

Community networks newsletter 61: Can connectivity enable a worthwhile digital future leaving no one behind?



By APCNews. Published on Aug. 31st 2023. Updated on Sept. 1st 2023. Photo Colnodo.

While seeing how the internet can bring both negative and positive impacts in the world, there is a promising entry point happening within the community networks movement: the combination of complementary connectivity alternatives with processes to strengthen the social appropriation of information and communications technologies (ICTs) by communities around the world. In this edition we can see many examples of community-centred initiatives flourishing in Asia, Africa and Latin America.

Welcome to the 61th monthly round-up of developments impacting your local access networks and community-based initiatives.

Routing for Communities podcast

- In August, the Routing for Communities podcast travelled to a rural area in Córdoba, Argentina. There we could get to know the Quintana Libre community network. We could also find out more about groundbreaking policy in support of community-led models for connectivity in the country. [Play](#).
- In Indonesia, we met the Common Room Networks Foundation, an organisation that helped build the community network in Ciptagelar Traditional Village, in West Java. This inspiring initiative presents

alternatives for community-led connectivity in a country where around 12,000 villages are still unconnected. [Play](#).

- Stay tuned: In September, two new episodes will take us on a journey to Brazil and Nigeria to hear the life stories of people connecting themselves while defending the fundamental rights and well-being of their communities. [Join our Telegram channel now](#) to keep up to date with the new releases.

Community networks news and stories

- Can connectivity enable a free, safe and worthwhile digital future leaving no one behind? This vital question is discussed considering different reports and reflections in this article. [Read more](#).
- For many years, Zenzeleni Networks have been bridging the digital divide in South Africa. This news article highlights their impact in local villages and on the country's policy and regulation. [Read more](#).
- This photo essay captures MAJI's journey in holding oil polluters accountable in Nigeria. They have been deploying low-cost technologies and open data for monitoring air pollution and creating evidence-based advocacy. [Read more](#).
- Also from Nigeria, we learn more about how the Centre for Information Technology and Development (CITAD) is making strides in closing the digital divide in Nigeria through capacity building. [Read more](#).
- Seeding change: In many parts of East Africa, lack of connectivity has a big impact on education, especially among the most vulnerable. Addressing this is the goal of the Kenya-based organisation Arid Lands Information Network (ALIN). [Read more](#).
- In Brazil, the Amazon Community Networks School celebrated the inauguration of a community radio that also works as a hotspot for internet access for a riverside community. [Read more](#). [Available in Portuguese.]

Gendered experiences

- Empowering Communities Through Digital Entrepreneurship: From India, DEF tells the story of Rajni Kashyap establishing her digital centre as a transformative bridge between government services and an underserved community. [Read more](#).
- In Colombia, an initiative led by Colnodo is training women in rural communities so they can strengthen their ICT skills and use digital tools to promote their small businesses. [Read more](#). [Available in Spanish.]

Enabling policy and regulation

- The working group formed by the Brazilian telecommunications regulator (Anatel), civil society organisations and community network

representatives has been meeting to discuss how to create a more enabling environment to promote community-centred connectivity in the country. [Read more](#). [Available in Portuguese.]

- In this video, Adriana Labardini Inzunza, an independent public interest lawyer specialised in information and communications technology (ICT) regulation, discusses how digital change led by communities is vital for sustainable development in Latin America. [Watch now](#). [Available in Spanish.]
- This piece from Colnodo tells more about an event organised by the Ministry of Information and Communications Technology in Colombia focusing on community connectivity. [Read more](#). [Available in Spanish.]

Publications, research and toolkits

- Indonesia's digital transformation, a priority issue in the G20 for 2022, requires collaboration among stakeholders. This paper reflects on how to ensure rights, equality and a gender perspective in this process. [Read more](#).
- This toolkit from the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) emphasises ICT accessibility, recognising its significance in building inclusive digital communities. [Read more](#).

Events

- From 7 to 10 September, Brazil will host a new edition of CoolabCamp, this time in collaboration with DWeb. The theme is "Decentralising is decolonising". [Read more](#).
- This year, the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) will take place in Kyoto, Japan, from 8 to 12 October. [Read more](#).
- Before the global IGF, various regional and national forums are being held, such as the Asia Pacific IGF. From 29 to 31 August it discussed different topics in Brisbane, Australia, including an interesting session on "Sustainability of Complementary Connectivity Initiatives". [Watch the recordings](#).
- The Africa IGF will take place from 19 to 21 September in Abuja, Nigeria. [Read more](#).
- The online event "Journey towards Meaningful Connectivity" explored value-added services of community networks during two days of insightful discussions. Check out the recordings [here](#) and [here](#).
- This collaborative workshop led by the Internet Society also discussed community networks' achievements and challenges. There are recordings available in [Spanish](#) and [Portuguese](#).
- This piece from Nupef Institute tells about their experience in exchanging learnings with other organisations that work on connectivity and digital

rights during this year's RightsCon and other side gatherings in Costa Rica. [Read more](#). [Available in Portuguese.]

Funding opportunities

- The Internet Society Foundation announced a third round of grant funding through its Resiliency Programme, which aims to help communities build internet resiliency when faced with adverse events. Proposals can be sent until 15 September 2023. [Read more](#).
- Ford Foundation re-launched their Digital Infrastructure Insights Fund, which accepts proposals spanning a spectrum of activities, from pioneering research on different methodological traditions to the implementation of past findings. The submission deadline for proposals is 30 September. [Read more](#).

Featured from the community networks learning repository

Did you know there is an [online learning repository](#) focused on materials made for and by community networks? This is a collective space to store and exchange resources that can be useful in training processes.

Among many materials on different topics, this month we want to highlight this summary of the key outcomes from the 2021 Asia-Pacific Regional Community Networks Summit. Co-hosted by ESCAP and ISOC, the event aimed to enhance digital connectivity in rural areas, recognising the role of community networks in bridging the digital divide.

[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](#).

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](#).