

IGF 2022 TOWN HALL #33

Topic: “Understanding digital policy demands of rural and urban poor”

Panel - Auditorium - 60 Min

Day 2: Wednesday 30 November 2022 / Time: 10:45-11:45

Venue: UN Conference Centre, Addis Ababa

Background

Rural communities have long been expected to benefit from information and communication technology. In the twenty-first century, however, the reverse has proven true. Knowledge spillovers have fuelled urbanisation and drawn job seekers to big cities, widening the divide between urban and rural communities. We contend that recent developments in technology and decentralised social behaviours have begun to buck this tendency. A major reason for this is that rural communities struggle to maintain affordability given the pace at which digital connectivity grows capacity - in select regions of high density and income. Internet and broadband infrastructures policies are not aligned with rural communities requirements in developing countries. The focus is no longer on the "haves" and "have nots," but rather on the extent of use of edge and decentralised technologies, and diverse usage patterns across communities.

Many conversations globally have focused on the so-called "digital gap" between developed and underdeveloped countries. It is believed that failing to leverage the benefits of the ongoing technology revolution leaves developing countries behind and at an increasing disadvantage in a transforming world. While such broad discourse is beneficial for bringing attention to some of the most pressing issues, the development challenges it presents can be daunting and seem unsurmountable. Moreover, when identifying intervention priorities, the available data tends to be obscure and incomplete. Oversimplifying complex and long-standing development concerns results.

This town hall meeting's goal is to look beyond the declarations about the digital gap and consider current policy issues and their effects from the standpoint of people's welfare and development objectives for rural and urban poor people.

The following objectives are outlined:

1. Promote dialogue, collaboration and knowledge sharing
2. Discuss strategies for group action with local, national, regional, and international multi-stakeholders.
3. Improved communication amongst stakeholders about strategies to filling digital policy gaps for rural and disadvantaged urban impoverished communities
4. Start a stakeholder discussion to inform national policy direction and strategies towards rural and urban impoverished communities.
5. Start a conversation about the top priorities and use cases based on the data already available, paying particular attention to the digital policy gaps that need to be bridged to

make it easier to design long-lasting, decentralised solutions for rural and urban poor communities.

Expected Outcomes:

The town hall session will begin with two quick policy talks on how to better understand the road map process and what needs to be done in the short and long term.

1. Increased knowledge and awareness of how economic convergence investment objectives might assist developing countries' rural and underserved urban impoverished communities in achieving the SDG 2 goal
2. Recognize opportunities and lessons learned that would benefit developing countries. Matching up effective digital policy initiatives to benefit rural, underserved communities and urban, impoverished populations
3. Determine the most important policy gaps in the digital sphere that are impeding the adoption and use of digital technologies for economic gain
4. Find ways for governments to coordinate national broadband and connectivity priority programs for underprivileged rural and urban areas in emerging nations.
5. Identify key issues and challenges on funding gaps, resources and capacity at the national and local levels
6. Identify key policy gaps hindering the penetration of Internet to the underserved communities in the developing countries, and actionable digital economy community mechanisms to overcome them.

Agenda outline:

1. Welcome, introduction
2. opening remark
3. Presentations:
 - a. Case Study I:
Topic: Connectivity and Agriculture digitalization and innovation, the situation in developing rural communities
 - b. Case Study II:
Topic: The role of the internet in transforming education in developing nations
 - c. Solution:
Topic: How can rural and urban poor communities in developing nations effectively deploy cost-effective community networks? (Internet Backpack)
4. Discussants and Q&A: There will be two (2) discussants in-room and remotely who will share their perspectives based on their experiences and the lessons they've learnt in developing and implementing various digital policy programs and initiatives, this will be complemented by a Q&A. The two (2) discussants from among the audience (in-room and remote) will respond to specific submissions made by the speakers.
5. Closing remarks

Participation:

To extend beyond the physical confines and to promote equal participation both in-room and online, we will make sure to include all streaming channels (YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, etc.). Educating our participants will be paramount before and during the session. Speakers will be invited on stage to present and speak on the policy issues, followed by a response from the discussants and a Q&A session with the onsite and remote audience. To speed up the engagement with participants, a unique approach will also be used to gather questions in the chat. The questions will be read out alongside the discussants for the speakers to respond.

