



## Thank you for your support in improving children's lives in Railaco East Timor

### Making a difference through quality education

The Jesuit secondary school (NOSSEF) Railaco in the District of Ermera East Timor, an initiative of sister parish St Canice's in Sydney, has been in operation since 2004 as a private Catholic senior secondary school serving the needs of the poor families around Railaco.

The 2017 enrolment of 313 students over three years prepares students for possibilities of further tertiary education and in training for trades. Twenty of the sixty seven students who graduated in 2016 will enter the National University (UNTL) in 2017! The words of one 2016 graduating student, Ivonia, is testament to sustainability and encouragement to our supporters.



*"In the process of applying to the National University of East Timor, I would apply for medicine, nutrition, or biology. This is because Ermera [the district we are in] has one of the highest rates of malnutrition, and I would like to educate people on how to take care of their health, especially in terms of nutrition."* Ivonia Lemos Araujo Martins

Ivonia was one of two students in the 2016 seniors class who participated in exit interviews to demonstrate further how NOSSEF has made a difference. All questions and answers were carried out in Tetum. Their responses to two of the questions put to them are as follows:

**In your opinion, what is the biggest change that has happened to you after schooling in NOSSEF for three years?**

**Ivonia:** The opportunity and means to explore and express my talents. For example, through my involvement in the Student Council, and other various activities, I was able to organize my fellow students, experience and practice public speaking, prepare and present traditional dances, as well as many other activities.

From these experiences, I do feel that I have been given large responsibilities to shoulder. In turn, I feel that I have expended and expanded my capabilities and really used them to the maximum. I feel that I have not only gained through studies, but have also enriched my life in terms of other values, such as those espoused in Jesuit education emphasizing Competence, Conscience, Compassion and Commitment.

But one of the greatest changes I felt was the motivation to study due to the competition for the study scholarships. Before coming to NOSSEF, study was not something very important to me. Given the opportunity – and responsibility to maintain – a study scholarship motivated many of us in the class to take studying seriously, which we never had done so before.

*Joana:* Personally, I feel that the greatest change in me is not that I have learned a lot from the material taught, but more so from the presence and practice of leadership in NOSSEF. From these examples, I have been able to understand and put into practice what public speaking is about, and be a leader to my fellow students.

Even though we are highly competitive in our class, being a leader does not mean that I command them to do things, or try to put down my enemies. Being a leader means that I would help the other students who are struggling with their lessons or their understanding of what is happening in NOSSEF. I feel privileged to have been able to gain this insight and knowledge, and I wish to help others to gain some of that too.

### **In the future, what would you like to do?**

*Joana:* I would like to continue my studies. In the process of applying to the universities, I would apply for medicine, nutrition, or biology. This is because Ermera [the district we are in] has one of the highest rates of malnutrition, and I would like to educate people on how to take care of their health, especially in terms of nutrition.

*Ivonia:* As for me, I would accept my examination results as they are. I have applied to Universidade Nacional Timor Lorosa'e (National University of East Timor or UNTL) to study health, education or biology. I find that what is important is not just learning theories and information as just a process of education, but also to put what I have learned into practice. In that sense I believe that education is a key to life, in enabling me to put into practice such knowledge that I have gained in order to give back to life and my country. Therefore, NOSSEF will continue to be my "school for life" which I will support in the future. It might not be in terms of money or contribution of materials, but definitely at the moment it could be in the form of ideas, and my wholehearted participation, as an alumni.

## **Making a difference through Nutrition and Medicine**

### **The Railaco Children's Feeding Program and Mobile Medical Clinic – 2016 update**

In addition to the successes of children in the three senior classes at our Railaco Jesuit Mission NOSSEF Secondary School, around 90 pre-school children in three areas are fed three times per week on the Children's Feeding program; and 7,390 patients were seen and treated by the dedicated team in the Mobile Medical Clinic, led by medical doctor and priest Fr Bong SJ (up from 5,102 in 2014).

With thanks to all our supporters, and Congratulations to the 30 graduating students who are pursuing higher studies inside and outside the country in 2017!