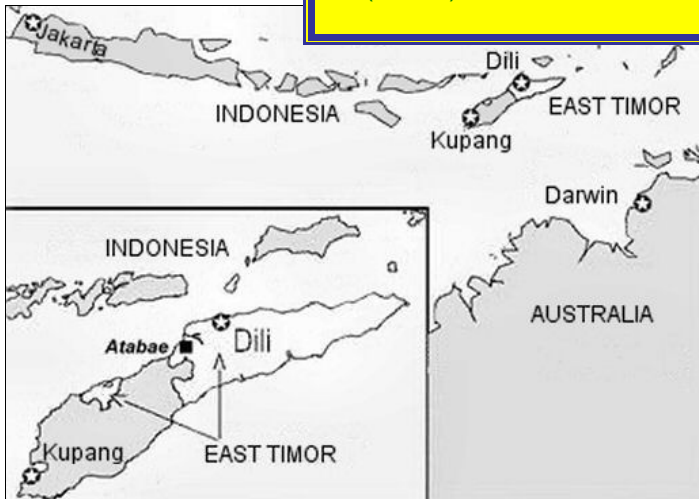


Friends and Partners with East Timor Incorporated

(FPET) ABN 11987 413446

December Newsletter 2007 Vol 6 No 2



Like to know more about us and/or projects ?

View our website: www.fpet.org.au

Or Email: info@fpet.org.au

Or Write: FPET PO Box 191 The Gap 4061

Snapshot of the last 12 months

Fr John Tamonob SVD replaced Fr Marsellus as parish priest.

In the 12 months to 30 September 2007 as reported at the association's AGM on 5 November 2007, the main areas of financial support to Atabae were:

- allowances for Margaret and David Hall (covers more than 12 months) \$21,090;
- teachers' salaries (for 17 teachers where there is no Government support) \$20,834;
- water tanks \$9,394;
- Atabae parish expenses (including operating costs for the donated vehicle) \$8,393;
- medical equipment (audiometer and haemoglobinometer, equipment for travelling clinics – these items have proved invaluable in Margaret's Community Health initiatives) \$4,544.

With these sizeable outlays, funds available have been depleted significantly.



Fr John

THE JOURNEY WITH ATABAE COMMUNITY

In October 2000, Deacon Gary Stone first spoke of his recent experiences of the plight of the East Timorese people and especially of the Atabae area of some 10,000 people spread over 17 communities. Atabae, being close to the western border had suffered extensively through loss of life, displacement of families and destruction of property and infrastructure.

Father Marsellus Baonule SVD, then parish priest of Atabae, and other community leaders made the moving plea "please do not forget us". The relationship with Atabae started in late 2000 through people of St John's Wood/The Gap parish and Bardon parish coming together to answer this call. Since then, other parishes, community groups and people from all over Australia have joined in the friendship and partnership with Atabae.



Fr Marsellus

FPET begins

May 2001 saw a further visit by Gary to Atabae, accompanied by Peter de Haas and Peter Fitzsimons and by October 2001 the incorporated association Friends and Partners with East Timor Incorporated had been formed.

Our first newsletter was produced in June 2002 by then editor Rad Speedy, now deceased. It spoke of East Timor being the poorest country in Asia and one of the poorest in the world – at the same time the East Timorese people were celebrating the birth of their new Nation.

In 2002-03 significant donations were made by supporters which allowed for the re-building of schools and chapels, support of widows and orphans, emergency relief and provision of a four-wheel drive dual cab utility.

Volunteers based in Atabae

In conjunction with PALMS (a lay organisation based in Sydney), volunteers have been placed in the Atabae community, initially Jane and Nick Eager, and currently Margaret and David Hall. As the relationship moves from being one of aid and re-building to skills development and community benefit, having volunteers in Atabae is vital.



Atabae school students

The future

While there are some signs of government spending, especially in Dili on much needed road and civil works, there is still very little money circulating in the Atabae area. There is talk of an electricity supply to the main town of Atabae being reconnected in the near future.

FPET believes it is important to continue if possible the good works done so far in Atabae. The priority areas being:

- Support **PALMS volunteers** through to 2010 - \$15,000 estimated cost per annum (pa);
- **Teachers' salaries** for 12 – 18 months for 17 teachers in four schools which will allow some 400 primary school students to be educated - \$24,000 estimated cost pa (the

Christian Brothers have recently gained government funding for some teachers and we are hopeful of being able to obtain similar funding);

- **Baucau teacher training college**, presently supporting four trainee teachers from Atabae who will return to Atabae when qualified - \$2,100 estimated cost pa;
- **Don Bosco technical college** in Dili, nine students recently selected to undertake trade and technical courses of one to two years duration - \$3,800 estimated cost pa;
- **Build Atabae Community Health Centre** to be run by Margaret Hall and local people trained by Margaret (to improve infant and mother nutrition and other community health issues including children with disabilities) - \$7,000 budget to construct, plus salaries for two or more trainee health workers (see Maria's story);



Margaret Hall at work

- Sponsor four Timorese to attend **World Youth Day** and support **Atabae Youth Group** - \$9,000 estimated.

Benefits for both partners

The generosity of many has allowed a considerable amount to be achieved for the benefit of the Atabae community. The friendship and partnership with Atabae has not been one directional – Fr Marsellus has said that at each Mass in Atabae and the local chapels prayers are said for the relationship. If we are open to it, our Timorese friends have much to teach us about forgiveness, faith, hope and the importance of family.

Achieving the priorities

There is clearly a need to raise further funds if there is to be any real chance of achieving the priorities outlined above. In 2008, this will formally start with Deacon Gary speaking at week-end Masses in St John's Wood/The Gap parish on 2–3 February 2008. This will be followed in other parishes and venues where arrangements are being made.

On behalf of FPET, thank you to all supporters of the friendship and partnership over the last seven years and for your generosity in so many ways.

John Brady, Treasurer (07 3300 4811)



Village school funded by FPET had three teachers and students attending before the building was finished.

MARIA'S STORY (in brief)

Maria, our trainee health officer, has written a short history of her life which is summarised here. Look on our website (www.fpet.org.au/Maria2007.htm) for full version.

My complete name is Maria Lurdes Gusmao Goncalves. I am 22 years old. I have six brothers and two sisters. My father works in the government administration office and my mother is a teacher. I live with my grandparents and I love all my family.

I started high school in 1999 but stopped when we had to go to West Timor (Atambua) for several months because of the violence. I resumed study when we returned and I completed high school in Dili in 2005. I started at University but left after six months because of the cost. I then did a six month administration and accounting course with World Vision.



Maria busy doing school health assessments

Then my Father told to me about the Health Manager position in Atabae and encouraged me to apply. I got the position and started working with Mother Margaret (Hall). It's still difficult for me but I try very hard to learn from Mother Margaret and other people. So now I have confidence to work and I enjoy it. But I must do more study.

We are very grateful for the help from the Australian organisations – FPET, PALMS, Connect East Timor and Loreto College. I especially appreciate Loreto College students' help for the babies in need of special care. I am very happy working in this situation and we always pray for you all the time. Finally, thank you Mother.

Maria Goncalves, Trainee Health Officer, Atabae

So, **WHAT CAN YOU DO NOW?** - You choose:

- Pray for the relationship, and
- Join FPET and participate in organisation, and/or
- Support FPET financially (tax deduction optional).

Let us know your choice and we will contact you:

Name:.....

Address:.....

Phone and/or.....

email:.....

Mail to: Friends and Partners, PO Box 191 The Gap 4061