East Timor (Timor Leste)

After over 20 years of Indonesian military occupation, the Timorese were finally given a chance to join Indonesia or to be an independent nation under a UN referendum in 1999. Overwhelmingly they voted for independence. In the wake of the referendum the exiting Indonesian military and associated Timorese militias sacked the country, killing thousands and leaving much of its infrastructure in shambles. Following the referendum, the UN transitional authority eased the transition to full independence on May, 20, 2012.

A Future Leader in East Timor: Amena Cristovao

As part of capacity building, Global Ministries is supporting the professional development of one of Clinic Imanuel’s staff: Amena Cristovao.

Clinic Imanuel Lospalos is one of two rural health clinics overseen by Global Ministries’ partners, the Protestant Church of East Timor (IPTL). Amena is the laboratory coordinator, where she performs malaria blood smears and sputum smears for diagnosing tuberculosis. While she has a most important role in the clinic with regard to these serious and sometimes deadly conditions, she has little formal education. Global Ministries is providing support for Amena to attend a Medical Laboratory Technician program in Duluth, Minnesota.

Amena is 24 years old and the oldest of eight children. She is from Lospalos, East Timor, a town in the far eastern reaches of this small island nation in Southeast Asia. Amena finished high school in 2006. As jobs are very hard to come by in her country, she decided to volunteer with the local Red Cross to develop her capacity after she graduated. She became a trainer in First Aid for rural communities, and took courses on HIV/AIDS and missing persons.

In 2009, Amena had an opportunity to learn laboratory skills in the Lospalos Hospital. While her training was minimal and she received no salary, her experience opened the door for her to work in Clinic Imanuel, which is a primary care clinic under the direction of IPTL.
Tom and Monica Liddle

Tom and Monica Liddle returned on July 4 from a three-year term as Global Ministries missionaries in East Timor. Tom worked with pastors of our partner church, the Protestant Church of East Timor (IPTL), helping them develop leadership capacity and working to revitalize congregations in rural areas. He also worked with local carpenters to remodel Imanuel Clinic. Monica, a naturopathic physician, provided medical care in one of IPTL’s rural health clinics.

A Future Leader in East Timor: Amena Cristovao

Amena is responsible for the microscopic diagnosis of malaria and tuberculosis. She works alongside other staff at Clinic Imanuel to ensure proper follow-up and treatment of patients with these conditions. She provides daily doses of TB medicine to patients, and works with local health authorities to ensure good care for them.

Because East Timor does not have a formal medical laboratory training program at this time, Timorese nationals have very limited resources to gain skills and increase capacity in this essential field of medicine. You can help remedy this problem by supporting Amena’s education to complete a Medical Laboratory Technician program in Duluth, Minnesota. Amena will take a 4 month English language intensive, a year of science prerequisites, and then she will complete her AA at Lake Superior College. When she finishes, she will be one of the most competent medical laboratory analysts in her home country, where she will return to work, and raise the standards of care in her community and in her nation.

Igreja Protestante Timor Loro’sae (IPTL)

Like the nation as a whole, the Igreja Protestante Timor Leste (IPTL) is in transition. Timor Leste, often called East Timor, just had a successful presidential and parliamentary election. IPTL just had its 4th Synod election and the new team will begin work in August.

Global Ministries’ work with IPTL over the past 10 years has been about helping IPTL to rebuild following the exodus of its old Indonesian leadership and support it in discerning its ministry in this new context. Last year Global Ministries missionary Carlos Madrazo helped IPTL design and conduct a “bottom up strategic plan.” Carlos spent several months traveling to the churches with Synod officers in order to help them come up with a plan for their future ministry. The result is a comprehensive strategic plan which IPTL will be able to utilize for many years.

In Lospalos, Global Ministries missionary Tom Liddle finished a renovation of Clinic Immanuel this year with the help of several Timorese carpenters. The renovation included a new roof, doors and windows, electrical upgrades and a paint job. Also in Lospalos, Tom worked with church leaders to design and implement a rural ministry program that included Sunday worship, home visitation and children's programs.
Building Capacity in Clinic Imanuel Lospalos

Since Global Ministries’ Missionary Monica Liddle began work at Clinic Imanuel in Lospalos in 2009, a primary focus of her work has been to build the capacity of the Timorese staff, both in clinical care as well as in administration.

While none of the staff have formal training in health care, all are sincerely interested in patient care. Dr. Monica utilized the staff to translate one of the 4 local languages into Tetum. She also provided on-the-job training for them, helping staff learn how to identify more serious problems, such as pneumonia, severe dehydration, acute asthma, and other illnesses that are not uncommon in this primary care clinic in rural East Timor. Two new programs were added in the past two years: a nutrition program and prenatal care. Monica trained the staff to assist with and manage aspects of these programs as well.

Although many of the staff have worked at the clinic for 10 years or longer, they had never had an opportunity to be in positions of management responsibility. Thus, Monica and Tom provided informal training with all staff in communication skills, finances and record keeping, and basic computer and internet skills.

The Educational Ministry at Lisa Dila Junior High School

The Lisa Dila Junior High School under the Didache Foundation – a service foundation of the Protestant Church in East Timor, Global Ministries’ partner, obtained second place in an academic test for the entire school district of Likesa for SY 2010-2011. Lisa Dila is the only junior high school located in the Lisa Dila valley, some 13 kilometers away from the national highway that goes to the border between Timor Leste and Indonesia.

Most students at Lisa Dila completed their elementary education from the nine (9) public schools located in the valley. Since its opening at the urging of Dr C L Madrazo, Jr in 2007 and later by the Didache Foundation officers and IPTL church leaders, enrolment had been increasing. The government’s Ministry of Education has encouraged the Didache Foundation to open a senior high school, but like all church related educational ministry, the Foundation is plagued by the lack of financial and human resources. Currently two of its teachers are pursuing further studies at the University of Artha Wacana- another church related educational ministry institution of Global Ministries’ partners located in Kupang, Indonesia.
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