A4AI-Nigeria Coalition Online Knowledge Forum

Exploring Community Networks to Advance Connectivity in Nigeria

28 October 2021

AGENDA

13h00 - 13h05	Check-in, Housekeeping
13h15 - 13h15	Opening & Welcome Message **Onica N. Makwakwa, Head of Africa A4AI/Web Foundation**
13h15 - 13h20	Introduction: Exploring Community Networks in Nigeria **Olusola Teniola, A4AI-Nigeria National Coordinator**
13h20 – 14h15	Presentations & Discussion **Luca Belli**, PhD, Professor FGV Law School & Coordinator Center for Technology & Society (Brazil) **Josephine Miliza**, Community Networks Engineer (invited) **Y.Z. Y'au**, Executive Director, Centre for Information Technology and Development (CITAD) **Fola Odufuwa**, Managing Director at New Frontier **Steve Song**, Researcher & Consultant for access to wireless communication **Moderator:** Olusola Teniola, National Coordinator, A4AI-Nigeria
14h15- 14h30	Wrap-Up & C losing Remarks

PRESENTERS

Olusola Teniola, National Coordinator, A4AI-Nigeria

Mr. Teniola has over 27 years of global ICT experience working in strategic management positions at several major telecom companies. He was instrumental in the rollout of mobile and broadband services by World Telecom in Portugal (2003 – 2007) and has served in executive positions at British Telecom, Vodafone, Cisco Inc. and Alcatel-Lucent Technologies. Olusola was previously the CEO and board member of IS Internet Solutions (a Dimension Data company) in Lagos, Nigeria and briefly CEO of Phase3 Telecom based in Abuja before deciding to launch out on his own. He was once the Client Partner to Detecon Consulting GmBH leading Nigeria and Ghana opportunities in Africa. He is also the current ATCON President until end Nov 2020.

Luca Belli, PhD

- **Luca Belli**, PhD is Professor of Internet Governance and Regulation at Fundação Getulio Vargas (FGV) Law School, where he heads the CyberBRICS project, and associated researcher at Centre de Droit Public Comparé of Paris 2 University. Luca's work is at the interface of law and technology, focusing primarily on Internet access models, data protection and digital platform regulations, and digital policy in the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) countries.

Josephine Miliza

Josephine Miliza is a digital inclusion and community networks champion passionate about supporting communities to build resilient and scalable bottom-up connectivity models. She is among the pioneers of the community network movement in Africa and has co-founded TunapandaNET a community network in Kibera, Nairobi Kenya. Josephine serves as Africa regional coordinator for the Association of Progressive Communications-LOCNET project hosted by the Kenya ICT Action Network in Nairobi Kenya. This project aims to contribute to an enabling ecosystem for the emergence and growth of community networks and other community-based connectivity initiatives in the global south. Josephine is actively involved in promoting the community networks movement in Africa participating in organizing the Africa community networks summit, awareness building, capacity building and policy advocacy forums. Her current interests are in bottom-up sustainable connectivity models and creative approaches to an enabling environment that fosters resilience and innovation for communities in Africa.

Fola Odufuwa

Mr. Fola Odufuwa holds an MSc in Radio Propagation (Physics) obtained in 1994 from the University of Ibadan, Nigeria. His career to date has included senior and executive positions within broadcast engineering, communications, investment banking and financial services. He is an accomplished project & business consultant and, since 2001, has coordinated numerous research and consulting assignments on four continents for dozens of blue chip organizations, regulators and government agencies, including the World Bank, International Finance Corporation, United Nations, International Telecommunications Union, Asia Development Bank, among several others.

Steve Song

Steve Song is a researcher, entrepreneur, and advocate for cheaper, more pervasive access to communication infrastructure. He is a Policy Advisor with the Mozilla Corporation, a consultant on access regulation and policy to the Association for Progressive Communications (APC), as well as a research associate with the Network Startup Resource Center (NSRC) where he works to expand the use of wireless technologies through shared spectrum strategies. His blog (http://manypossibilities.net) a popular destination for anyone interested in African telecommunications and Internet issues. Since 2009, Steve has been actively maintaining public maps of undersea and terrestrial fibre optic infrastructure in Africa. Steve is also the founder of Village Telco, a social enterprise that manufactures low-cost WiFi mesh VoIP technologies to deliver affordable voice and Internet service in under-serviced areas. Previously, Steve worked at the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), where he led the organization's ICT4D program in Africa, funding research into the transformational potential of ICTs.

