

**Report on a visit to  
Timor-Leste and the  
*Strengthening Friendship*  
Workshop in Maubisse  
August 2010**

Prepared by Richard Brown  
September 2010



## **Background**

The East Timor Project Officer, Richard Brown, was invited to attend the *Strengthening Friendship: People to People* workshop held on 27-28 August 2010 in Maubisse, Timor-Leste. It was organised by the Timor-Leste Ministry of State Administration and Territorial Management (MSATM) and the Australia Timor-Leste Friendship Network (ATLFN). The workshop was attended by representatives of the Timor-Leste National Government, District and Sub-District Administrations, and representatives of Australian Friendship groups, and Australian and Timor-Leste non-government organisations (NGOs).

Attendance at the workshop also enabled the Project Officer to visit Aileu beforehand and meet with local officials and representatives of partner organisations, and to meet representatives of government and non-government organisations in Dili.

The Project Officer was accompanied during part of the visit by a member of the Friends of Aileu Community Committee and Timor-Leste Project Officer at the Victorian Local Governance Association (VLGA), Gary Jungwirth, whose costs were met by the VLGA.

The following report covers the main activities and key outcomes of the visit, which took place between 23-30 August 2010,

An outline of the visit schedule is at Attachment 1. A list of people met during the visit is at Attachment 2. An outline of the workshop program is at Attachment 3.

### **Meetings in Dili, 24 & 28-29 August 2010**

1. Sr Abilio Caetano. On 24 August, Richard Brown and Gary Jungwirth met with Sr Abilio Caetano, Director of the National Directorate of Local Administration in the MSATM.

They discussed the Ministry's objectives for the Maubisse workshop, including improving the coordination of activities by friendship groups in the Districts, communication between friendship groups, and identifying possible new Australian Local Government partners for Sub-Districts and *sucos*.

Sr Caetano outlined plans for the transition to elected municipal government in Timor-Leste, originally scheduled for 2010 and now expected to take place after the 2012 Presidential and Parliamentary elections, probably in 2013 or 2014.

He referred to a previous request for an Australian advisor to be located in the Minister's office, which had yet to be fulfilled, and the Minister's wish to be more fully informed about the activities of friendship groups in the Districts.

He also indicated that the Timor-Leste National Government is interested in the possibility of holding another 'friendship' conference in 2011.

Richard Brown and Gary Jungwirth outlined some of the current issues of interest to Australian Local Government friendship groups and their desire to support the decentralisation program and assist with the briefing and training of local officials. They explained the VLGA's role in supporting and advising its local government and

community organisation members which are involved in friendship relationships, particularly in relation to decentralisation.

**2. Ms Ali Gillies.** On 24 August, Richard Brown and Gary Jungwirth met with Ms Ali Gillies, Minister-Counsellor (Development Assistance), AusAID, at the Australian Embassy in Dili.

She outlined AusAID's approach to implementing the Australian Government's program of development assistance to Timor-Leste over the next five years, particularly ensuring that it makes an impact in the Districts.

She also expressed an interest in communicating more closely with Australian friendship groups and receiving information about their activities in the Districts.

Richard Brown and Gary Jungwirth outlined some of the issues of interest to friendship groups, including supporting the decentralisation program.



(L-r) Gary Jungwirth, Sr Abilio Caetano, Richard Brown



(L-r) Richard Brown, Major Michael Stone, Gary Jungwirth

**3. Major Michael Stone.** On 24 August Richard Brown and Gary Jungwirth met with Major Michael Stone, Military Affairs Adviser to the Timor-Leste President.

They discussed a proposal for the President to attend a celebration of the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the friendship relationships, when he visits Melbourne in October 2010. Major Stone referred them to Timor-Leste Ambassador to Australia, Abel Guterres, to make the arrangements.

Major Stone outlined the arrangements for the Tour de Timor bicycle race, which will have its final stop-over in Aileu on 18 September. They offered to put him in contact with the Friends of Aileu-AVI Volunteer District Support Officer, Paul Coghlan, to assist with the arrangements.

