

Friends of Suai/Covalima

Friends of Suai/Covalima is a program of Health, Equity and Social Justice at the City of Port Phillip

September 2018

Message from the Friends of Suai/Covalima Coordinator

In November, Pat Jessen retired and I was employed as the Coordinator of Friends of Suai/Covalima (FoS/C). It is a great pleasure to work in this role and I would like to personally thank everyone for their wonderful support.

This is the first newsletter I have produced and coincides with my first annual monitoring visit to Suai. This was my third trip to Suai but my first in the role of Coordinator and it was wonderful to work with the team at the Covalima Community Centre (CCC) and to meet with many community members. This newsletter provides information and updates on activities that are happening in and around Suai and also in the City of Port Phillip. It also outlines some of the ways in which FoS/C and our partners at the CCC are working together to support local communities in Covalima district.

Thank you for your ongoing support.

Best wishes from Carlene



Carlene and Pat

Third annual Trivia Night raises over \$8,000 towards scholarships

The Trivia Night held at the Middle Park Bowling Club on the 6th of April was a huge success. Over 130 people attended the event and we were extremely grateful for the support from local volunteers and our wonderful MC, Councillor Louise Crawford. We were also thrilled to have the Timorese student band provide entertainment, with special guest Ego Lemos also joining in for a few songs.

A big thank you to all who attended and supported this event and congratulations to the trivia, raffle and silent auction winners. Funds raised at the event ensure that we can fulfil our commitment to the ongoing scholarship recipients and improve employment outcomes in the future.



Councillor Louise Crawford did a great job as MC for the event.



Timorese students provided entertainment at the event.

Computers from City of Port Phillip arrive in Suai

Second hand computers donated by the City of Port Phillip (CoPP), arrived in Suai in June. The shipment was organised in partnership with InfoTimor, and included desktop computers, laptops and printers. The computers will be used for income generating activities through the IT Social Enterprise at the CCC. Some computers will be sold and others will be used for training. There are plans in place to use the laptops to provide 'mobile training' in local villages.



Official handover from FoS/C to Alberto Barros, Director of the CCC.

A big thank you to the Business Technology team at the CoPP for helping to organise the shipment.

Follow Friends of Suai/Covalima



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Scholarship student ready to graduate and start teaching

There are currently six scholarship recipients studying at the Baucau Teachers College. One of the students, Ercilia, is in her third year of study and will graduate at the end of the year. Ercilia recently completed a teaching placement at a primary school close to the Suai airport. She is specialising in teaching maths but gained experience teaching all subjects with students of different ages. She thoroughly enjoyed the experience and the Principal gave her very positive feedback. She has great confidence and enthusiasm and is hoping to find work in Covalima after graduating at the end of this year.



Ercilia at the CCC after speaking to the staff and Commission about her study.

Ercilia is one of 30 students who has received a FoS/C scholarship for study in 2018. All students maintain regular contact with the Education Program Coordinator at the CCC and updates are posted on the CCC Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/FriendsOfSuaiCentroComunidadeCovalima/> ●

Enthusiasm and innovation from Science & Maths teachers in Suai

A proactive and innovative group of science and maths teachers in Suai have formed a group called Knua Pratika (translation: 'Village Practice') with the objective of developing skills to implement practical activities to use along with theory in the school curriculum. They aim to share ideas and bring teachers together for training.

With financial and practical support from FoS/C, the CCC and the Centre of Study of Science and Maths (SESIM) staff in Dili, the group was able to hold a two day in-service training program in June. There were 36 science and maths teachers at the workshop, with many travelling great distances to attend. The teachers participated in a range of activities and discussions with a focus on using everyday objects to create fun learning experiences. The training was considered a huge success with positive feedback from both trainers and participants. ●



Teachers learning to use everyday objects in classroom activities.

WASH training and facilities at Suai Secondary School

FoS/C have an ongoing commitment to health and hygiene at Suai Secondary school and to support local training. In June, teachers and staff at the CCC attended workshops delivered by WASH trainer Dulce Soares. The objective was to review the school health program activities, including operation, monitoring and maintenance, and to prepare the team for future health training. There was also discussion about successes, challenges and recommendations for the future. Behaviour change takes time and regular training, meetings and commitment from the WASH Committee are vital. FoS/C and CCC staff will continue to provide support and encouragement.

