

## Community networks newsletter: Women connecting a village



By APCNews

Published on 29 June 2023 -- Page last updated on 19 July 2023

In this issue, we are inspired by women who are cultivating community networks in their regions. With the recent launch of the Routing for Communities podcast, we had the opportunity to learn more about the women working with the TunapandaNET community network in Kenya and the Mamaila Community Network in South Africa. From Argentina, AlterMundi celebrates a milestone reached by a community network that started with deployments made by a women's team in Tierra Fértil.

Welcome to the 59th monthly round-up of developments impacting your local access networks and community-based initiatives.

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

- In our first episode, we discover an inspiring experience from South Africa: the Mamaila Community Network, which is connecting a rural area that had been ignored by major service providers, while building digital skills. [Play](#).
- The second episode takes us on a trip to Kenya to visit TunapandaNET, an initiative that combines digital networks with community-led action to enable communication, education and health in Kibera, the biggest slum in Africa. [Play](#).
- Coming soon: Two new episodes will be launched every month. In July, the third episode will take us to Mexico to learn more about Wiki Katat, the first Indigenous virtual operator providing internet and mobile phone services in the whole country. In the fourth episode of the season, we will travel once again to South Africa, where we will get to know more about the Amadiba Community Network's experience. [Join our Telegram channel](#) to keep up to date with the

new releases.

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

- Two years after starting its activities, the [Amazon Community Networks School](#) reached the stage of realising collective dreams, as they are now supporting the participants in making change happen in their communities. Recently, the school helped to equip a community radio led by young communicators from the PAE Lago Grande region, the home to 154 communities and 6,600 Indigenous and riverside families in Brazil. [Read more.](#)
- The National Schools of Community Networks are a collective capacity-building effort for the creation, development and consolidation of community networks. Beyond Brazil, they have also taken place in South Africa, Kenya, Nigeria and Indonesia. [Read more.](#)
- Messenger of the Amazon: HERMES is a Rhizomatica project that brings communication to communities without access to telephony or the internet, through a digital HF radio system. This video offers more information about this initiative, alongside beautiful footage from deployments made in the Amazon rainforest in Ecuador and Brazil during 2021 and 2022. [Watch here.](#)
- Also in the field of technologies for community networks, in Colombia, the community networks team from Colnodo has begun working on the manufacture and development of sectoral waveguide antennas. These antennas can be replicated by communities to facilitate their connectivity. [Read more.](#)
- And from Africa, BOSCO Uganda celebrated an important milestone to bring reliable communication infrastructure to remote areas: the construction of a network tower on Kalongo Hill, with impressive support from 48percent.org. [Read more.](#)

### **Gendered experiences**

- Imagine Infrastructures of Care and the Environment: this gathering brought together feminists from the community networks ecosystem, the digital rights, digital care and security fields, and people working for environmental justice on 2 and 3 June in Costa Rica. This piece shares the experience of one of the participants. [Read more.](#)
- Women and gender-diverse and queer people in community networks have been nurturing each other through a technology channelled through many years: the art of togetherness. Find out more in this inspiring video made in a circle held by women involved with community networks from Latin America and the Caribbean. [Watch here.](#)

### **Enabling policy and regulation**

- From Argentina, AlterMundi celebrates another application to the [Roberto Arias programme](#). Tierra Fértil was formed in 2008 due to the need to protect the different territories and the lifestyle of Indigenous peasant families in the town of Palma Sola. They have just presented their community network project to the country's regulatory authority, which should allow them to connect to fibre, among other things. [Read more.](#)
- In Kenya, KICTANet is also celebrating: the Association for Community

Networks in Kenya, the first ever of its kind in Africa, is a new membership-based network that unites members from 13 community networks in the country. Together, they will push for a more enabling environment for the movement. [Read more.](#)

- In Brazil, the community networks working group created within the scope of the telecoms regulatory agency, Anatel, held its first meeting in June. The group will map existing community networks in the country, seeking access demands and opportunities in their regions. [Read more.](#)
- Community networks were also in the spotlight at a forum held in the Mexican Senate on bridging the rural-urban digital divide. Find out more on [its recordings.](#)

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

- Did you know that there is a repository of learning materials for the strengthening of community networks? Check out this collective online space to exchange resources that can be useful in training processes. [Read more.](#)
- Communities of practice in community networks: This piece recounts the joint discussions and learning shared among three community networks in the state of São Paulo in Brazil, revolving around the installation and use of the Pirania captive portal, an open source application that works as an internet access control tool. [Read more.](#)
- Anecdotes from the field on updating Universal Service Fund policies: Many governments have established funds dedicated to expanding connectivity to underserved communities. This paper examines advocacy efforts related to them led by civil society in some countries. [Read more.](#)

### ***Events***

- The EsLaRed Foundation is holding the 26th Workshop for Latin America and the Caribbean (WALC) focusing on technologies for internet networks from 13 to 17 November in the city of Guayaquil, Ecuador. [Read more.](#)
- This year, the Internet Governance Forum will take place in Kyoto, Japan, from 8 to 12 October. From now until then, different regional and national forums will be held, such as the African IGF happening in the week of 18 September in Abuja, Nigeria, and the Asia Pacific IGF from 29 to 31 August in Brisbane, Australia. [Read more.](#)
- 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.](#)

### ***Funding opportunities***

- The IGF Secretariat has opened their call for travel support for eligible global South participants to attend IGF 2023 in Kyoto, Japan. The deadline is 12 July. [Read more.](#)
- Derechos Digitales announced the launch of their Fund for the Promotion of Digital Rights in Latin America (FDD), which will support the implementation of different activities in order to raise awareness about communities' digital rights.

[Read more.](#)

- This piece from the Internet Society Foundation discusses why digital equity is important and summarises their grants programmes and other funding opportunities for its promotion. [Read more.](#)
- The CYRILLA Collaborative initiative announced grants to be awarded for advocacy-oriented initiatives, particularly those that aim to highlight and influence digital rights policies that impact marginalised communities in Latin America, the Middle East and North Africa, Sub-Saharan Africa and Asia. The deadline for submission of proposals is 31 July. [Read more.](#)

### **What is the experience of the women in community network spaces?**

"I think women are often the best placed to get things started on a community network, and then when you get to the point of actually building a network, well of course, women are fully capable, when they're trained, of carrying out the technical work involved in a community network."

This comment was made by Claire Milne, a telecom specialist from the UK, to the Routing for Communities podcast to highlight women's participation in community network spaces.

As an extension of the society in which they are embedded, digital technologies and decision-making processes often reflect the normalisation of centuries of structural imbalance related to factors such as gender, race, class and nationality. Community network spaces are not immune to these processes and, therefore, it is necessary to actively think about how to challenge them.

### **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](#).*

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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](#).*