

South Sudan School of Internet Governance (SS-SIG) 2026

- ❖ **Theme:** Shaping the Future of the Internet in South Sudan
- ❖ **Organized by:** ISOC South Sudan Chapter in collaboration with the SS-IGF Secretariat
- ❖ **Policy brief topic:** Bridging the Digital Divide through Community Networks in South Sudan
- ❖ **Session facilitator:** Eng. Unguec Kang
- ❖ **SIG Training dates:** 20th – 22nd May 2026
- ❖ **Venue :** Scinius Hub

❖ **Executive Summary:**

Affordable, and reliable Internet remains limited in South Sudan especially in rural and underserved areas with many counties, schools, health facilities, refugee settlements, and border communities still lacking meaningful access to digital services. Meaningful access includes affordable connectivity, devices, digital skills, local content, and online safety.

The digital divide restricts education, healthcare, economic growth, innovation, and civic participation. High costs, weak infrastructure, limited electricity, low digital literacy, and gender gaps continue to exclude many people from the digital economy.

Community Networks offer a practical solution as these locally owned and managed networks that can expand affordable access while empowering communities. This brief recommends enabling policies, rural investment, digital literacy, and partnerships among government, regulators, civil society, development partners, and local communities.

❖ **The issue highlighted:**

South Sudan has a major urban-rural digital divide where urban areas have better coverage while rural communities face poor connectivity, high costs, and weak infrastructure.

✚ **The key barriers include:**

- Limited telecommunications infrastructure.
- High Internet and device costs.
- Poor rural coverage.
- Electricity shortages.
- Low digital literacy.
- Gender inequality.
- Limited local content.
- Security and geographic challenges.

Prepared by: Richard Mawa Michael_IGF/SIG Rapporteur

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❖ **Why this it's important;**

Digital access supports:

- Education and learning.
- Jobs and economic growth.
- Government services.
- Health information and care.
- Innovation and entrepreneurship.
- Civic participation and inclusion.

Community Networks as a Solution

Community Networks are locally owned communication systems that connect underserved areas. They can provide affordable, community-managed connectivity where commercial providers do not invest. They are suitable for rural counties, schools and universities, refugee and IDP settlements, health facilities and border communities.

❖ **Policy recommendations captured.**

- ✓ Create an enabling regulatory framework that recognizes and support community networks.
- ✓ Invest in rural connectivity by using the Universal Service and Access Fund to support underserved areas that prioritizes places like schools, health facilities, and community centers.
- ✓ Expanding digital literacy for youth, women, and rural communities.
- ✓ Promote partnerships work with government, regulators, operators, civil society, academia, development partners, and communities.
- ✓ Support local content and innovation as well as backing innovation hubs and community-led solutions.

❖ **Conclusion**

Community Networks offer a practical way to bridge South Sudan's digital divide especially when guided with supportive policies, targeted investment that will enable South Sudan to expand meaningful Internet access and build a more inclusive digital future thereby strengthening digital skills and community participation.

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