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From work preparation to peacebuilding, several USAID programs focus on empowering Timor-Leste's youth.

Photo: Karl Grobl



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STRENGTHENING INDEPENDENT MEDIA PHOTO SNAPSHOT



USAID and AusAID launch online TV news service TimorToday.com. Photo: D.Jose/USAID

Through the Regional Media Houses, journalists now have access to production facilities like this one at the ICFJ office in Dili. Photo:ICFJ



Women journalist trainees filming the opening of the Media House in Ermera; Photo:ICFJ



Satellite installation at the Regional Media House in Ermera. Photo: ICFJ



ICFJ's Charles Rice demonstrates the high-speed internet connection at the Media House. Photo: ICFJ



This Baucau community radio journalist is one of the clients of the Regional Media House in Baucau. Photo: ICFJ

Regional Media House in Ermera Opens Doors to Community

The Regional Media House in Ermera opened its doors to journalists and the community on March 20, 2009. The inauguration ceremony in Gleno was led by US Embassy Chargé d'Affaires, Henry Rector, USAID / Timor-Leste Mission Representative, Mark Anthony White, and First Secretary of Australian Embassy, Darian Clark.

With the opening of this Regional Media House, journalists in Ermera and neighboring districts can now get free access to media facilities, training and other services provided by the International Center for Journalists (ICFJ) without having to go to the capital, Dili.

This is the second Regional Media House to open in the country. The first Regional Media House in Baucau has been serving district-based journalists since January 2008; while the other two Regional Media Houses in Oecussi and Suai are soon following suit.

The establishment of a network of Regional Media Houses in the country is one of the projects made possible by the five-year, US\$ 5.5 million "Strengthening Independent Media Program" jointly supported by USAID and AusAID, with a Aus\$1.25 million contribution from the latter.

This USAID-funded activity is making a difference in expanding news coverage of Timor Leste.

Resources available to district-based journalists through the Regional Media Houses include free access to the internet and equipment such as tape recorders and digital cameras. The Regional Media Houses also enable journalists to produce stories in audio and video formats and upload these via high-speed internet connection to the online news service, www.timortoday.com, another ICFJ initiative under the independent media program.

The online news service TimorToday.com features stories that impact the daily lives of the Timorese people. The communities can access the online news service in the Regional Media Houses.

To make sure that the Ermera media house will serve as a true regional hub for community journalists, newly appointed Ermera media house coordinator Antoninho Salsinha Carvalho, is tasked with actively encouraging journalists from the neighboring districts of Aileu, Manufahi and Ainaro to come and use the resources available in Ermera.

The Regional Media House in Ermera is a joint initiative by the Timor-Leste Journalists Association (AJTL), the Syndicate for Journalists Timor-Leste (SJTL), the Center for Investigative Journalists (CJITL), the Timor-Leste Photographers Association (TILPA), the Community Radios Association Timor-Leste (KRTL) and ICFJ.

Coconut Climber Saves the Day for Radio Akademika!

The old antenna atop the radio tower at Radio Akademika at National University had to be replaced one sunny day in early February. The problem was – no one wanted to climb the daunting 25 meter-high tower.

An ICFJ staffer got halfway up before the tower began to sway – at which point he figured it was time to climb back down.

This was a job for a specialist who doesn't weigh a lot.

Gathered around the base of the radio tower, the ICFJ staff discussed the issue in what seemed to be a futile exercise – that is, until someone mentioned the name "Januario Barros Pereira."

After a while, this slim guy shows up – weighing in at about 50 or so kilograms. Januario's profession

when not a student at National University: he climbs coconut trees.

Before he started up the tower, Januario took off his shoes, grabbed the antenna and some wrenches and strapped a safety belt around himself and the tower.

Climbing barefoot, Januario was up at the top in less than two minutes. Anchoring his feet on the sides of the tower, it took him about ten minutes to unhook the old antenna and install the new one.

He was back on the ground 15 minutes after his ascent.

Thanks to Januario and the new antenna, the student-run radio station now, for the first time, broadcasts across the entire city of Dili.



Time it took the legendary coconut climber to climb the 25-meter high radio tower: two minutes. Photos: ICFJ



Radio Akademika is now on the air at 90.0 FM and can be heard all over Dili.

NEWS ROUND-UP

CCT Opens 4 More Health Clinics in Remote Villages



Villagers of Estado in Ermera can now avail of primary health service through a new purpose-built Clinic Café Timor.

