills that I will carry forward in my career and community contributions.

As a committee member of TLNOG (Timor-Leste Network Operators Group), I also attended the NOG Report session. As a newly established NOG, I gained valuable insights from more experienced NOGs on how they have grown and sustained their communities, successfully organized events, and attracted large audiences. Their experiences will serve as invaluable references for me and other TLNOG committee members as we work toward strengthening our own NOG in the future.

Additionally, I attended the ICANN Opening Session titled “How I Grew Up with NOGs and the Internet” by Kurt Erik Lindqvist. This session provided valuable insights that will guide us in organizing future events and fostering the growth of our NOG.

Beyond the conference sessions, as a member of the Switch SEA Gender Project Timor-Leste, I connected with fellow Switch community members from five economies, including National Coordinators of Switch and APNIC Foundation staff. We exchanged experiences and learned from one another, further strengthening our network.

I was also invited by the APNIC Foundation, through the Switch SEA Gender Project led by Ms. Cathlene Corcoran, to participate in a short interview with Dave Dawson. In this interview, I shared my experiences as a member of Switch-TL, a TLNOG committee member, and my role as the first Timor-Leste Fellow at APRICOT 2025 and the first Timor-Leste woman Fellow at IGF 2024 in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

During the interview, I shared a message to women, particularly those in my country, encouraging them to continue learning and growing in the field of networking. Women's participation is crucial, and we can excel in this industry just as much as men to help develop Timor-Leste through technology.

I also learned a lot from fellows from other countries who possess strong public speaking skills. Although most of us are not native English speakers, we supported each other in improving our communication and confidence.

Additionally, I received several meeting requests from service providers such as PCCW Global, who introduced their products and services as potential references for the future or for my current workplace if needed.

Conclusion

Attending APRICOT 2025 as a fellow has been an incredibly enriching and inspiring experience. It has not only expanded my technical and soft skills but also deepened my understanding of networking communities, leadership, and collaboration. The connections I have built, the knowledge I have gained, and the insights I have gathered will significantly contribute to my role in TLNOG and my efforts to strengthen the ICT industry in Timor-Leste.

This experience has given me a fresh perspective on the importance of community engagement, mentorship, and continuous learning. I am excited to apply everything I have learned and contribute to the growth of TLNOG, the Switch SEA Gender Project, and the broader ICT sector in Timor-Leste. I look forward to staying connected with the global community and playing an active role in future discussions and initiatives.

Appreciation


I would like to express my deepest gratitude to the entire APRICOT Fellowship Team for making this incredible experience possible. A special thanks to **Fellowship Coordinator Mr. John Rattaray, Mr. Rupesh Shrestha, and the Fellowship Support Team** for their unwavering support and dedication. Their guidance, patience, and professionalism ensured a meaningful and well-organized experience for all fellows.

Lastly, I am grateful to all APRICOT Fellows for their camaraderie, knowledge-sharing, and inspiration. I look forward to continuing our collaborations in the future.

Thank you all for this incredible opportunity. I am truly honored and grateful to be part of this journey!

Thank you,

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