

Friends of Suai/Covalima



April 2023

Scholarship Newsletter

We are delighted to share this update with you on the Friends of Suai scholarship program.

Last year we conducted a review of our 2020-25 Strategic Plan, including the scholarship program, and we interviewed scholarship recipients and Covalima Community Centre (CCC) staff. Many positive outcomes were cited including the financial benefits to students and their families when they gain employment, as well as benefits to the wider community as students contribute to the development of Covalima and to Timor-Leste.

Some of the most important changes for students cited were:

“After training they can get a job which changes their family life, gives them support, a secure place to live, they have money....” Alberto Barros, CCC Director

“The deep learning that students have, the confidence and the practical skills they develop which they can apply. This gives them opportunities beyond Suai, at a national level, so they can meet new people and have new opportunities.” Bernadino de Jesus, CCC Education Coordinator

“I have been able to support my family – grandmother, parents and four siblings.” Idalia da Costa Barros, Hospitality scholarship graduate

The social and economic benefits of the scholarship program are enormous, and we are grateful for the support from our Port Phillip community to continue this successful program.

We hope you enjoy reading about the scholarship program activities for 2023.

Megs Alston, Chair & Carlene Harlock, Coordinator

Friends of Sua/Covalima

Bachelor of Teaching graduates

In 2022, Casilda & Carmelita completed their third year of study at Bacau Teachers College. Their graduation ceremony was held on 11 March and both young women now have a Bachelor of Teaching.

Casilda (left) is now continuing her studies to complete the Licentiate (Bachelor of Education). She is currently preparing her research topic and doing an extended placement at pre-secondary school close to Suai.



Educational opportunities for many young people in Covalima are limited, especially for women and those in remote, rural communities. Since 2012, Friends of Suai/Covalima (FoSC) has funded more than 178 scholarships for students from Covalima district to further their studies at senior secondary schools, vocational training centres and universities in Timor-Leste. The program has had high levels of completion rates, with over 88% of students graduating. This is a credit to the students, their families and to the support and encouragement they receive from the CCC.

2023 Scholarships

There are 17 scholarship recipients who have now commenced their studies in 2023, which includes nine new students and eight students continuing their tertiary studies. There are six students at Bacau Teachers College studying to be primary school teachers, including one student who has started her fourth year to complete the Bachelor of Education. There are also three students at the National University continuing their post-graduate studies in Community Development (2) and Nursing (1).

Eight students are completing 12 month vocational training certificate courses this year in Hospitality (4), Motorbike mechanical training (2) and Automotive mechanical training (2).

All students have reported that they are enjoying their studies.



Photos: (Left) The two students at Don Bosco Training Centre in Dili are enjoying the practical component of their training.

(Below) Four Hospitality students at the Canossian Vocational Training Centre in Suai learn to make a variety of foods including cassava, moringa and sweet potato cakes.



Graduations

Five nursing students have completed their post-graduate studies in Midwifery at the National University in Dili and their graduation ceremony is scheduled for later this month. These young women have shown great resilience and determination to complete their studies, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic and are looking forward to starting their nursing careers. We hope to have photos soon.



Photos: (Top right) Elsa attended the Nursing Faculty Yudisum in November and is looking forward to graduating. (Above) Feliciano and Olandina graduated with a Certificate 2 in Hospitality in December. Feliciano is now working at a new restaurant in Suai. (Right) Francisco graduated in December with a Certificate 1 in Motorbike Mechanic Training.

Donations

All funds raised will benefit students and will contribute towards enrolment fees, training materials, equipment, transport, accommodation and pastoral care from the Education Coordinator.

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/focscholarships>

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