

Fuan Nabilan Acquittal Report for the Rotary Club of Albert Park 9 July 2012

Organisation: Fuan Nabilan ba Matan A'at
Address: Rua Nuu Laran
Same, Manufahi
Timor Leste

Contact Details

Name: (Mrs) Patricia Woodcroft-Lee
Title: Australian Liaison Officer
Telephone: 03 9481 4232
Mobile: 0407 580 777
Email: cpwl@bigpond.net.au

Project & Funding Details

Project Title: Purchase of specialist educational products
for children who are blind or have low vision
Grant: \$240.00
Date Received: 17/05/2012

Description of the Project as submitted in the application:

Purchase of specialist educational equipment to assist children and young people in Timor Leste who are blind or have low vision to integrate into their school and community.

On 20 May 2012, Fuan Nabilan, with the assistance of The Royal Australian college of Surgeons (RACS) and the District Education Department of Manufahi will present a braille literacy workshop in Same for mainstream teachers to enable them to assist the children in the Inclusive Education Program. There will also be some training for the children by Dr Frances Gentle, a former special education teacher, now lecturer in Vision education from NSW. The children's day to day needs such as schoolbags and uniforms are being provided by RACS and the volunteer teachers will receive a small per diem for the duration of the course.

However, as Fuan Nabilan does not have any permanent income, aside from \$4,000 per year, generously provided by Friends of Same, Melbourne, which pays for food and a small salary for the Director, there is no money available for educational supplies, such as braille paper, large print calculators, and other products commonly used by blind and low vision students. Some products have been donated by Australian supporters but as the organisation expands and more blind and low vision people want to acquire an education there is an ever growing need for such items. Furthermore there is currently no government funding for inclusive education programs in Timor Leste although the government supports the concept in principle.

Without educational aids available any training course would be severely limited and the children would find their studies considerably more difficult. Fuan Nabilan seeks a contribution of \$240.79

from the Rotary Club of Albert Park for the purchase of these essential braille and low vision products which are listed in Appendix II.

Description of project at time of report:

Dr Frances Gentle, Course Coordinator and Mr Ben Clare, braille instructor, arrived in Same on 21 MAY 2012 to present an Inclusive Education and basic braille training course for teachers in the Same Sub-district of Manufahi District. The course was supported by the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons, Avoidable blindness initiative and the Manufahi District Department of Education.

Initially 29 teachers were enrolled in the course, of whom around 25 attended the whole five and half days. Some were unable to attend because of the continuing rain, which caused a flooding in a number of areas, or because of the lack of a replacement teacher for their class.

There was an impressive opening ceremony, with representatives from the Education and Health departments and the principal of the local Catholic school. This indicates that there is a good deal of goodwill toward the inclusion of children with disabilities into mainstream schools, even though there is a lack of materials needed for the project. Frances' interactive teaching style was very popular and blind trainer Ben Clare, with his screen reader and Perkins Braille received a great deal of attention. People in this community have met very few blind or low vision people who are educated and earning their own living. Ben spent a lot of his spare time showing two older students Bela and Julio the JAWS reader, with which they were most impressed and are anxious for another course to be held in the near future.

The course covered the idea of inclusive education, how to introduce the blind or low vision child into the classroom, our aids such as braille writing frames, tactile rulers and thick lined writing pads and thick pens for low vision children proved very useful here.

The major portion of the course was devoted to introducing mathematical concepts in braille. There was also a segment on introducing children to the concept of numbers and counting, using a variety of objects such as blocks and other shapes.

A fact which emerged from this segment was that in order for a child to progress past about grade 4, they would need a Perkins Braille as it was impossible to line up numbers in complex operations using the frame. This would mean that future donors who were interested in supporting the inclusion program would need to budget for a number of these machines to be loaned out to the children for the duration of their studies.

The teachers had done three short braille courses with the Director of Fuan Nabilan prior to Frances' course and were surprisingly dexterous with their braille frames. They were each awarded a certificate for the completion of the course, of which they were very proud and were given the products used in the course to take back to their classrooms, for the current students or to keep in reserve for future enrolments.

Currently there are three children in the program. Five enrolled, but the parents withdrew two of them before the start of the school year. This is disappointing, but not unusual in rural communities where parents are either worried about their children staying town during term or do not have any understanding of the value of the opportunity the inclusive program is offering. For this reason, progress can be expected to be slow, at least in the early stages of the initiative. Another child is expected to join early next year, after problems with her documentation are resolved.

Unfortunately we were unable to work with the children in the program, as classes were suspended while the teachers attended the course. We met one girl, Ediana, and her teacher who says she is doing very well, considering her late start. She is eleven and only started school this year.

There appears to be interest from the District Administrator and others in a further course for teachers from the other sub-districts, possibly early in the New Year. Frances and Ben would be keen to do this, provided funding could be obtained from RACS or any other interested donor. Both the trainers and Fuan Nabilan's staff see this as being a modest beginning to improving the opportunities for blind and vision impaired students gain access to the same education as their sighted peers.

On behalf of Fuan Nabilan and especially the teachers and children who will use these products, I would like to thank the Rotary club of Albert Park for their generosity.



C.P. Woodcroft-Lee

12 July 2012

:

Attachments:

Att. I Photos of course activities

Att. II Goods purchased from Vision Australia with the funding

Income and Expenditure Statement as at 28 June 2012

INCOME

Donation from Collier Charitable Fund:	\$15,000.00
Total Income to date	\$15,000.00

EXPENDITURE

Details of Expenditure:

• Breeding and development costs up to 7 weeks	\$ 2,500.00
• 12 months of Puppy Development	\$ 5,500.00
• Vet visits, eye tests, x-rays and scoring	\$ 2,500.00
• Official assessment Training	\$ 2,000.00
• Official assessment for breeding program	\$ 2,500.00

Total Expenditure: **\$ 15,000.00**

Balance of unspent funds: \$ 0.00

Signature: _____
Deb Renshaw-Jones

Date: 28 June, 2012