CNX 2021
Community Network Connecting Unconnected

An initiative of

Internet Society

Supporting Partners
Day 1 Session 1

Dr. Daniel Featherstone
Daniel is a Senior Researcher at RMIT University researching digital inclusion in remote Indigenous communities. He was previously General Manager of First Nations Media Australia from 2012-20 and Archiving Projects Manager to April 2021. He managed the remote media organisation Ngaanyatjarra Media from 2001-2010, supporting media and communications programs in the Ngaanyatjarra Lands of WA. Daniel has a PhD in evaluation and policy in Indigenous media and communications.

Bhai Shelly
Bhai Shelly is a C4D Specialist in the UNICEF office of Uttar Pradesh, India. An alumnus of the Indian Institute of Mass Communication, he has a career span of approx. 30 years, mostly in the development sector. While serving UNICEF for the last 20 years, he has had the privilege to serve well-known Polio Eradication initiative, GARIIMA, Dastak in UP and most of these initiatives have been presented in international fora such as International SBCC Summit. Bhai loves cycling, cricket and travelling and he lives in Lucknow with his wife Kamlesh Rathore (Writer, Journalist) and daughter Aarohi Surya works in HTC, Dubai.

Amrita Choudhary
Amrita Choudhary is the Director of CCAOI an organization representing the interests of internet users and non-users in India. She is an active participant in tech policy discussions, both at domestic and international platforms, involved in capacity building, outreach and research in Internet Governance. Amrita is the President of Internet Society Delhi Chapter, UN IGF MAG member, Vice-Chair Asia Pacific Regional IGF (ApriGF), Vice-Chair APRALO at ICANN. She is one of the founding members of the India School of Internet Governance (inSIG); curates for the Geneva Internet Platform and advises and guides Youth@IGF, a youth outreach initiative in India and Rural SIG at Internet Society.

Satish Mittal
Satish heads Meta connectivity program in India. As part of mobile partnership, Meta connectivity enables partners with core monetization & analytics platforms to manage the life cycle of connectivity deployments. Prior to Meta, Satish was CTO with Vodafone Business Services, Mumbai and Director of Lucent Technologies, Singapore. Satish has to his credit the launch of IoT services, B2B Mobility, Business Analytics, FTTH and Cloud services on both sides of service and technology providers.
Talant Sultanov
Talant Sultanov is the Chair and Co-Founder of the Internet Society-Kyrgyz Chapter. In this capacity, he was involved in building community networks in remote villages of Kyrgyzstan such as Suusamyr and Zardaly. Another project is the ilimBox or Internet-in-a-Box project, where we bring educational content like Khan Academy videos and Wikipedia in Kyrgyz to schools and libraries in rural areas without access to the Internet. The ilimbox project was listed among seven worldwide digital education initiatives by Thomson Reuters Foundation. This project has evolved into an online educational platform ilimBox.kg. Talant is also working on the building of the Internet Exchange Point (IXP) in the Fergana Valley. In the past, Talant has was the Adviser to the Prime Minister and the Coordinator of the National Digital Transformation Program Taza Koom.

Dr Regi George
Dr Regi George and Dr S. Lalitha have been involved in transforming the health of the tribal community in the Sittilingi valley and the surrounding mountains for the past 24 years. They pioneered the "Tribal Health Initiative" (THI) which grew as an expression of their desire to empower tribal villagers to take care of their own health. The THI has achieved this through various initiatives that have not only improved the health of the tribals but also improved their financial status and community well-being. Whether training tribal women to deliver health to their community, reviving tribal art, or forming a society of organic farmers, they have consistently strived to empower the tribal community that they chose to serve.

Duncan Macintosh
As CEO of the APNIC Foundation, Duncan is responsible for increasing support for capacity building to advance professional development in the APNIC community, particularly for network engineers. In addition to training and education, the Foundation supports technical assistance and community development activities. Priority topics for this work include the security of Internet and DNS infrastructure; the promotion and deployment of IPv6; the development of Internet exchange points and related infrastructure; and the promotion of best operational practices.

Meeta Sengupta
Meeta Sengupta works at the cusp of policy and practice across the education and skills spectrum and enjoys sharing her gleanings via her writing for a wider audience. She has been an investment banker, researcher, editor, teacher and school leader across continents. A keen observer of how economics, foreign policy and investments affect the policy and hence practice of education, she works with leaders to design interventions that improve the quality and process of education. Designing education processes to realise the potential of individual students is at the centre of her education philosophy. Meeta has been the founder of the Centre for Education Strategy, a Delhi-based think tank that builds bridges between policy and practice for educators, educationists and Institutions.
Vinod Pavarala
Vinod Pavarala is Senior Professor of Communication and serves as the UNESCO Chair on Community Media (since 2011) at the University of Hyderabad, India. After obtaining a PhD degree in Sociology from the University of Pittsburgh, USA, he has taught at Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, USA and IIT-Bombay, India before joining the University of Hyderabad. His teaching and research have been mainly in the areas of communication for social change and community media. He has been actively involved in research, policy advocacy, and capacity building in the field of community radio not only in India and elsewhere in South Asia, but also in East and West Africa and parts of Europe. He is the author of Other Voices: the struggle for community radio in India (Sage, 2007; with Kanchan K. Malik). His most recent book, Community Radio in South Asia: Reclaiming the Airwaves (Routledge, 2020) is co-edited with Kanchan K. Malik.

