

Press Advisory

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Timorese Youth Fight for Peace

Dili, Timor-Leste – Ba Futuru, a local NGO in Timor-Leste, is working in partnership with youth across Timor-Leste to build peace in communities. On Tuesday, the 27th of March, at 5pm a group of twelve youth will finish two months of training in how to become peace educators for their peers and for children in their communities at a Youth Center in Seroja Comoro, Dili.

The **New Zealand Ambassador, Ruth Nuttall** will hand out certificates to the youth, as NZ Aid was one of the largest contributors to Ba Futuru's programs in 2006.

Through the joint *Youth Integration and Development Initiative*, **Ba Futuru** and **Edge-ucate.org** have begun the process of engaging the Timorese youth in positive activities at the Seroja Youth Center due to a direct request from the **Prime Minister Dr. Jose Ramos Horta**. Sierra James, International Advisor and Co-Founder of Ba Futuru, reports, "Funds from Conoco Phillips and individual donors in the United States, have enabled the first stages of refurbishment of the Youth Center in Seroja, however, this center still needs a lot of work, like refurbishing of bathrooms and the finishing of courts for sporting activities. We are in the process of looking for funding to support the remainder of costs for this center."

Together with **Edgu-cate.org** and **Austcare**, Ba Futuru is creating youth centers to actively and positively engage Dili's largest and most critical demographic, children and youth. This will be done by providing outlets and activities that afford youth opportunities to enhance their personal, professional and social development. Training programs will be combined with personal development and self-esteem building activities to prepare youth for integration into the economy and society. This will help to create long-term peace-building mechanisms that keep the Timorese youth off the street and more engaged in positive activities while processing the negative impacts of conflict.

We are at a critical time for Timor-Leste where peace in communities needs to be consolidated and the cycle of violence in homes and communities can be stopped. With vital efforts of individuals and communities, in cooperation we can create sustainable peace for Timor-Leste.

Ba Futuru (For the Future) is a not-for-profit NGO established in Timor-Leste in 2004. Its vision is to build a culture of peace and non-violence by providing people with the skills and knowledge necessary to create a positive future. Ba Futuru does this through the promotion of opportunities for conflict affected, vulnerable and at-risk children and youth to reach their fullest potential and regain a sense of confidence in the future, as well as providing those who care for children and community leaders with the knowledge and capacity to support the children in their communities.

For more information about Ba Futuru please visit www.bafuturu.org.

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