

Community networks newsletter: Fostering a community-centred approach to tackle the digital divides

By APCNews -- 25 July 2024

Many digital divides persist today, to the point that a third of the world's population is still offline. In this issue, we highlight a new video from the Local Networks initiative showing how a growing number of communities are taking action to overcome these divides, while defending their fundamental rights and well-being. We also gather updates from different training activities promoting technological appropriation by community members, so that the use of the connectivity can meet people's expressed needs and dreams.

Welcome to the 71st monthly round-up of developments impacting your local access networks and community-based initiatives.

Routing for Communities podcast

- With 12 episodes, the first season of the Routing for Communities podcast is a journey to learn about community-led experiences of people who have come up with alternatives to overcome the challenges of digital inclusion in different places, such as South Africa, Mexico, Argentina, Kenya, Brazil, Indonesia, Nigeria, Thailand and Colombia. You can listen to the episodes at [this page](#), and also on [Apple Podcasts](#) and [Spotify](#).
- **Special episodes on the way:** We are planning new episodes to share more of the incredible interviews conducted for our first season together. Stay tuned!

Community networks news and stories

- The [Local Networks initiative \(LocNet\)](#) is a collective effort led by APC and Rhizomatica in partnership with grassroots communities and support organisations in Africa, Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean. This video from the initiative highlights the importance of supporting community-centred connectivity initiatives across the world. [Watch now](#).
- Discover a training programme aimed at people carrying out communication and telecommunications projects in Indigenous communities in Latin America through two inspiring resources: a video about its 2024 bootcamp ([watch now](#)) and an article written by one of the participants. [Read more](#).
- The end of the 2024 training programme was marked by a bootcamp that took place from 20 to 30 April in Guatemala City. This initiative is

designed to bolster community communication endeavours and self-managed telecommunication projects among rural, remote and Indigenous communities of Latin America. [Read more](#).

- In Colombia, another capacity-building initiative has been successfully completed. The first virtual course of the [Community Network School](#) held by the civil society organisation Colnodo trained 60 people. [Read more](#).
- This article recounts the installation of an internet community network in Mogótavo, a Rarámuri Indigenous community in Mexico that is resisting against territorial dispossession. [Read more](#).
- In India, the Digital Empowerment Foundation has taken on the challenge of bringing digital literacy and livelihood opportunities to a remote community. [Read more](#).

Gendered experiences

- In the digital era, the gender gap remains a difficult barrier to overcome in order to achieve development and equality. This article reflects on Colnodo's experience in promoting initiatives that seek to close the gender digital divide. [Read more](#).
- Discover an innovative way to connect and train women and youth in Sierra Leone in an experience that transformed a 40-foot-long refurbished shipping container into a mobile digital classroom with connectivity. [Read more](#).

Enabling policy and regulation

- Achievements and challenges for Indigenous peoples: this article analyses how Mexico's policy and regulation has evolved four years after the country's telecommunications reform. [Read more](#).
- The International Telecommunication Union (ITU) has developed a series of national country reviews on collaborative digital regulation, in partnership with government authorities, national stakeholders and experts. This report focuses on Nigeria's digital transformation. [Read more](#).
- The Communications Authority of Kenya is set to release a revised spectrum pricing framework. Find out more about the multistakeholder process to develop it in this summary from KICTANet. [Read more](#).
- In the Philippines, 23 organisations called on the country's president to certify as urgent the proposed "Konektadong Pinoy Act", which is a bill aiming to increase private sector and community investment in broadband infrastructure. [Read more](#).
- The [24th Asia-Pacific Telecommunity \(APT\) Policy and Regulatory Forum](#) was held from 16 to 18 July in Chiang Mai, Thailand. Participants shared

summaries on social media highlighting the importance of community-centred connectivity for Asia countries, as you can see [here](#).

Publications, research and toolkits

- The Engine Room just launched the Digital Resilience Hub, a platform providing tools, strategies and ideas to support organisations working towards social justice. Its first set of resources focus on meaningful connectivity and on alternative tech tools for knowledge sharing. [Read more](#).
- The 2024 edition of the ITU's ICT Development Index (IDI) is now available. The Index tracks progress towards universal and meaningful connectivity – defined by the ITU as the ability for everyone to go online under optimal conditions, at an affordable cost, anywhere and anytime they need to. [Read more](#).

Events

- The Asia Pacific Regional Internet Governance Forum (APrIGF) 2024 will be held on 21-23 August in Taipei, Taiwan. [Read more](#).
- The call for applications is now open for the 17th edition of the Latin American and Caribbean Internet Governance Forum (LACIGF), which will be held in Santiago, Chile in November this year. The deadline to submit session proposals is 11 August. [Read more](#).
- On 11 July, the Glitter Meetup, a text-based chat where digital rights defenders can share regional and project updates, invited a community network and internet infrastructure builder to talk about the topic. [Read more](#).

Funding opportunities

- The Internet Society Foundation announced the 2024 edition of their Building Opportunities/Leveraging Technologies (BOLT) Grant Program, an initiative designed to support teams of innovators dedicated to improving internet access and connectivity in unconnected or underserved communities worldwide. Applications can be sent until 6 August. [Read more](#).
- Are you interested in maintaining the public nature of the internet? The third call of the NGI Zero Commons Fund is open until 1 October 2024. [Read more](#).
- In its call for essays for this year's Future Leaders Competition, the International Institute of Communications invites applicants to reflect on the sustainability of networks and the impact of digital technology on the wider economy. The competition encourages and promotes original thought in the areas of communications and policy. Submissions can be sent until 12 August. [Read more](#).

Community networks learning repository

This repository is a collective online space to store and exchange resources from multiple sources and authors that can be useful in training processes focused on materials made for and by community networks.

In this issue, we would like to highlight a space in the repository dedicated to sharing experiences and resources from five National Schools of Community Networks, in which capacity building was the entry point to cultivate community networks and bottom-up meaningful connectivity.

[Find out more!](#)

This newsletter is part of the Local Networks (LocNet) initiative, an initiative led by APC in partnership with Rhizomatica that aims to directly support the work of community networks and to contribute to an enabling ecosystem for the emergence and growth of community networks and other community-based connectivity activities in Africa, Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean. You can read more about the initiative [here](#), [here](#), and [here](#).

Previous editions of this newsletter are available [here](#).

Invite others to subscribe to this monthly newsletter [here!](#)

One more thing! If you have comments about the newsletter or information relevant to the topic that you would like us to include in the next edition, please share it with us [here](#).