AHM Bazlur Rahman
AHM Bazlur Rahman, a pioneer for giving voices to the voiceless people through Community Radio Broadcasting, ICT4D & community social dialogue in Bangladesh. He has seen first-hand how rural disadvantaged people in Bangladesh are deprived of their basic rights, freedom of expression and are subject to discrimination in many areas of their lives in line with VOICE POVERTY. He heads up the Bangladesh NGOs Network for Radio and Communication, one of the leading and pioneering media developments related to civil society organizations (CSO) in Bangladesh and is the Special Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) accredited with World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) of the United Nations and UN WSIS prize winner 2016 and Champion 2017, 2019, 2020 & 2021 for promoting media development.

“RadioRob” Hopkins
RadioRob has a passion for accessible low-cost FM radio as his motivation for visiting community stations in Southeast Asia. Rob comes from a pioneering family of Canadian inventors. Starting a small rural radio station in 1997, Rob planned on how he would make his station accessible, providing community access programming and public alerting that he began to envision a web-based “radio station in a box” with unattended CAP Emergency Broadcasting at its core.
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Naveed Ul Haq
Naveed is the Regional Director for Infrastructure and Connectivity, primarily working in the Asia and the Pacific region. Naveed carries a professional appetite to work with the people and build Internet infrastructure and networks to connect the unconnected. Internet technology, policy, and regulations are his essential skills, and working with people from different cultures is his passion. He aspires to live in a world with an open Internet, music that comes bundled with a strong coffee, and a force that drives inclusion and collaboration. He spends his free time at the gym, reading books, with friends and watching cricket.

Balkrishna Pokhrel
Mr. Balkrishna Pokhrel is currently working as Executive Director of Association of Community Radio Broadcasters’ (ACORAB) Nepal, an umbrella organization of 360 community radios in Nepal. He has more than 20 years of experience in community development, media and communication, human rights and governance sector. He has been engaged in advocacy and lobby for community media-friendly policy, capacity development and research of community radio. He has also experience in working with different community networks and development organizations.

Osama Manzar
Osama Manzar is a global leader on the mission of eradicating information poverty from India and the global south using digital tools through an organisation he co-founded in 2002. With over 25 years of experience, Osama has worked in the areas of journalism, new media, software enterprise before he established DEF to digitally empower the masses (so far 20 million directly) with a footprint of 1000 locations and 9000+ digital foot soldiers across 130 districts in 24 States. Osama writes a weekly column in Mint and tweets at @osamamanzar.
Philomena Gnanapragasam
Philomena Gnanapragasam is currently the director of Asia-Pacific Institute for Broadcasting Development. She holds a double degree in Psychology and Political Science from UK and Malaysia respectively. To date, she has 15 international awards for radio and television. Prior to joining AIBD Philomena was Station Manager of Malaysia’s Pioneer English Radio Station, Traxxfm, RTM. Ms Philomena has significant experience in both radio and television programming. She was also Senior News Editor for Primetime television. Under her management, Traxxfm won several international awards, the latest being the Blue Ribbon Award from World Health Organisation (WHO) in 2016 and she was instrumental in rebranding the English radio station.

Natasha Badhwar
is an Indian author, columnist, filmmaker, journalist and media trainer. She has written the books, My Daughters Mum and Immortal For a Moment. She is currently working as the Creative Producer in Karwan E Mohabbat. Badhwar started her career in broadcast journalism with NDTV (New Delhi Television Ltd.). She worked with NDTV for almost 13 years and left it as vice president for training and development in 2007. She covered the 2002 Gujarat riots as a video journalist.

Dr. Sarbani Banerjee Belur
Dr. Sarbani Banerjee Belur, is currently the Asia Regional Coordinator for Association for Progressive Communications (APC) for the Community Networks Connecting the Unconnected project. She is also a Senior Research Scientist hosted by Spoken Tutorial project at the Indian Institute of Technology Bombay, Mumbai, India. She has been working in the domain of rural connectivity for the past 6 years and has been associated with the Gram Marg project in the Department of Electrical Engineering, IIT Bombay. She holds a PhD in Demography from the University of Groningen, The Netherlands. Her current work involves increasing digital outreach to remote and rural areas of India, deployment of new technology alternatives for the middle and last-mile internet connectivity, development of sustainable models supporting Public · Private · Panchayat · Partnership (4-P model), seed the growth of community networks, gender and access, developing community technologies and impact assessment studies of connectivity in the lives of people.

