

*Railaco Mission Update
January 2021—June 2021
for
Pilgrims 100 Members*



Students and teachers at Escola Secundaria Católica Nossa Senhora de Fatima (NOSSEF) in Railaco, Timor-Leste

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January—June 2021

Overview

The successful project at the Pilgrims 100 Awards nights in October 2020 was the Railaco Mission in Timor-Leste. This project covers three main programs: the mobile medical clinic, the feeding program and the secondary school. The Pilgrims 100 funds, along with other Jesuit Mission funds, cover the cost of salaries of teachers and other staff, medical supplies, food requirements and vehicle running costs.

COVID-19 Update

Up until March 2021 Timor-Leste had very few COVID cases, with the border to Indonesia closed since 19 March 2020. Now Timor-Leste is witnessing a significant increase in new cases as the epicentre of the pandemic has shifted south from the capital Dili to the Ermera municipality, where Railaco is located. On 29 July the prevalence of cases in the Ermera area stood at 30.3 cases per 100,000 population, six times higher than the national average. The State of Emergency has now been extended to 25 August 2021 in the Ermera municipality, which also has one of the lowest vaccination rates in the country.

On the 31 July 2021 Father Hyoe Murayama SJ, the Director of NOSSEF school in Railaco, and 40+ students tested positive for COVID-19 and were transferred to the quarantine facilities in Dili. It is understood that all have recovered. The school is now closed after having been open all year, except for a brief closure in early April 2021.

Since the pandemic in March 2020 began there have been 13,433 COVID-19 reported infections in Timor-Leste and 41 deaths. On 21 August there were 291 new cases, with a 7-day average of 244. Timor-Leste is providing the AstraZeneca vaccine with 491,569 doses administered, which equates to 19% of the eligible population being fully vaccinated.

The Mobile Medical Clinic has been able to operate fully during the first half of 2021 and the Feeding Program has been able to continue its visits to four villages on a regular basis. During the current lockdown at NOSSEF school, online classes are not possible because students do not have smart phones, internet or laptops. Once Fr Hyoe returns to work it will be decided whether to deliver lessons to students' homes.

Flooding in April 2021

On Easter Sunday, 4 April, a strong tropical cyclone Seroja hit Indonesia and Timor-Leste causing catastrophic damage of landslides and flooding. At least 40 people were killed in Timor-Leste. Fortunately Railaco was not damaged like Dili, but there were extended black outs and extensive damage to roads.

Project participants reached

PROGRAM	2021 TARGET PARTICIPANTS	JAN-JUN 2021 ACTUAL PARTICIPANTS
Mobile Medical Clinic	5,000	5,326
Feeding Program	215	296
NOSSEF Teachers	18 part-time teachers	22 part-time teachers
TOTAL PEOPLE SERVED	5,233	5,644

Railaco Feeding Program

In the January to June 2021 reporting period the feeding program provided nutritious meals to 296 boys and girls across four villages. 55% of the program budget was spent in the first six months on food.

Railaco is a very disadvantaged area with one of the highest infant mortality rates in the country. One of the aims of this program is to educate the parents and children about a healthy diet for the growth of the children. Once the parents are familiar with this, we hope they give their children more nutritious food. However, this will take time as many families in the remote villages just cannot afford to do that at present.

The team for the Feeding Program comprises three people. The food is prepared in the Railaco Parish kitchen and includes chicken, eggs, tofu, tempeh and vegetables, as well as rice.

The children bring their own plates to be filled with food they would not usually get at home. The team takes advantage of the gathering of the children as an opportunity to impart learning through sharing of the children's stories and dance performances. This helps develop the cognitive, emotional and physical skills of the children.

Children Beneficiaries of Feeding Program		
Village	Boys	Girls
Cocoa	64	51
Caitarehei	36	31
Lebdodon	32	46
Tabulasi	23	13
TOTAL	155	141

Case Study

Miralda is a 27 year old woman with two daughters. She lives in Caitarehei village and her children are beneficiaries of the Feeding Program.

