

**Dynamic Coalition on Innovative Approaches to Connecting the Unconnected –
Internet Governance Forum 2017
Session Report**

1. **Session Title:** *Dynamic Coalition on Innovative Approaches to Connecting the Unconnected*
2. **Date:** 21 December, 2017
3. **Time:** 10:40-11:40 a.m.
4. **Session Organizer:** Christopher Yoo
5. **Chair/Moderator:** Christopher Yoo
6. **Rapporteur/Notetaker:** Sharada Srinivasan
7. **Speakers and Institutional Affiliations:**
 - Subi Chaturvedi, Cellular Operators Association of India
 - Michael Kende, Analysys Mason
 - Vassilis Chryssos, Sarantaporo.gr
 - Josephine Miliza, Tunapanda Institute
 - Sarbani Belur, Indian Institute of Technology Bombay
 - Diana Oo, Comcast
 - Ezekiel Tari, Maewo Telecommunications Committee
 - Claudia Selli, AT&T

1. Key Issues raised (1 sentence per issue):

The primary issue discussed was the work done by grassroots connectivity projects around the world: Sarantaporo.gr in Greece, Comcast Internet Essentials in the US, Gram Marg in India, Tunapanda Institute in Kenya, VITAL project in Vanuatu and ESCUELA+ in Latin America

2. Discussion summary

The Dynamic Coalition on *Innovative Approaches to Connecting the Unconnected* seeks to collect and disseminate information about innovative technological and business practices that help provide last mile connectivity as well as explore various supply and demand side drivers of adoption in unconnected communities. Over the last year, the project has completed 120 interviews from a catalog of nearly 750 case study candidates. Professor Christopher Yoo provided a high-level overview of the work done this past year by the dynamic coalition, to set the scene for the panel. Following this, co-conveners Subi Chaturvedi from COAI and Michael Kende provided remarks. Ms. Chaturvedi focused on the efforts being made to bridge the digital literacy gap in India as part of the National Digital Literacy Mission, and highlighted the importance of overcoming demand-side barriers. Mr. Kende reflected on the importance of compiling connectivity initiatives such as the ones on the panel, and spoke of the convening power of the IGF and its DCs to bring together such projects.

The next part of the session was dedicated to experiences of different projects from around the world. Diana Oo from Comcast Internet Essentials spoke of the program that has connected nearly 4 million people in the US since its launch in 2011. Vassilis Chryssos from Sarantaporo.gr NPO spoke of the work done by Sarantaporo.gr Community Network in Greece to connect 14 rural villages through a community network and highlighted the importance of Internet connectivity in the local context by presenting local people's stories. Josephine Miliza from Tunapanda Institute in Kenya spoke about their work in connecting the largest urban slum in Kenya and providing

training in technology, design and business to the residents. They seek to connect nearly 300 schools in Kibera through a community network. Dr. Sarbani Belur from Gram Marg spoke of its efforts to connect 25 villages in India through an optimal mix of technologies i.e TV White Spaces and 5.8 GHz in the unlicensed band. , Claudia Selli from AT&T provided insights on ESCUELA+, the Latin American program that has reached nearly 2 million students in 8 countries in Latin America with locally relevant content that can help educate them. Ezekiel Tari from Maewo Telecommunications Committee focused on using a community network for a telemedicine link that has saved nearly 70 lives in the last year, in the remote island of Maewo in Vanuatu.

The discussion with the audience touched upon many different issues, including recovery in the aftermath of Cyclone Pam and the need for disaster resilience, gender divide, if it exists, in such grassroots initiatives and ways to overcome them, as well as questions on sustainability of such projects and ongoing research on the same.

3. Key takeaways

The panel highlighted the geographic and technological diversity in community-level connectivity projects that address both demand-side and supply-side barriers faced by unconnected communities, and the need for research on such projects to determine sustainability. Education and training of the people using Internet was an important focus and action point for everyone.

4. Gender Reporting

Estimate the overall number of the participants present at the session: 30

Estimate the overall number of women present at the session: 12

To what extent did the session discuss gender equality and/or women's empowerment?

To some extent; not the primary focus of the session

If the session addressed issues related to gender equality and/or women's empowerment, please provide a brief summary of the discussion:

Discussed in the QnA as an explicit question on whether the gender divide existed in panellists' projects. Two remarks were made on how Tunapanda Institute and Gram Marg were addressing the gender gap in digital divide in their project and how connectivity can help empower women.