

Will community networks change our approach to connectivity?



By APC News

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Over the past weeks, diverse community network builders and supporters have joined together to exchange knowledge, discuss challenges and alternatives, and form closer bonds. While Brazil and Colombia hosted national encounters, events like the Internet Governance Forum happening in Ethiopia are gathering people from Africa, Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean. Among a wide diversity of community-led initiatives, there is one thing they all have in common: a human-centred focus that looks at connectivity as a way of improving people's lives and building a sustainable future for all.

With a bottom-up approach, communities from around the world have been demonstrating that they are not only capable of building solutions for the digital divide, they can also do it while bridging inequalities and seeding important social changes.

Welcome to the 53rd monthly round-up of developments impacting your local access networks and community-based initiatives.

Community networks news and stories

- A village in South Africa leaps across the digital divide: read this article about Zenzeleni Community Networks and its experience in using low-cost access to the internet to benefit the community. [Read more.](#)
- TunapandaNET, a community network located in the informal settlement of Kibera, Nairobi, has been at the forefront of the community networks movement in Kenya, advocating for affordable connectivity through community deployment of infrastructure. [Read more.](#)

- From Argentina, two beautiful new videos from AlterMundi offer a combination of grassroots voices, stunning landscapes and powerful reflections about community-led rural connectivity. Watch them [here](#) and [here](#). [Available in Spanish]
- Under the theme "promoting digital inclusion from local management", the Forum of Community Networks in Colombia gathered different experiences on 21 November, showing that the community networks movement is part of an evolving and vibrant field weaving bottom-up technologies and solutions to the digital divide. The recordings are available on [Colnodo's channel here](#). [Available in Spanish]
- Representatives connected with diverse social movements and from different parts of Brazil assembled on 10 and 11 November 2022 at the Internet Community Networks Encounter in São Paulo to discuss their experiences and exchange learning, challenges and dreams. This wide diversity of community-led initiatives issued a joint letter valuing the role of community networks to bridge the digital divide and calling for supportive policy and regulation for community networks in the country. [Read more](#).
- Instituto Nupef celebrates the deployment of a new community network in an Indigenous village in the state of Espírito Santo in Brazil. The organisation has already supported the installation of 17 community networks in the country. [Read more](#). [Available in Portuguese]
- Meanwhile in India, the Digital Empowerment Foundation is implementing a project called "Community Networks: Connecting the Indigenous Communities of Ziro Valley" in partnership with the Internet Society. [Read more](#).

Gendered experiences

- 48percent.org has partnered with Servalots near Bangalore, India, to support a project aiming to connect young girls to the internet through "ASPi"-devices (aspiration networking devices). This blog post gives an insight into the project and the work that is being done. [Read more](#).

Enabling policy and regulation

- A Push Towards Universal Connectivity: This article from the Internet Society explores how governments can help connect the unconnected. [Read more](#).
- What is the role of African parliamentarians in shaping an inclusive and human-centric digital future? [Read more](#).
- AlterMundi's Semillero de Redes Comunitarias para Postulantes al Programa Roberto Arias (Seedbed of Community Networks for Applicants to the Roberto Arias Programme) [won first place](#) in the category of Community Enablement Proof of Concept at the awards presented by IEEE during the Connecting the Unconnected Summit 2022. Learn more about this groundbreaking initiative [here](#) [in Spanish] and about the Roberto Arias Programme [here](#) [in English].
- And the Sarantaporo community network in Elassona, Greece was also recognised at the IEEE Connecting the Unconnected Challenge 2022: they won second place in the Business Models Proof of Concept category. [Read more](#).
- From the 2022 Internet Governance Forum, in this episode of Local Sound Bites

produced by APC, Adugna Necho, president of the Internet Society Ethiopia chapter, speaks about digital inclusion policies and community-based initiatives. [Listen here](#).

- This article explores the reflections of a workshop focused on policy and regulatory support for digital inclusion in Nigeria. [Read more](#).

Publications, research and toolkits

- The new edition of Global Information Society Watch (GISWatch) is out, focusing on “Digital futures for a post-pandemic world”. Among the various thematic reports included, this one looks at advocacy for community-led connectivity access in the global South. [Read more](#).
- Community Networks as Enablers of Human Rights: The official outcome of the Internet Governance Forum Dynamic Coalition on Community Connectivity was just launched during the 2022 IGF. The publication compiles diverse articles about the community networks' achievements around the world. [Read more](#).
- The Brazilian Internet Steering Committee – CGI.br recently launched a comprehensive research report on community networks in the country. The publication “Community networks and the Internet in Brazil: Experiences and challenges for digital inclusion” is now available in English. [Read more](#).
- The G20 Compendium of Case Studies gathered 10 experiences organised by segments of digital infrastructure, including one focused on the last mile, featuring community networks and rural shops as Wi-Fi access points. [Read more](#).
- The recordings from the BattleMesh event provide interesting highlights from this year’s edition, such as the [geopolitics of chip production](#) and a talk given by [AlterMundi about the LibreRouter](#), showing how to assemble this open hardware.

Events

- This year, the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) is happening from 28 November to 2 December in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Among many crucial discussions about the future of internet governance and human rights, various sessions are focusing on how to strengthen bottom-up and community-led initiatives that challenge inequalities. Check out some [here](#) and [here](#).
- The 2022 Bootcamp organised to close the "Telecommunications and Broadcasting Promotion in Indigenous Communities" programme took place from 12 to 18 November in Colombia. The programme's aim is to enable Indigenous people to create media reflecting their own values. To mark the occasion, a radio celebration was produced by the participants. [Check it out](#). [Available in Spanish].
- This journal of the 2022 Bootcamp published by Coolab, from Brazil, offers an interesting reflection about the gathering: isn't contributing to others being able to speak for themselves instead of positioning ourselves as an intermediary the greatest achievement of all? [Read more](#). [Available in Portuguese]
- The third edition of the Tanzania School of Community Networks convened by the Kasulu Community Networks Cooperative took place on 1 and 2 November

2022 in Kasulu district, Kigoma Province, Tanzania. The theme for this year's edition was "Digital Literacy Towards Addressing the Usage Gap in Tanzania". [Read more](#) and discover some [lessons learned](#).

Discover community networks stories

"Routing for Communities" is an online collection of creative and inspiring short videos about community networks and people decentralising the internet for change. They were produced by communities and organisations in Africa, Asia and Latin America.

The films capture the different contexts and initiatives of community networks around the world, exploring both the challenges and joys of their work.

[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](#).

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