

Community raises funds to build own mobile network tower

FOR THE FIRST TIME IN VANUATU, remote villagers without access to mobile network have taken matters into their own hands by fundraising to build the communities' own mobile network tower.

The charitable association is called the Maewo Telecommunications Committee (Inc.), or MTC, and was officially registered with the Vanuatu Financial Services Commission on the 5th of April 2016.

While the MTC must raise funds for the tower on their own, the Office of the Government Chief Information Officer (OGCIO), the Telecommunications and Radiocommunications Regulator (TRR), and the Ministry of Health (MoH) have expressed support of the project to make sure health clinics on Maewo will have access to the Government Broadband Network (GBN), once the tower is completed.

In addition, Telsat Broadband has agreed to let MTC purchase materials to build the tower at cost, and will be providing on the job training to one of Maewo's



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communication between all levels of care from the aid post to Lolowai Provincial Hospital and through to Luganville's Northern District Hospital on Santo Island.

Telemedicine, a type of

former President of Penama Province, Ezekiel Boelum, stated, "We have petitioned the government and asked the government and network providers for years.

"In 2003, TVL introduced mobile phone service to rural

communities through mobile network and Internet."

Since broadband Internet access is almost non-existent on Maewo, schools, government offices and health facilities are currently unable

advance long-term economic, social and community development prospects.

The MTC has expressed the desire to help other underserved islands with grant applications,

at ICT Days on May 17th and 18th at the National Convention Centre.

If you would like to help or to learn more, visit <http://www.facebook.com/MaewoWifi>.