

# NATIONAL ICT DAY CELEBRATED FOR THE FIRST TIME IN LUGANVILLE



With a crowd of over 1,000 people witnessing the street parade and attending Luganville's celebration of the World Telecommunications and Information Society Day (WTISD), which is also known as the National ICT Day, for the first time.

During the opening of the celebrations, the Member of Parliament for Santo rural, MP Alfred, also the Government WIP, and also representing the Minister responsible for ICT (who is also the Prime Minister for the country, the Hon. Joe Natuman) stated in his key note address to the public that "it is about time the people of the Northern region of Vanuatu, and in particular in Luganville, are aware and innovative when using the ICT devices and tools that they have in their hands or carry with them everywhere they go". He continued to say that "ICT's are now essentially part of everyone's life including children, youth, chiefs, church leaders and everyone who has access and use of it".

The venue of celebration was crowded with people who, for the first time, experienced the booth showcase of ICT products and services by each participating stakeholder. During the official booth tour for the VIP guests to this important celebration, guests also learned, from the various booths, the different types of Telecommunications/ICT services and products, including the valuation of land which was showcased by the Department of Lands, Classrooms without walls showcased by TRR, and the importance of using ICT when customs officers are performing their services at the border control.

The 1 ½ day's celebrations was an exciting event which also attracted more than 875 members of Yumitoktok street who followed online the Luganville ICT day program.

The celebration had positively impacts on the audience, especially the public forum discussions on ICT in Education, ICT in Tourism, ICT in Agriculture, ICT in Youth and Disability and ICT in health. During the ICT in Education forum, the audience heard one of the panelists - the SANMA PEO - informing the public that ICT has enabled the school drop outs to become part of the formal education system again and, particularly, with very good grades that they obtained as a result of using ICT in their formal studies.



As an outcome of the 1 ½ days celebrations, the participants can head home with constructive messages on the impact of the use of ICT in their daily lives and, importantly, that awareness has created the demand to establishment of an ICT committee in Luganville, which is now underway.

Another exciting activity that happened during the opening ceremony is that, the Member of Parliament for Luganville MP Kalfau Moli officially launched the TRR Community Consumer Champions Program, TRR's Community Consumer Champions Handbook and TRR Factsheets, and the Champions were commissioned by Rev. Bishop James Ligo. The TRR Community Consumer Champion Program is an initiative of TRR aimed at establishing and having Champions assist TRR in, firstly, raising their own awareness, and then to assist TRR in its role of raising awareness, education and empowerment of the community, on telecommunications ICT services, under guidance from TRR.

The Community Consumer Champions is designed for civil society representatives, especially youth leaders in the provinces, and they have been selected from the 54 applications received from many of the Islands of Vanuatu. Understanding the local settings and behaviour of people are integral parts of developing and creating benefits from the use of telecommunications and ICT that the Champions will assist TRR with.



Photo showing some of the champions who were present during the ICT day in Luganville on the 15th to 16th of May.

People of Luganville were proud to witness and be part of the launching of TVL's fiber optic cable on the 16th of May 2015. "With the fiber optic cable now available in Luganville, the speed of internet is expected to be faster than the speed which is currently on the market said Mr. Palas, TVL's representative".

On behalf of the Prime Minister's Office, OGCI and the TRR, we would like to publicly thank the stakeholders and their officers who hosted a booth during the celebrations. Such stakeholders with their officers as CNS, Sanma Tourism Office, Customs Department in Luganville, Lands Department in Luganville, Digicel, TVL and Yumitoktok Stret for actively participating during the celebrations. Our thanks too goes to the participating schools such as Vanuatu Agriculture College, Santo East School, St. Michelle and St. Therese School, teachers and students, for their participation during the parade and the whole celebrations.

Our special thanks goes to the main Sponsors Vuj, Wilco Hardware, Santo hardware, the Luganville Municipal Council and FM107. We believe that next year's event will be more colorful learning from this year's experience.