



GREEN TL
Youth-in-Action
GREEN Games



Final Report 2019

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| Project Title: | <i>Youth-in-Action</i> GREEN Games | |
| Name of Implementing Organisation: | GREEN Timor leste (TL) | |
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| Date of GREEN Games: | May - July 2019 | |
| Cost of GREEN Games | \$US21,351.00 | \$Aus31,822.00 |

Quoting the opening paragraph of last year's report – "Somehow we managed to get the 12th annual *Youth-in-Action* GREEN Games completed with some major hiccups along the way. Wonder if the 13th will be as difficult? Wonder if there will be a 13th?"

Well we have just finalised the 13th and they were as difficult if not even more so than the 12th. I wish Luis would choose easier places to hold this event – but then I guess nothing is easy in a place like Oecusse!

Before I returned to Oecusse, whilst still in Sydney raising funds for the Games, Luis and I discussed Lifau, the venue he had chosen this year. Luis assured me that in Lifau there was a level playing field, quite good and well used by the locals. I should know by now that when Luis says things are "quite good" it is measured by his standards not mine! I would love to see some Australian teams play on the soccer fields we use up here!



When I arrived back in Oecusse and went to Lifau to check out the soccer field and volley ball court, I looked in horror at the site and asked the question

“Why did you choose Lifau for the games this year?”

His reply:-

“Sometimes we have to do things which are not easy”



The “quite good” soccer field I saw was an open paddock, covered in patchy grass, dirt and buffalo pats and with several swampy bog holes in it! The goal posts, wonky bits of wood that might have stood for another day or two. Luis assured me that the locals use this field every day – I don’t doubt that they do for keeping their buffalo, cows and pigs not for playing soccer. The volley ball court did not exist but there was a flattish piece of ground in the paddock, amongst the trees,

covered mainly in grass on which the court could be built! So here we go – how to turn a paddock into a sporting arena!

“We are very proud to have this opportunity – we have never had any such thing in Lifau before.” (Miguel, Committee Leader)

So over three weeks Luis and his team measured, flattened, dug, made goal posts from purloined telegraph poles, cut, welded, painted, carried sand and rocks, filled in holes, marked out white lines with local chalk dug from the hillside, removed buffalo pats, built a shelter and seats, connected the electricity and lo and behold we then had a useable soccer field and volley ball court!



What a great community effort, it shows just how grateful and enthusiastic these local communities are to have events such as the *Youth-in-Action* GREEN Games.



Everything was ready for the Grand Opening which was held in style – with plentiful coffee, food, music, a popular local singer, speeches, thanks, representatives from each of the teams and several VIPs in attendance and a crowd of many thousands.



Luis and his team. What an amazing group of enthusiastic workers.

Highlights this year.

Every year brings something special to the games – be it the enthusiastic crowds, the noise, the obvious excitement, the amazing skills shown by the players so it is often difficult to pick out highlights. This year however I would say:

- ◆ The amount of work which went into fixing up, (making?) the soccer and volley ball courts – all done with no complaint and great good will.
- ◆ The pride shown by the women of the community when they were asked to decorate the thatch shelter for the Closing Ceremony – banners, pot plants crocheted table cloths, and four young girls dressed in traditional costume to help hand out the prizes. Beautifully done!
- ◆ The size of the crowds which arrived every day in trucks far too small for the number they were carrying! Then the noisy procession back into town in the dark, by both winners and losers with motorbikes, flags, blaring car horns and loud cheering. Luckily there were no accidents along the way.



Problems we had a few!

- ◆ **The chosen site, Lifau,** and the problems it presented have already been described.
- ◆ **The unusual weather** -something we can do nothing about. The wind – never have I



known Oecusse to be so windy for so long and at this time of the year. Every day for the first four weeks and spasmodically after that, the wind howled across the soccer field blowing dust, twigs and leaves with it so by the end of the day everyone was covered in a fine layer of grit which got into very available nook and cranny. The GREENTL committee, who don't seem to mind the heat, rugged up in long sleeved shirts, scarves tied over their faces and hats pulled down over their eyes! I just had to sit and bear it – heat, dust, leaves, screaming children, yelling supporters, whistles and trumpets! I asked myself - Am I enjoying it? I'm sure I will once the wind stops. We had to postpone the volley ball for a week waiting for the wind to ease off, the soccer players continued on regardless.