Photo: CCT

Cooperativa Café Timor's health care division, Clinic Café Timor, recently opened a small health clinic in a village called Estado in Ermera district (west of the capital, Dili). Three more similar small health clinics will open over the next six months in the coffee-growing regions. The new health clinics are a welcome addition to CCT's existing network of 11 fixed clinics and 28 mobile clinics that provides primary health care services to more than one-sixth of Timor-Leste's rural population.

The original idea behind Clinic Café Timor was to provide quality and affordable health care services for cooperative members who were outside the government health system. However, they have since expanded to provide services to the general population in the coffee-growing regions. The network has become the largest private health service provider in the country, and the

government now contributes medicines to support Clinic Café Timor's operations.

Additionally, Clinic Café Timor provides extension services for a Maternal and Child Health Program.

The new health clinics are a welcome addition to CCT's existing network of fixed and mobile clinics.

Several institutions have come together to make the construction and operation of the four additional clinics possible. The National Cooperatives' Business Association (NCBA), which is implementing USAID's Timor-Leste Economic Rehabilitation and Development Project (assisting CCT), was able to pool resources from Starbucks, the global coffee retailer, as well as local communities. Starbucks

donated the funds for the construction of the clinics while the lands were donations from CCT and local communities. The ongoing operation of the health clinics is supported by USAID, CCT, and the Ministry of Health. The community extension program based out of the new clinics was developed by a grant from MILK, a Singapore-based children's charity with ongoing operations funded by USAID.

This alliance between different institutions serves as a model for forward thinking and collaborative development.

"Over the last eight years, CCT has been struggling to deliver a weekly mobile health service using whatever local shelter was available in these remote villages, ranging from the verandah of the local village leader's house to a makeshift camp under a tree. From now on, the mobile health team will be operating from a purpose-built clinic with a sheltered waiting area," said Dr. Ross Brandon, of Clinic Café Timor.

For the villagers of Estado, Lulirema and Poetali in Ermera district, and Manulobas in Ainaro district, this is one good news, indeed!

"ITA NIA RAI" FACILITATES PEACEFUL LAND DISPUTE RESOLUTION

Alberto da Silva, a retired civil servant from Aiteas village of Manatuto district (east of the capital, Dili), is relieved. He has just recently registered his claim to the land where his house has stood for many years.

"There was originally a boundary dispute with his neighbor, so he asked us to give him some time before registering their land claims. Through the mediation of local leaders, he and his neighbor agreed on a compensation scheme, and when they were ready, they called us," said Geraldo Gomes, who is the field manager for the USAID-supported land claims collection activity in Manatuto district.

"I am happy because now we have peace," da Silva said.

The first thing he plans to do with his pension money from Portugal and Indonesia is to finally have a good fence built for his land—something he could only dream of doing until now.

As of March 2009, a total of 891 land claims have been registered through the USAID-supported "Strengthening Property Rights in Timor-Leste" or "Ita Nia Rai" ("Our Land") project, working with the National Directorate for Land and Property (DNTPSC) in two pilot areas—Liquica and Manatuto. The land claims registration activity will expand to include two new areas—Aileu and Baucau -- by May 2009.

To see this project in action, check out: www.youtube.com/watch?v=9xbnxQV1hOw.



Retired civil servant Alberto da Silva of Aiteas village in Manatuto and his neighbor recently agreed on their boundary, ending years of land dispute. He has recently registered his land claim through the USAID-supported Strengthening Property Rights (or "Ita Nia Rai") project implemented by ARD, Inc., ACDI/VOCA, Land Equity International, and local NGO Blelun. Photos: ARD

Youth Suco Councils Promote Peace and Reconciliation in Communities

"Y4A" Gives Youth Confidence As A Negotiator

"Through the 'Youth for All' (Y4A) for Peace and Reconciliation' project, I learned to organize and lead meetings. More importantly, I gained confidence. Before attending the training, I was afraid of standing up in front of many people. Now, I know that I can do it.

For example: I suggested to my chief of village (chefe suco) that we should facilitate a dialogue process between two families that had an issue after a boy got a girl pregnant, then refused to marry her.

When my chief of village called a meeting between the parties to discuss the problem, I was nervous at first. But the chief of village and I were able to



Youth Suco Council Representative Sku Alves facilitating a community consensus-building meeting in Bemori, Dili.

Photo: Mercy Corps

facilitate the discussion. We helped each other to lead and moderate the problem until both families reached a consensus. My newly found confidence comes from practicing and facilitating several community consensus-building meetings under the Y4A project."

--Siku Alves, youth suco council representative of Bemori, Dili

What is "Y4A" All About?

