

ITU Regional Development Forum for Americas (RDF-AMS)

Accelerating the digital development in the Americas

organized by the International Telecommunication Union with the support of the
the Government of El Salvador

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San Salvador, El Salvador

Please note that submitted information will be presented during the RDF-AMS P2C Roundtables and
it will also be reflected on the pledging platform of the Partner 2 Connect Digital Coalition.

Once completed send to AMSDir@itu.int

CONTRIBUTION FORM

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TITLE: Red Soldati Conectada

DESCRIPTION OF ACTION:

Soldati Conectada is a local project that seeks to provide connectivity to the neighbours of Villa Soldati, through a community internet network borned from a collaboration between 'El Hormiguero', 'FM Soldati 91.3', and the National Communications Agency' (ENACOM), together with national government authorities, aims to develop connectivity infrastructure in popular neighborhoods. The objective is to provide fiber optic connection to various social organizations, institutions, and community spaces in five neighborhoods of Villa Soldati, as well as free and open WiFi access to different areas of the neighborhood.

Villa Soldati is an area located in the south of the Argentine capital, historically facing socio-economic difficulties and lack of access to basic services, including the internet. This digital isolation has limited development opportunities, education, and citizen participation for local residents.

The deployment of a community fiber optic internet network is driven by the goal of building universal access to telecommunications, democratization of information, education, access to knowledge, entertainment, and digital resources of all kinds. Soldati Conectada is thus a grassroots project conceived and implemented in a horizontal and cooperative manner, guaranteeing full and high-quality connectivity at a low cost. Anyone can join or expand the network, by following its design, principles, and organizational structure.

The project is funded by the national government through ENACOM's approval of a Non-Refundable Contribution (ANR) from the Universal Service Trust Fund, amounting to 36,197,207.74 Argentine pesos. The main goal is to provide connectivity to the popular neighborhoods of Villa Soldati (Comuna 8 of the City of Buenos Aires) with an inclusive rights-based perspective, prioritizing connection in collective spaces such as educational and social institutions. The neighborhoods where the project will be implemented are Barrio Fátima, Ramón Carrillo, Los Piletones, Las Esperanzas, and Los Pinos. The project will involve installing five technological stations (two in Barrio Fátima – the most populous – one in Ramón Carrillo, one in Los Piletones, and one in Los Pinos). It has more than 100 members who have community-managed fiber optic internet at home, and could expand to 8,400 families living in the nine informal neighborhoods, or slums, of Villa Soldati. Considering an average family size of 4 people, the project could potentially reach directly or indirectly 33,600 people. In addition, we have already installed 50 public Wifi Access



points that are used by approximately 2,000 devices per week and free internet access to 46 local institutions including schools, sport clubs, churches and community kitchens.

During the first stage of the project, the first four points of the network were connected in Barrio Fátima, and the WiFi points in their surroundings are already operational. This will also enable the development of new job opportunities and technological training for the residents. Currently, the network is sustained through contributions from members and local institutions as well as specific projects we were able to develop with the experience gained in network management.

Access to the internet is a gateway to other rights, such as education, work, healthcare, and entertainment, which cannot be fully realized without connectivity. The national government aims to ensure that all citizens can access quality ICT services, making it essential to work in coordination with community organizations that can guarantee provision to strengthen territorial, labor, and cultural integration for all residents.

To promote the acquisition of skills and digital literacy, two different training initiatives have been launched: a plan designed for the broader community, and a second a more in-depth technical plan designed for the workers in our team and those seeking to pursue a career in technology and communications. The gender perspective is cross-cutting: in an environment that is highly male-dominated, we have a female street crew chief and female fiber optic splicers involved in network deployment. Additionally, we provide gender and ICT training in collaboration with local organizations.

The "Villa Soldati Conectada" project has been a successful initiative that brought digital connectivity to a neighborhood that previously lacked it, promoting socio-economic development and social inclusion by its own community. On top of that, the project includes professional training for the locals that maintain the network and also by deepening courses for new digital skills. The collaboration between ENACOM, the local government, and other stakeholders has been crucial for its implementation and success. This project has demonstrated how technology and connectivity can transform lives and communities, paving the way for a more inclusive and prosperous future that meets the challenges of the digital age.

Next goals are to prove the replicability of the model for other urban informal settlements where poor connectivity and lack of service is also present, and to expand into the formal area of Soldati in order to become an alternative to the high costs offered by large telecommunications companies.

COUNTRIES in FOCUS: [Name countries to be impacted by this action]

Argentina

YEARS of IMPLEMENTATION: [Tick the relevant boxes or delete the irrelevant items]

- ☒ 2023
- ☒ 2024
- ☒ 2025

RELEVANT ITU REGIONAL INITIATIVE: [Tick the relevant boxes or delete the irrelevant items]

- ☒ AMS1: Infrastructure deployment (DEPLOYMENT OF MODERN, RESILIENT, SECURE AND SUSTAINABLE TELECOMMUNICATION/INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY INFRASTRUCTURE)
- ☒ AMS2: Digital Inclusion and skills development (ENHANCEMENT AND EXPANSION OF DIGITAL-LITERACY, DIGITAL-SKILLS AND DIGITAL-INCLUSION PROGRAMMES, ESPECIALLY AMONG VULNERABLE POPULATIONS)
- ☒ AMS3: Digital transformation and innovation ecosystems (EFFECTIVE SUPPORT FOR DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION AND INNOVATION ECOSYSTEMS THROUGH SCALABLE, FUNDED AND SUSTAINABLE CONNECTIVITY PROJECTS)



- ☐ AMS4: Enabling Policy and Regulatory environments (DEVELOPMENT OF ENABLING POLICY AND REGULATORY ENVIRONMENTS TO CONNECT THE UNCONNECTED THROUGH ACCESSIBLE AND AFFORDABLE TELECOMMUNICATIONS/INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES)

Please find more information on the ITU Regional Initiatives 2023-2025, as defined by WTDC-22,

<https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Regional-Presence/Americas/Pages/RI-projects-2023-2025.aspx>

RELATED ITU-D PRIORITIES AS DEFINED BY THE ITU WORLD TELECOMMUNICATION DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCE 2022

- ☒ Affordable connectivity
- ☒ Digital Transformation
- ☐ Enabling policy and regulatory environment
- ☒ Resource mobilization and international cooperation
- ☒ Inclusive and secure telecommunications/ICTs for sustainable development

Please find more information on the ITU-D Priorities, as defined by WTDC-22, [here](#).

RELATED ITU PRIORITIES AS DEFINED BY ITU PLENIPOTENTIARY CONFERENCE 2022

- ☐ Spectrum use for space and terrestrial services
- ☐ International telecommunication numbering resources
- ☒ Inclusive and secure telecommunication/ICT infrastructure and services
- ☒ Digital applications
- ☒ Enabling environment

Please find more information on the ITU Priorities, as defined by PP-22, [here](#)

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