



# ANNUAL REPORT

2020 – 2021

ChildFund Timor-Leste is the representative office of ChildFund Australia – an independent international development organisation that works to reduce poverty for children in developing communities. ChildFund Australia is a member of the ChildFund Alliance – a global network of 12 organisations which assists almost 23 million children and their families in 70 countries.

ChildFund Australia is a registered charity, a member of the Australian Council for International Development, and fully accredited by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade which manages the Australian Government’s overseas aid program.

ChildFund began work in Timor-Leste in 1990, originally under the management of ChildFund International. Since October 2017 it has operated as an office of ChildFund Australia and works in partnership to create community and systems change which enables vulnerable children and young people, in all their diversity, to assert and realise their rights.

ChildFund Timor-Leste is working with rural communities to build a new, stable, and prosperous future for what is one of the world’s youngest nations.

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Front cover: Nanju, age 5, Timor-Leste



The past year has been difficult for families and communities around the world, and Timor-Leste has been no exception.

While Timor-Leste managed to limit the spread of COVID-19 for a considerable

amount of time, there was an inevitable outbreak in the community. The necessary lockdown measures have had a significant impact of children's lives.

On top of this, Timor-Leste faced its largest natural disaster in 40 years. When Cyclone Seroja hit Timor-Leste on Easter Sunday, it caused severe flooding and landslides. Approximately 15,000 people sought refuge in evacuation centres and many more families experienced significant damage to their houses, belongings, and livelihoods.

Even though many of our staff were personally impacted by the floods, it was amazing to see how they still responded to the needs of affected children and families. ChildFund staff supported civil protection activities by undertaking a rapid needs assessments and distributed hygiene materials, toys and learning materials for children. Working with local partners, we organised child-friendly spaces in evacuations centres so that children have a safe place where they could express their emotions, play, and learn.

In the last year, our health team and community volunteers have continued their vital work to provide essential information and support to pregnant women, young mothers and their children. Nutrition rehabilitation and education sessions continued and ensured that children who were malnourished and their parents received the adequate training and support.

With schools closed for long periods of time, parents have taken on a more significant role in continuing their children's education at home. Our education programs ran education sessions that provide practical tips for parents, distribution of learning materials and encouragement. School and community reading clubs continued and made use of the growing number of Tetun books in the digital library.

We were excited for the 10 communities in Liquica and Lautem that opened new community-based

preschools. The trained volunteers are already doing an outstanding job providing early learning opportunities to children in their community. The program built close ties with Disabled People's Organisations (DPOs) to make sure that the preschools were inclusive.

This year the Youth Changemakers program expanded into the Lautem municipality. The first cohort of Changemakers embarked on an exciting capacity building program with a focus on peacebuilding, leadership, and economic empowerment.

While we launched birth registration campaigns in four municipalities and raised awareness on the importance of a birth certificate, the mobile birth registration drives have been on hold because of the ongoing pandemic. This is just one example of the pandemic's impact on children. Many children have also experienced lost learning opportunities, mental health impacts, and delays of vital services.

I would like to give a big thanks to our partners, donors and sponsors who supported us through this challenging year and enabled us to respond quickly to children's needs.

Thank you for continuing to support our joint mission to ensure all children are safe, nurtured, and able to develop their potential.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'ERINE' with a stylized flourish.

**Erine Dijkstra**  
**Country Director**  
**ChildFund Timor-Leste**

We want every child with whom we work to be able to say:

# I AM SAFE

## Community health volunteers preventing child malnutrition

In Timor-Leste high rates of malnutrition among young children in the country is often a result of a lack of access to health information and healthcare. Stunting and poor nutrition can have long-term effects on young children. It can

diminish their cognitive and physical development and can increase their risk of degenerative diseases in the future.

ChildFund's Maternal and Child Health program merged with the nutrition project to care for the well-being of pregnant women and children's nutrition. Community health volunteers also educated parents on basic children's nutrition and health.

Augusta is a community health volunteer who underwent training with ChildFund Timor-Leste. She was able to recognise that her three-year-old son, Jacson, was at risk of being malnourished and that he was below a healthy height and weight range for a child his age.