Miranda said that the usual diet for the family is cassava leaves, corns, and in the morning, they eat sweet potatoes or cassava. She thinks her children do not like corn very much because it is tough to chew. They very rarely have meat in their diet.

Through the Feeding Program, her children eat chicken and also tofu or tempe, which is hard to obtain in her village. Due to the better food, she thinks her daughters are growing and look healthier than before.



Miralda and her two daughters.
4 July 2021

"This program started when I was still a teenager. I am really glad that this program has been ongoing. I hope it can continue and I hope those who support this program are in good health so that they can continue to help our children grow".

Miralda, 4 July 2021



Miralda's youngest daughter
enjoying a nutritious meal.

Railaco Mobile Medical Clinic

In the January to June 2021 reporting period, the mobile medical clinic treated 5,326 patients across 11 villages.

Fr Martin Antonia “Bong” Abad Santos SJ, a Filipino doctor and Jesuit priest, operates mobile medical clinics in the Railaco area serving poor communities living outside the reach of local government services. Two trained local assistants accompany Fr Bong in his 4WD and dispense medications. The team is equipped with medical equipment and medications but also knowledge about local people, their medical conditions and living conditions. The Mobile Clinic improves healthcare access for vulnerable populations in rural areas, bolsters the prevention of some chronic diseases and improves health outcomes.

Due to the global impact of COVID-19, the cost of medicines has increased significantly over the past twelve months. Already 95% of the annual medicine budget of USD23,040 has been spent. The cost of salaries and petrol is tracking with the annual budget.

Objective	Impacts
To provide basic health care to the underprivileged remote areas where residents are cut off from access to medical care.	Those who were sick received immediate treatment.
	Patients that came in for consultation also received some basic health education.
	More than 400 people who live in inaccessible areas have access to this mobile clinic.
	On average, 5 to 6 children came with their parents for a medical check-up.
	Prevention of the spread of infectious diseases.
	Reduced costs for the patients, especially since they are poor and vulnerable persons.
To provide basic health care to the underprivileged remote areas where residents are cut off from access to medical care.	Three visits to three different locations every week: Monday, Tuesday and Thursday. Arrive at location around 8.45am.
	There are 11 different centres that this program serves: Dasarlaco, Gamanhati, Nasuta, Tocoluli, Caitarahei, Cocoa, Lebdodon, Tabulasi, Fahiten, and Lebuloa.
	Each location is visited twice a month.
	Medical treatment is provided to two to 25 patients per day.

Breakdown of Patients served by Mobile Medical Clinic by Age & Gender								
Month	Number of Patients Treated	0-18yo Male	0-18yo Female	19-59yo Male	19-59yo Female	60+ Male	60+ Female	Un-known
January	821	176	243	101	246	23	29	3
February	711	162	170	83	208	15	15	58
March	1,285	281	296	106	401	40	32	129
April	714	138	172	93	253	30	22	6
May*	656							
June*	1,139							
Total	5,326							

* The breakdown of figures for May and June is not available

Challenges

- The expenditure for medicine in the last six months has already reached 95% of the total budget. This is due to the increase in the price of medicine as a result of the coronavirus pandemic affecting supplies. Railaco Mission has secured funding from another source to cover the shortfall in the cost of medicines for the remainder of 2021.
- The catastrophic flooding in Timor-Leste in April 2021 damaged many roads around Railaco. However, Fr Bong and his team were still able to reach the locations as scheduled.

Case Studies—Mobile Medical Clinic

On 6 July 2021 whilst on one of his regular trips to the villages of Lebdodon and Caitarehei, Fr Bong interviewed two residents about what the Mobile Medical Clinic means to them.

1. Jose

Jose is a farmer in the village of Lebdodon. He is 46 years old.

What Jose thinks about the mobile medical clinic:

“I like this mobile health clinic very much because I can come for medical check-up and my children can also come to receive treatment. Fr. Bong and his team come here twice a month and that is really helpful for our community because we are farmers and most of the time we stay here to look after our farms”.