The WASH facilities at the school are in great condition. All toilets and basins were painted, cleaned and repaired during a recent humanitarian assistance visit by US, Australian and Timorese military personnel. The school has also employed a technician who will ensure that equipment is working and water remains accessible. ●



The toilets and wash basins at Suai Secondary School have recently been repaired, cleaned and painted.

Student placement at the CCC

Angelo Jong completed a practical placement at the CCC earlier this year. Angelo is studying the Masters in Community Development at Victoria University and is also the Timorese advisor to the FoS/C Community Reference Committee.

During the three month placement, Angelo worked with many of the CCC staff to support them with their work. He worked with local communities, with a focus on community engagement and monitoring in Laen Tolu, the sub-village where the Village Lighting Scheme has been installed, providing lighting to 39 households. He also worked with the CCC Health Officer to review the roles and responsibilities of the WASH Committee at Suai Secondary School.

The feedback from the CCC team is that Angelo was a great asset to the team and was very willing to learn and to share. We are very grateful for his support. ●



Angelo did a presentation on his placement at the Victoria University Masters symposium.



Suai students receive certificates for completing placements at the CCC.

Student opportunities for placement at the CCC

The CCC continues to provide a variety of opportunities for students in Covalima. In addition to English language and computer training, the CCC also offers practical student placements and work experience for local students. Earlier this year, four administration students from the local Vocational Training Centre did a three week placement at the CCC. Nine students from the local Cristal Technical Secondary School were also given the opportunity to undertake a placement over six weeks; learning about computer programs, hardware, organisational and financial management. Each student was awarded with a certificate and enjoyed the opportunity to learn and apply their knowledge. ●

Community donations for Suai Secondary School library

The library at the Suai Secondary School continues to be a valuable resource for students and teachers. Thanks to local fundraising and donations in the City of Port Phillip, books are continually added to the library shelves and have also been shared with other local schools as part of a 'Book Project' which is facilitated through the CCC.

There is also science equipment in the library, which is regularly borrowed by teachers of biology, physics and chemistry for use in the classroom. The FoS/C Education Working Group recently organised for books and microscopes to be shipped to Suai and to be used by teachers and students. ●



Suai Secondary School librarians, Felicidade & Almerio.

Infrastructure development in Covalima

There has been a significant improvement to local roads in Suai in the last 12 months. Most roads in and around Suai and nearby villages are now paved and there are pedestrian crossings in the centre of town. This work has coincided with the building of the 155km South Coast highway as part of the Tasi Mane petroleum project. The highway is still under construction and currently starts near Suai Secondary School and is heading towards Ainaro. The Tasi Mane project plans also include the building of an airport (now completed), supply base and wharf. Some local villages have been impacted by these projects through land acquisitions and relocations. The CCC and the Covalima Network continue to provide support, advocacy and information on these developments to local leaders and their communities. ●



Pedestrian crossings near Suai market.

WithOneBean coffee available at local Town Halls and now online

WithOneBean is a not for profit social enterprise producing ethical, social, and environmental coffee for consumers who want their coffee to create real social impact whilst also tasting delicious. The coffee is sourced directly from over 650 subsistence coffee farmers in Timor-Leste, who produce the coffee cherry using 100% organic farming methods on small-holder farms.

The 250g bags are available for sale at the Assist counters at St Kilda, Port Melbourne and South Melbourne Town Halls. You can now also order a wider variety of WithOneBean coffee online and have it shipped to your home. To order, visit <https://withonebean.org.au/coffee-shop/> and make sure you include the coupon code **suai2018** when ordering. ●



Volunteers Nancy & Rhonda selling coffee at the FoS/C Trivia Night.

Solar lighting providing great benefits in Laen Tolu



Community members in Laen Tolu.

In 2017, FoS/C partnered with the Alternative Technology Association to install a Village Lighting Scheme (VLS) in the small coastal sub-village Laen Tolu, in Suai Loro. Solar PV systems were installed in 39 households, providing house lighting, a rechargeable torch and the ability to recharge the torch and a phone.

Each household attends community meetings and contributes to a maintenance fund. Local technicians have been trained to maintain and repair the solar systems. Community members have reported social, health and economic benefits from having lighting in the evening and from no longer relying on the use of kerosene lamps.

The CCC are playing a key role in monitoring and community engagement in Laen Tolu. They have also started community consultation processes for the implement of a second VLS in Covalima, with funds raised by FoS/C supporters. ●