

Association for Progressive Communications

## Community networks and local access

Newsletter 54 – January 2023



An activity during the South Africa School of Community Networks. Photo: Zenzeleni Networks NPC

**Walk the Talk Video Case Stories:** This series made for the latest edition of the Community Network Xchange (CNX) brings diverse and inspiring stories of community network builders in Asia, including initiatives from Indonesia, India, Malaysia, China, Pakistan and Nepal. [Read more.](#)

**Seeding change in 2022:** This post explores in-depth stories of diverse and inspiring projects from APC members and partners supported by APC subgrants, including several focused on enabling community-led digital inclusion. [Read more.](#) [Also available in [Spanish](#) and [French.](#)]

**Dreaming collectively:** DWeb Camp was a place to share questions, experiences, concerns and joys regarding our relation to technologies. People from diverse walks of life had the opportunity to get together and weave ideas towards the decentralisation of the internet. [Read more.](#) [Also available in [Spanish.](#)]

**Connecting the Indigenous Communities of Ziro Valley:** This piece from Digital Empowerment Foundation shares more about local alternatives bridging the digital divide in India. [Read more.](#)

In 2022, Instituto Nupef deployed community networks in 18 areas of Brazil. [Read](#)

[more](#). [Available in Portuguese.]

The community networks movement should also grow in Brazil in 2023: The last interaction of the Amazon Community Networks School brought together 21 students from different locations. This was their last capacity-building encounter and now the participants will develop projects in their communities. [Read more and see inspiring photos](#). [Available in Portuguese.]

The Argentine national news agency Télam listened to stories and experiences from different people for an in-depth piece that explores a range of themes, from daily experiences to the development of community networks and the local production of technology for sovereignty. [Read more](#). [Available in Spanish.]

### **Gendered experiences**

Access denied: A new GenderIT.org edition collects stories of individuals and communities from South and Southeast Asia discussing the impact of the gender digital divide, and how they respond to the challenges and barriers. [Read more](#).

Women's community radio: The new edition includes this powerful piece about how islanders and mountain residents are coping with the impact of COVID-19 in rural Indonesia. [Read more](#).

As part of the series “Conectividad desde los territorios”, this beautiful short video from AlterMundi tells the story of three generations of women living in the countryside, showing how internet connectivity upholds them in continuing to live in their homelands. [Read more](#). [Available in Spanish.]

### **Enabling policy and regulation**

The president of the National Telecommunications Agency (Anatel) received the UK Ambassador in Brazil and civil society representatives in a meeting about community networks and the steps needed to create a more enabling environment for them in the country. [Read more](#). [Also available in [Portuguese](#).]

Anatel's regulatory agenda for the period 2023-2024 includes a "reassessment of rules applicable to community networks" as a "priority". Such networks can reduce access gaps, in addition to guaranteeing fundamental communication rights to Indigenous and Quilombola communities and civil society organisations. [Read more](#). [Available in Portuguese.]

While efforts to understand the cost of connectivity investment are noble, they have the unfortunate side effect of making one think of the challenge as a monolithic problem. Find out why this is a limited approach in the reflection “A game of stones”. [Read more](#).

What is spectrum policy? Why do we need it? How is it used? Find out more through a new podcast by PolicyTracker called “Spectrum Policy 101”. [Read more](#).

### **Publications, research and toolkits**

Discover the findings and proposals from the new report “Towards a regulatory

framework for community networks in French-speaking African countries”. [Read more](#). [Available in French.]

Steve Song has published the ninth annual review of telecommunications infrastructure development in Africa, summarising developments and highlights in 2022. [Read more](#).

gaul is an internet-independent wireless mesh communication app. It was designed to communicate peer-to-peer without any internet or communication infrastructure. [Read more](#).

## **Events**

Zenzeleni Networks NPC is hosting the closing event of the first ever South African School of Community Networks. The event will be held on 30 January 2023 in Johannesburg, with online streaming. [Read more](#).

Did you miss the annual Internet Governance Forum (IGF) in late 2022? Insightful reflections and summaries were published by those who were part of it, bringing a global South perspective and pointing out what worked well and what did not work so well in the latest edition. Read more in [this piece from APC](#), in [this one](#) from the Brazilian organisation Projeto Saúde e Alegria [available in Portuguese], in this [reflection](#) by Y. Z. Yau of Nigerian APC member CITAD, and in this series comprising parts [1](#), [2](#), [3](#) and [4](#) from Kenya-based APC member KICTANet.

## **Funding opportunities**

This grant announced by the NLnet foundation can support projects for the development of open source tools, documentation, hardware and the like. The deadline for applications is 1 February. [Read more](#).

Cultural Survival announced the 2023 call for proposals for the Indigenous Community Media Fund, running until 15 February. [Read more](#).

The Internet Freedom Fund is the Open Technology Fund's primary way to support projects and people working on open and accessible technology-focused projects that promote human rights, internet freedom and open societies. It accepts applications on a rolling basis. [Read more](#).

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

Connect Humanity just launched a new report: “State of Digital Inequity: Civil Society Perspectives on Barriers to Progress in our Digitizing World”. The report provides the largest ever mapping of the digital barriers that civil society organisations (CSOs) face – and those faced by the communities they serve. While 95% of CSOs said the internet is vital to their ability to do their work, three in four said that a lack of internet access, tools or skills limits their ability to serve their communities effectively.

This newsletter is part of the Local Networks (LocNet) initiative, a collective effort led by APC and Rhizomatica in partnership with people and organisations in Africa, Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean, aiming to directly support community networks and to contribute to an enabling ecosystem for their emergence and growth. The newsletter was supported by Canada's International Development Research Centre (IDRC) in 2017/2018 and funded by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) from 2019 to 2022.

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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 at [localaccess.newsletter@apc.org](mailto:localaccess.newsletter@apc.org).

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