Augusta knew that he was not getting the proper nutrition he needed. "I immediately enrolled him in the ChildFund's child nutrition project together with some children who were malnourished," says Augusta.

Gradually, with better nutrition and diet, Jacson's health improved. Augusta's experience as a community health volunteer helped to ensure that Jacson would not follow the path of many young children in remote and rural communities in Timor-Leste.



Augusta and her son Jacson.

# I AM EDUCATED

## Working with communities to build preschools close to homes

As part of the Early Childhood Development project, ChildFund Timor-Leste has helped build 10 community-based preschools in Liquica and Lautem areas. The preschools are established by the community with the help of ChildFund.

Inside there are collections of books suitable for children between the ages of three and five, along with other learning materials and educational toys.

Before the preschool was built, children in the village had to walk 3km to the nearest preschool, which was in the city. The long walk on a steep and rocky road discouraged many families from enrolling their children in preschool.

For five-year-old Nanju starting school had been a long-time coming. He is a curious and enthusiastic child and had been learning the alphabet at home during school closures.

"Nanju is very active," says Celestiano. "At home he was learning his ABCs and colouring-in. "He is so happy now that the school is finally open."

ChildFund supported training of the school management committee. They worked with the Ministry of Education's National Institute for Training of Teachers and Education Professionals to train teachers in child-friendly teaching methods, to help them develop engaging lessons and activities for their students.



Celestiano and his 5-year-old son, Nanju.

# I CONTRIBUTE

## Empowered youth to educate their peers about health

In the middle of the COVID-19 pandemic, young people have faced barriers to accessing information and services about their health, particularly regarding sexual and reproductive health.

ChildFund Timor-Leste, in partnership with Fundasaun Alola, led a maternal and children's health program. This program guided youth led activities and raised awareness about sexual and reproductive health. The capacity building and training was facilitated by other young people from Youth for National Development – a youth organisation that has been involved in the development of other health activities in the country.

The 40 Youth Peer Educators then conducted a monthly peer-to-peer session with other young people and adolescents in their own community. In these sessions, they learnt about the reproductive system, sexual relationships, risks and consequences of early pregnancy, HIV, sexual abuse, physical violence, gender and sex and healthy decision making.

The peer-to-peer sessions helped young people to gain a deeper understanding about the reproductive system, as well

as learning about healthy relationships, types of abuse and violence.

This helped them make informed decisions about issues that affect their overall health and wellbeing. This also empowered young people and adolescents to increase their self-esteem and understand their self-worth.



A peer to peer learning session.

# I HAVE A FUTURE

## A gardening program is teaching vital life skills

Students in a public primary school in the Lautem municipality spent the year learning to grow and take care of a vegetable garden. There are many varieties of vegetables to be found in their school garden; water-spinach, cabbage, green mustard, and chili.

Maria Indiana is a sixth-grade student that has worked in the garden since the start of the program. She said: "I like growing the seeds of the vegetables and in the afternoon watering them."

The school was one of three selected through the ChildFund Disaster Ready Program to take part in the garden activity.

ChildFund Timor-Leste worked with local partners, Fraterna and Permatil, to establish gardens at 11 public schools in the Lautem municipality.

In line with Government plans to establish garden in every primary school around the country, the program is now known as "permaculture gardens" and has already been included in the National Curriculum for basic education under the subject of arts and culture.

Anderson is in sixth grade and took part in a school gardening activity. When asked about his favourite vegetables that grows in garden, he said "I love water-spinach, it so delicious compared to other vegetables."



Maria Indiana and Anderson are growing vegetables at school.



Children learning in an evacuation centre.

## I AM SAFE

### Bringing hope to families during crisis

This year, on Easter Sunday, Timor-Leste experienced torrential rainfall and severe flooding when Cyclone Seroja struck.

Families were evacuated from their homes with the help of Red Cross and local authorities to one of 32 evacuation centres set up in the capital of Dili including churches and the Red Cross Timor-Leste office. Unfortunately, there was still significant loss of life.

