

Friends of Suai/Covalima



Newsletter June 2021

Dear Friends

We would like to share this update with you on the programs at the Covalima Community Centre (CCC) that are funded through fundraising activities in Port Phillip and community donations.

Civic Health Fund

COVID-19 cases have increased significantly in Timor-Leste in recent weeks. Extensive testing is taking place and many people are now registering to be vaccinated.

The District COVID-19 Taskforce has been 'reactivated' and has been expanded to include sub-district and community leaders. The CCC is one of only two NGOs involved in the taskforce and continues to play an integral role. The team has been asked to continue their work in preventing the spread of COVID-19, including disseminating information and providing demonstrations of handwashing, social distancing, etc. They are also encouraging people to get vaccinated.

Friends of Suai/Covalima is providing funds to the CCC for a Civic Health Fund. Over the last 12 months the primary focus of the fund has been to share information and resources with communities to prevent the spread of COVID-19. This work has involved visiting villages throughout the district, many of which have been extremely vulnerable due to their remote location and close proximity to the border with Indonesia.

Since the floods in April, the Civic Health Fund is now also funding food relief for vulnerable families. There are people living in remote communities who have not been able to travel to markets due to flood damage to roads and also frequent lockdowns. There are other NGOs working in this area, however the CCC has identified that some families are 'falling through the cracks' and are working to ensure that all families are receiving food packages. In some cases, the food packages have been donated to other NGOs however the CCC are assisting with distribution, coordination and transport.

It is inspiring to hear that the CCC has been able to work closely with local government, media and donors to advocate, share information and respond during these challenging times.

Would you like to get involved or learn more about our Friendship?

Contact the Friends of Suai/Covalima Coordinator for information.

Phone: 03 9209 6598 Email: friendsofsuai@portphillip.vic.gov.au



Photos: Distributing supplies to villages after flooding; CCC staff with infographics on stopping the spread of COVID-19.

Scholarships

There are 24 students who are receiving scholarships for the 2021 school year, including 18 continuing and six new students. They are studying a variety of tertiary and vocational courses including agriculture, community development, primary school teaching, electrical studies and hospitality.

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused many disruptions to education. In some instances, practical placements and graduation ceremonies have had to be delayed. At some schools, students have had to adapt to online learning. The Education Program Coordinator remains in contact with all students to check on their welfare and provide encouragement. The students have expressed that they are committed to finishing their studies and look forward to graduating and working in the community.



Photos: Hospitality students at the Canossian Vocation Training Centre in Suai participating in a mini-expo; Two students at Maliana Agricultural Secondary School are completing their final year practical placement in the school garden.

With One Seed (WoS) reforestation program

Last year 10,000 young trees were grown in the nursery in Tilomar sub-district and distributed to local farmers. The WoS team has continued to monitor their progress and more than 9,250 trees have survived. This is an excellent survival rate for the first year of this long-term initiative which will generate income for the tree owners for many years to come.

The WoS program continues to expand and in April 2021, a further 10,000 mahogany trees have been distributed. This coincided with the official launch of the program, which had been delayed due to COVID-19 restrictions. This event was shown on the national news in Timor-Leste.

The team has also continued to undertake land mapping using GPS technology. This is part of the accreditation process to ensure that the trees are planted on land that meets the criteria for Gold Standard Certification.

We are delighted that the European Union has announced the launch of their 'Rai Matak' (Green Lands) program, which will be funding the expansion of this fantastic reforestation project in new areas of Timor-Leste, including support for WoS in Covalima.



Photos: Mahogany seedlings in the nursery; Launch of the WoS program in Tilomar

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 into our Commonwealth Bank account. Acct Name: Friends of Suai Donations BSB: 063 243 Account Number: 1034 3552
- On-line via the Friends of Suai Covalima Give Now webpage:
<https://www.givenow.com.au/foscscscholarships>
- 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

We are grateful for any amount that you can contribute. Thank you!