

# Timor-Leste: Transforming Education Through Partnership in a Small Post-Conflict State

Jude Butcher, Peter Bastian, Margie Beck,  
Tony d'Arbon and Youssef Taouk



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**Timor-Leste: Transforming Education Through  
Partnership in a Small Post-Conflict State**

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A Diversity of Voices

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# **Timor-Leste: Transforming Education Through Partnership in a Small Post-Conflict State**

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## FOREWORD

Education has been recognised as an important factor in helping to overcome disadvantages among the people of developing nations. In the case of Timor-Leste, the after effects of its struggle for independence and the small size of the State left it with grave problems in providing educational capacity building in the years after 1999. In response, a partnership was developed between the Diocese of Baucau, the Marist Brothers in Australia, Australian Catholic University (ACU) and *Instituto Católico para a Formação de Professores* (ICFP) at Baucau. It initially aimed at providing in-service support for current teachers and then a bachelor's degree programme to train primary teachers while also developing the Institute to a point where it would be Timorese-operated.

At first, the goals of the partnership were modest and specific but over time this has broadened into an ongoing and multi-varied form of co-operation. Inspired by Catholic social teaching and an awareness of development aid principles, the partnership has been able to draw upon a wider group of supporters both within Timor-Leste and from Australia and Europe in order to give the project a greater scope. Over time, ICFP has created widely recognised courses and qualifications for its students. Staff and students have also come to enjoy a high standing in the community and good employment prospects. The Institution is continuing to develop its profile in teaching, research, scholarship and community engagement.

The purpose of this book is to examine the co-operative partnership in the development of capacity building in education in Timor-Leste between 1999 and 2012. The study highlights the transformative power of such value based co-operative partnerships.

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## PREFACE BY THE SERIES EDITORS

The nature of international collaboration requires a level of mutuality between the collaborating parties in order to attain a successful outcome. This is particularly the case in those situations in which a project involves institutions with widely different resource bases, both in a qualitative as well as quantitative sense.

If the project reported upon in this book is taken as a case, then there are valuable lessons to be learned. The collaboration is between various organisations with corresponding ideological/religious understandings and within that there is a commonality of mission. The religious underpinning of the project is in line historically of the role of the Catholic Church in Timor-Leste from Portuguese colonial times to the present. There is a clear agreement that the project is to move to full local operation: this is an essential ingredient in both attaining sustainability and in fulfilling the local group's mission and aspiration.

The collaboration is based on the partners deriving outcomes that are not identical but recognise the differences in what constitutes institutional success on the broader scale: in the case of ICFP and the Marist Brothers a viable and respected programme; for the Australian university a successful production of research results as well as addressing the religious promulgation role (as evidenced by the support indicated in the letter from the Bishop).

The reader should study this book in the context of the successes and failures of a multitude of international "development projects" which have been supported by organisations as diverse as the World Bank, government-backed organisations such as USAid, CIDA and SIDA, and NGO's of all types.

*Allan Pitman*  
*Miguel Pereyra*  
*Series Editors*