**4. Sr Amaral Tilman.** On 24 August, Richard Brown and Gary Jungwirth met with Sr Amaral Tilman, Director of Human Resources at the Timor-Leste Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Sr Tilman was in Melbourne early in 2010 as part of a Victorian Government-sponsored training program and met members of Friends of Aileu.

They outlined current activities and issues of interest to friendship groups for him.

**5. Chris Adams.** On 24 August, Richard Brown and Gary Jungwirth met with Chris Adams, former Friends of Aileu - AVI Volunteer and currently an AVI Volunteer with the Timor-Leste NGO Forum (FONGTIL), which is the umbrella body for NGOs in Timor-Leste. Of an estimated 670 NGOs operating in the country, 401 (334 Local

and 67 International, including one of the friendship groups) are currently members of FONGTIL.

Chris Adams outlined the structure and function of FONGTIL and introduced some of the staff, including the Executive Director, Sra Dinorah Granadeiro, the Administration Manager, Sr Joao Freitas, and the District Liaison Officer Coordinator, Sr Mario da Silva.

6. Jill Jolliffe. On 23 August, Richard Brown and Gary Jungwirth met with Jill Jolliffe, Director of the *Living Memory Project*, which documents the experience of East Timorese ex-political prisoners. Friends of Aileu and its partner, Merri Community Health Services, have raised funds for the project, and held displays of the project's archival material.

They discussed the project's current work program and preparations for a major exhibition in Melbourne early next year, which will be used to raise funds for a health program for the ex-political prisoners.



Jill Jolliffe (c) with Gary Jungwirth and Richard Brown in Dili



(L-r) Ambassador Peter Heyward and Kirsty Sword Gusmao

7. Reception at Ambassador's residence. On 29 August, Richard Brown and Gary Jungwirth attended a reception for participants of the Maubisse workshop at the residence of the Australian Ambassador to Timor-Leste, Peter Heyward. At the reception, the ambassador spoke about the importance of the friendship relationships. Kirsty Sword Gusmao spoke about a program to support the use of local languages in Timor-Leste. She also thanked Richard Brown and Gary Jungwirth for bringing two donated laptop computers to Dili for use in a literacy project which she is sponsoring.

8. Driver/interpreter. While they were in Dili, Richard Brown and Gary Jungwirth reached agreement with Timorese driver/interpreter, Alberto Pinto, to provide a service for friendship group representatives from Victoria who need assistance with transport, accommodation and interpreting while visiting Timor-Leste. He works part-time for Australian Volunteers International, and the Country Manager, Martina Shanahan, agreed to the arrangement, subject to his availability.

### **Meetings in Aileu, 25-26 August**

1. District Administration. On 26 August, Richard Brown and Gary Jungwirth, together with the AVI Volunteer District Support Officer, Paul Coghlan, met with the Aileu District Administrator, Sr Martinho Matos, and the Chefe District Development, Sr Mario Soares. They outlined plans for a range of infrastructure projects for Aileu

which have been funded as part of the decentralisation program. They include upgrading the road between Aileu and Maubisse, maintenance of the water supply in Aileu Town, Remexio and Laulara, and construction of a new maternity clinic and primary school in Liquidoe. The total budget for the works is over US\$1.6 million.

They also advised that discussions were being held with the Minister for State Administration and Territorial Management about upgrading the water supply in Aileu and funds had also been received to rehabilitate the 'Timor Klaran' building behind the government health clinic to be used for community meetings.

Sr Soares advised that final payments for 2010 would be made shortly to the scholarship students and a meeting of the Aileu Friendship Commission was planned for September-October. They also planned to seek feedback from the Sub-Districts on the Strategic Plan which was developed at the 2-day workshop in July 2009. They proposed holding a follow-up workshop in early 2000, to review progress in implementing the Strategic Plan.

Sr Soares also said that the District Administration would like to find an Australian friendship partner for the Laulara Sub-District if possible. Richard Brown and Gary Jungwirth undertook to follow that up when they return to Australia.

Paul Coghlan proposed a change to his volunteer assignment with the District Administration, to take account of the postponement of the local government elections, probably till 2014. Instead of supporting the District Administration in managing the transition to elected local government, he proposed increasing the amount of time spends working directly in support of projects funded by Friends of Aileu and its partners. This will be discussed with AVI, in consultation with Friends of Aileu.



