

## Community networks newsletter 63

By APC News -- Published on 26 October 2023



Photo: Colnodo.

This month we are highlighting the fundamental role of knowledge exchange and capacity-building in expanding meaningful and community-centred connectivity. Around the world, diverse peoples are building community networks through the synergy of their knowledge of local realities and technologies, and the expertise of people and organisations engaged in support this field.

Concrete and inspiring examples can be seen in this issue, which highlights projects taking place in Colombia, focusing on women, and in the proliferation of online resources on the topic, such as those available in the community networks learning repository; as well as the new online course launched by CITEL and Rhizomatica focusing on how to create an enabling regulatory environment for community networks and communications.

Welcome to the 63th monthly round-up of developments impacting your local access networks and community-based initiatives.

### ***Routing for Communities podcast***

- This month, we travel to Colombia and England. And we learn about two inspiring experiences of community networks functioning in very different contexts but with one element in common – their construction reflects the power of joint action to realise dreams in communities. Listen to them now:
- [Episode 9: The story of B4RN and the power of joint action](#)

- [Episode 10: The network of the wind from the Nasa Indigenous community](#)
- Stay tuned: In November, we will launch the final two episodes of this season. [Join our Telegram channel now](#) to keep up to date with the new releases.

### **Community networks news and stories**

- For many years, Indigenous communities were in the dark when it came to telephony and internet services in Puebla (Mexico). Wiki Katat is the name of the virtual, social and community-based mobile operator created by these communities to overcome this difficulty. A new video features their experience. [Watch now](#).
- You can also find out more about Wiki Katat at this new photo-reportage from the media outlet, DesInformémonos. [Read more](#). For more information in English, [listen to the third episode](#) of the Routing for Communities podcast.
- How is connectivity shaping the future of tourism in Sherpa villages in Nepal? Find out more on this article from 48percent.org. [Read more](#).
- Exploring connectivity around the world: This piece reflects on the various connectivity challenges, developments and improvements in different countries. [Read more](#).
- In Indonesia, Common Room just hosted the Rural ICT camp from 11 to 14 October 2023. Every year, this gathering discusses the digital transformation needed to foster the inclusion of remote places. This year's edition was captured by beautiful pictures and videos published by Common Room on their [Instagram profile](#). [Find out more on their recap video](#). You can also learn more about Common Room's partnership with local communities in Indonesia [in this episode of the Routing for Communities podcast](#).

### **Gendered experiences**

- Reflections on women's participation in community networks: Historically, women have faced inequality in various fields, and technology is no exception. Find out more on this reflection from Laura Sánchez, published by the Colombian organisation, Colnodo. [Read more](#).
- From reflection to practice: Find out more about Colnodo's projects in the country aiming to allow [rural women to strengthen their ICT skills](#) to boost their productive initiatives and lead community networks in their localities. Recently they celebrated [the inauguration of the community network, La Chitara Cerritana](#), on 1 October 2023.

### **Enabling policy and regulation**

- How to bring about an enabling policy and regulatory environment for sustainable community connectivity and communications? This is the focus of a Spanish-language online course, developed by the Inter-American Telecommunications Commission (CITEL) and Rhizomatica. The deadline to apply is 7 November 2023. [Read more](#).
- Investing in meaningful connectivity to a better internet in Africa, Asia and Latin America: This article proposes a change in the way UN measures access to the internet. [Read more](#).

- Argentina's licences for community networks to provide connectivity services are pioneering and have inspired other countries to create their own public policies in this regard. Find out more in this interview from Jesica Giudice from AlterMundi to La Ribera Multimedia. [Watch now](#).
- You can also find out more about Argentina's policy and regulation scenario at the broadcast of the 1st Meeting of Community Internet Networks and Technologies for Rural communities in Argentina, which saw the release of a new book on public policies for internet access in popular neighbourhoods and rural areas. [Watch now](#).
- In this episode of the PING podcast, Steve Song discusses a project mapping internet content delivery networks and cloud services, making the case for open data in telecommunications decision-making. [Read more](#).

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

- Under the title "Community Networks: Building Digital Sovereignty and Environmental Sustainability", the UN IGF Dynamic Coalition on Community Connectivity just launched its official outcome. The publication highlights several articles emphasising the relevance of community networks not only as an engine for the expansion of connectivity but also as a vector of community self-determination. [Read more](#). You can also watch the [launch during this year's Internet Governance Forum \(IGF\) here](#).
- Toward smart community networks: This article aims to lay out the technical features of future community networks, arguing that emerging technologies will give fresh impetus to them. [Read more](#).
- The Colabora Forum is a platform created by the organisation Colnodo in Colombia. It is a virtual collaborative space where local people involved with community networks within the territory, and individuals working in organisations that accompany them or conduct research on the topic, can exchange experiences and recommendations. [Read more](#).

### ***Events***

- The annual Internet Governance Forum (IGF) is the United Nations' most significant multistakeholder event with respect to internet governance. This year's edition took place in Kyoto, Japan, from 8 to 12 October. A lot of sessions and dialogues highlighted community-centred alternatives to bridge the digital divide. You can find some of the recordings in this recap from APC. [Read more](#).
- This article brings some reflections explored during the IGF session, [Agents of inclusion: Community networks & media meet-up](#), which brought together local community representatives to share their learnings and practical solutions for a truly inclusive digital world. [Read more](#).
- Short and insightful reflections about the alternatives on access were also summarised by APC during this year IGF's in its Local Sound Bites, which featured a daily short interview with a civil society representative attending the forum. [Listen these sound bites](#).
- The 2023 global IGF staged the launch of the campaign, #TheIGFWeWant, calling attention to the crucial role of the forum and its multistakeholder approach. As

part of the campaign, this video explores how IGF should bring people from the global South together – like those involved in community networks – so that their diverse and important voices are heard so as to define the future of internet governance. [Watch now](#).

- Multiple civil society organisations, however, expressed their alarm over the eventual decision that Saudi Arabia will host the next annual meeting of IGF, considering its government's long history of silencing and persecuting activists. [Read more](#).

### **Funding opportunities**

- The Feminist Internet Research Network (FIRN) has launched a call for proposals. Individual researchers and/or organisations are invited to submit research proposals that address critical and emerging issues related to technology-facilitated gender-based violence. The deadline for applications is 2 November 2023. [Read more](#).

### **Featured from the community networks learning repository**

This repository is a collective online space to store and exchange resources that can be useful in training processes, focused on materials made for and by community networks and other community-centred initiatives.

Among many materials on different topics, in this edition we invite you to dive into this guide that provides a comprehensive, step-by-step manual for establishing, managing, and leading a smart village initiative aimed at sustainable development.

#### **[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](#).*

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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](#).*