

A Day in Viqueque - A Surprise for Mum

A Grade 6 Geelong College boy: "I had a really great day. It's mother's day on Sunday and I have bought Mum a handbag but she is sure going to get a surprise when she opens it to see what I made for her at the weaving workshop!"



Our fifth annual *Day in Viqueque* was a very successful day – 11 schools attended – Christ the King PS, Christian College, Bellarine and Highton, Clonard College, Geelong College, Geelong High School, Sacred Heart College, St Francis Xavier PSI, St Ignatius College, St Joseph's College and Torquay College – 125 students were accompanied by 15 teachers.



The students attended four of the following workshops: **Music, drums and dance** – music in East Timor, East Timorese **food and cooking**, **Weaving** In and Out, **Timor – land of the crocodile**, **Let's play** – games and activities in East Timor, **Letter writing in Tetum**, **I Love Timor** – student experiences in East Timor, **With One Seed** – a social enterprise that is taking action on climate change through community forestry in East Timor and Special Guest Chris Van Ighen whose profound talk was again the highlight of the day. The feedback from staff and students confirms that the students enjoyed themselves and came away with a better informed knowledge of life in East Timor.

Many, many thanks are owed to Patrice Hall, the coordinator, who each year has spent many hours leading this day. She was assisted by Chris Clark, Louise Madden and Peter Cannon. Committee member David Whelan acted as Games and Play coordinator. Thank you too, to Saint Joseph's College who make us so welcome to their school. Many of their staff are on hand to help out on the day. Short download on Facebook of some action on the day.

<https://www.facebook.com/deb.singleton.14/videos/10206436104038921/>

Christian College Sets the Pace

In April an 11 strong group of teachers from Christian College provided an education conference for teachers of Viqueque. Themes for the conference were health for the junior levels of teaching, while the upper levels concentrated on teaching strategies. The “tippy tap” was researched and a prototype was constructed with volunteer assistance at the Friendship House kinder. A lovely happenstance for this trip was the inclusion of a member from the Mansfield Venilale friendship group. The teacher to teacher conference was well received and plans are already underway for another conference in 2016. Long time supporter and teacher at Christian College Deb Singleton co-ordinated the program.



Christian College Geelong continues to support and maintain existing programs in Viqueque and surrounds. Some of its wonderful achievements:

- Five Timorese staff employed to run programs at the Friendship House, Uma Maun Alin. Sinto Soares is the coordinator.
- Kindergarten (74 x 4 & 5 year old children enrolled), and meeting space.
- Computer Centre running computer modules, 6 classes taught Monday to Friday 3.30 – 9.30pm, coordinated by Akay.
- English classes teaching English modules in Term 2
- Upgraded accommodation facilities in Friendship House (sleep 20, includes kitchen, bathrooms, toilets, wall fans, Australian power points).
- Kraras primary school, now extended to include Kinder & Year 9. (Built and opened by CCG in 2010) maintained
- Motorbike supplied in 2011 now used by female staff member, Eliza, who had been walking from Viqueque to Kraras daily (6 month contract April-September 2015)
- Water and sanitation project at Mota Le'e (primary school built and opened by CCG in 2012) – 4 x toilets, 2 x water points for community families and farms, electric sump pump and hand pump from well (ADRA managed the project in-country)
- Outreach to community Aderai (2h 15m drive beyond Viqueque) – computers given and maintained to support remote village in their endeavour to bring computer skills to their people. 10 certificates awarded.
- Sewing machines repaired at new Olobay women's sewing group, business commenced Sep 2014.
- Scholarship students (2015 intake) met and encouraged in their studies. 2 original CCG supported scholarship students now graduated.
- 4 kinder teachers (Lucia, Paulina, Venancia and Deolinda) from UMA sponsored to further their training and professional development at CCG, each in Australia for 3 months during 2015.
- 2 computer gurus (Akay and Januario) from UMA sponsored to undergo training and skill development for 3 months, July-September 2015.
- Kinder training in Dili being provided for teachers from UMA as well as 3 neighbouring village kinder centres (4 x 1 week sessions over 1 year x 7 teachers), commenced November 2014.

Timor Leste Independence Day in Geelong



Geelong again formally celebrated Timor Leste Independence Day. Cr Andy Richard, Chair of Geelong Friends of Viqueque introduced and welcomed all present. Special Guest Speaker was Maria Bohan, Chair of Alola Foundation Australia. Students from Sacred Heart College, Brooke Russell and Rebecca Trezise (32 Army Cadet Unit) raised the Timor Leste and Australian flags, while before the ceremonies India Ney and Jessica Gulli movingly told of their recent trip to Baucau and the wonderful people they met.