(l-r) AVI Volunteer, Paul Coghlan, Gary Jungwirth. Sr Mario Soares, Richard Brown, DA, Sr Martinho Matos



The Maryknoll community in Aileu at Peg's farewell

2. Maryknoll Sisters. On 25 August, Richard Brown and Gary Jungwirth met with Sister Susan Gubbins at the Uma Ita Nian Clinic. She provided an update on the programs which are currently supported by Friends of Aileu and its partners, including soy milk production, chicken production and fuel-efficient stove construction. She also referred to a new project which involves providing an improved strain of pigs for breeding by local villagers.

They also met Peg, a lay missionary and agriculturalist, who had been working locally on seed production, and who was about to relocate to Cambodia, and attended her farewell party.

3. Aileu Resource and Training Centre. On 25 August, Richard Brown, Gary Jungwirth and Paul Coghlan met with Sister Rosalva Sandi at the Centre's headquarters in the *Bibliotek* building. She provided an update on the various projects operated at the Centre, some of which are supported by the Friends of Aileu and its partners, including the village literacy program and the related child development program, the employment creation project and the product expo, computer training and the school reading competition, and the community development training centre in Manucasa.

4. St Francis of Assisi Disability Workshop. On 26 August, Richard Brown, Gary Jungwirth and Paul Coghlan visited the workshop and met with the Manager, Maryknoll lay missionary, John O'Donoghue, the newly-appointed Timorese supervisor, Sr Augusto dos Reis, and the other staff. They saw the production of the hand-cranked tricycles, which the Workshop supplies to the Disability organisation in Dili, Assert, which supplies them to clients around Timor-Leste. They inspected prototypes of a handcart and a peddle-driven produce transport vehicle, which the Workshop is considering producing. They saw a prototype of a folding dental chair which the Workshop is making for possible use in Sub-District Health posts as part of the Friends of Aileu-supported Dental Health Project. And they also saw some prototypes of orthopaedic shoes for infants which the workshop had made.



Sr Augusto (l) and John O'Donoghue (r) with the partly built proto-type of the folding dental chair



Sra Maria Diamantina Martins and Gary Jungwirth and part of the *O Mundo Perdido* display at the *Bibliotek*

5. *O Mundo Perdido* ('Lost World') display. While they were in Aileu, Gary Jungwirth and Richard Brown met with Professor Patricia Vickers-Rich and Dr Corrie Williams from the Monash University Science Unit at the *Bibliotek*, where they were refurbishing the display of the early history of Timor-Leste. They had repainted the display area and the display stands, and installed new multilingual interpretive labels and banners.

6. Other meetings. While they were in Aileu, Richard Brown and Gary Jungwirth also met briefly with Doug Ruuska from Engineers without Borders and Alex Grumbley from Plan International, who were both working on water and sanitation projects in Aileu. They also met Kate Horwood, Aileu Area Coordinator, World Vision Australia.

## **Strengthening Friendship: People to People Workshop, Maubisse, 27-28 August**

The workshop, which was held in the hilltop town of Maubisse, was organised by the Timor-Leste Ministry of State Administration and Territorial Management and the Australia Timor-Leste Friendship Network.

The stated aims of the workshop were to:

- Consolidate the principles of the Australia-Timor-Leste Friendship groups
- Plan for future activities, and
- Improve coordination and communication

A copy of the workshop agenda is at Attachment 3.



The town of Maubisse – the workshop venue is the red-roofed building in the centre of the picture



Timor-Leste President, Dr José Ramos-Horta, delivers the keynote address to the workshop

The workshop was attended by approximately one hundred and forty participants, including representatives of the Timor-Leste government and government departments, most of the District and Sub-District Administrators, representatives of some of the Australian friendship groups, and some Timorese and Australian NGOs.

The Aileu District Administration was represented by the District Administrator, Sr Martinho Matos, the Chefe District Development, Mario Soares, the Sub-District Administrator for Remexio Sr Carlos Alberto, the Sub-District Administrator for Aileu Vila, Sr Xisto Amaral, and the AVI Volunteer District Support Officer, Paul Coghlan. Friends of Aileu was represented by Richard Brown and Gary Jungwirth. Prof. Pat Vickers-Rich, Dr Corrie Williams and Mick O'Connor from the ATA also joined the Aileu 'group'.

