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Joel Paulino and His Dream To be a Veterinary

By: Pery Mesquita

Joel Paulino, a young man at the age of 23 years has not managed to finish his Secondary education and has been out of school since 2004 due to the insufficient economic conditions of his parents. At first, he just stayed at home and did not join his friends, who were mostly loitering around the streets of Dili, some drinking alcohol, which he says is common amongst the unemployed youth in Dili and around the country.



At times Joel was getting very bored and rather desperate about his future. But then, when an opportunity came along he realized that he could actually do something to make some money to sustain himself and his parents. "Rather than hanging around the streets or getting involved in fighting, it is better to work and earn money to sustain your life, even if it is small money" Says Joel with big smile.

His luck changed when he obtained an opportunity

through the Youth Centre in Bidau Lecidere that runs Furniture Design activities. Unfortunately, after only a few months he had to leave the Centre because it had no more funds to support its activities. This was a severe blow to him and he almost lost hope, but he never gave up.

Joel then started to run a small business selling fuel and gasoline with some start up money offered by his mother. He operated this business along the streets in Lecidere where he lives. After a few months selling fuel and gasoline he expanded his business to sell "sate" and roast meat. It is however difficult for him to gain enough money that would really make an impact on his life or to realize other dreams.

He then heard from the Head of Village of Bidau Lecidere, that there is a labour intensive public works project to be implemented in the community where one can earn \$ US 2.00 per day. Joel jumped on this opportunity and decided to immediately register in order to take part or participate in project called the YEP, and he has already worked for one week now. After joining the programme Joel passed on the information to his friends and in fact 20 of them have been able to join the programme. So far, Joel and his friends are participating in canal cleaning, which involves digging the sand and removing waste in the drainage channels around their dwellings in Bidau Lecidere, which also helps to improve their own environment.

He says that this type of initiative is very good for in particular the youth to earn some money, even if little, and that many who used to create problems in town now changed their habits.

Joel always dreamed of becoming Veterinary but still has not decided whether to finish his Secondary education. He is planning to use the earned money to continue and expand the business of selling fuel/gasoline and "sate". He also hopes that this Programme could be continued in the future, in order to support the "Youth" both men and women that are really willing to work.

Jaime da Silva Soares, the Head of Village of Bidau Lecidere, and supervisor for the project where Joel works tells us that the programme of providing work to the youth in this time is very important, because it has a calming effect on what could otherwise be a rather tense situation with so many unemployed youths. In fact, he states that "the youths of my Village have now all calmed down and that the opportunity to earn some money, even though short, has changed their mind to work seriously". He also expects and hopes that this kind of work will be continued in the future.

The Head of the Village says that the experience shows that after participating in work programme and earning \$2.00 per day, many people have modified their view on work and some are now trying to sell things as a part of running a business. He also hopes that the money earned can help some of them to continue their studies.





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Cecilia Araujo: “Not Only for Money, But to Learn”

By: Pery Mesquita

Cecilia Araujo is a young mother to four at the age of 24. Her situation became very difficult after the 2006 crisis in Timor Leste. She was at first recognized as a displaced person who had the rights to recuperation aid from the Government, but she is not enjoying those rights anymore.

Cecilia and her husband are now basically jobless, although Cecilia sometimes makes some little money working part time as a housekeeper.

When the Caicoli's Local Authority, informed that the SEFOPE and ILO with AusAID support are planning to implement a work activity for the local community in their Suku, Cecilia and her friends were very happy, and decide to join in immediately, and it is now eight days already since she joined the work activity offered by YEP.

Cecilia is involved in the road cleaning in Suku Caicoli, Aldeia 04. Together with 20 of her friends, they are carrying out activities such as grass cutting, sweeping the roads and garbage collection. She is getting \$2.00 per day for this work and the activities also aims to prevent the bad impact of flooding, which may occur in the rainy season, expected to start in November.

For Cecilia, this work activity will become a good extra income opportunity to support her family, which consists of her husband and four children. Especially to be able to cater for the children's basic needs such as milk and clothes. Cecilia argues that \$ 2 per day is not enough to sustain their daily life. However she says that the value of the money is significant, because she will work for 30 days, which mean that she will make a total of \$ 60.



Cecilia and her group of friends hope that there will be sustained community work activity in their area. She believes that the activity and work methods will improve their knowledge and encourage them to pay more attention to the health and environment issues, especially the young people. She says “this project is very useful, and should train us to take care of our health and our environment”.