

New Zealand's aid helps to eliminate poverty and create a safe and just world.

**JANUARY 2009**

**Making a difference in Timor-Leste**

## NEW ZEALAND'S DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE

### NZAID snapshot

- NZAID is the Government's international aid and development agency
- In 2008/09 NZAID will spend \$471.3 million on overseas development assistance
- NZAID will spend close to \$59.1 million in Asia in 2008/09
- NZAID's bilateral programme of assistance to Timor-Leste in 2008/09 will total \$5 million.

### The facts

- The population of Timor-Leste is just under a million.
- The people of Timor-Leste are among the poorest in Asia. Around 80 percent live on less than US\$1 a day.
- 76 percent of the population live in rural areas and most of these practise subsistence agriculture.
- At 7.8 children per woman, Timor-Leste has one of the highest fertility rates in the world.
- Almost half the population is under the age of 15, and two-thirds are under 25.
- The country's offshore oil and natural gas reserves are a significant Government asset, and provide the majority of Government funds.
- Coffee is currently the main private sector export earner.
- Timor-Leste was devastated by the violent transition from Indonesian rule in September

1999, which left more than 75 percent of the population displaced and 70 percent of the physical infrastructure destroyed.

- Timor-Leste gained full independence on 20 May 2002, after a period of UN administration.
- In April 2006 civil unrest erupted in the capital Dili, displacing around two-thirds of Dili's population. Most displaced persons have now returned to their villages, with approximately 30,000 people still remaining in Internally Displaced Person camps.

### The issues

- Timor-Leste is a young nation.
- The Government faces many challenges including building and strengthening the institutions of state.
- Skill levels are low. Less than half of the school-aged population remain at school beyond grade six.
- There is high unemployment, particularly of young men.
- The justice system is in its infancy.
- The country has experienced economic hardship since independence.



A market in Dili

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New Zealand's International  
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- Reliance on subsistence agriculture means many livelihoods are vulnerable to natural disasters such as drought, floods, and crop failures.
- A key challenge for the Government is translating oil revenues into sustainable development.
- Finding solutions to the successful reintegration of the population affected by the security crisis is also a challenge.

### NZAID's programme focus

NZAID focuses on education; promoting good governance, focusing on the justice sector and public sector reform; and are planning to expand their rural livelihoods programme. Capacity development, human rights and gender are also prioritised.

As many of the underlying causes of conflict are still to be resolved, Timor-Leste is considered to be a fragile state. NZAID works closely with other New Zealand government departments to ensure that the aid programme is implemented in a way that the Timor-Leste Government can best manage.

### “The future starts today” – strengthening rural livelihoods

A high proportion of people live in rural areas making sustainable livelihoods an important focus.

Naroman Timor Foun, (NTF) meaning “new light of Timor”, is a local Timorese NGO which is based in Comoro, Dili district. NZAID funds their new initiative to cultivate grape vines as a cash crop to sell grapes at market in Dili.

NZAID also supports the Aileu Resource Centre (ARC), a small NGO based in Aileu district, which focuses on basic literacy, and ensuring food security for a number of villages in the district. The centre has a library with books for children and adults in several languages including Tetum and English, provides IT and language classes, and works on adult literacy. They began with literacy classes for subsistence farmers to make

sure that they had better access to information relating to farming practices.

ARC works with households in many villages helping people cultivate small gardens that provide families with nutritional food sources year round. Developing nurseries to plant shade trees also ensures adequate water shed protection and combats erosion.



Aileu Resource and Training Centre Literacy Class

NZAID also works with another local organisation, Moris Rasik, which provides savings and loan services to poor women in rural areas for small business activities. Moris Rasik has 9000 clients, most of who are involved in small-scale trading of basic items such as food and firewood. NZAID funds will be used for small loans to clients in the west of the country, to support the establishment of new branches in the eastern districts, and to ensure that loan interest rates are kept below the repayment threshold given recent fluctuations in the value of the US Dollar.

### Strengthening education management

NZAID is committed to supporting the Timor-Leste's Ministry of Education to strengthen its management capacity and systems. Since independence, Timor-Leste has faced a severe shortage of qualified and experienced personnel in the education sector. Rapid progress has been made in rebuilding schools and training teachers, but less attention has been paid to building the capacity of the Ministry of Education to provide leadership in the development and management of the education system.

NZAID is currently providing advisors to assist the Ministry in the key areas of change management, human resource management, support to the Regional Offices, support to the Office of the Inspector General, and in analysing teacher supply and demand. By assisting the Ministry to regain the lead on its own development, the programme will help to ensure quality education is delivered systematically and consistently.

### Human rights

NZAID provides ongoing support to a local non-governmental organisation, the Judicial Systems Monitoring Programme (JSMP).

This organisation advocates for people's rights and for their access to law and justice. Its vision is to contribute to the development and improvement of the justice and legislative system through objective monitoring, analysis, advocacy and training.

NZAID funds JSMP's outreach unit to work with members of remote communities, providing training on judicial practices in Timor-Leste and a monthly package of practical legal and human rights information. Community members learn about their basic rights, as well as how laws are made in Timor-Leste, how to access the formal justice system, what to expect when dealing with the police, and what to do if they or someone they know becomes a victim.

NZAID also supports the newly established human rights institution, the Provedoria for Human Rights and Justice. This institution monitors human rights abuses, corruption and maladministration.

The work of the Provedoria is central to upholding the constitutional system, ensuring the functions of the government are transparent, and providing the public with a channel through

which their complaints can be heard and remedied. NZAID's funding helps build the human rights knowledge and skills of the staff of the Provedoria, as well as its capacity for public outreach and education, and its regional and international networking.

### Public sector reform

In addition to support provided to the Ministry of Education, NZAID provides support to the multi-donor Planning and Financial Management Capacity Building Programme. It aims to strengthen the Government's ability to better plan, budget, and manage public expenditure and revenue administration. It also assists the Government to better manage their petroleum resources, and ensures that the country's resource wealth translates into benefits for all people.

### Health

With funding from NZAID's Asia Development Assistance Facility, the Fred Hollows Foundation is working with Timor-Leste's Ministry of Health and a local NGO to improve the provision of eye health services. It aims to provide sustainable eye health for all in Timor-Leste through building the capability of the Ministry's Eye Health Unit to implement the National Eye Health Strategy.

The aim is to build management capability of eye care personnel in Timor-Leste, develop a policy framework for eye care and implement the policy so the population can benefit from an improved quality of eye care services. A target has been set to improve standards of eye care by 80 percent by 2010, with increased service in rural areas and equal utilisation of services by women and men.



Explaining vision measurement – photo by A. Palagyi

For more information visit [www.nzaid.govt.nz/programmes/c-timor-leste.html](http://www.nzaid.govt.nz/programmes/c-timor-leste.html)