The workshop was addressed by the Minister for State Administration and Territorial Management, Sr Arcangelo Leite, who noted that the participants represented all Districts. He acknowledged the difficulties experienced in managing communications between Australia and Timor-Leste and expressed the hope that new friendship relationships would be established.

The Australian Ambassador to Timor-Leste, Peter Heyward, said that one challenge for the friendship groups is to ensure that they are aware of the changes which have taken place recently in Timor-Leste and plan for the future. In particular they should take account of the Timor-Leste Government's Strategic Development Plan in any

activities which they undertake. He referred to the 'particular role' which Australian local governments could play in supporting the decentralisation process in Timor-Leste, in sharing their capabilities in areas such as governance and mentoring their Timorese counterparts.

The Honorary Consul-General for Timor-Leste in Melbourne, Kevin Bailey, speaking on behalf of the Ambassador, Abel Guterres, who was unable to attend, spoke of the reciprocal benefits of the friendship relationships for communities in both Timor-Leste and Australia.

The Coordinator of the Australia Timor-Leste Friendship Network, Rae Kingsbury, reminded the participants of the three 'principles' underpinning the friendship relationships; i.e.

- Timorese-led decision-making
- Long-term (minimum 10 years) sustainability
- Collaborative partnerships

The keynote address was given by the President of Timor-Leste, Dr José Ramos-Horta. He was critical of much of the aid provided to Timor-Leste, which he said had not made an impact on local people. However, he described the Australian government's new strategy as now better aligned with the Timor-Leste government's priorities.

He described the essence of the friendship relationships as 'people to people' and called for each of Sub-Districts in Timor-Leste to be 'adopted' by an Australian Local Government, with the aim of creating one hundred friendship relationships.

District representatives were asked to provide a summary of the main features of their friendship relationships. Sr Mario Soares described the development of the Friends of Aileu, from its beginnings in 2000 through to the establishment of the Aileu Friendship Relationship Commission in 2004, and the current range of partners supporting various projects.



Sr Mario Soares presenting a *tais* to Richard Brown



The Aileu District group discussing the development of the friendship relationship

The District representatives each presented a representative of their friendship group with a *tais* scarf as a token of the relationship between them.

Representatives of each District discussed the development of their friendship relationship in separate groups and identified their strengths, and opportunities and challenges for the future. Many of the challenges were similar for each District e.g. language and communications, transport, lack of a contact person in the District, etc.

Among the strengths identified for the Aileu friendship relationship were:

- Good communication and coordination between the Friends of Aileu Community Committee and the Aileu Friendship Commission
- Good support for the AVI Volunteer from the District Administration and the Aileu Friendship Commission
- Good support for Friends of Aileu from partner councils and partner organisations in Australia
- The preparedness of the Aileu Friendship Commission to debate issues
- Building of trust and understanding through frequent visits
- The people of Aileu being very welcoming to visitors
- The five-year friendship Agreement and five-year Strategy Plan in both Aileu and Australia

Some of the challenges identified included:

- Language
- The social and physical conditions/geographic isolation of Timor-Leste
- Getting support from young people in Australia and increasing community support for Aileu in Australia
- Creating jobs for people in Aileu
- Achieving gender equality for women in Aileu

Looking ten years into the future, some of the opportunities included:

- More exchange visits of Timorese to Australia and Australians to Timor-Leste
- Promoting Aileu as a welcoming, beautiful, organic food tourist destination
- Establishing Aileu as a model for environmental sustainability for Timor-Leste, especially through solar power, agriculture, energy efficient stoves and clean water/water conservation
- Creating new friendship groups for Sub-Districts and *sucos*
- Involving councils and communities in Australia in supporting the transition to elected local government
- Creating a museum and discovery centre for the region based in Aileu

The groups were asked to identify what 'protocols' they would use in planning and implementing projects.