Challenges for a Teaching Assistant

Hi..! I am Avito J. Henriques L.Ed (*pictured with Aurelia and Binda student teachers who spent time at Sacred Heart College*) I am from East Timor, and I am currently a teaching assistant at one of the biggest and largest boarding schools in the Southern-Hemisphere; that is, Geelong Grammar school. Geelong Grammar School was established in 1885.



I first arrived in Melbourne, Australia on the second of March, 2015; I never realized just how big Melbourne is! Compared to Dili (Timor Leste). I felt a real Culture shock and a little home sick. "Culture shock by definition is that sense of confusion and uncertainty sometimes with feelings of anxiety that may affect people exposed to an alien culture or environment without adequate preparation". So my first culture shock was about all the people here. They are so heterogeneous and vibrant difference races, with different ways of believing and so forth but, still they are living in

tolerance, harmony and a peaceful living society. The second thing is about being a bit home sick because I miss my country, family, friend and especially the food.

Furthermore, people here are so "independent". What I mean by independent here, is the people tend to work on their own. Students often work on their own too, although here unlike Timor, I see more little groups working and studying together in their classes which looks good and they seem to learn a lot from each other and don't appear to waste their time.

One thing that Australia (Geelong Grammar School) has really impressed with me is their Education system. Students go to school here all day (in Timor students really only go to school for four an half hours a day if that). From 8:30 am- 8:30 pm at night, many are boarders who sleep here. Day students stay till 8:30 pm too.

Another concrete example here I would like to emphasize is, the broader school hours starting from 8:30 am -3:30 pm in most other schools. Students spend most of their time in school learning, while teacher as well as teaching are using much of their time doing research and extra study which they call PD (Professional Development). In my country we only have limited hours for the learning and the teaching process. All schools start at 8:30 am and finish at 12:30 pm; so, students are spending many hours in their house playing instead of studying. While in Timor, we still lack many resources, namely: no internet, not many up- to date books, no or few libraries and no science laboratories for students to do any practice or investigation concerning relevant issues or subjects.

It has also been fun being involved with the Timor activity group run by Janet Taylor at Geelong Grammar School, who are trying to support their partner school Olocasa in Viqueque. As well as they are raising money to help give every student in the school a word finder dictionary (which in sometimes is their first own book). They have been trying to send over a class set of computers (and classes in Timor can be up to 50). I will be helping students learning Tetun and they help me improve my English, hopefully they will have a school trip to Timor in the near future.

All in all, my presence at Geelong Grammar School as a teaching assistant has been quite challenging. However, day by day I am adjusting myself to the both education system and the environment. I am meeting more people who are friendly in this community. The challenges, apprehensions, the loneliness will all have been a rewarding experiences with knowledge I gained.

Five Years for Geelong Nurses in Viqueque

Cathie Mahar and Annie Chadwick, nurses at St John of God, were in VQQ 8th March to 19th March for two purposes. The first was to deliver nursing education in Basic Life Support and hand hygiene. These training packets are part of a larger suite of nursing competencies developed by St John of God in Dili with the TL Ministry of Health. The eight packets (and others to be developed) will be competencies TL nurses will be expected to pass every year. Thirty-one of a possible 43 nurses were trained and nursing kits comprising of a stethoscope, watch, pen light, thermometer, pen and bag to carry them in were given out. The number of participants and their eagerness to learn has markedly grown in the last few years.



The second purpose was to facilitate an evaluation by Liz Elsworthy, long-time employee with St John of God and for the last three years Nurse Manager at St John of God in Dili. The St John of God program in VQQ is nearing the end of its fifth year and it was being evaluated for effectiveness, desirability by VQQ health care workers, and for future planning.

Curriculum Units on Timor Leste

There is a new website launched shortly by the xpand foundation, which contains curriculum resources for Australian schools (mapped to the Australian curriculum) on Carbon, Culture and Citizenship. <http://withoneplanet.org.au> The Culture and Citizenship modules focus on Timor-Leste.

Katrina Langford, who attended our Student Day has written the culture modules. She would welcome feedback from teachers. Katrina conducts Tetun courses: Melbourne- 16/17 May, 6/7 June (all level 1)
Sydney- 22/23 May (all level 1), 12/13 June (level 2). Katrina's email address is schoolsfortimor@yahoo.com

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