

Friends of Suai/Covalima



Newsletter October 2021

Scholarship graduation

Each year the Friends of Suai/Covalima (FoSC) scholarship program provides opportunities for students to study Primary School teaching at the Baucau Teachers College (ICFP). Students undertake a three-year Bachelor of Teaching, with many students now continuing to complete a fourth-year post-graduate qualification. In 2020, four scholarship recipients completed the three-year qualification (pictured) and one student completed the four-year Licentiate (equivalent of a Bachelor of Education in Australia).

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the graduation ceremony for 2020 was delayed but finally held on 11 September. Margie Beck AM, Deputy Director of ICFP described the graduation as 'very simple - no parents, no guests, no party but the students were so happy that they finally had their graduation'.

This photo shows Augusta, Elizeo, Lucia and Octaviana at the ceremony. Augusta and Octaviana continued their post-grad studies this year and are close to completing. We wish all graduates the very best with their future careers.



Vaccination rollout



The Covalima Community Centre (CCC) team is working closely with the Municipal Administration Taskforce to continue to raise awareness about COVID-19 protocols and encourage vaccine uptake. This involves supporting the national government campaign and visiting villages, often travelling with the Municipal Administrator and staff from the Health department.

Covalima district currently has the third highest vaccination rate in Timor-Leste, after Dili and Oecusse. There are no issues with vaccine supply and vaccination rates are especially high in villages located along the border. Border communities continue to be extremely vulnerable due to illegal crossings to and from Indonesia, where COVID case numbers are very high. Border controls have increased recently in response to this continued threat to communities.

Shipments arrive in Suai



Two shipments of computer equipment have been sent to Suai this year, containing desktop computers, laptops, keyboards and tablets. Books and science equipment have also been sent to add to the Suai Secondary School library collection.

FoSC has facilitated the ongoing development of IT services in Suai with regular donations of second-hand computers since 2007. Computer equipment is donated by the community and through the City of

Port Phillip Council disposal program. The IT Social Enterprise at the CCC generates income through the sale and repair of computers and the delivery of computer and English language training courses. The income is sufficient to employ four full-time staff. There is great demand for the computers and the training, which help many young people develop skills for future employment.

Food relief project

The CCC was successful with a proposal to international NGO Give2Asia, to fund a food relief project for vulnerable families impacted by floods and lockdowns. The project was rolled out in August and the food has now been distributed to 220 families in four sub-districts. Give2Asia provided funds for 153 families to receive food packages and FoSC provided funds for an additional 67 families that the CCC had identified as also needing support. The Municipal Administrator and Police Commander travelled to each location with the CCC team and helped to distribute the food.



The pandemic and severe weather events have left many communities isolated with increased food insecurity. The CCC team reported that many families were in great need and were extremely grateful for the food packages.

Support our programs:

The programs delivered in Suai are funded through community donations and we need your help! Donations can be made via the following methods:

- Direct deposit: Account Name: Friends of Suai Donations BSB: 063 243 Account No. 1034 3552
- On-line via the Friends of Suai Covalima Give Now webpage: <https://www.givenow.com.au/cause1266>
- A cheque payment to **City of Port Phillip** sent to Friends of Suai Covalima, City of Port Phillip, Private Bag 3, St Kilda Vic 3182