Jose Manuel’s message to donors:

“The families here in our community are grateful to Fr Bong and the donors that have been giving funds to medicine that we receive. Thank you very much for looking after us and making us look healthier”.

2. Angelita

Angelita is a farmer from the village of Caitarehei. She is 54 years old.

What Angelita thinks about the mobile medical clinic:

“Me and my family always come to see Fr Bong and his team whenever we need a medical check-up. I come here to check my blood pressure and if I feel a little unwell, I usually tell Fr Bong about my symptoms and he prescribes some medicine for me to drink and recover”.

Angelita’s message to donors:

“Fr Bong and his team have been coming here for many years now and we know that this is because the donors are very kind to keep supporting Fr Bong’s clinic. We are always grateful to the donors because it is easy for us to receive medical treatment. We hope that this mobile health clinic can continue to come to our village because many of us really need this kind of help”.



Jose during medical check-up with Fr Bong. Date: 6 July 2021. Taken by Mobile Clinic Assistant.



Angelita during medical check-up with Fr Bong. Date: 6 July 2021. Taken by Mobile clinic assistant.



Angelita and her grandson waiting for their prescribed medicine. Date: 6 July 2021. Taken by Victor.

NOSSEF Secondary School

The Jesuit-run Secondary School, NOSSEF, provides schooling for 380 students from Year 10 to Year 12. The student numbers are equally divided between males and females. There are 22 part-time teachers and four administration staff. The goal of this project is to support the school in providing a quality Jesuit education to students through a contribution to the salaries of the part-time teachers.

Since NOSSEF's overall income from tuition and other related income is not enough to cover the salaries every month, Jesuit Mission Australia supports the costs for the NOSSEF teachers' salaries with the assistance of your generosity. Up until the end of June 2021, 58% of the annual budget of USD18,750 had been spent on the salaries of the teachers.

The impacts of this generous contribution are described in the table below:

	Objectives	Impacts
1.	To cover the deficit of the operational costs of the school.	30% of the operational costs of the school is covered by support from Jesuit Mission.
2.	To provide a quality Jesuit education to young men and women in Railaco.	All of the teachers at NOSSEF are familiar with the Jesuit teaching methods especially the 4Cs (conscience, competence, compassion, commitment) and also cura personalis (care for each student).
3.	To increase the number of high school graduates among the communities in remote villages of Railaco.	The existence of NOSSEF in the middle of Railaco is a window of opportunity for many indigent students in Railaco. NOSSEF welcomes anyone especially those who are poor. Offering education to 375 students per year in Railaco will really make great significance for the population in Railaco.

Case Study

Rosendo is a teacher at NOSSEF. He comes from Aileu, one of the thirteen municipalities in Timor-Leste. It is located in the western part of the country, around 40 kilometres from the capital, Dili.

Rosendo is a part-time teacher of Portuguese, one of the official languages of Timor-Leste. Most students grow up speaking the other official language, Tetum. He has been teaching at NOSSEF since 2018. He enjoys teaching the students who all have different personalities and capabilities and values the feedback from them.

He believes the education and formation at NOSSEF is different to other schools, as NOSSEF is not only a school for students but it is also a place where teachers can grow and improve themselves. He feels that NOSSEF promotes the true value of teaching which is knowing how to serve others. For him, this is the principle that St Ignatius of Loyola used to teach others.

Feedback from Rosendo:

"First of all, the funds from the donors in Australia have been very helpful for the school, not just the students but also for the teachers. As a teacher, it is my duty to educate the young men and women here at NOSSEF to ensure that they can live a better life in the future. But I am also grateful because of the compensation from the school and I am thankful for the donors in Australia that have been generously supporting the salaries of the teachers at



Rosendo at NOSSEF. Date: June 2021. Taken by a NOSSEF student



Rosendo with some of his students. Date: June 2021. Taken by: a NOSSEF student