

Local Access: Women cultivating community networks



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Community networks cultivate bottom-up, sustainable approaches to communications technology and meaningful connectivity that strengthen personal and collective autonomy and self-determination. But they are not free of imbalance by design. While women have been making essential contributions to community-led initiatives, it is important to acknowledge their roles and seek opportunities to challenge gender inequalities. In this edition, find out more about women's engagement in community networks in Africa. Discover how women are finding self-expression through community radios in India. Also, read the story of Kgopotso Magoro, founder of the Mamaila community network in South Africa, and much more.

Welcome to the 49th monthly round-up of developments impacting your local access networks and community-based initiatives.

Community networks news and stories

- This piece from KICTANet takes us on a trip to BOSCO Uganda, where we can learn more about a community-led initiative's achievements and challenges in a region isolated from access. [Read more.](#)
- From Colombia, Colnodo shares the story of Jxa'ñ Wejxia Casil, a dream of a community network that came true and is growing thanks to its community. [Available in Spanish] [Read more.](#)

- Discover these tales of community-rooted initiatives from the hills in Manipur, towards India's northeast, and the Meo community in Nuh, in the country's heartland. [Read more.](#)
- In Brazil, participants of the first-ever Amazon Community Networks School made a podcast about their territories and lives. Earlier this year, they have been involved in activities related to community radio and communicational autonomy. [Available in Portuguese] [Listen the podcast.](#)
- Around 35 communities are joining the national community networks schools, the first of their kind, taking place in five countries: Brazil, Indonesia, Kenya, Nigeria and South Africa. [Available in English, Portuguese and Spanish] [Read more.](#)
- How is one rural community in South Africa creating opportunities for its youth? Read the story of Kgotso Magoro, founder of the Mamaila community network. [Read more.](#)

Gendered experiences

- In a male-dominant field, community-led initiatives are not free of gender inequalities and cultural biases by design. APC interviewed Risper Akinyi, from the Tunapanda Institute in Kenya, to find out more about the achievements, challenges and hopes for the future when it comes to women's engagement in community networks in Africa. [Read more.](#)
- An indignant and idealistic young radio jockey empowers herself and others: Discover what the story of 28-year-old Shibani tells us about the women weaving connections and finding self-expression through community radio stations in India. [Read more.](#)

Enabling policy and regulation

- The International Telecommunication Union (ITU) published the provisional final report of the 2022 World Telecommunication Development Conference held in Kigali. It includes the revised resolution 37, the one focusing on bridging the digital divide, which finally recognises the important role of complementary access networks, such as community networks, non-profit operators, small ISPs and others. [Read more.](#)
- Abhishek Raj, a researcher at the Centre for Internet and Society (CIS), has authored a document that provides an overview of the policy and regulatory environment surrounding telecommunications in India. [Read more.](#)

Publications, research and toolkits

- The Brazilian Internet Steering Committee recently launched a collection of articles about ICTs, internet governance and gender, including the piece “A proposal for an alliance to overcome permanent access inequalities: Experiences and lessons learned from community networks”. [Available in Portuguese] [Read more](#).
- The webinar “All eyes on content: Tools for content production and sharing” gathered people from different initiatives to share experiences and tools to create, disseminate and store local content and knowledge. The notes and recording are now available. [Read more](#).
- The School of Digital Security from Colnodo launched a community toolkit for training on prevention of digital risks in rural communities. [Available in Spanish] [Read more](#).

Events

- On 29 July at 04:30 UTC, the Community Network Xchange Asia Pacific will host the second of a series of five monthly online events. It will feature videos about a community-owned wireless mesh network in Tumkur, Karnataka, India, and about a community network in the hilly, remote village of Khalte, on the Nepal-China border. The screening will be followed by a discussion focusing on the theme "Last Mile Access: Policy vs Practice". The next events in the series will happen on the 29th of August, September and October. [Register here](#).
- The online event "Pollution and Tech Activism: Lessons from Taiwan and Nigeria" will bring together speakers from those two countries on 6 August at 11:30 UTC to discuss how communities can track pollution as well as strategies to hold polluters accountable. [Read more](#).
- For those who want to exchange ideas about how to create a decentralised web that is more open, private and secure, the DWeb Camp 2022 will happen from 24 to 28 August in California. [Read more](#).
- The BattleMesh event is going live again for its 14th edition, back to an on-site event in Rome from 19 to 22 September. It aims to bring together people from across the world to test the performance of different routing protocols for networks. [Read more](#).
- The Internet Governance Forum (IGF) has announced the workshops selected for its 2022 meeting, taking place in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, from 28 November to 2 December. [Read more](#).

Funding opportunities

- Last week to apply: Numun Fund's first grant entirely dedicated to supporting feminist tech activism and work in the Larger World is open until 1 August 2022. [Read more.](#)
- The Internet Society has announced a second round of grant funding through its Resiliency programme, which aims to help communities enhance preparedness and build internet resiliency when faced with adverse events. Applications are open until 19 August. [Read more.](#)
- IGF will support a limited number of eligible candidates from developing countries to participate at the 17th annual meeting happening from 28 November until 2 December. Candidates can submit the travel request until 31 August 2022. [Read more.](#)

Why do we need community-led approaches to digital inclusion?

In times of crisis, community networks demonstrated they were more than technological solutions to communication and access gaps. Every location of these community-rooted initiatives became its own powerhouse of resistance against the risks and inequalities exacerbated by COVID-19. The GenderIT.org special edition “Infrastructures of resistance: Community networks hacking the global crisis” features grassroots stories that prove it. [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 developing countries. You can read more about the initiative [here](#), [here](#), and [here](#).

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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](#).