Anju Mangal
Anju Mangal is the Regional Head of Asia Pacific with the Alliance for Affordable Internet, World Wide Web Foundation. Her work focuses on strengthening national coalitions and supporting multistakeholder collaboration to advance meaningful and affordable internet for Asia and Pacific region. She continues to work on digital inclusion, digital transformation and digital connectivity initiatives and ensures and advocates for an open, secure and safe internet for all including marginalised communities - persons with disabilities, rural and remote communities and youths and women and girls in particular. Anju is the Chair of the Asia Pacific Internet Governance Forum and has worked for the UN Internet Governance Forum-Secretariat in Geneva, Switzerland. She was a former board member of the Pacific Islands Chapter of Internet Society and is currently the Co-Chair of the Pacific Internet Governance Forum.
Harish Pillay
Harish Pillay is an electrical & computer engineer and recognised thought leader in the use, development and deployment of the Internet and technologies that support it. His early introduction to internetworking was on the ARPANet in 1985/86 when he was in graduate school at Oregon State University. He was intrigued by the promise and possibilities of ubiquitous connectivity and the benefits that bring to human societies. That interest was sufficient enough to drive his work in his MSEE thesis which was about building a TCP/IP stack for the then Microsoft/IBM OS/2 operating system. After spending some years in the US, he returned to Singapore in 1991 and set up a UUCP-based network to bring about connectivity with the Internet to benefit the local community of techies. Apart from interests in networking, he continues to be an educator and mentor to startups in the technology space especially with solutions that are built using open source technologies as he is of the firm belief that enabling customers and societies at large with all of the tools in an open manner brings forth significant benefits.

Siope Vakatake ‘Ofa
Siope Vakatake ‘Ofa is an Economic Affairs Officer of the ICT and Development Section, in the ICT and Disaster Risk Reduction Division of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific. Mr. ‘Ofa supports the implementation of the Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway (AP-IS) initiative which coordinates regional cooperation between governments, private sectors, and other stakeholders on identifying digital connectivity challenges and opportunities for bridging the digital divide. Through this initiative, Mr. ‘Ofa has worked with various external partners on different projects including the promotion of community networks for enhancing rural digital connectivity with the Internet Society, meaningful connectivity with the Alliance for Affordable Internet, and currently supporting Asia-Pacific governments on drafting a new AP-IS action plan as a blueprint for accelerating digital transformation.

Jane Coffin
Jane Coffin is responsible for the Internet Society's Internet Growth project teams. The Internet Growth project teams are focused on Community Networks, Internet Exchange Points (IXPs) & interconnection, peering, and community development, and a new critical project on measuring the health of the Internet. Her work also focuses on access and development strategy, where she and other ISOC colleagues and partners focus on coordination of collaborative strategies for expanding Internet infrastructure, access, and related capacities in emerging economies with partners.

Satyam Darmora
In 2015, I2e1 was incubated at IIT Delhi by Mr. Satyam Darmora with the sole aim to bridge the digital divide in India. During his schooling and graduation days, internet was almost a luxury for Satyam. This propelled him to envision a company that would provide internet access at affordable rates to all, which finally led to the genesis of I2e1. The idea was further bolstered when he moved abroad to Harvard Business School for education, where he realized the true importance and power of the internet. Satyam along with this team is working relentlessly to bring the power of the internet to the masses in India, to help them access opportunities that will grow and secure the future of the coming generation. Satyam brings a unique combination of experience in the development sector, technology, innovation and startups. In 2019, he was also recognized as 40 Under 40 entrepreneurs in India by Business World.

Nandini Chami
Nandini Chami is Deputy Director at IT for Change. Her work focuses on research and advocacy at the intersections of digital policy, development justice and gender equality. She is part of the core team working on policy advocacy for data justice, inclusive digital trade, and gender perspectives in the debate on ICTs as means of implementation in the SDGs. She also provides strategic support to IT for Change’s field centre Prakriye in its training programmes for women’s rights groups on adopting digital tools in their field practice, and critical ‘education for empowerment’ for rural adolescent girls. She has a Masters in Urban and Rural Community Development from the Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai.
Co-Conveners of CNX-APAC 2021

Rajnesh Singh, Regional Vice President, Asia-Pacific, Internet Society

and

Osama Manzar, Founder Director, Digital Empowerment Foundation

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Coordination Contact
cnxapac2021@defindia.org