Y.Z. Y'au

Y. Z. Ya'u, the Executive Director of CITAD, is a writer and academic. He lectured in the

Department of Electrical Engineering at Bayero University, Kano from 1984 until 2000 when he resigned to co-found CITAD, one of the few ICT-focus NGOs in the country, which has been working on youth entrepreneurship, peace building, popularization of ICT, ICT policy advocacy and ICT business development support services. In 2007, he directed the Annual Child Institute of the Council for the Development of Social Science in Africa (CODESRIA), Dakar Senegal on Youth and ICTs. He served also the Vice President of the Information Technology (Industry) Association of Nigeria (ITAN) and is a registered member of the Computer Professionals Registration Council of Nigeria (CPN). He coordinated the CODESRIA Multinational Research Working Group (GMG) on the theme of "Africa in the Information Society Era (2014-2017) and currently coordinates a research project on safety

and security online for women in Nigeria. He leads on the Community Networks Project at CITAD. Ya'u is on the Editorial Advisory Board of the GISWatch 2020 on the Circular economy published by the Association for Progressive Communications (APC). As a writer, has edited/authored/co-authored of over 20 books. YZ served in the National Conference set up by former President Goodluck.

Discussion Key Issues

1. **Licensing Regimes** - there are various licensing regimes used for CNs in Africa.

2. **Spectrum allocation and management** – most existing CNs use unlicensed spectrum, no real example yet of spectrum allocation for CNs. There's a need to develop innovative regulations to unlock unused spectrum in rural areas and spectrum sharing policies.

3. **Digital Inclusion** – There is a positive correlation between the existence of community networks and digital skills development as such CN should be part of inclusion policies rather than competition policies.

4. There should be guidelines on **community commitment**

5. Enhanced services – in addition to connectivity, CNs should offer services that could make a difference such as **digital literacy**

6. Affordable **backhaul infrastructure** - Access to high speed backhaul infrastructure such as terrestrial fibre networks, etc. is key. There is a need to address the pricing so it is affordable to everyone including CNs, smaller ISPs, etc.
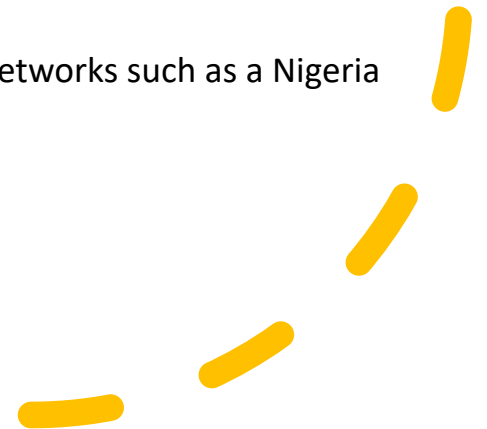
Dialogue Question

What policies and regulations would be gamechangers in enabling community networks?

Key Recommendations

1. Demystify Community Networks - Overcome fear of the unknown towards community networks. Dedicate time to understand CNs and view them as complementary rather than competitive.

2. Community ownership and participation on the process is key, dedicate time to mobilize and engage the community.

3. Understand regulatory landscape for suitable opportunities

4. Finances – understand the cost and identify resources

5. Resistance – expect resistance from community, regulators, financiers, operators, etc. and have a plan to

6. Champion – find people who are passionate about inclusion to champion the development of CNs.

7. Develop a framework for the existence of community networks such as a Nigeria National Policy on Community Networks

Resources Shared

1. Community Networks in Latin America: Challenges, Regulations and Solutions

2. Dynamic Coalition on Community Connectivity

3. About Community Networks

4. Kenya – Licensing and Shared Spectrum Framework for Community Networks (May 2021)

5. Community Networks Regulatory Framework and Structures in Zimbabwe (June 2020).

6. Building Community Network Policies: A Collaborative Governance towards Enabling Frameworks: Official Outcome of the UN IGF Dynamic Coalition on Community Connectivity (2019)

Thank You
https://a4ai.org/nigeria-africa/