

Friends of Suai/Covalima

Friends of Suai/Covalima is a program of Health, Equity and Social Justice at the City of Port Phillip

September 2017

Albert Park College to help with basketball facilities upgrade at Suai Secondary School

Albert Park College (APC) believes there is a strong correlation between healthy, fit kids and academic performance, so they encourage all students to enhance their sporting prowess. There are lifelong benefits in teaching kids the value of fitness and how to exercise properly. Teamwork, ethics including fairness and honesty, tactics and communication skills are all enhanced on the sporting field. Their most

successful sporting program is their renowned Basketball Academy. With a membership of 170 students it symbolises APC student passion and commitment to achieving sporting success. Pat Jessen, Coordinator FoS/C was invited to speak to a full assembly of 800 students. A short video with a message from the students in Suai was shown, asking students at APC to consider helping them to improve sporting environment in Timor Leste, which



Suai student shooting hoops currently students play a half court due to only one hoop available.



Suai students sending a message to Albert Park College about their basketball facilities.

was warmly received. So with enthusiasm the students of Albert Park College have agreed to raise funds for the Suai Secondary School to refurbish their court and help with some equipment. Let's hope that the Suai students can play ball on a new surface with two hoops instead of the current half court arrangement. Good luck with the fundraising effort APC! ●

Friends of Suai/Covalima Coordinator to retire

Dear Friends,

It is with mixed emotions that I have tendered my resignation to Council, but I do hope to stay involved as a FoS/C volunteer. It's been an extraordinary job to work hand-in-hand with our friends and colleagues in Suai, Covalima. It seems like yesterday we battled with language, bad roads and communications to forge this friendship. I commenced as



Pat Jessen passing on the Suai students message to Albert Park students.

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Solar Village Lighting Scheme – Where there is light there is hope

Friends of Suai/Covalima (FoS/C) and its partner the Centro Comunidade Covalima (CCC) are partnering with the Alternative Technology Association (ATA) in Covalima to provide its first Village Lighting Scheme (VLS) in a selected off-grid small village in Suai Loro. The VLS is being delivered within a framework of community development, whereby a village agrees to purchase solar lighting and forms a committee of management. Local village people are trained

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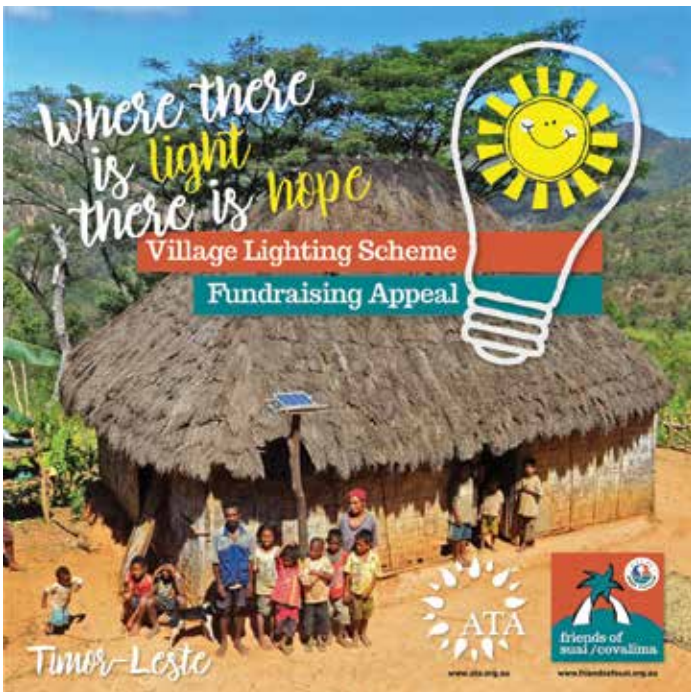




Participants from Laen Tolu off-grid village in the VLS.

as technicians to install, maintain and repair solar photovoltaic (PV) systems and the committee collects funds from beneficiary households to invest in regular maintenance and repairs. Householders in remote, off-grid locations then benefit from high-quality electric light.

The benefits of getting solar panels and access to power include: people are no longer at risk of inhaling kerosene fumes and the associated risk of fire; children and others can study at night; families can work on activities at night; improved security for family members at night. Apart from providing house lights, the scheme provides a rechargeable torch and gives the ability to recharge the torch and a phone. Thirty-nine households have been provided with a solar PV system. ●



Help Light Up a New Village

It's so impressive we are aiming to light up a second village. FoS/C have raised \$10,000 and seeking to match it with further donations.

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www.friendsofsuai.org.au

Coordinator in 2004, when there was a scarcity of food and generally people had very little. Yet this border town and district is resilient despite enduring a sad history of violence. I took on the role from my predecessor Lee Kirk, who did the ground work to ensure the program got off to a strong start. Successive Councils and CEOs at CoPP have always stood strong behind the agreement of the twenty year commitment.



Coordinators Simao Barreto, Pat Jessen and Alberto Barros.

Since 2004, there has been three Coordinators at the Covalima Community Centre (CCC), all hardworking and committed to ensure as much as possible could be achieved. The CCC continues to develop into a vital and dynamic organisation achieving many positive developments in Covalima.

It's been a privilege to work together, we have listened, talked, and developed a range of programs with our friends at the CCC. It's still tough in rural areas, but life is slowly improving. Many young people have gained skills and jobs through scholarships and support. The friendship with Friends of Suai/Covalima has a community development approach of 'walking together' and a genuine understanding has developed and endured.

