

Partners in Community Development

Working to empower communities by assisting them to make informed decisions for their future development.

RA KAKA NEWSLETTER



January 2011

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Community saved by coconut entrepreneur

When 28-year-old farmer Basilio Pita first heard of the MORDI and CATD business and management training, he thought of it as a good way to develop his skills. Since the dalo and yaqona crops growing on his land only sold for little money,

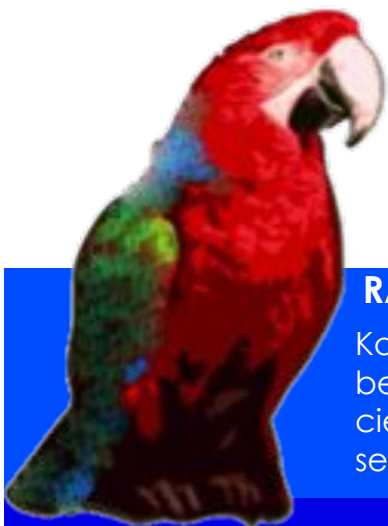


he had been looking for new ideas to improve his farming business. Little did he know that only a few weeks after attending the training course, his life, and that of so many living in his community, would change forever.

In June 2010, Basilio enrolled in the three-month business and management training in Nadave and learnt about an array of simple business models that can be implemented by any motivated member of the community.

After completing the training, Basilio returned to his village of Kilaka, where prospects are bleak and many of the elder community members suffer from diabetes, cancer, high blood pressure and strokes. He was bustling with ideas; eager to implement the theories he had learnt on the course and to improve not only his own business, but also the lives of other community members.

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RA KAKA

Kaka is Kadavu for parrot. Kadavu Province is the home of the beautiful shining parrot, 'prosopaea splendens', an endemic species. The Kaka is a messenger not only on land but also on sea - it serves as a communicator for God's living creatures.

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Basilio had learnt through the media that many European countries use virgin coconut oil to treat heart and blood diseases and when assessing the resources in his village, he was struck by the wealth of coconut and pine trees.

Only a week after leaving the training, Basilio decided to start up a business producing virgin coconut oil. After speaking to experts in the field and collecting key concepts, he was ready to put the idea into action.

In a true community effort, Basilio gathered his siblings and friends to assist him with the collection, cooking and sieving of the coconuts. After only two days, Basilio was able to package the oil into 350ml bottles, which he now sells for 10 FJD each.

Since then the business has saved many lives in the community, diseases are being treated

and often cured. Individuals are also spared the heavy expenses of having to travel to the closest health centers and hospitals in Labasa or Savusavu.

The medicine is so successful that members from nearby communities reach out to Basilio to buy his virgin coconut oil to cure their diseases.

Basilio has now gained confidence in generating new ideas to market products. He says he was 'very fortunate' to attend the training by PCDF (MORDI) and CATD to progress his farming ideas into a successful business model that also serves his community.

The project provides inspiration for the youth of Bua. To them it demonstrates how enthusiasm and available resources can be used for business ventures and serve the dual purpose of community development.



Basilio at his farm in Kilaka

MORDI and CATD work in partnership. PCDF (MORDI) provides eight days of business and management training and CATD the three-month business theory and management training. The combined training has empowered many people to start their own businesses just like Basilio Pita.



The MORDI Review Team 2010

Staff from MORDI, FSPI and IFAD, as well as PCDF's Executive Director, several Media representatives and the Ministry of Information undertook a weeklong review of communities that run income and non-income generating projects.

The development was so remarkable that several case studies were later published in

the Fiji Sun and broadcasted on national television.

Dialogue about past projects offered valuable feedback for the future. Particularly women highlighted how the community training had empowered them. MORDI is expected to exit the project sites this year, having worked with and trained the communities over the past five

years to establish self-sustainability.

Programme Manager Iliapi Tuwai reminded the communities to open their doors to governmental departments, NGOs and private sector organisations in the future – and with their newfound confidence, there is nothing stopping them.

On target: MORDI project sites set for self-sustainability

NGO staff, governmental departments and national media outlets visited MORDI project sites in Wailevu, Cakaudrove and Kubulau to assess the development progress that took place during 2010, in view of the scheduled programme exit this year.

