Community Networks: Features, Governance, Regulation

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A4AI - Nigeria
Community Networks in Latin America

Challenges, Regulations and Solutions

Authors: Carlos Baca, Luca Belli, Erick Huerta & Karla Velasco
What are Community Networks?
crowd-sourced distributed networks
built, utilised and managed in a bottom-up fashion by the local community as commons
managed democratically by groups of individuals and entities such as NGOs, local businesses, and/or public administrations
why are they interesting options?
they can complement traditional options
community networks can succeed to connect “market failure” areas (rural/peripheral areas) left unconnected by traditional market players
virtuous circle of knowledge and innovation
positive externalities of CNs:

- freedom of **expression**
- access to **knowledge** and **capacity building**
- permissionless **innovation**
- **decentralisation**
- more “**interesting**” Internet
new content and services by the community for the community

- maps
- instant messaging apps
- VoIP services
- hosting services
- local e-commerce platforms
- e-health apps, etc.
the local community self-determine itself
“all peoples must be free to determine their political status and to pursue their economic, social and cultural development”

art. 1 UDHR, 1(3) ICCPR & ICESCR
Network Self-determination

right to free development of network infrastructure
“the right to freely associate to define, in a democratic fashion, the design, development and management of network infrastructure as a common good, in order to freely seek, impart and receive information and innovation”
Community Networks: Bridging Digital Divides through the Enjoyment of Network Self-determination

Luca Belli
Network self-determination: When building the Internet becomes a right

There is no doubt that network self-determination reinforces the distributed nature of the Internet and there is no reason why individuals should not have the possibility to build the Internet themselves, improving their standards of living while bridging digital divides.

By: Luca Belli

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what can be done to facilitate CNs?
- **legal definition** of CNs
- **simplified licensing/authorisation**
- **simplified equipment approval**
- **spectrum sharing and non-discriminatory interconnection obligations**
- **tax exemptions and funding programs**
Resolução 614/2013

License waiver for small (less than 5% of market share) Multimedia Communication Providers
CNs are not a silver bullet

BUT

there is nothing to lose from allowing people to build the Internet themselves
Thank you for your attention!

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