ChildFund Timor-Leste supported the Secretary of Civil protection to respond to the floods by undertaking a rapid needs assessment of the families affected by the flood. This helped the government to identify what families and communities needed.

Children were the most impacted after the floods with widespread school closures due to water damage and COVID-19 continuing to spread through the community. Because of water damage to their homes, children had to adjust to a new way of life in evacuation camps.

The Ministry of Social Solidarity and Inclusion in Timor-Leste worked with UNICEF and ChildFund to create a safe and supportive place for children. Together 12 child-friendly spaces were created in every evacuation centre where children were sheltered with their families.

These spaces provided psychosocial support for children and offered structured activities such as games, sports, and arts and crafts.

ChildFund supervised and monitored two of these child-friendly spaces in an evacuation camp located in a high school building in Kristal and Balide. ChildFund worked with local organisations, the Alola Foundation and Mane ho Vizaun Foun (Man with New Vision), and community volunteers.

The data collected in the two evacuation camps showed that 710 households and 128 children from the ages of 0-18 including were in the evacuation camp including two young children with special needs. Children are divided based on their age group 0-2, 3-5 years, 6-12 years, and 13-18 years to attend the programmed activities.

Working with local partners and other NGOs, we delivered 200 relief packages to families across three villages. These contained essential food items, kitchen utensils and dignity kits to ensure children and families had the resources they need to be safe during this crisis.

THANK YOU

## COLLABORATING TO ACHIEVE CHANGE

Thank you to the following organisations and individuals whose generous support and assistance is vital to the work of ChildFund Timor-Leste.



• Alola Foundation • Ba Futuru • Mary MacKillop Today • ONG Fraterna • Plan International • Library For All • Juventude Ba Desenvolvimento Nacional (JDN) • Community Based Rehabilitation Network (CBRN) Timor Leste

ChildFund Timor-Leste would also like to thank the Timor-Leste Government for its support.

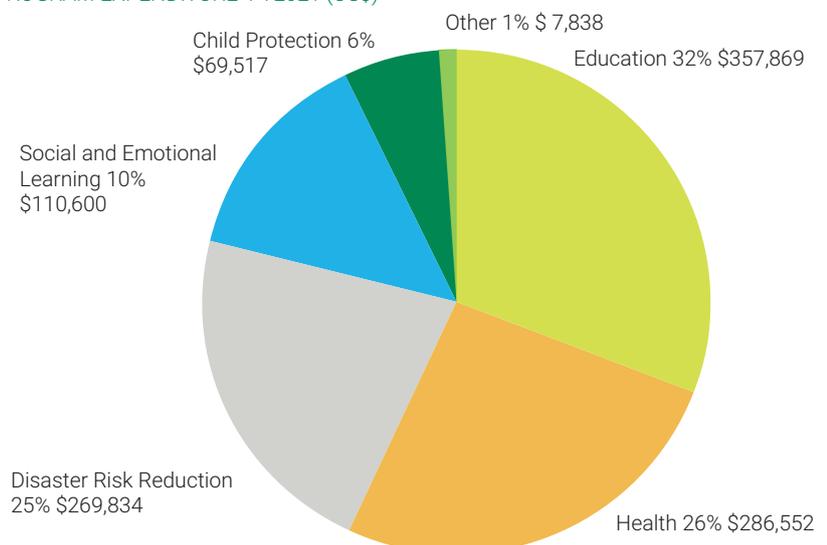
## FINANCIAL REPORT

Financial report for year ended 30 June 2021

REVENUE	FY20 (US\$)	FY21 (US\$)
Donations	1,062,063	526,367
Grants	650,379	967,097
Other income	1,207	35,776
<b>Total revenue</b>	<b>1,713,649</b>	<b>1,529,240</b>

EXPENDITURE	FY20 (US\$)	FY21 (US\$)
Program and projects	1,370,492	1,102,210
Program support	204,538	105,744
Accountability and administration	318,557	160,528
<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b>1,893,587</b>	<b>1,368,482</b>

PROGRAM EXPENDITURE FY2021 (US\$)



**BECAUSE  
EVERY CHILD  
NEEDS A  
CHILDHOOD**

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