Mercy Corps and its local NGO partner Timor Aid work with 60 youth suco council representatives, providing the Timorese youth leaders with training in basic concepts of community mobilization, project management, and community facilitation. Using Mercy Corps' widely tested community

The USAID-funded "Y4A" peacebuilding program aims to strengthen community-level youth governance in two districts -- Dili and Covalima -- of Timor-Leste.

mobilization experience, Mercy Corps and Timor Aid have been coaching and supporting youth suco council representatives like Siku to lead a community-driven process of identifying community needs, developing plans and budgets and implementing projects to meet those needs.

The skills developed under this program will allow Timorese youth leaders to begin promoting peace and reconciliation within their communities. They will be able to mobilize youth and other community members in activities that demonstrate an alternative to violent conflict.

Most of the youth suco council representatives have completed facilitating a series of community consensus-building meetings, where the youth led community members in identifying, prioritizing and

analyzing community problems, and, ultimately, preparing community action plans. Many youth council representatives (11 in Dili and eight in Covalima) have already proposed relevant projects, ranging from sports/musical events, clean-up of the streets/sports grounds and even water and sanitation, and road rehabilitation projects.

Suco Chief Gives Y4A the Thumbs Up

"I believe that the "Y4A" project provides youth leaders very good learning opportunities in leadership, community facilitation, mobilization, and office management skills. I am now very confident with youth suco council representatives like Siku."

-- Afonso da Crus, suco chief of Bemori, Dili

USAID Work Preparation Programs Producing Young Entrepreneurs

The *Prepara Ami ba Servisu* (Preparing Ourselves for Work or PAS) program provides out-of-school rural youth, aged 16-30, with a workforce preparation program that combines classroom education with on-the-job training. In groups of 50, youth participants work together for one year in Timor-Leste's districts outside the capital. Over a three-year period, at least 2,500 young men and women will benefit from this program. The program is now reaching youth in Baucau, Aileu, Maubisse, Suai and Oecussi. Elements of this program include literacy and numeracy, life skills, entrepreneurship and vocational training.

1 Agosto Borges, 24, expanded his father's small business:

Along with his father, Agosto Borges, 24, used to sell fresh fish at the downtown markets of Baucau. He dropped out of pre-secondary school to help his father full-time.

In July 2008, Agosto joined the PAS program after hearing about it through his church. After actively participating in the PAS program and learning new skills, Agosto and a group of four other PAS youth participants decided to get together and open a *kiosk* to sell goods in their neighborhood. However, after completing part of the course on 'how to open a small business', Agosto observed that there were already too many *kiosks* in his village, so he changed his mind and decided instead to expand his family business by selling chickens as well as fish.

Agosto and his father are now making \$300 a month selling chickens and fish. By implementing business practices he learned from the program such as 'consultation' and 'problem solving', Agosto can tackle challenges with new tools and a greater pool of resources. He also utilizes his new financial

skills such as money management. Prior to participating in the PAS program, Agosto and his father didn't even know how much money they earned in a month.

Not only does the Borges family now have a greater income; more importantly, they have gained a better understanding of their own business.

2 Sildonia Da Silva, 29, now feels more in control of her life:

Prior to joining the PAS program, Sildonia Da Silva, 29, sold clothes at the markets in Baucau but struggled to find any sort of success. Her husband and father are farmers, partly contributing to the feeling that she didn't have the support or experience for this type of business.

As a result of the PAS program's formal classes, mentorship, and human resource network, Sildonia now has the critical skills required to run a successful clothes business. She has also taken the lead in managing the finances of her new *kiosk* business.

Her PAS training has better prepared her to buy, sell, and price her products, and interact with her customers with

confidence. She also learned how to apply sound business strategies -- she has narrowed the scope of her inventory by selling clothes exclusively for 5-17 year-olds.

According to Sildonia, she now feels more in control of her own life and able to make decisions for herself and her family.

3 Jose Manuel Belo, 24, now keeps himself busy with a small business

Jose Manuel Belo never finished primary school. He did not want to follow in the footsteps of his father and become a carpenter, so he lingered for a long time with nothing to do and no means to support himself or his family. In joining the PAS program, he was looking to create an opportunity and a future for himself. With the help of the PAS program training partners, Jose spotted a business opportunity to sell gasoline in his village.

Currently, Jose Manuel keeps himself busy selling gasoline at the busiest roads. His idle days are definitely over, and he is happy with the numeracy skills he learned from the program, which changed his life.

Graduates of USAID Agribusiness Program Start a Shrimp Farm



A graduate of the USAID-supported agribusiness training program working in the shrimp farm his group started in Manatuto.

Photo: LOL

Recent graduates of the USAID-supported Building Agribusiness Capacity program have formed a cooperative called Hadian no Dezenvolve iha Area Rurais (HADER) or "Improve and Develop in Rural Areas" and started a shrimp farming operation in Manatuto district.