- ◆ **On-field problems** At the end of one of the very hard fought women's volley ball matches the volatile crowd went wild with excitement and one of the spectators threw a rock into the air, (as you do) and of

course it came down and landed in the eye of the winning coach! This led to an all out scuffle on the volley ball court – the police ran riot, grabbing people by the scruff of the neck whilst wielding their batons. Women screaming and yelling obscenities, men running around hitting whatever they could find to hit. Luis calmly in the middle of all this trying to placate the injured parties and doing a fine job! I tell him that these 2 teams have to be expelled but he says the issue was not part of the games as it happened after the game had finished so it is a personal problem that they have to sort out between themselves and the police!

- ◆ A few more than usual on-field incidences – several yellow and red cards had to be handed out by the referees. Not sure if it was the volatility and excitement, the screaming and yelling from the sidelines or the sheer fact that Oecusse youth are becoming disgruntled due to their lack of opportunity and need to take their frustrations out in a relatively safe place. All players certainly put their heart and soul into the games so at times emotions ran high!



- ◆ Apart from that the usual – crowds running onto the field each time a goal was scored even though we roped off the field each day, dogs trying to join in the games, the daily clean up of cow pats, five destroyed soccer balls, three destroyed volley balls – everything as per normal.

What led us to introduce the *Youth-in-Action* GREEN Games in 2007?

The idea for the games came up in 2006 when Luis Armando, Director of GREENTL and myself were having a general conversation re young people in Oecusse having too much spare time on their hands and not seeing a bright future for themselves, many finished

school, could not afford to go onto further education and had little opportunity of employment, leading to disenfranchised and easily angered young people so he suggested we organise a sporting competition to give them something to do. The inaugural GREEN Games were held in 2007 and the event has been a great success ever since. Sadly the societal situation has not changed a lot over the last 13 years and in actual fact is getting worse due to the disconnect between the government and the general population, particularly young people. The fact that a total of 67 teams in all disciplines registered to take part in the Games shows there are many young people keen to get involved in sport – why isn't the Oecusse Administration's, Department of Youth and Sport, offering them more such events?

Since 2007 the **Youth in Action GREEN Games** has evolved into what it is now – the single, biggest, most important, annual sporting competition in the enclave, in fact probably in Timor leste!

Over the last 13 years the majority of the population of Oecusse has been involved in one way or another, some of the players watched from the sidelines when they were too little to play and are now taking their turn! We have held the games in several sub-districts with the intention



Large and enthusiastic crowds turn up every day of the games



of giving as many people as possible the opportunity to participate – Obeau, Padeia, Pune, Passabe, Boaknana and now Lifau. Next year hopefully we can find somewhere already set up and ready to use!



This year we limited the soccer players to under 25 years of age to encourage newer teams to join up and not be intimidated by the older, more professional teams, hence an enrollment of 27 soccer teams, many of them new!

The importance of sport, especially in a developing country such as Timor leste with a very large, disenfranchised youth population, can not be over emphasised. Sport is very popular in Timor leste and young people have natural, well developed fine motor skills. I am always amazed at the expertise

shown in the games even though there is very little training received in these outer, isolated districts, simply enthusiastic locals who do their best.

Outcomes of the *Youth-in-Action* GREEN Games 2019

When the *Youth-in-Action* GREEN Games were first introduced in Oecusse in 2007 the aim was twofold:

- ◆ provide a sporting competition in which as many young people as possible could take part and so channel some of their energy into worthwhile, character building and enjoyable action.
- ◆ provide opportunity for a team of young people to learn skills such as office management, organisational tactics, public speaking, financial accountability, leadership and teamwork.

An unplanned but exceptionally welcome outcome from the Games is that GREENTL has now rehabilitated or built five soccer fields and volley ball courts throughout the enclave. This has meant that schools and community teams now have an area to practice and can organise their own competitions.

“Now thanks to GREENTL we have a good field with proper goal posts, we will be able to organise better inter-school competitions.” A local school teacher in Lifau.

“Our Youth Group has organised a very successful under 12 soccer competition. Thanks to GREENTL who taught us the skills and repaired the field to do so.” (Jose a member of the Padeia Youth Group)

Beneficiaries

The direct beneficiaries of the games include not only the referees, linesmen, players and their supporters but also the local community. The number of participants, both directly or indirectly involved, has fluctuated over the years due to changed venues and circumstances, but overall it would be safe to say that the majority of the population of Oecusse has been involved in the games in some way or another – we reach up to 35,000



people every year as teams and their supporters travel from each of the sub-districts! People in Dili even talk about the games and wish they could take part. In 2007, the first year of the games, the number of direct participants was 490, this has been as high as 1200 and this year 1085. The spectator crowds grow each year as does their vociferous, (sometimes too vociferous) support from the sidelines!