The group from Aileu listed the following:

- Each project should respond to an identified need in Aileu
- There should be a written project proposal with costings
- The project should relate to strategic plans (local, national and Friendship group)
- Projects should aim to be handed over locally (i.e. locally-managed and/or owned) and sustainable (e.g. ensure that training and maintenance is included)
- Keep the community/NGOs and other groups informed
- Work within the capacity of acceptable resources (people, infrastructure and funds)
- Projects should respect the history, culture and social processes of both Timor-Leste and Australia
- Projects should be evaluated through the life of the project (checking ongoing relevance, etc.)
- Celebrate the success of projects and publicise what is being done

Friendship agreements. The groups identified what should be common to friendship agreements. The Aileu group listed the following, based its current five-year Friendship Agreement:

- Recognise the aspirations of the people to build their own future
- Commit to long-term relationships
- Acknowledge the role of key stakeholders e.g. the District Administration, the Friendship Commission, in representing the people
- Acknowledge the role of other partners
- Work together to establish decentralisation and local government
- Share benefits across the District
- Meet the goals of the people
- Principles of mutual respect, cooperation and local decision-making
- Take account of the programs of the Timor-Leste National Government
- Capacity off the District and Australia to support programs
- Particular attention to the needs of young people
- Sharing cultures
- Implement mutual understanding
- Strengthening communities in both Timor-Leste and Australia
- Agreement is a guide not legally binding

The groups were asked to identify how communication can be facilitated by the Ministry of State Administration and Territorial Management and the Australia Timor-Leste Friendship Network.

The Aileu group identified the following:

1. Role of MSATM:

- Promote friendship relationships at local level
- Monitor activities of friendship groups
- Distribute information about activities of friendship groups to the Districts

2. Role of ATLFN:

- Collect and exchange information between friendship groups
- Distribute information from Friendship MSATM
- Act as contact point for friendship groups
- Communication not control



Sr Mario Soares and Professor Patricia Vickers-Rich at the workshop



Sr Xisto Amaral presenting the results of the Aileu District discussion group

The following recommendation was agreed by the workshop participants:

1. That the Australia Timor-Leste Friendship Network establish a website so that information can be shared with friends in Timor-Leste and Australia
2. That the Ministry of State Administration and Territorial Management put information on the website about decentralisation, budgets, donors, projects and the districts
3. That Friendship groups in Australia put information on the website about their projects and their contact information

In closing the workshop, the Director of National Development at MSATM, Sr Abilio Caetano, made a plea that Friendship groups should bring some Timorese Australians with them to any future conference. Sr Mario Soares also suggested that more young people should be present, as the representatives at the present workshop were all ageing

Outcomes of the workshop. The Maubisse Workshop was a good opportunity to network with other Australian and Timor-Leste representatives, despite the fact that not all Australian friendship groups were represented. It was also an opportunity to see how other groups operate and identify common issues and challenges. This was particularly valuable for the Friends of Aileu-AVI Volunteer, Paul Coghlan.

There was a lot of interest expressed in the results of the Aileu group's discussions, with the Aileu friendship relationship being seen by many as among the more developed of the friendship relationships and as providing something of a role model. Information was distributed about some of the Friends of Aileu's current projects.

Meeting with the President. At the workshop, Richard Brown and Gary Jungwirth spoke briefly with the Timor-Leste President, Dr José Ramos Horta. He agreed to participate in a proposed celebration of the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the friendship relationships, to be held in Melbourne during his planned visit in October, subject to arrangements being made with the Ambassador, Abel Guterres.



Timor-Leste President, Dr José Ramos-Horta, with (L-r) Richard Brown, Gary Jungwirth, Aileu DA, Sr Martinho Matos



