



Message from CEO

"On behalf of the Foundation Board I'd like to thank ALL our partners, sponsors and volunteers and look forward to another challenging and exciting 2nd quarter."

Welcome to the Digicel PNG Foundation's first quarterly newsletter. The Digicel PNG Foundation launched its very first project on October 15th 2008; a Mobile Learning Centre for the community of 8 mile in Port Moresby. At the end of the first quarter of 2009, 6 months after the launch of the Foundation, there are 11 Mobile Learning Centres (MLC's) in operation in marginalized urban and sub-urban communities in PNG with another 15 under construction bringing the total up to 26 MLC's to be launched by the end of May. These Centres will give at least 2,000 children a basic education, something they would have missed out on otherwise just because they cannot afford the school fees required.

A second focus area for the Foundation is improving elementary and primary school infrastructure. The current school infrastructure projects will provide more than 600 children with a good quality learning environment thereby enhancing their opportunities to gain a better quality education for the future.

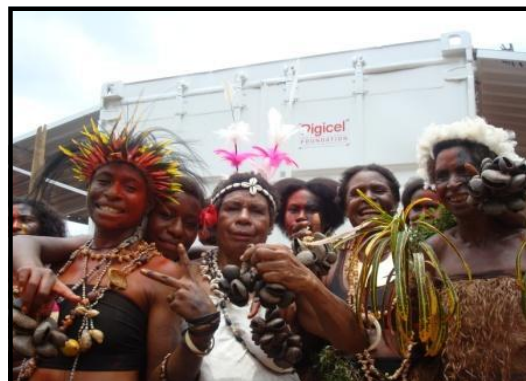
A third focus area for the Foundation is helping victims, mostly women and children, of domestic violence. The Foundation will launch the first Meri Seif Ples (Womens Shelter) project in April in partnership with local NGO, City Mission. The Foundation is also partnering with UNICEF to fund the construction of 2 Family Support Centres in Wewak and Maprik hospital in the province of East Sepik. These Centres will also cater for victims of domestic violence.

A new project the Foundation has embarked on is to provide basic health services to rural areas in Central and Gulf Province by using a fitted out 10 seater Landcruiser as a Mobile Health Clinic. Aim is to start up this service, in partnership with Foursquare Church, by May.

On behalf of the Foundation Board I'd like to thank ALL our partners, sponsors and volunteers and look forward to another challenging and exciting 2nd quarter.

Marina Van de Vlies
Chief Executive Officer— Digicel PNG Foundation

Foundation Launched



Jubilant women in traditional attire posing for the camera in front of the new MLC.

The Digicel PNG Foundation was officially launched on 15th October 2008 as a not for profit charitable organization with the aim of empowering communities and building community spirit. With its focus on addressing poverty among the disadvantaged population in society, the Foundation's main area of concentration will be on supporting initiatives that focus on promoting universal basic human rights to education, health, and freedom from all forms of violence against women and children.

Launched at 8 Mile settlement outside of Port Moresby, the event also coincided with the inaugural opening of the first Mobile Learning Centre (MLC), a facility to be used as a resource centre for the community.

The MLC is being used by the Enei Monou Literacy and Preschool for Unfortunate children, an initiative set up by the community with the help of World Vision International (Pacific Development Program). Over 200 children are benefiting from this facility, while it is also used for other programs like HIV awareness and sewing and cooking for mothers in the community.

Barakau Village elated with new Community School

The Foundation funded a complete new community elementary and primary school at Barakau, comprising 8 new classrooms, an office, storage room, library, toilet block and water tank.

The Foundation intervened upon discovering that this old school built in the 1950s had not had maintenance carried out since, leaving the facilities in a dilapidated state.

It took less than 4 months to complete the project with support from the local village community (such as mothers preparing food for village laborers). The new facilities were launched on November 21, and benefit close to 300 children. Enrollment numbers are rising, as children that used to go to school in Port Moresby, 60 km away, are returning home to attend school, saving valuable transport costs, and reducing the inconvenience and security dilemmas posed by such travel.



Digicel PNG Foundation CEO, Marina Van de Vlies (left) and local Member of Parliament Hon. Paru Ahi (right) cutting the ribbon to officially launch the new school buildings.

MLC rollout benefits needy communities

A total of 26 Mobile Learning Centres (MLC's) will be set up throughout the country by May 2009.

These 20ft containers are prefabricated into standard model units that are ideal for use as a classroom for preschools, storage for basic health supply, and as training centres for mothers and youths. Other additional items such as cabinets, chairs, tables, blackboards, slates, and children library books are also placed inside the units to make them more useful and accessible for the communities.

Since the inception of the concept in October 2008, with the launch of the first model in Port Moresby, a total of 11 MLCs have now been rolled out. The Foundation sets up these MLCs in partnership with various NGOs and groups that work with the communities.

Those that have now benefited from this MLC rollout concept are settlement communities at the brinks of major towns and cities where basic services like health, education, and regular income sources are non-existent.



MLCs are built out of second-hand 20ft shipping containers costing about US\$7, 000 per unit.



Shots taken on MLC at different angles. Top: Side view, Left: Inside one of the MLCs, Above: front view

Communities to benefit from school infrastructure projects



A double classroom launched on March 27th at Omai Primary School, Southern Highlands Province.

Construction is progressing, with 1 double classroom launched at the end of March in the Southern Highlands and another 2 school infrastructure projects well underway and planned for launch in April.

The next 2 schools to benefit will be Milford Haven Elementary School in Morobe Province, and Mendikwae Primary in Chimbu Province. These schools will receive a standard double classroom with an office in the middle.

The Foundation has identified a further 2 school infrastructure projects in Central Province and Western Highlands, where construction will begin by May bringing the total number of schools to 6, with at least 600 children benefiting from the Foundation's school infrastructure improvement program.

The Foundation aims to improve the educational environment for these children, making the overall learning experience suitable for longer-term growth and development.

Volunteer engagement program proves successful

One of the important highlights of the Foundation's activities is the involvement of Digicel PNG staff in its volunteer program. In this program, Digicel staff volunteer to take part in various activities organized by the Foundation.

The main objective is to provide Digicel PNG staff with the opportunity to get involved with the Foundation, and contribute to implementing the Foundation's vision of helping communities grow and develop in tandem with the company.

Some of the events which the volunteers have been engaged in include, having time out with communities, the rotation of library books at MLCs, Christmas charity visits, and community cleaning drives. These activities are mostly done with communities where the Foundation is actively engaged in a community project.



Volunteer of the year, Martin Joseph (right), showing off his award. Martin was the proud recipient of the volunteer of the year 2008 award from the Digicel Foundation. Incentives as these are some of the things the Foundation will continue to provide to volunteers in recognition for their continuous contribution towards its activities.

About the Digicel PNG Foundation - A non-profit organization that distributes and utilizes funds on a charitable basis for the sole purpose of building communities and community spirit in PNG.

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