Last March 16, 2009, following a community dialogue with the landowner, the group secured land rights to five hectares of land they intended to use for shrimp farming and horticulture. They celebrated this with a Timorese traditional ritual for transferring land ownership.

The USAID-supported Building Agribusiness Capacity in East Timor program introduced a one-year vocational training course, and in the process also trained agriculture teachers, installed satellite communication systems and internet connectivity, and exposed students to innovative technologies and modern agribusiness practices.

The group of seven students was among the first batch of 120 graduates of the one-year post-secondary certificate program offered at the three agricultural high schools administered by the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries. Through the USAID-supported program, the youth learned business management skills and were introduced to the principles of forming and operating cooperative producer groups. The students were also exposed to other successful agriculture enterprises, which inspired them to be agribusiness entrepreneurs.

Having attended the Natarbora Technical Agriculture High School, the HADER group knew that there was a wide range of land in the area known as Suco Aobeon that they could develop. Their research showed that the land is suitable for shrimp farming due to the number of available water sources and presence of local shrimp.

Members of the group each contributed \$15 as seed money. Originally, the group had 17 founding members; however, only seven were able to sustain their investment in the project.

Following the advice of an established local farmer and, later, agriculture specialists from the German Technical Assistance (GTZ) agency, HADER started clearing the land situated upland from rice paddies and digging pools for the shrimp farm. GTZ is currently providing technical, logistical and organizational development support to the group.

From their classes in cooperative organizations, HADER learned that a key principle of cooperative organizations is "concern for the community". Through the ups and downs of starting up a business, the group learned that they could really count on the local community, which helped them during the worst times when they did not even have money to buy food.

Less than a year after graduation, the HADER group will be going back to their alma mater for a forum where they will share with the current crop of students their experience as a start-up in Timor-Leste. Their advice to those who want to follow in their footsteps: "It all starts with a good idea, but you should be ready for all the hard work, sacrifice and uncertainty, to become successful entrepreneurs."

Photo Gallery: Youth At Work



Photos: Karl Grobl/PAS



Youth participants of the Prepara Ami ba Servisu (PAS) program benefit from an integrated learning and working program, and get to work in community projects as well.



SPOTLIGHT

Building on Successful Pilot

USAID Links Over 100 Youth to Hospitality and Tourism Industry

On March 17, 2009, Minister of Tourism, Industry and Commerce, Mr. Gil Alves, officially launched the USAID-funded Hospitality Industry Internship Program (HIIP) together with the US Embassy's Charge d'Affaires, Henry Rector, USAID Representative, Mark A. White, and Acting Secretary of State for Professional Training and Employment/Secretary of State for Natural Resource, Mr. Alfredo Pires.

"The hospitality and tourism industry and these interns are not working just for themselves, but for others as well, and will help contribute to Timor-Leste's economic growth" said Minister Alves. He added, "I would like to thank the United States, USAID, and Desenvolve Setor Privadu/Private Sector Development project (DSP), for their support and collaboration to implement this program."

The USAID Representative, Mark White, spoke directly to the intern candidates, encouraging them

to follow several simple steps to succeed in their line of work: "(1) Be professional; (2) Try to learn something new every day; (3) Put what you learn into practice, and lastly, (4) Be passionate about what you do and have fun."

As part of the internship, over 100 recent graduates of Timorese hospitality and tourism training institutes will participate in one of two, six-month programs which include on-the-job training and mentoring at hotels and restaurants, as well as on-going training in industry-demanded topics. The current program will be implemented over the upcoming year, with the first class just starting in March and another slated to begin in July.

This program is building on the successful pilot program implemented by the USAID-funded Small Grants Program, in which 22 out of 26 interns were offered jobs following on-the-job-training.

As part of the expansion of the program, a local partner, East

Timor Development Agency (ETDA), is taking on the day-to-day management of the internship program. ETDA will see to it that the group receives the most relevant training throughout the program. By encouraging local institutional capacity to effectively manage the internship program, USAID/DSP is working towards the creation of an integrated and sustainable hospitality program that will hopefully become an accepted and valued part of the hospitality curriculum in Timor-Leste.

In launching the program, Ms. Palmira Pires, ETDA Executive Director, had this to say: "This unique program will use standards developed by the government in coordination with demands by the industry. This program will do what others have not, connecting job seekers with employers. It will equip interns with better skills and make them employable."

Previous participants of the pilot USAID program also addressed the new batch of interns during the ceremony.

