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Chairman

Overview

- What is a Community Network?
- The Journey of Community Networks in Kenya
- The Journey of Community Networks in Africa
- Milestones and Achievements
- Opportunities and Challenges
- Recommendations to the Regional Internet Registry and ISPs (LIR)
- Recommendations to ccTLDs and other TLDs
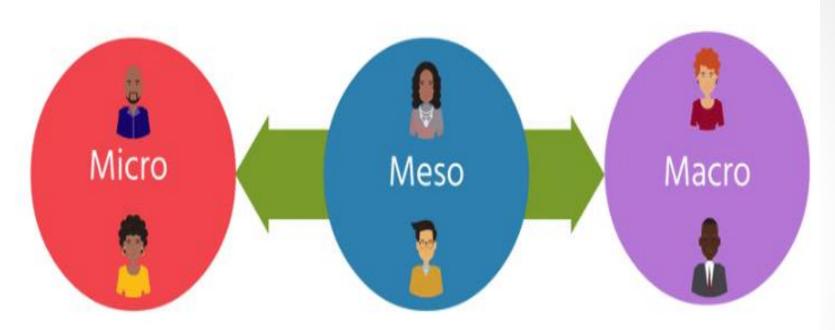
What is a Community Network?

- Loosely defined a Community Network refers to Tele (Communication) Infrastructure designed by the Community to address issues that are relevant to a particular Community.

Community Networks As Tools

1. Provide users the only way to access the internet
2. Generally more grounded in the users' needs
3. Build deeper knowledge on ICTs
4. Help localize income

The Actors

- This level refers to the community where the community network operates.

This actor functions as a catalyst and or a support for the community, usually through bringing knowledge, skills or partnerships to the community
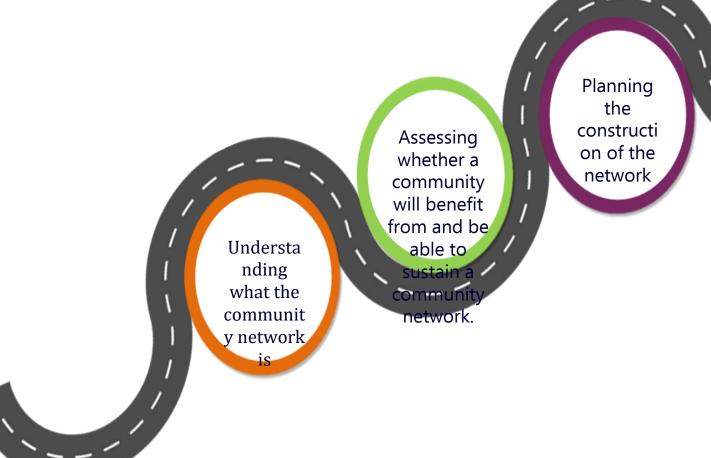
The Macro level is comprised of organizations which influence how the community network integrates into the telecom sector

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Community Network Challenges

As with any new development, there will also be some challenges you will encounter. The road to building a community network has 3 major challenges:

Understanding what the community network is

Assessing whether a community will benefit from and be able to sustain a community network.

Planning the construction of the network

The Journey of Community Networks in Kenya

- First Summit on Community Networks in Africa 22 November 2016 within the AfriCHI conference.

- Survey identified 37 Community network initiatives in 12 African countries. 25 initiatives were considered active at the time source ISOC

- Presentations from Mesh Bukavu, BOSCO Uganda, Murambinda Works, Soweto Wireless User Group, Pamojanet, Tunapandanet, Fantsuam Foundation, Connecting Eenhana, Namibia

- 2nd Summit 25th – 26th May 2017 alongside the Africa Internet Summit

- Kenya School of Community Networks Organized by Tunapandanet with the Support of APC and hosted by aherinet March 2022. Similar Schools organized in South Africa and Nigeria

- National Summit of Community Networks in Kenya 2024 Organized by the Internet Society Kenya Chapter with the support of ISOC Foundation and hosted by aherinet

Journey of Community Networks in Africa

- 2nd Summit 25th – 26th May 2017 alongside the Africa Internet Summit

- 3rd Summit Eastern Cape , South Africa 2- 7 September 2018 hosted by Zenzeleni

- 4th Summit Dodoma Tanzania hosted by Kondoa

- A series of Virtual events in 2020,2021, 2022 and 2023

Map of Community Networks source apc.org

Milestones and Achievements

- Community Network Service Provider License in Kenya 2021 developed through the APC LOCnet initiative hosted by the Kenya ICT Action Network and supported by FCDO

- Community Networks recognized in Lesotho

- Community Networks recognized in Uganda

- Efforts underway to ensure Community Networks are recognized through relevant policy frameworks in South Africa

- Number of Community Networks is growing across the continent

- Increasing awareness among Policy makers and Infrastructure players resulting in more last mile access

Opportunities

- Increasing support from governments and regulatory agencies resulting in allocation of resources and prioritization of last mile connectivity.

- Increasing awareness on the digital value chain

- Increasing Digital literacy owing to an increase in the number of actors involved in the Digital Ecosystem from Civil Society and Academia

- Enactement of futuristic policies that support digitization and digitalization. (AI, AFCTA, Digital Public Infrastructure, Data Protection)

- Localization of Internet Traffic and Increase in data Centres

Challenges

- Cost of equipment for Infrastructure Deployment (CAPEX)
- Cost of Operating (Opex)
- Inadequate power
- Cost of bandwidth (High Taxation)
- Inappropriate network designs (MANRS)
- Weak Communities of Practice (Local NOGS, National DNS Forum)

Recommendations to the Regional Internet Registry and ISPs

- Need for a Policy that allows Community Networks to access Resources from AFRINIC
- Training to Community Network Operators to ensure the resources are optimally used
- Focus on value chain based training
- Support to Communities of practice that support interdependence and re-sue of resources

Recommendations to ccTLDs and other TLDs

- On boarding of Community Networks as Registrars
- Collaboration with Community Networks to build local Internet Value Chains
- Collaboration with Community Networks to train end users
- Conducting DNS Capacity building programs in collaboration with Community networks to increase the number of registered domain names at the last mile.

References

www.Internetsociety.org

Community Network Readiness Assessment Course

Building Wireless Community Networks

Designing and Deploying Computer Networks

Thank you