

Centre for Digital Public Infrastructure (CDPI) Residency India Immersion: A Global Nexus of Innovation for Sustainable Development in the Global South

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In a pivotal convergence of minds and methodologies, last month, CDPI held the first DPI Residency immersion program from November 6 to 9, 2023, attracting participants from an impressive roster of eleven countries spanning Africa, Asia, and the Caribbean, including Trinidad and Tobago. Far beyond a conventional training program, this transformative convening served as a global nexus for coalescing insights, fostering cross-cultural collaboration, and sharing best practices in the design and implementation of Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) and Infrastructure Thinking.

The DPI Residency immersion program offered an immersive exploration of the foundational principles of Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI). Participants were engaged in an interactive learning environment where theoretical knowledge was complemented by practical insights. Beyond a mere educational endeavour, it became a dynamic exchange of ideas that went beyond borders and offered a comprehensive understanding of how DPI can be strategically designed and implemented to meet the unique needs of diverse nations.

Integral to the immersion was a captivating journey through the India Story. Participants had the unique opportunity to witness the evolution of India's digital landscape, particularly in the realms of Digital Identities, Digital Payments, and Secure Data Exchange—core components of DPI. The India Story not only served as a case study but as a source of inspiration, illustrating how a well-crafted digital infrastructure can be a catalyst for transformative development and economic growth.

Empowering Minds for DPI Design and Implementation

The program delved deep into the intricacies of the DPI design process, providing participants with comprehensive insights into the practicalities of conceptualization, development, and implementation. Beyond theoretical lectures, the curriculum incorporated real-world use cases, ensuring that participants were not just equipped with knowledge but possessed the practical acumen needed to navigate the complexities of DPI projects.

Hands-On Design Sprint Sessions: Crafting Solutions for Real-World Challenges:

A highlight of the immersion was the hands-on design sprint sessions, providing participants with a platform to translate theoretical knowledge into actionable solutions for real-world challenges. These interactive sessions, akin to crucibles of innovation, facilitated collaborative problem-solving and showcased the potential of shared infrastructure to streamline and amplify development efforts.

The resonance of the DPI Residency reached far beyond geographical confines, as representatives from countries such as Kenya, Ethiopia, Rwanda, Ghana, Malawi, Nigeria, Zambia, Uganda, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Nepal, the Philippines, and Trinidad and Tobago came together with a shared commitment to advance DPI solutions. The resulting cross-cultural exchanges became instrumental in fostering a collaborative spirit that transcended borders.

Value of Digital Public Infrastructure: A Catalyst for Development and Economic Growth:

Digital Public Infrastructure, encompassing Digital Identities, Digital Payments, and Secure Data Exchange, emerges as a linchpin for nations seeking to spur development and catalyse economic growth. Shared infrastructure significantly reduces the cost and time needed for development efforts, creating an environment where resources are utilised efficiently, and progress is accelerated. At the heart of DPI is application and re-use of open source technologies development of solutions,

this addresses one of the biggest challenges facing most government vendor lock-in. Additionally, the open source approach reduces the total cost of ownership (TCO) associated with forex, a big challenge facing the global south and in particular African economies.

By providing a robust framework for secure and interoperable Digital Identities, DPI ensures that individuals can access essential services seamlessly. Digital Payments within the DPI paradigm not only streamline financial transactions but also pave the way for financial inclusion, empowering citizens and fostering economic resilience. Secure Data Exchange becomes the bedrock of trust in the digital landscape, facilitating seamless collaboration and information flow.

The shared infrastructure, as demonstrated in the DPI Residency, becomes a force multiplier for development initiatives. It not only optimizes resource allocation but also creates a fertile ground for innovation, as evidenced by the hands-on design sprint sessions during the immersion. In essence, DPI becomes the cornerstone upon which nations can build sustainable, inclusive, and digitally resilient futures.

CDPI: Pioneering Global Transformation through DPI:

At the heart of this global initiative is CDPI, a dynamic team of DPI builders committed to co-designing localized solutions that scale the adoption and use of DPI in diverse ecosystems. Funded by Codevelop and the Nelikani Foundation, CDPI serves as a catalyst for stakeholders to share knowledge, collaborate on projects through the residency program, and advocate for DPI policies. It is more than an organization; it is a driving force propelling nations toward a digital future defined by inclusivity, innovation, and sustainable progress.

Conclusion: A Blueprint for Collaborative Development:

The DPI Residency India Immersion stands as a testament to the power of collaboration, education, and shared vision in shaping a world where digital infrastructure is not just a tool but a catalyst for positive change. As participants return to their respective countries armed with knowledge, inspiration, and a global network of peers, the impact of this immersion resonates far beyond the four days it spanned. It marks a pivotal moment in the global dialogue on DPI, where nations collectively strive to co-create a digital future that leaves no one behind.

The DPI Residency India Immersion was not merely a program; it is a blueprint for collaborative development—a roadmap where nations converge to harness the transformative potential of Digital Public Infrastructure through co-creation and solution design exchange. It illuminates a path toward a future where digital infrastructure becomes a cornerstone of societal development, enabling nations to overcome challenges, foster economic growth, and build resilient, digitally empowered societies. The DPI Residency India Immersion signifies not just a culmination but a commencement—a commencement of a global movement that will continue to shape the digital destinies of nations for years to come.