Sr Abilio Caetano giving the closing speech at the workshop

## Attachment 1.

### Visit to Timor-Leste, 23-30 August 2010

#### Outline program

Monday 23 August	Travel Melbourne - Dili
Tuesday 24 August	Dili. Meetings with Sr Abilio Caetano (Min. State Administration), Major Michael Stone (President's Office), Sr Amaral Tilman (Ministry Foreign Affairs), Ali Gillies (AusAID), Chris Adams (FONGTIL)
Wednesday 25 August	Aileu. Meetings with Paul Coghlan (AVI), Sr Martinho Matos (DA), Sr Mario Soares (DA), Sr Rosalva Sandi (ATRC), Sr Susan Gubbins (SMK)
Thursday 26 August	Aileu. Meetings with John O'Donoghue (St Francis Workshop), Sr Rosalva Sandi (ARTC), Prof. Pat Vickers-Rich, Dr Corrie Williams ( <i>O Mundo Perdido</i> ), Travel to Maubisse
Friday 27 August	Maubisse. <i>Strengthening Friendship</i> workshop
Saturday 28 August	Maubisse. <i>Strengthening Friendship</i> workshop Travel to Dili. Reception at Ambassador's residence
Sunday 29 August	Meeting with Jill Jolliffe.
Monday 30 August	Travel Dili - Melbourne

## Attachment 2.

### People met during visit

Sr Abilio Caetano, National Director, Ministry of State Administration and Territorial Management, Dili  
Alberto Pinto, driver/interpreter, AVI, Dili  
Alex Grumbley, Plan International, Aileu  
Ali Gillies, Minister-Counsellor, AusAID, Dili  
Sr Amaral Tilman, Director Human Resources, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Dili  
Sr Augusto dos Reis, Supervisor, St Francis Disability Workshop, Aileu  
Sr Carlos Alberto, Sub-District Administrator, Remexio  
Chris Adams, AVI Volunteer Project Officer, FONGTIL, Dili  
Dr Corrie Williams, Monash University Science Unit  
Sra Dinorah Granadeiro, Executive Director, FONGTIL, Dili  
Doug Ruuska, Engineers Without Borders, Aileu  
Jill Jolliffe, Director, Living Memory Project, Dili  
Sr Joao Freitas, Administration Manager, FONGTIL, Dili  
John O'Donoghue, Manager St Francis of Assisi Disability Workshop, Aileu  
Dr José Ramos-Horta, President of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste  
Kate Horwood, Aileu Area Coordinator, World Vision Australia  
Kevin Bailey, Honorary Consul-General for Timor-Leste  
Kirsty Sword Gusmão, Chair, Alola Foundation  
Sra Maria Diamantina Martins, Coordinator, ARTC, Aileu  
Sr Mario da Silva, District Liaison Officer Coordinator, FONGTIL  
Sr Mario Soares, Aileu Chefe District Development  
Martina Shanahan, AVI Country Manager, Dili  
Sr Martinho Matos, Aileu District Administrator  
Major Michael Stone, Military Affairs Adviser to the President, Dili  
Mick O'Connor, Alternative Technology Association  
Paul Coghlan, AVI Volunteer District Support Officer, Aileu  
Peter Heyward, Australian Ambassador to Timor-Leste  
Professor Patricia Vickers-Rich, Monash University Science Unit  
Sister Rosalva Sandi, ATRC, Aileu  
Sister Susan Gubbins, Uma Ita Nian Clinic, Aileu  
Sr Xisto Amaral, Sub-District Administrator, Aileu Vila

### **Attachment 3.**

#### **Strengthening Friendship: People to People Workshop, Maubisse**

##### **Outline of program**

##### **Friday 27 August**

- 9.00am Welcome, Minister for State Administration, Sr Arcangelo Leite  
Peter Hayward, Australian Ambassador to Timor-Leste  
Kevin Bailey, Honorary Consul-General for Timor-Leste
- 10.00am Background to Friendship movement, Rae Kingsbury
- 11.00am Presidential Address, Dr José Ramos-Horta
- 12.00pm Reports from Districts
- 12.30pm Lunch
- 1.30pm Reports from Districts (continued)
- 2.30pm District Group discussions – Strengths, Opportunities & Challenges
- 3.30pm Afternoon tea
- 4.00pm District group discussions - feedback
- 5.30pm Close
- 7.00pm Dinner

##### **Sunday 27 August**

- 8.30am Presentations from four friendship groups on their activities
- 10.00am Morning tea
- 10.30am District group discussions
- What should be the key 'protocols' in project planning?
  - What should be common to Friendship Agreements?
  - What should be the role of the MSATM and the ATLFN in facilitating communication?
- 12.00pm Sharing of outcomes of discussion groups
- 12.30pm Closing remarks, Sr Abilio Caetano
- 1.00pm Lunch