Community networks newsletter: Making our experiences more visible

By APCNews #72 - August, 2024

On the road to addressing the digital divide, numerous initiatives focus their work on access to connectivity for communities by promoting the knowledge and skills involved in these deployments, by building the needed infrastructures and also by advocating for legislation and regulations that accompany and facilitate them.

In this issue we highlight the importance of the communication of all the activities that communities developed for the visibilisation of these experiences, to get to know them, to have the opportunity of learning from and being inspired by them. In this edition you will also find podcasts, stories, news, videos, events, toolkits and other resources that demonstrate what communities do for their right to access to information and communication technologies and for the related rights for their well-being.

Welcome to the 72nd monthly round-up of developments impacting your local access networks and community-based initiatives.

Routing for Communities podcast

The podcast Routing for Communities has just launched a new episode featuring voices from Latin America in Spanish. In the 10th episode of the podcast's first season, you will learn more about the experience of an Indigenous community in a rural region of Colombia, where the Red Comunitaria Jxa'h Wejxia Casil operates. [Listen here](#) And discover other episodes in Spanish and Portuguese [here](#).

We also present a new special episode of the Routing for Communities podcast in which you will hear from people who participated in the Tz'ikin radio fest, held in April 2024 in Guatemala City, as part of the Bootcamp that concluded the training programme for information and communication technology network managers in Indigenous and rural communities in Latin America. [Listen to it here](#).

The Routing for Communities podcast is available [at this page](#), and also on [Apple Podcasts](#) and [Spotify](#). Its first season features 12 episodes from different countries around the world.

New episodes are on the way to share more of the incredible interviews conducted for our first season together.

Community networks news and stories

- Seeding Change: Embark on an audiovisual journey to discover the Ciptagelar Community Network in Indonesia. [Read more](#) and check out the amazing videos documenting this experience.

- In Colombia, the civil society organisation Colnodo celebrated the inauguration of two new community networks in the country: the Sueños del Manjar and the Red Nasa Piçkwe Ikh community networks. Read more [here](#) and [here](#).
- From Argentina, AlterMundi published an interesting video about an open software designed to facilitate management, administration and e-commerce for cooperatives and SMEs, called Odoo Chasqui. [Watch it here.](#)
- In response to the question "Why we need to rethink financing for connectivity to bridge the digital divide?", this article analyses possible mechanisms for the financing of community-centered connectivity based on different experiences around the world. It was originally published in English [here](#), and is now available in Spanish [here](#).

Gendered experiences
- Connected Resilience is the title of a new research report from the Global Digital Inclusion Partnership that offers an overview of the challenges and opportunities in achieving gender digital inclusion, particularly in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. [Read more](#).
- In Pakistan, the Digital Gender Inclusion Strategy has been developed to increase gender participation in the country's digital transformation. It includes plans to set up 15 community-based networks in three years. [Read more](#).

Enabling policy and regulation
- The "ASEAN-UK joint ministerial statement: Enhancing connectivity for a prosperous and sustainable future" statement published in July 2024 highlighted the importance of community-based internet infrastructure. [Read more](#).
- In the Philippines, 23 organisations are calling on the country's president to certify as urgent the proposed "Konektadong Pinoy Act", which would enable important measures to help bridge the internet connectivity gap and support community-centred models to reach previously underserved areas. [Read more](#).

Publications, research and toolkits
- The deployment of publicly accessible Wi-Fi hotspots that are free or mostly free to use has emerged in the last 10 to 12 years as a relatively low-cost means for governments to take steps to address the digital divide. This new report examines 60 free and public Wi-Fi initiatives in 25 selected countries in Africa, Asia and the Pacific. [Read more](#).
- OSPIT is the Open Source Solar Powered Irrigation Tool. This development, presented in the re:publica conference in Berlin this year, enables the remote monitor of the use of water providing a technological basis for meaningful ways to connect to the internet, designed and implemented by local communities. Nils

Brock interviewed the two women who developed the prototype: Elektra Wagenrad, a hacker and electronics engineer, and Pamela Cuadros, a designer and permaculture practitioner. Read more.

- CryptPad provides a full suite of end-to-end encrypted tools for work collaboration. This column from the NGI0 non-profit coalition tell us more about it and about how it balances accessibility and privacy for secure digital collaboration. Read more.

- "Who could say no to a project that promises internet access for everyone?" asks Steve Song in the article "Starlink and inequality", in which he analyses the deployment of this low earth orbit (LEO) satellite constellation around the world, including a range of African countries, and asks the question whether we might be better off without them. In addition to the original version in English and a French translation, this article is now also available in Spanish.

Events

- The 2024 Global Gathering will take place in Estoril, Portugal, from 27 to 29 September this year, bringing together digital rights networks from around the world. Read more.

- The Latin American and Caribbean Internet Governance Forum (LACIGF) will take place on 7 and 8 November 2024 in Santiago, Chile. Read more.

- Registration is now open for this year's Community Network Xchange (CNX), happening on 15 and 16 November. This edition's theme is "Building Communities for Rights to Access and Access to Rights". Read more.

- This year's edition of the AWID International Forum is happening in Bangkok, Thailand and online from 2 to 5 December. Read more.

- The 19th global Internet Governance Forum (IGF), for which the chosen theme is "Building our Multistakeholder Digital Future", will be held from 15 to 19 December 2024. Read more.

- Registrations are now open for RightsCon 2025, happening in Taipei and online from 24 to 27 February next year. Read more.

- This year's edition of WALC (Workshops for Latin American and Caribe) will take place from 11 to 15 November online, and includes a track on community networks. Registration is already open. Read more.

- The free online course "Community connectivity strategies in Indigenous and rural territories in Latin America" was just launched though ITU-Academy. Registrations are open until 16 September here.

Funding opportunities

- The NGI0 non-profit coalition supports open source, open data, open hardware and open standards projects. It provides both financial and practical support in a myriad of ways, including mentoring, testing, security tests, accessibility,

dissemination and so on. Funding opportunities through calls for projects are [available here](#).

- Purpose Earth is a grant to support purpose-driven projects that are finding creative solutions within the areas of environmental protection, community activation and cultural collaboration. But the deadline to apply is coming soon: 31 August. [Read more](#).

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. In the repository, you can find out more about three editions that analysed from different perspectives the communication strategies developed by communities to enable access to technology. They are "Let us rethink communication technologies", an edition that explores methodological proposals to design and implement community communication projects; "Guía para el Diseño de Estrategias de Comunicación para la Defensa del Territorio", a guide that promotes the use of communication tools in the defence of territories; and "Pueblos Indígenas y Territorios mediáticos", an academic and activist perspective on Indigenous communication in Argentina. The first two were produced by Redes AC. The second and the third are available in Spanish. Find them all in the learning repository.

[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](#)**.*