Water tanks secure education of Lau Island village

Eleven 5,000-litre water tanks have been installed in Keteira village in Moala Island, Lau, providing the community with access to safe drinking water, enhancing the everyday lives of women and dramatically improving local education.

From 11th-25th of January, PCDF's Natural Resource Management (NRM) team implemented the project under the Good Governance and Water in Rural Fiji initiative, funded by Canada Fund.

Keteira village has a population of 110 and is situated on a hilly terrain on the leeward side of Moala Bay, where the houses are sparsely situated on a hill. Nine water tanks were strategically placed within the village to ensure that each tank was accessible for up to three houses. Two tanks were also installed at Keteira's Primary School Uciwai.

Until now, the women and children travelled long distances to obtain water during the dry seasons, damaging their health and well-being. Uciwai Primary School frequently sent many of their twenty-eight students home, due to the lack of drinking water.

With the new water tanks, women can now access safe drinking water from right beside their homes and use the time saved to help their children, whose education is now secured, with their homework.

NRM helped install the new guttering and construct concrete stands.

The practical work provided an opportunity to train the men and youth to understand the processes involved in water tank installation; enabling them to conduct repairs and maintenance work in the future to guarantee the sustainability of the project.

The community was very grateful for the assistance, as they have struggled to access clean and safe drinking water for a number of years. Recent prolonged dry seasons have made it especially difficult for local families to cope.



Young boys offloading the tanks onto village grounds.



The tanks were delivered to the villages by government shipping services.



Helping to lay the foundations of the concrete stands

The implementation of the project was delayed slightly as a result of the warning on Cyclone Wilma, which was forecasted to strike Moala on 24th January, and tanks were securely stored away in the village.

A follow up visit to Keteira is planned for February. PCDF will also conduct awareness training for the students on how they can contribute to the sustainable management of their water tanks in the school compound and around the village.

FINANCE AND ADMIN NEWS

- The **Annual Audit** of PCDF books is almost complete by KPMG
- **EED audit** for July-December 2010 to begin by KPMG
- Report to **AusAid** on Core Funding was submitted
- **EED funding** for May 2010 to December 2010 was received
- 2010 **Annual Report** should be ready for distribution on second week of February.
- **MORDI Programme funding** for period January-December 2010 was received.
- First Board of **Directors Meeting 2011** was held on 25th January at Vunimaqo Deck.
- **2011 Staff contract review** begins
- Staff are mindful of the Health Promoting Policy, Child Policy, Gender Policy, and Environment Policy in work places.
- **Support** work for all programmes **continues at productive and fast pace!** Work ranges from finance, admin, graphics, reporting, fundraising, publications, media releases, to assisting the programmes in the field and in meetings.



Biogas plant at Falelauni community, Samoa

Biogas: new energy source lays path for future of the Pacific

Samoan pilot highlights benefits of renewable energy to rural communities

With the increasing focus on renewable energy developments in the Pacific, PCDF was delighted to accompany an acclaimed delegation of UNESCAP professionals to the opening ceremony of a biogas pilot project in the Falelauni community of Samoa from 22 - 26 November 2010.

Represented by MORDI's Training, Monitoring and Evaluation Officer Talica Anderson, three Youth With A Mission (YWAM) biogas projects in the Falelauni community were visited. The delegation consisted of several leading UNESCAP employees and other technical experts in the field.

The opening Ceremony of the Biogas Programme was presided over by the Minister of Environment Honorable Fonote Meredith, in the company of 65 participants. In his opening speech, the Minister emphasised the power of biogas initiatives to improve sustainable livelihoods for the people of the Pacific.

Biogas is gaining recognition as a vital tool for the fostering of energy-led development in rural Pacific Island communities.

The gas is produced through the combustion of household and agricultural waste, which is then collected in a dome and used to provide energy to household stoves, water heaters and lights. Biogas initiatives are low-cost in terms of both implementation and maintenance and can produce gas for 15-20 years without any major re-investments.

