

Prepara Ami ba Servisu (PAS) Program Update

Education Development Center Inc. (EDC), a US-based, non-profit education research and development organization, leads the USAID “Preparing us for Work” or Prepara Ami ba Servisu (PAS) program in Timor-Leste.

The PAS program provides minimally-educated rural men and women, ages 16-30, with a workforce preparation program that combines off-the-job instruction with on-the-job training. In groups of 50, youth participants work together for up to one year in different locations around the country, outside the capital. The program strengthens skills of young people by providing in-classroom instruction based on a comprehensive work-readiness curriculum with community-based working and training experience. By the end of the three-year program, the USAID PAS program will have successfully trained at least 2,500 youth throughout the country.

In October, the PAS program completed its third month of training in Baucau, with over 100 youth learning important life skills about proper workplace behavior and ways to improve efficiency at work. As part of the learning-from-work component of the program, the youth continue to build a basketball court for the community, and rehabilitate the kitchen of a local community organization. Many participants have already begun preparing business ideas for the second half of the program, during which they will receive some support from the PAS program to improve their income earning potential. A group of participants in the sub-district of Berkoli have already begun a small business, offering photography reproduction services.

As part of the mission of the PAS program to develop the capacity of NGO partners, PAS staff joined NGO partners in a weeklong training in Dare. Partnering with Cruz Vermelha Timor-Leste (CVTL), the PAS program provided background information and skills to help trainers better deliver health curriculum to participants as part of the life-skills component of the program. Additionally, CVTL taught staff and partners about basic first aid and reproductive health, providing vital information and skills so that they can better teach youth about how to improve health for themselves, their families and the community.



PAS partners with CVTL to train PAS staff and local NGO partners in life-saving First Aid.

The PAS program is also preparing for the launch of the first Accompaniment phase of the program (second half) in January 2009. Participants in Baucau who have successfully completed Livelihood Preparation (first half) will now be “accompanied” into one of three livelihood pathways: employment or internship, further education (either formal, non-formal or vocational), or micro-enterprise endeavors.

With over 200 participants already enrolled in four sites, the PAS program is expanding rapidly to reach the most economically depressed, rural areas of Timor-Leste. In October, two District Coordinators were hired to cover Covalima district and the Aileu-Ainaro region, and two new learning centers were opened in these areas. The PAS program will be opening new sites around the country throughout 2009 to extend the benefits of the program to more rural areas in Timor-Leste.

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