TAKING THE PUBLIC PULSE

By Isabel Ximenes, Technical Officer, Democracy and Governance

One of the key findings of a 2006 conflict vulnerability assessment commissioned by USAID to assess the causes of the crisis was the widespread lack of reliable information in Timor-Leste. The assessment team also noted the severely limited formal channels for communication in Timorese society.

In response, USAID launched a three-year project in 2007 aiming to develop the qualitative and quantitative research skills of local institutions to take the public pulse on relevant topics for the Government of Timor-Leste, donors and other stakeholders. The project will also help develop the skills of Timorese organizations to conduct public opinion surveys, project evaluations and impact assessments, field tests of public education materials and other research projects as requested or contracted.

To develop the local institutions' research skills, USAID's implementing partner Democracy International (DI) has been working with a core of professional researchers among university staff,

NGOs, and private companies. Staff of local research institutions have benefited from a variety of training on developing research skills, ranging from methodologies, design, developing of questionnaires, data collection, data analysis, and report writing. The research institutions also received necessary training in Statistics Program for Social Sciences.

These institutions include two tertiary educational institutes – Dili Institute of Technology, and Institute of Business – and two local research institutes – INSIGHT and East Timor Development Agency. The four research institutions have since been busy conducting researches and public opinion surveys at the request of stakeholders such as the World Bank, the International Republican Institute and The Asia Foundation, on a range of subjects, including performance of youth centers in the country, national political opinions, and community policing behavior and performance.

At the request of USAID, Democracy International and its local

partner INSIGHT will be conducting a national survey on suco councils' performance by the middle of this year. As the term of suco councils first elected in 2004 and 2005 comes to an end, it is an appropriate time to assess the overall performance of suco councils so far. The assessment will guide the Government's policies for suco councils for the upcoming term, as well as the activities of USAID/Timor-Leste's partners in helping suco councils to become more effective. Another survey that will be conducted by the end of 2009 is on cultural and values profile to help USAID/Timor-Leste and its partners determine more effective methods of intervention for development projects. The survey results will also guide efforts for promoting values conducive to advancing democracy, justice and prosperity in Timor-Leste.

This is all a part of USAID's efforts not only to ensure that intervention is attuned to the needs of the people, but also to improve the flow of information in the new democracy.



From left to right: Minister of Tourism, Gil Alves; U.S. Embassy's Charge d'Affaires, Henry Rector; USAID's Mark White, and Secretary of State for Natural Resource, Mr. Alfredo Pires.



(Above:) USAID Representative Mark A. White addressing the candidate interns; (Below left:) A hotel manager signs contract with intern and administrator ETDA; (Below right:) Interns enjoying the launch ceremony. Photos: D. Jose/USAID

"By Doing Your Best in Your Field, You Are Contributing to the Development of Timor-Leste"

Remarks by USAID Rep. Mark A. White Launching Hospitality Industry Internship Program, March 17, 2009

Today marks an important day in the lives of the first batch of 62 interns who are participating in the Hospitality Industry Internship Program. Through this unique on-the-job training program, each of you will spend the next six-months putting into practice what you have learned about hospitality and tourism. At the same time, you will be supervised and trained by selected hotel/restaurant staff to develop your skills further in-line with industry standards.

By doing your best in your field, you are not just working for yourself, but contributing to the development of Timor-Leste.

Doing your best includes not only being good, but looking the part as well. For example, when I walk into a restaurant or hotel, I look for staff with friendly faces and smiles. I look for someone to ask, "May I help you?" The friendliness of an employee, the customer service I receive will determine whether I will go back to an establishment. You are the number one determiner of success of a tourist-oriented business. Your employer depends on you. So smile, and just be the great person that you are.

USAID, through its Private Sector Development project, is very pleased to provide continued support to the hospitality and tourism sector in Timor-Leste through the expansion of the

Hospitality Industry Internship Program, which builds on a successful pilot we did earlier (October 2007-June 2008) that resulted in job offers for most of the interns. This time, over 100 youth interns will be able to participate in this unique program.

A special thank you to Timor-Leste's leading technical and training institutions who have taken the first steps to train these interns in the classroom and provide them with a great foundation for continuing their education and experience. I am pleased to have the opportunity, through this program, to work with the tourism training institutions in upgrading facilities and improving practices in hospitality and tourism management.

From what we have just heard from both an intern and a manager of a hotel who participated in the pilot internship program, it is clear that there is great opportunity awaiting those who are persevering and committed to improving their skills in this industry.

I wish all the participants much success in your internships. May this just be the start of a productive time for you, not only as professionals in the tourism and hospitality industry, but more importantly as members of the Timorese society!

To invest in you is to invest in the future of Timor-Leste.