

OKFestival 2014: Communities, Activists and Open Minds

Submitted on 16 Jul 2014 by Martin Alvarez-Espinar



During this week, representatives of transparency and open data communities, civic activists, academia and industry from 76 countries will be brought together at the [OKFestival 2014](#).

This annual event, organised by the [Open Knowledge Foundation](#), has been held in a variety of different European cities in the past, but it was Berlin that was handed the honour of hosting this year's event.

Over the coming days, dozens of different activities, from keynotes and panels to unconferences, are being held at [Kulturbrauerei](#) - a large architectural complex originally built and operated as a brewery, housing multiple brick buildings and courtyards.

This festival aims to inspire participants to share skills and experiences, encouraging communities to work together to build tools and partnerships that will further the power of openness as a positive force for change. In addition, it is a fantastic opportunity to celebrate all that the open movement has achieved so far, and an opportunity to plan and shape the landscape ahead.

Today, the OKFestival started with an plenary session containing interesting keynotes. **Patrick Alley**, Director at [Global Witness](#), demonstrated the relevance of his organisation, involved in criminal investigations in countries of South East Asia, Africa and Europe, with succesful results. Of course, transparency unveils corruption, but some 'opaque' countries needs activists –global and local– to fight against corruption. Patrick showed some examples of field work to track money (invoices, bank accounts, etc.) to gain evidence of corruption in governments, where **natural resources (oil, forests, minerals) are key** in their developing economies.

Beatriz Busaniche, property rights expert at [Fundación Vía Libre](#) then explained how the intellectual property rights (IPR) set barriers in the development of economies, limiting innovation. She explained how most constitutions in Latin-America have IPRs included as a basic right for

citizens, and why there is a need of establishing limits in IPRs. For instance, patents on life science, agriculture (seeds), and math algorithms are problematic for health and innovation. Critical of the foundations on Internet Neutrality (recently set by [Net Mundial](#) in Brazil), Beatriz defined **Net Mundial as 'a big circus'**, where multistakeholders signed foundations that put human rights behind local laws. She fosters activism, learning from the past, and fighting against that restrictions for our society.

Much more is planned to take place after this plenary session, check out the [agenda](#) for more details.

Please note: the event is currently experiencing some technical problems in regards to the Internet connection. As soon as these issues are resolved, conferences will be [livestreamed on the web](#), so stay tuned if you have not had the opportunity to attend in person.