Community networks newsletter: Creating connectivity models to support life and the future of the Earth

By APCNews
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Community members flatten the foundation for a new Hello Hub in Dakwa. Photo courtesy of Hello World and CITAD.

In this issue, we highlight stories of connectivity centred on local communities that have occupied land for centuries without provoking the socio-environmental destruction of their regions. From Nigeria, South Africa to the Amazon region of Latin America, their experiences offer us a reflection on the need and possibilities for creating models of connectivity and digital technologies that sustain life on the planet rather than harming it.

Welcome to the 70th monthly round-up of developments impacting your local access networks and community-based initiatives.

Routing for Communities podcast

- Have you listened to the fourth episode of the Routing for Communities podcast? In it you will get to know the Amadiba Community Network, a project that has been strengthening the community's fight to defend their land, the coast of their country and their people, through access to the internet. Listen now.

- New episodes on the way: We are planning new episodes to share more of the incredible interviews conducted for our first season together. Follow along: The Routing for Communities podcast is available in this page, and also on Google Podcasts, Apple Podcasts and Spotify.

Community networks news and stories

- Photo essay: Discover how the collective building of Hello Hubs is bridging the digital divide in the Dakwa and Jama'are communities in Nigeria. Through the images, one can see the power of partnership. Read more.

- For years, Indigenous communities in the region of the Paraguayan Chaco were digitally isolated. But new community networks provide many of them with reliable internet access, expanding economic opportunities. Read more.

- The connectED project in Colombia aims to bridge the digital divide by providing internet connectivity to villages along the Amazon River. Read more.

- And in the Brazilian Amazon region, the Digital Forest Community Network call for proposals launched in April selected nine projects whose challenge was to establish community or collaborative networks. This article tells more about the cohort's inaugural face-to-face meeting and their plans. Read more. [Available in Portuguese.]

- Another initiative focusing on the region, called "Conexão Povos da Floresta", also held a face-to-face planning meeting. This is a joint initiative that aims to connect more than 5,000 communities in the Brazilian Legal Amazon to broadband internet. Read more. [Available in Portuguese.]

- In a different part of the Brazilian Amazon, Nupef Institute is implementing a pilot project using TV white spaces (TVWS) technology to extend and strengthen the quality and security of connectivity. Read more. [Available in Portuguese.]

- Nupef Institute is also starting a project in partnership with traditional communities in Brazil seeking to contribute to the internet resilience of those dealing with climate and environmental threats. Read more. [Available in Portuguese.]

- The Green Screen Coalition just announced the new Catalyst Fund awardees tackling climate justice and digital rights. Projects focusing on autonomous and community-based technological infrastructure are among them, such as the Media Awareness and Justice Initiative (MAJI) low-cost technologies to monitor air pollution in Nigeria. Read more.

Gendered experiences

- Bridging the gender digital divide continues: This piece from BOSCO Uganda offers updates on the progress of their Digital Literacy Training specifically tailored to support women and girls in the community. Read more.

- From India, the Digital Empowerment Foundation shares several stories about how women-led initiatives to expand access to digital services and government entitlements are bridging the information gap. Read more here, here, here and here.

- This Feminist Internet Life: FTX Stories of Collaboration, Creativity and Care is a podcast series that features stories told by the voices of over 15 feminist tech activists from the global South. Listen to its five episodes here.

Enabling policy and regulation

- The World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) has served as a pivotal platform to foster cooperation among governments, civil society, the private sector and technical communities. As the WSIS+20 milestone approaches, action line facilitators and all digital governance stakeholders should reflect on the the last two decades. Read more.

- Closing the digital divide is no longer just about infrastructure. Policy makers looking to make large-scale advancements must understand the human barriers to internet access. This article offers some perspectives from the Global Digital Inclusion Partnership (GDIP). Read more.

- From Colombia, the civil society organisation Colnodo explains what IMT (International Mobile Telecommunications) spectrum is and why access to it for community networks needs to be guaranteed in the country. Read more. [Available in Spanish.]

Publications, research and toolkits

- These two different but complementary guides were created to support community members and Earth defenders interested in starting a journey on wireless community networks. Read more.

Events

- The Asia Pacific Regional Internet Governance Forum (APrIGF) 2024 will be held on 21 -23 August in Taipei, Taiwan. Read more.

- The 17th edition of the Latin American and Caribbean Internet Governance Forum (LACIGF) will be held in Santiago, Chile between 4 and 8 November 2024 (date subject to change). Read more.

- The Virtual School on Internet Governance is receiving registrations for upcoming cohorts in Spanish (from 2 August to 25 September 2024) and English (from 9 September to 29 November 2024). Read more.

- From 4 to 6 June 2024, the Indigenous Connectivity Institute hosted the 8th Indigenous Connectivity Summit (ICS 2024) in Membertou, Nova Scotia, Canada. This community-led forum is the primary convening for Indigenous leadership and allies working across the United States and Canada to build a digital future on their terms. The experience of the National Schools of Community Networks was shared in this session. You can find all recordings from the Summit here.

Funding opportunities

- Deadline coming soon: The FRIDA programme announced a new round of funds for internet strengthening in Latin America and the Caribbean. The calls cover topics like access and connectivity, security and others – but proposals should be sent by 28 June. Read more.

- The Internet Society Foundation just announced a new round of funding for its Resiliency Grant Program, which supports projects that ensure local communities are prepared to deploy, maintain and repair internet infrastructure and restore connectivity in areas affected by natural disasters. Applications will be accepted until 30 July 2024. Read more.

- Are you interested in maintaining the public nature of the internet? The third call of the NGI Zero Commons Fund opened on 1 June and will remain open until 1 October 2024. Read more.

Community networks learning repository

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

In this issue, we would like to highlight the official 2023 outcome of the Internet Governance Forum Dynamic Coalition on Community Connectivity (DC3), focusing on community networks and on how to build digital sovereignty and environmental sustainability.

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.