Organisers

1. Africa Open Data and Internet Research Foundation (AODIRF)
2. School of Information Studies, Syracuse University, USA

Co-organisers / Facilitators:

3. Wisdom Donkor, Africa Open Data and Internet Research Foundation (AODIRF), Republic of Ghana (Africa Region)
4. Dr. Lee W. McKnight, School of Information Studies, Syracuse University, USA (North America)
5. Dr. Danielle T. Smith, College of Arts & Science, Syracuse University, USA.
6. Kwaku Antwi, Africa Open Data and Internet Research Foundation (Africa Region)
7. Catherine R. Kimambo, African Child Projects, Republic of Tanzania (Africa Region)

Speakers

Main Speakers:

- 1) Andre Laperriere, Executive Director, Global Open Data for Agriculture and Nutrition (GODAN) <https://www.godan.info/>
- 2) Lee W. McKnight, Associate Professor, School of Information Studies, Syracuse University, USA <https://ischool.syr.edu/lee-mcknight/>
- 3) Dr. Ephrem Kwaa-Aidoo, Senior ICT Lecturer at the University of Education, Winneba, Ghana. <http://pilot.uew.edu.gh/itservices/staff/profile/ekkaidoo>

Discussants.

1. Dr. Danielle T. Smith, College of Arts & Science, Syracuse University, USA. (North America)
2. Hon. Neema Lugangira. Member of Parliament, Republic of Tanzania
3. Kwaku Antwi, Kwaku Antwi, Director, Programs and Outreach, Africa Open Data and Internet Research Foundation (AODIRF)

Onsite Moderator: Edinam Lily Botsyoe, Coordinator, Women & Youth Development, Africa Open Data and Internet Research Foundation (AODIRF)

Online Moderator: Sara Kiden

Rapporteurs

1. Jane Appiah-Okyere, Doctoral Student, School of Information Studies (iSchool), Syracuse
2. Akinremi Peter Taiwo, Africa Rapporteurs Network

SDGs

1. No Poverty
2. Zero Hunger
4. Quality Education
7. Affordable and Clean Energy
8. Decent Work and Economic Growth
9. Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure
10. Reduced Inequalities
11. Sustainable Cities and Communities
17. Partnerships for the Goals

Targets: In order to reduce the digital divide and poverty, provide access to health, agricultural, and educational services, among other things, and give the poor new sources of income and employment, community networks, energy, ICTs, and digital agriculture are crucial. Internet access and ICT use are now important factors in competitiveness, economic expansion, and social advancement.

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Draft Agenda

1. Welcome, Introduction and Purpose 2minutes
2. Opening Remarks 3minutes
3. Presentations 30 minutes
 - a. Case study I 10minutes
Andre Laperriere, Executive Director, Global Open Data for Agriculture and Nutrition (GODAN)
Topic: Connectivity and Agriculture digitalization and innovation, the situation in developing rural communities
 - b. Case study II 10minutes
Dr. Ephrem Kwaa-Aidoo, Senior ICT Lecture at University of Education, Winneba, Ghana.
Topic: The role of the internet in transforming education in developing nations
 - c. Solutions 10minutes
Lee W. McKnight, Associate Professor, School of Information Studies, Syracuse University, USA
Topic: How can rural and urban poor communities in developing nations effectively deploy cost-effective community networks? (Internet Backpack)
4. Discussants (onsite and remote). 10minutes
 - a. Dr. Danielle T. Smith, College of Arts & Science, Syracuse University, USA.
 - b. Hon. Neema Lugangira. Member of Parliament, Republic of Tanzania
 - c. Dr. Ephrem Kwaa-Aidoo, Senior ICT Lecture at University of Education, Winneba, Ghana.
<http://pilot.uew.edu.gh/itservices/staff/profile/ekkaidoo>
5. Q&A 5 minutes
6. Closing remarks

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