



Manten Kontaktu

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Exciting New School Building Commences



The following is a report from Br Tony Clarke who is overseeing the rebuilding of St Teresinha. Geelong Viqueque Schools were delighted to provide early funds to help in such a significant project for the **Sacred Heart College** partner school in Ossu. Currently the students at St Teresinha are being taught in the primary school



classrooms.

I am writing to send you some photo reports that will update you on the Santa Teresinha's School Ossu Rebuilding project.

The initial preparation work started on Monday, 21st August. The building contractor is Mr Martin Rerebain. He is from Indonesia. He has a reputation for building with quality and efficiency. He employs local labour as well as his own Indonesian builders. Just last week he informed me he plans to have all the work completed and hand over the keys by the first week in December.



The US\$10,000.00 donated to the school a few years ago for repairs to the school was handed over to Father Evaristo and became part of the advance payment at the end of August. Thank you to GVFS for this significant contribution. The cost of this whole rebuilding project is US\$170,084.82. It looks most likely that the blessing and opening ceremony for the newly rebuilt Santa Teresinha's School will be on either the 12th or 13th of January 2017.

Our Next Door Neighbour ranked 9th in hunger

The Global Hunger Index (GHI) is designed to comprehensively measure and track hunger globally and by country and region. Calculated each year by the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), the GHI highlights successes and failures in hunger reduction and provides insights into the drivers of hunger. By raising awareness and understanding of regional and country differences in hunger, the GHI aims to

trigger actions to reduce hunger. Yes, Timor Leste is 9th. Another critical reason for us to maintain our support for education in Timor Leste.

Eyes Open to the Bigger Picture



Preamble: Deb Singleton

The **Christian College** Year 11 Global Politics students worked very hard preparing English lessons before they left Geelong for Timor-Leste. In groups, they delivered to various audiences in Viqueque, from Kindergartens to Year 12 classes, with modification obviously. The lesson contexts ranged from everyday conversation starters, body parts (Heads Shoulders Knees and Toes got a fair workout during the week!), market scenarios and Australian geography. The group had a couple of songs prepared, which were performed to most of the schools visited. We were fortunate to have a number of our English speaking volunteers from the Friendship House assist as unofficial interpreters for the different lessons. A highlight of the trip was being able to deliver the final consignment of laptops to our buddy senior high school, Calixa. They had allocated a classroom which was modified with security bars and a trolley to house the 30 laptops. The welding job was designed and accomplished by staff and volunteers from the Friendship House earlier this year. It was fitting that we could present the laptops in a student to student ceremony at the school.

From Kahlee:

For me, Viqueque was a real eye opener to see what we were actually doing for the people in this region of East Timor. We are often raising money for Timor but often oblivious to know exactly what for; and to go there and first hand see everything that has been achieved, is something incredible. Since returning from our trip I have a burning desire to do as much as I can for these people and it has also brought on a change of attitude in myself in relation to my schooling. After seeing the

determination of Timorese students to gain an education, it has really made me realise how much I take the incredible opportunities I receive for granted. I look forward to the day that I am able to go back.



And another reflection from Montana Jones: Coming back to Australia after being in Viqueque was a real eye opener. Compared to Viqueque, the streets in Australia seem dead and the roads were so quiet. I remember being so shocked to hear everyone speaking English. It was so weird when we walked past people without making eye contact or greeting them. When in Viqueque, we always would say "Bondia".



From Emily:

My experience in Timor-Leste was probably what I should've expected from the stories I had heard and the pictures and videos I'd seen, but I still found it such a surprising and unique environment I had never encountered.

The standards of living were at the level I expected them to be from what I had learnt in class, from an academic perspective. However, from seeing it in real life and living the lifestyle myself, I began to perceive the serious reality behind what used to be just words and statistics.

The highlights of my trip was definitely interacting with the people, whether it was from our own class or the locals and being able to laugh and connect with another when a language barrier was broken.

I see Timor continuing to learn and develop in the future as inevitable with the number of organisations supporting it. However, I have also learnt to understand that the work will be very slow and tedious, but will result in a long term change instead of a short term fix.

This trip for me has been unlike any other experience in my life, and I feel that my future contributions will not only help the people and their country, but myself in keeping my eyes open to the bigger picture of what really matters in life.

More Laptops for Partner School

Committee member Janet Taylor has been busy in arranging for 15 pre-used laptops from **Geelong Grammar School** to be shipped to Timor Leste. Memeniso the Principal of Olocasa has been working hard to establish an information technology center for the school which already has some computers and a data projector.

Geelong Continue to Support Alola

Under the leadership of Brian Edward and other members of Geelong Friends of Viqueque Anne Fairbairn, Rosemary Nugent, Steve Levakis, Christine Perkins, Cathy Maher, Deb Singleton, and Maria Bohan, (Chair Alola Australia) a dinner held in Geelong raised \$18,150 to support the Alola Foundation. The special guest was Kirsty Sword Guamao, who founded Alola which has as its prime aim the support of women in Timor Leste.

