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International Girls in ICT Day 2016 events

Telecommunications and Radiocommunications Regulator and Women & Girls in ICT Committee

Port Vila, Vanuatu, 2016, April 28

Vanuatu Girls in ICT Celebration 28th April 2016

Introduction

The Girls in ICT initiative of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) is a global effort to raise awareness on empowering and encouraging girls and young women to consider studies and careers in Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs). The initiative is committed to celebrate and commemorate the International Girls in ICT Day on the fourth Thursday of every April as established by the ITU membership.

The 2016 Girls in ICT Day celebrations in Vanuatu was coordinated by Women and Girls in ICT Association is a Charitable Association based in Vanuatu.

The event is celebrated for the first time in Vanuatu this year 2016 and it was celebrated at two locations, one at Eles School in Nguna island and one in Port Vila.

Eles School Celebration

The Eles school celebration was coordinated by Shannon Tomlinson a Peace Corp volunteer. Eles is located in a remote village at a Computer Lab and Internet Community Center (CLICC) that was installed under the Universal Access Policy managed by the Telecommunications and Radiocommunications Regulator's office. 18 mothers and 5 year 8 girls participated in the basic training to create email and Facebook accounts.

They were addressed by Ms. Dalsie Baniala the Telecommunications and Radiocommunications Regulator through a pre-recorded video message that was downloaded from YouTube - see link to the message <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=daDbk4Yv730>

Port Vila Celebration

The event started at 9.30am at the SHEFA Education conference room in Port Vila. It was attended by the following women leaders of Vanuatu;

- Dalsie Baniala – Telecommunications and Radiocommunications Regulator
- Dorosday Kenneth Watson – Director of Women's Affairs
- Leimara Malachi – Deputy Lady Mayor of Port Vila
- Soletia Christie - Deputy Country Director of Peace corps
- Two Port Vila market vendor Presidents
- Representative of the Vanuatu Women's Center.

The Key Note address was delivered by the Vanuatu Telecommunications and Radiocommunications Regulator Dalsie Baniala that focused on the need for empowering women and girls with ICT tools. The Director of Womens Affairs Department Mrs. Dorosday Kenneth Watson also delivered a speech encouraging women to positively use ICT to promote their daily living including their business operations.

Mr. Joseph Tamata owner of a local Computer Network Services also delivered a short speech encouraging women to make use of technology in a positive way. At the end of his speech, he offered to develop and host the Women and Girls in ICT website for free. Before morning tea break, the Deputy Lady Mayor officially launched the Women and Girls in ICT constitution and those who were present signed the constitution as first members of the Association.

Doreen Lango who is Chairperson of the Women and Girls in ICT day event, later presented the vision of Women and Girls in ICT followed by the Smart Sistas ICT Girls Camp presentation by Rodney Philemon of Peace Corps.

The SMART Sistas ICT Girls Camp Committee is a strong collaboration between US Peace Corps Volunteers, US Peace Corps Staff, ICT Association Professionals (VITUS), the Vanuatu Government and other partners in the ICT industry. The committee began preparations in November 2014 and they hope to expand the program in future years. The 10 girls who were selected from over 60 applicants for the Smart Sistas ICT camp in May joined the sessions with their guardians at 11am and their names were announced for the first time. The Telecommunications and Radiocommunications Regulator also addressed the 10 girls and congratulate them they were fortunate to have been selected from the many applicants and encouraged them to take this opportunity seriously and that in the next 15 years they will be experts in their specific areas of interest in the development of ICT programs.

Training

The training session started with a brief introduction then a hands-on training creating email addresses and personal websites. There was a mixture of young girls and women who interacted to learn how to create their own email address and websites. Some managed to complete the creation of their websites. It is anticipated that a follow-up training for the same group will take place in the next three months. The participants were overwhelmed by the training and wished there was more time.

Outcome

The outcome of the celebrations is as follows;

- Over 100 people attended the celebrations and learned for the first time how to create their email accounts and personal websites.
- 10 Girls aged between 9 and 14 were selection out of over 60 applicants to attend a one week basic training on different programming languages as part of the Pacific ICT Days Celebrations.
- 30 women and over 20 young girls attended the one day training and were able to created their own email addresses and personal websites and start to use them immediately.
- A quarterly program was established for a follow up training.
- A free offer for creation and host of the women and Girls in ICT by the local owner for Computer Network services.



