

Project No. 3

Providing clean and safe water supply for rural communities in Timor-Leste

Country Overview and Jesuit History

Timor-Leste is Asia's youngest country and is ranked 141 out of 189 countries in the Human Development Index (a measure of poverty and development, with a higher number equalling higher poverty). Almost 42% of the population live below the national poverty line, unemployment among the youth remains high, which is especially concerning given that approximately 75% of the population are younger than 35 years of age. Literacy is also a key challenge of the country, with only 58.3% of adults having literacy skills. The current population of Timor-Leste is 1.3 million.

The country's independence in 2002 came at a great cost for the people. Under Indonesian occupation (1975 to 1999), at least 183,000 died from fighting, disease and starvation. Indonesia's departure in 1999 was marked by violence and destruction that left thousands displaced, hundreds dead, and many buildings, homes and over 90% of schools severely damaged or destroyed. Timor-Leste was left without a government, official language, currency or legal system, and few formally qualified personnel as the nation lost 20% of its primary school teachers and 80% of its secondary teachers.



2021 has been a year marked by significant political uncertainty and continuous lockdowns due to COVID-19. Additionally, on 4 April 2021, Cyclone Seroja struck and caused significant flooding and landslides, resulting in destruction of agriculture and infrastructure as well as fatalities.

The Jesuits were present in Timor-Leste in the late 19th century but were expelled, along with all other religious orders, in 1910 by the colonial ruler, Portugal. After some decades of absence, the Jesuits returned and resumed their work in education and formation. The Jesuit community in Timor-Leste is growing and there are already many stories of success. Timor-Leste is a priority country for Jesuit Mission.

About the project

Jesuit Social Service—Timor-Leste (JSS-TL) is engaging communities to deliver six (6) water infrastructure projects in Ainaro, Ermera and Liquiça in 2022. The vision and mission of the JSS-TL water project is to provide clean water for each community and the residents in the communities also have to get involved in the process. JSS-TL have been running the Water Project since March 2018 and have ensured that more than ten rural communities now have easier access to safe and clean water.

More than 30% of the beneficiaries in previous water projects are children. It is normally the job of children to fetch water from springs a long distance from their homes. With water availability closer to home, children can focus more on their education which benefits the family, community and the country.

The main activities of the project are:

- Construction of a water source/stream in each of the six locations.
- Construction of a water reservoir and spring catchment at the point of the water source.
- Installation of water pumps storage tanks, mini dam and distribution network.
- Installation and construction of water pipeline and distribution to beneficiaries.
- Maintenance of the water project system.

The complete project plan is not just about the installation of the water pumps, water tanks, and the pipelines. Key to the project is the Maintenance Plan which is incorporated through an extended accompaniment of the community. Chiefs of villages are identified to maintain good communication with the JSS-T-L team. Communities are also encouraged to contribute financially (usually \$0.50 to \$2 per household per month) to maintain the water facility. Thus the water project is an entry point to a potentially protracted battle against poverty.

Another key aspect is the Green Project which involves tree-planting and motivating the beneficiaries to conserve water and improve the vegetation and greenery in their area. Beneficiaries are also encouraged to take the opportunity to plant vegetables and other edible plants. The vision is to enhance their land's holding capacity for water in order to reduce the impact of the long dry season in the country. JSS-T-L has also established a critical partnership with the Timorese government in providing seedlings for villagers to plant in their communities.

Project participants

Based on previous water projects, the average in a village is 60 households with five people in each family. So the expected number of beneficiaries across six villages is 1,800 people.

Program activities and outcomes

	Project Summary	Indicators	Means of Verification	Risk/Assumptions
Goal	Improve access to clean water in five remote villages in Ermera, Liquiça and Ainaro and one in the Jesuit community in Railaco by the end of 2022	Number of beneficiaries or households that have access to their facilities	Data/statistics collected	N/A
Outcome	Communities in six locations have access to clean water facilities reducing illness and increasing school attendance by children who no longer have to walk long distances to collect water	Number of facilities completed	Project reports	Natural disasters and COVID-19 lockdowns
Outputs	Completed the construction of six water facilities in six locations that will provide clean water to around 300 people per location	Number of residents in each location	Data/statistics collected	Availability of the water source
Activities	Community organising	Identification of project site and surveying of the location. Meeting with the beneficiaries to get to know more about the families in the location	Meeting minutes and data on location surveyed	Villagers want to be involved in the water project
	Construction of a water reservoir and spring catchment at the point of the water source	Number of reservoirs and capacity of the reservoirs	Dimension of the reservoirs and water volume	Water source availability
	Installation of water pumps, storage tanks, mini dams and distribution networks	Number of distribution tanks and pumps installed	Tanks purchased	N/A
	Installation and construction of water pipelines and distribution to beneficiaries	Length of pipes to each distribution tank	Pipes purchased	N/A
	Maintenance of the water system. Each household gives a monthly contribution between \$0.50 and \$2.00	Total contribution collected	Collection register	Households are willing to contribute

Impact of COVID-19

As at 5 December 2021, there are presently no recorded COVID-19 cases. The total number of cases since the beginning of the pandemic is 19,828 with 122 coronavirus-related deaths. The number of vaccines administered equates to 43% of the population being full vaccinated.

Budget

The projected budget for the programs **USD88,000.00** This covers staff salaries , operational costs associated with the program and the costs of the installation of six water facilities in six villages.

Potential for Pilgrims 100 members to visit

Excluding current COVID-19 travel restrictions, it is easy to travel to Timor-Leste, with daily flights from Darwin. Jesuit Social Service welcomes visitors and is able to arrange for groups to visit the villages where water infrastructure facilities have been installed and inaugurated.

Herminia, a beneficiary in Fatunero (water facility inaugurated May 2019)

"We have been living here for more than 20 years now. It was very difficult for us because we had to fetch water every day from the water stream down the hill. We had no choice because we needed water for cooking, bathing, and washing our clothes.

But now our daily routine has changed a lot. Almost all of the households in our community now have access to the water facility that JSS established through the pipes channelled to their homes.

Our family grow vegetables, potatoes, corn, egg plant, and cassava. It's easy now because we have water near our house. We have a small fish pond as well. The fish are still small but we hope that in a few months we can eat some fish. We live far from the sea so it's a good thing for us to raise some fish."



Luisa, 30yo mother with three children in Matata (water facility inaugurated in Dec 2019)



For Lusía , this water facility helps her and her family in many ways. Before she had to walk everyday to fetch water from down the hill. But now that the water facility is close to their house, her family can use the water to shower, cook, wash, and also to water their plants.

"Now that we have water near our house our children do not have to wake up at 4am to fetch water from the stream down the bottom of the hill. They can now take showers before going to school and in the evening they can study because they do not have to fetch water in the afternoon. We have also planned to plant vegetables as well, instead of just corns and cassava"

Jose, Chief of the village of Matata (water facility inaugurated in December 2019)

Jose, the Chief of the village of Matata, is proud of the voluntary contribution from each of the member of his community who worked together in groups to facilitate JSS-T-L in establishing the facility.

"Channelling the pipes through a steep slope from down the hill to the top of the hill was not an easy task. But thanks to JSS and especially the community of Matata that have worked together since the start until completion. This water facility is our Christmas gift from the donors through JSS", said Jose.

