

Outrigger Fiji Beach Resort Takes Lead Role in Building Two School Classrooms



Outrigger guests pay to mix cement, lay bricks and paint

CORAL COAST, FIJI – Two new classrooms will greet students in 2018 at the Conua Primary School in Fiji's Sigatoka Valley thanks to a community tourism project by Outrigger Fiji Beach Resort.

Over the last 12 months, more than 800 guests holidaying at Outrigger's Coral Coast resort assisted in building the classrooms, taking time out from their vacation to lend a helping hand.

Officially opened by the Attorney General and Minister for the economy, the Honourable Aiyaz Sayed-Kaiyum on November 24th, the total cost of the project was FJD\$100,000 (US\$48,000) with FJD\$20,000 (US\$9,600) raised by the Conua Old Boys Association going towards construction costs.

Through the resort's direct-action community tourism projects, guests were able to visit the school on a Tuesday or Thursday as part of a paid excursion which included return transportation to the school, lunch and a visit to the culturally significant Tavuni Hill Fort. Guests worked on the project under the direction of the resort's engineering team doing whatever was required at the time – mixing cement, laying bricks or painting, for example.

Guests generously contributed FJD\$100 (US\$48) for adults and FJD\$60 (US\$28) for children, of which approximately 30% was retained to cover expenses and 70% went into a building fund for purchase of materials.

Outrigger Fiji Beach Resort General Manager Peter Hopgood said that seven years ago when the resort first approached Conua School with a community tourism proposal, it had 55 students.

Since then, Outrigger Fiji Beach Resort has contributed a new library, a computer lab, a large meeting bure (hut) and a new kindergarten. With the opening of these new classrooms, the school will have an enrolment of 150 students with another 30 children attending kindergarten.

"We feel that we are an integral part of this community, and speaking personally, it has been so very rewarding to watch these children grow and develop," Mr. Hopgood said.

The resort has already begun planning its next community tourism project for the Conua School, the construction of two new teachers' living quarters which will commence before the end of the year.

In addition to these school-based community outreach projects, Outrigger Fiji Beach Resort recently supported a team of eye specialists from the United States who undertook over 800 consultations and restored sight to over 80 local residents of the province of Nadroga.

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