

Friends and Partners with East Timor Incorporated

(FPET) ABN 11987 413446

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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

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

On March 14, PALMS volunteers David and Margaret Hall arrived in East Timor. After a short time in Dili, they drove the FPET Troop Carrier to "FPET House" and took up residence for a two-year stay. Thus, FPET's goal of once again having volunteers living in the Atabae community was achieved.

They are well suited to the task. Margaret is an experienced nurse/midwife and has worked with isolated aboriginal communities for many years. David has practical and organisational skills from his time in the army and police.

As well as working on health and community and church projects, they will be our eyes and ears in Timor and will be able to advise us on how we can most effectively strengthen our friendship and partnership. Working with the Timorese and passing on skills will be their focus. As Margaret says, after two years, she hopes to have worked herself out of a job. Supporting the Halls is a major commitment of FPET funds and energy, and a major part of our strategy for the next two years. Please pray for the success of their time in Atabae.

Jim Johnson (3300 6332)

Making a difference in Atabae Education

FPET sees assistance in education for Atabae as a major goal. Using funds donated by our supporters, we have helped Fr Marsellus fill some gaps where the Timor government is not providing services –

- Building a new classroom block at the Atabae parish school
- Rebuilding the parish boarding house for children from other villages attending the Atabae secondary school
- Rebuilding the school in Biamaraen, the most isolated of the river villages

Our proudest achievement has been in the mountain village of Aidabeleten. FPET negotiated with the villagers to build a lower primary school for the small children who were finding it too difficult to walk over steep and rough roads to the school in the next village. Last year FPET provided funds for materials, Fr Marsellus organised the project and the community provided the labour. At the start of the school year in October, Aidabeleten had a new school ready to operate.



I visited the school in November. The walls were still open and the floor had not been concreted (not enough water in Aidabeleten at the end of the dry season to mix the cement). However the school was functioning, with 72 pupils and 3

teachers. It showed me what the Timorese will do to get an education. If the building is unfinished, use it half finished! If the floor is not yet concreted, sit on the rocks! If there are no desks or chairs, sit on a plank with your books on your knees!



More building is required in the parish but the bricks and mortar are only the start of it. So far, we have not been able to interest the government in paying teachers in parish schools, so FPET is paying these salaries – 12 teachers at the 3 schools. FPET is

also assisting some needy students to continue studying.

Education is taking a large part of the FPET budget, but we believe that investing in the youth of Timor is one of the best things we can do. They are the future of our partnership and of their country.

Jim Johnson

FPET now has a direct debit facility with the Archdiocesan Development Fund for supporters to make regular (non-tax deductible) donations. Our most significant expense from non-tax deductible donations is paying 12 teachers' salaries for outlying primary schools at a cost of US\$1,200 per month.

So, **What could I do ? - You choose:**

1. Get involved by joining FPET, AND/OR
2. Make a one-off donation, either to PALMS Overseas Fund (Atabae) for community development (tax deductible) or to FPET for Atabae parish works (non-tax deductible) AND/OR
3. Make regular direct debit donations to either PALMS or FPET.

Let us know and we will contact you:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone and/or email: _____

Mail to: FPET, PO Box 191, THE GAP 4061



Alice in Teachers College

◆ Alice Abu is 22. Last September she started 3 years of study for the Bachelor of Teaching at the Marist Teachers College in Baucau. The course is solely for primary school teaching and the only internationally accredited course in the country. The government itself does not have an accreditation system yet.

◆ Sending Alice to College to do primary school teaching supports the basic skills that need to be built in East Timor. There is a focus on building up quality primary school teaching. There's really no good place to go to be trained for secondary school yet. The Teachers College in Baucau takes just 50 students per year, and its first year of graduates are only finishing this year. There are no other properly trained indigenous teachers in the country! So lots of work to do. But it shows that there is a re-building of education underway in East Timor and that the Church is at the forefront. We can help Atabae to be part of it. Alice was one of two young people chosen by Fr Marsellus out of the young people in Atabae to apply to study at the College. She passed the entrance test and interview to be enrolled.

◆ As I understand, she would not have been able to study, nor perhaps would have thought to go to study teaching in Baucau, which is so far from Atabae, without our sponsorship and support which allowed her to apply and now begin her study. When I spoke to her, she was very much enjoying her time at the College. She was being hosted by a local family which helped her settle in and remind her of home.

Joel Hodge

Operation Hand Up gets underway

- The Parish of St Joseph's and St. Anthony's Bracken Ridge and Bald Hills launched the campaign in October 2005 to pay the salary of a teacher at the Biamaraen school.
- The Parish Pastoral Council has agreed to support this project for an initial 3 years. A notice board gave weekly messages to parishioners about the need for education as one of the UN's Millennium Development Goals to halve world poverty by 2015.
- Fr Bernie Costigan invited parishioner and FPET member Michael Hutchinson to address the congregation at the three masses on the last weekend in October where the educational needs of the children of the Atabae parish were presented.
- Thanks to the generosity of parishioners, the parish is well on the way to meet its first year commitment.
- The name of the campaign Operation Hand Up fits neatly in with the way FPET works with the people of the Atabae parish.

Michael Hutchinson

More support for Fr Marsellus

◆ Fr Carlos Alberto SVD, a Brazilian priest will start about May as assistant parish priest in Atabae Parish. This will be a quite permanent position. He doesn't speak English, but has expressed his interest to learn English as well as Tetun.

◆ The seminarian, Br Fidel, is still in Atabae. He will be there for at least another year. He is in pastoral years.

◆ The Holy Spirit Sisters of Timor Leste have agreed to establish a community in Atabae in order to help parish pastoral work.

Fr Yulius Yasinto, SVD House, Dili

Continuing strong support from Enoggera

St John the Baptist Enoggera Parish ran a Bazaar late last year and a Christmas carols evening. Over \$5,200 was raised and donated to FPET to support the Atabae community. Our heartfelt thanks go the Enoggera Parish for this generous support of the relationship with Atabae.

John Brady, Treasurer

East Timor For Beginners

See www.fpet.org.au for Ben and Sally's full report.

I am a registered nurse and recently completed my midwifery studies. In November, I made a private visit to East Timor with my husband Ben and my Dad (Jim Johnson). The people were incredibly friendly and kind, the roads were outstandingly potholed and regulation free and the animals (the Fahi [pigs] and Bibi [Goats]) were abundant and unruly



In Atabae, I did some work with Senor Alfredo and the other nurses, in the Atabae clinic and on a mobile clinic to immunise, weigh and measure babies. The nurses regularly used 3 or 4 languages, counting in Indonesian, documenting in Portuguese, speaking in Tetun and practising their English on me. The nurses had no rubber gloves and no facilities for washing their hands or equipment between children.

Getting to hospital from some villages often requires an eight hour walk to Atabae village and then catching a bus to Dili or Maliana.

I was surprised and humbled by how fondly Australian visitors are remembered by the people of Atabae. I think the new volunteers Margaret and David will be well received and well utilised.

Sally Kildea

In November last I spent two weeks in East Timor. As a Civil Engineer, the first thing that struck me was the lack of basic infrastructure. Roads are narrow with tight corners and landslips. Water supply is reliant on wells and springs, not reticulated. Rainwater tanks are few. Walking several hours to obtain water is common. Electricity generators are scarce due to the price and running costs. Electricity reticulation systems are in disuse since the Indonesians departed East Timor. Timor faces many challenges to redevelop its basic infrastructure. The most significant is to ensure reliable and clean water.

Ben Kildea