I trust you will support my successor to keep the friendship vibrant. The City of Port Phillip will be recruiting my replacement soon, so I will keep you posted on who will fill the role. Obrigada barak!

Pat Jessen

Covalima Community Centre (CCC) Annual Report 2016-17 reflects positive outcomes

The FoS/C Community Reference Committee has extended congratulations to the CCC staff and Commission for their 2016-17 Annual Report. The Executive thanked Director, Alberto Barros for his clear reporting which gives a very positive picture of the considerable progress. The CCC continues to provide an active focal point for community action, education and training in Suai and beyond.

By implementing its new strategic plan, CCC is working to achieve its mission to build a community in which 'everyone has the opportunity to develop their capacities so that they can contribute to the social and economic development of the District of Covalima.' ●

International Election Observers Mission

A group of six Friends of Suai/Covalima (FoS/C) mostly residents of City of Port Phillip participated as international election observers in Timor-Leste for the 4th parliamentary election held in July. Travelling overland to Suai, the group worked in pairs to visit a number of different voting centres including the hospital on Election Day. They noted that people showed great pride in voting. The experience was an opportunity to reflect on the long struggle for independence and contemplate the future of this young nation.



CCC staff all voted in the 2017 Parliamentary Election with FoS/C Observers.



Covalima vote ready for collection in the 4th parliamentary election.

Whilst the election was close, FRETILIN will form a coalition government and CNRT will form strong opposition.

The group also met with staff at the Covalima Community Centre (CCC), some scholarship recipients, members of Rural Women's Development groups, school teachers and members of the Suai community. The visit continues to strengthen the relationship between our two communities with the Suai community expressing their appreciation for the international observer presence.

Carlene Harlock Team Leader ●

Health and Hygiene Training

Health and hygiene training was continued at the Suai Secondary School in June funding by FoS/C. Sanitation is currently not available to 54% of households in East Timor, including those in most rural villages in Covalima. Awareness of the reasons for sanitation and accompanying hygiene practices such as the importance of handwashing is needed and will lead to improved health outcomes in the short and longer terms. The link between hygiene behaviours and preventable illness was emphasised during the workshop.

The training was provided by Dulce Soares, an experienced WASH schools health and hygiene trainer from Timor-Leste. FoS/C recognise that behaviour change will be challenging following many years of open defecation due to lack of infrastructure. Linking behavioural change to the school infrastructure initiatives and school health clubs, information sharing and engaging in drama and games with students can make significant headway and influence them and their families for better health and wellbeing. The CCC Health Promotion Officer, Gaudencio Cavalho continues toward these goals working with the Suai School. ●

Site visit by Timor Leste urban planning/waste management delegation



Mayor Cr Voss, CEO, Peter Smith Cr Brand welcome the Timor Leste Delegation

Local Government Victoria provided formal urban planning, waste management and community engagement training for twenty senior government officials, state secretaries, urban planners and waste management teams in August 2017. City of Port Phillip was one of a number of councils invited to host the delegation and provided an on-site visit on Friday 11 August. The delegation received a warm welcome from the Mayor Cr Bernadene Voss, Councillor David Brand and the CEO. An impressive presentation on Acland Plaza and Triangle site was delivered by Craig McLean, Coordinator, City Design, and Cr. Brand provided background on the history of the Triangle site. The group appreciated the opportunity as part of the professional training with Australian local government. ●

2017 Impressions of Covalima



CCC Staff and Commission with Pat Jessen Coordinator and Mags Alston Chair of FoS/C June 2017.



Many of the 100 FoS/C scholarships have provided job opportunities for many beneficiaries over 5 years. The CCC provides training in IT and English and some 350 young people were trained in the last financial year.



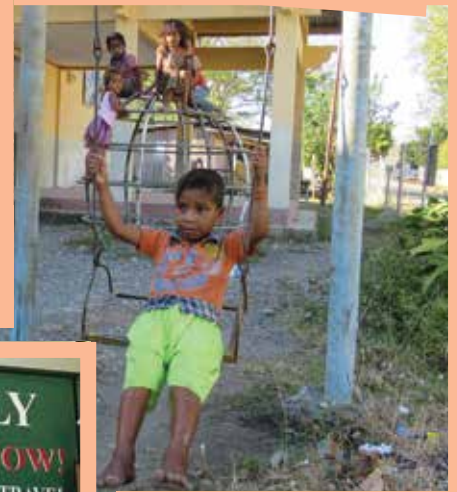
Suai – Viqueque road for oil and gas development costing \$1.5 billion. Progress, but many land care, environmental and health concerns from local communities. Major roads in and around Suai are also being repaired using heavy equipment.



Honorio Gusmao a FoS/C primary teacher graduate now studying for certificate 3 in English Language with Carlene Harlock.



Garlic Harvest in Fatulic diversification of crops CCC Agriculture project. Discussion on climate adaptation in agriculture is underway.



A new fence at the Suai kindergarten thanks to the Rotary Club of Sorrento. The recent adoption of a CCC Child Protection Policy is a significant achievement.



New markets for produce and handicraft for women are being explored. The work in gender equality is impressive with an ongoing emphasis on women's leadership as well as a focus on prevention of domestic violence to women and children.

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You can now fly to Suai with a new \$50 air service provides a 25 minute gateway to Covalima and Oecusse.



A new Saturday market in Suai is thriving with more produce and livestock being sold by vendors from sub-districts and other adjoining districts.



Active Covalima science and maths teachers have formed a club to support each other in their teaching practice, following training conducted by SESIM an UNESCO initiative. Equipment donated by FoS/C is now being borrowed by many schools.