

Community networks and local access - Newsletter 66

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Meet solar-powered hubs providing community-centred connectivity in Nigeria

Earlier this year, Hello World, in partnership with APC and CITAD, offered training on the Hello Hub connectivity model to seven community organisations in Abuja, Nigeria. The participants, among other things, built a fully operational Hello Hub in partnership with the Dakwa community in Abuja. These are outdoor, solar-powered, affordable internet hubs designed for communities to build and manage in order to provide meaningful connectivity in the region. The photos of the process, featured in this issue, show the power of partnership, knowledge-sharing and the leadership roles of community members in offering connectivity alternatives and bridge the digital divide in previously marginalised areas.

News of significant achievements in other countries, such as the Indigenous communities providing telephony and internet service with national coverage in Mexico, are also highlighted in this issue. Welcome to the 66th monthly round-up of developments impacting your local access networks and community-based initiatives.



Pictures of the training on the Hello Hub connectivity model in Nigeria. Photos: Hello World

Routing for Communities podcast

- Can communities shape digital technologies in favour of their environments, cultures, knowledge and well-being? This piece presents five inspiring stories from the Routing for Communities podcast showcasing how connectivity and the use of technology gain meaning from local demands. [Read more.](#)
- The entire season is available on the [podcast landing page](#), and also on [Google Podcasts](#), [Apple Podcasts](#) and [Spotify](#).

Community networks news and stories

- As mentioned, in Nigeria, the not-for-profit organisation [Hello World](#), in partnership with APC and CITAD (Centre for Information Technology and Development), imparted training on the Hello Hub connectivity model to seven community organisations in Abuja. The training built on the first [Nigerian School of Community Networks](#), led by CITAD and involving these communities in previous years. [Read more.](#)
- Participants got hands-on training about how to construct a Hello Hub and on topics like solar-powered internet stations and inclusive community management. There were also collaborative sessions on how to adapt the model to suit each community context. They constructed a fully operational Hello Hub in partnership with [Dakwa community in Abuja](#), and there are plans to build a second one within the Jama'are community. As the hubs are adaptable and replicable, CITAD and the trained participants are ready to share this knowledge. According to Hello World, the project has the potential to impact thousands of people.
- In Kenya, the rural community of Ugunja in the Siaya County region faces a digital divide that exacerbates social and economic inequalities, especially in vulnerable groups. In this blog, ISOC Kenya shares more about a project addressing this issue through the Kijiji Yeetu community network. [Read more.](#)
- Indigenous communities are providing telephony and internet service with national coverage in Mexico. Read more in [this press release](#) about the launch of TIC OMV and Wiki Katat Tosepan, the only social and community-based mobile virtual network operators in the country. Visuals of the launch are [available here](#). [Available in Spanish.]

- In Brazil, after a year dealing with various barriers, the Nupef Institute has begun testing TV White Spaces equipment in the Amazon region. The technology should make it possible to improve the quality and security of connectivity in the region. [Read more](#). [Available in Portuguese.]
- The community connectivity provider B4RN made a new video to celebrate the achievements of its Halo Project, which is delivering a resilient 400Gbps ring network across northern England to support communities. [Watch now](#).

Gendered experiences

- ILGA World recently launched [Accessing Connection](#), a pioneering research looking into the complex interplay between disparities in digital access and the unique experiences of individuals and communities spanning diverse sexual orientations, gender identities and expressions, and sex characteristics. Researchers also have mapped the complexities of the digital divide across race and migration status, geographic regions, urban-rural contexts and disability, among others. [Read more](#). [Also available [in Spanish](#).]
- Women-led community networks in Costa Rica: Discover how Indigenous women leaders of the Cabécar nation are using digital technologies strategically to connect younger generations with their community's culture, knowledge and language. [Read more](#).
- What is digital gender divide and what are the benefits of digital gender inclusion? This blog shares some reflections from research on the topic. [Read more](#).
- Imagining digital technologies from the perspective of personal and collective care and planetary solidarity: this special edition of GenderIT bring a series of articles and reflections on technological creation. [Read more](#). [Available in Spanish.]

Enabling policy and regulation

- Establishing community networks in Kenya has not been easy, but it has been achieved through continual collaboration by various stakeholders. This piece from KICTANet bring concrete experiences and statistics showing why the country needs these networks. [Read more](#).

- While the community networks movement advances in the country, stakeholders from several sectors gathered at the first ever National Summit of Community Networks in Kenya. Some of the highlights from this significant meet are summarised by KICTANet [here](#) and [here](#).
- Following their participation at the 2023 African Internet Governance Forum (IGF), the Media Awareness and Justice Initiative (MAJI) identified several key issues affecting digital inclusion, expansion and use across Africa and formulated some recommendations for the way forward. [Read more](#).
- In Brazil, the telecommunications regulatory agency, Anatel, is evaluating the use of the country universal service fund to support community networks, according to news about the movement's achievements and challenges in the country. The piece also brings inspiring images and information about the PSP community network. [Read more](#). [Available in Portuguese.]
- The civil society organisation, Colnodo, submitted its comments on the draft decree on the shared use of radio spectrum in Colombia, published by the Ministry of Information and Communication Technologies. Colnodo's contribution highlights the importance of creating a scenario of greater spectrum availability and access for small operators and community networks. [Read more](#). [Available in Spanish.]

Publications, research and toolkits

- The Community Network Roadmap is a tool designed to help communities create their own broadband network solutions for connectivity. It covers topics from community organising to network planning, technical training, organisational stability, community inclusivity and accountability, among others. [Read more](#).

Events

- On 29 and 30 April 2024, Brazil will host the NETmundial+10, a second global multi-stakeholder meeting on the future of internet governance, building on the first NETmundial held in the country in 2014. The goal is to collectively craft a common, structured, priority issues agenda for the global community. [Read more](#).

- Africa Community Networks Exchange on Knowledge Resources: this webinar series took a deep dive into the learning experiences of community networks in the region. It was also an opportunity to share information on useful tools and materials on the topic. The recordings are available on the social media sites of Tanda Community Network. [Watch them here](#).
- The eighth edition of YouthLACIGF in August 2023 brought together some 108 young people from 14 Latin American countries to Colombia to discuss internet governance. In this article, a participant highlights an important reflection shared at this forum: meaningful connectivity is centred on communities. [Read more](#). [Available in Spanish.]

Funding opportunities

- The Internet Society has announced new opportunities under its Connecting the Unconnected funding programme to support communities in building or improving community networks or other access solutions. This year, there will be two windows for applications: one ongoing from 1 February to 15 March, and another one from 16 July to 30 August 2024. [Read more](#).
- NGI Zero Commons Fund – Reclaim the public nature of the internet: the goal of this new fund is to help deliver, mature and scale up new internet commons across the whole technology spectrum. The deadline is 1 April 2024. [Read more](#).

Community networks learning repository

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

In this issue, we would like to highlight its information on the training programme Techio Comunitario, focused on Indigenous and rural communities in Latin America. In addition to providing technical knowledge for the installation, operation and maintenance of community communication projects, it seeks to generate a network of people who empower each other traversing the path towards technological autonomy in their territories.

[Find out more!](#)

[Send us your community networks updates](#)

[Link to previous editions](#)

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 2023.

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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.