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MORDI representative Talica Anderson at YWMA site



The Samoa delegation, led by UNESCAP

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Such projects provide critical and sustainable sources of household energy that can create opportunities for education and small commercial ventures; PCDF believe that they present a real opportunity that should be developed by similar communities in Fiji.

The Samoan initiative stems from Head of Fiji UNESCAP Iosefo Maiava’s travels to Vietnam. After seeing the benefits of fully functioning bioplant firsthand, Maiava decided to adopt the initiative to his native home of Samoa, where waste management remains a critical issue.

Outsourcing capacities

While looking for a partner with the capacities to run a pilot project in Samoa, UNESCAP became aware of the work of Mr. and Mrs. Fepuleai, missionary trainers for YWAM, Youth With A Mission, living in Falelauni. The Fepuleai’s had already suc-

cessfully implemented a small-scale biogas project and were interested in expanding it across the wider community.

With the help from UNESCAP’s Green Growth initiative and other stakeholders, the current biogas project will generate revenue (through new commercial ventures and employment) and provide an accessible, sustainable form of green technology that can facilitate community development.

Everyone benefits from biogas use

A further benefit of the use of renewable energy is the significant amount of money that can be saved for vital community resources such as food and education. In Samoa, a single gas cylinder costs 60 Tala (47 FJD), Fepuleai has used the money he has saved to develop his community by building a preschool for children of deprived families.

Local hotels and resorts are now latching on to the idea of renewable energy sources and are eager to incorporate such initiatives for a sustainable business.

Lessons learnt

Samoa’s pilot project has presented PCDF with an opportunity to assess both the difficulties and successes of the implementation of Biogas initiatives in the Pacific, and to gage their socio-economic impact on the local community. These activities are critical to PCDF’s core objective of resource-led development and will lay the foundations for future biogas initiatives across the Pacific.



TRAINING AND MEETING VENUE FOR HIRE

Located only footsteps from town, on Denison Road, the **Vunimaqo Deck** is the ideal training and meeting venue. It can accommodate up to **50 delegates**, equipment for meeting and catering are available upon request. For more information please **contact** the **Office Manager** on Tel.: 330 0392, or send an email to: **admin@pcdf.org.fj**





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Change in Boardmembers

This month, the PCDF family sadly said their-farewells to Dr Graham Roberts and Ms Monica Raghwan from the Board of Directors, who both resigned due to work commitments. We wish them all the best for the future!

PCDF is happy to welcome two newly appointed members to the Board of Directors: Mr. Rajeshwar Singh and Mr. Laitia Tamata

PCDF Membership

Passionate about Community Development?

Why not become a member of PCDF and support our important work with an **annual membership fee of only \$20.00.**

If you are interested in becoming a member, please write to the Executive Director at our Suva office.

Previous members are also encouraged to apply

Abbreviations

ED – Executive Director, Tevita Ravumaidama
NRM – Natural Resource Management
MORDI – Mainstreaming of Rural Development Innovation

The PCDF Team

Patron: Archbishop Petero Mataka
Trustees: Verona Lucas, Adi Laufitu Malani, Susana Tuisawau
Board of Directors: Sashi Singh (Chairperson), Lionel Gibson, Rajeshwar Singh, Laitia Tamata and Tevita Ravumaidama (Executive Director).

Tevita Ravumaidama, Feke Serau, Ferine Bano, Filipe Waqairagata, Iliapi Tuwai, Ilisapeci Whippy, Matelita Kedrayate, Setefano Nauqe, Seruwaia Hoyte, Tiri Naulivou, Talica Anderson, Ilisoni Tuinasavusu, Watisoni Sokiveta, Susana Lewanituva, Sereana Rakai, Moala Volau, Marika Tuvasu, Solomon Boleinaivalu, Annie Madden, and Alexandra Schiffmann.

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Finance & Administration - Annie Madden
Graphic Art - Filipe Waqairagata
Press/Ra KaKa Editor – Alexandra Schiffmann
MORDI - Iliapi Tuwai
Natural Resource Management - Matilita Kedrayate

Donors

PCDF humbly salutes the following organisations, without whom PCDF could not complete any of its important work:

AUSAID , NZAID , IFAD , FSPI , EED , Shangri-La's Fijian Resort , Canada Fund , Rotary Water for Life