One of the advantages of the *Youth-in-Action* GREEN Games is that it is open to any team which wishes to participate – experienced, new, capable or not – everyone can take part. All teams who wish to enter the GREEN Games can do so and get to play four games in the first round, giving them much needed match practice. First and second place getters then go onto round two.

Direct Beneficiaries

| Games | Teams | Members | Total |
|----------------------|-------|---------|-------------|
| Soccer | 27 | 18 | 486 |
| Volley Ball Men | 13 | 11 | 143 |
| Volley Ball Women | 11 | 11 | 121 |
| Tug of War Men | 8 | 12 | 96 |
| Tug of War Women | 8 | 12 | 96 |
| Team officials | | | 80 |
| Referees & linesmen | | | 9 |
| Organising Committee | | | 15 |
| Police | | | 12 |
| GREEN TL | | | 13 |
| Cooks | | | 8 |
| Entertainers | | | 6 |
| Total | | | 1085 |



It is not only the players and their club officials who benefit from the games –

- ◆ members of the local community who arrive each day to set up their stalls and sell local goods, betel nut, vegetables, sweets, biscuits and so on, young boys running around with trays of hard boiled eggs, (varying quality – good to disgusting) for sale at 25¢ each. The local community makes more money during this event than at any other time of the year!
- ◆ community spirit is enhanced as supporters cheer on their teams, wave flags, wear team colours and yell their support. The cheering gets very rowdy at times, especially amongst the women!
- ◆ District Sports Administrators, Youth Groups, Police and sporting clubs gain invaluable experience in seeing how well a large event such as this can be run.
- ◆ literally thousands of people are entertained, seven days a week for almost three months as they come to watch the games, youngsters practice their skills during the half time break, the players become role models for them.



And so to the Grand Finals!



All five Grand Finals, soccer, Men and Women's Volley Ball and Men and Women's dada tali, were hard fought and exciting events causing great enthusiasm amongst the supporting crowds. The winners received trophies, cash prizes and the very popular medallions.

Winners – everyone was a winner but these are the teams which took home the prizes.

| Tug-of-War | Men | Women |
|-------------------|----------------|----------------|
| First Place | Nefobain | Tulakai |
| Second Place | Oemolo Central | Oemolo Central |
| Third Place | Fatuknutu | Police, PNTL |
| Fourth Place | Baelbo | Fatuknutu |



| Soccer | |
|----------------------|---------------------------------|
| First Place | FC Fosna Baqui |
| Second Place | FC Bimeno Quibo |
| Third Place | FC Sao Thomas Fatusense |
| Fourth Place | FC Sporting Oetulu |
| Most sporting team | Tulakai |
| Top Scorer (8 goals) | Aghostinho do Sole, Tulakai |
| Best Player | Melquiano Folo, FC Bimeno Quibo |

The goalie saves the grand final for Baqui.





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|-------------------|-------------------|
| Volleyball | Men |
| First Place | KFTB, Anin Alaban |
| Second Place | Sandelo Palaban |
| Third Place | Espada |
| Fourth Place | Binipu Palaban |
| | |
| | Women |
| First Place | KFTB, Anin Alaban |
| Second Place | Police, PNTL |
| Third Place | Binipu Palaban |
| Fourth Place | St John Baptista |



Comments from participants:

“Now we have a master, standard soccer field we can organise more games.” (Chefe de Succo, Community Leader)

“What a special event for our community, we hope to have the GREEN Games again next year.” Several of the Lifau organising committee.

“We can not thank Mrs Judy, Luis and OzGREEN enough for giving us this event.”

Chefe de Aldiea, Community Leader.

Thank you donors.

On behalf of the people of Oecusse I would like to thank all the wonderful sponsors of the 2019 **Youth in Action GREEN Games**. You can be assured that your donations are very much appreciated and everyone is well aware of the Australian connection.

The budget for the games increases each year as more teams participate, the need to rehabilitate fields up to a playable standard costs more as we use more out-of-the-way sites and of course inflation In Timor Leste is running out of control. The cost this year was \$US20,182 but the excitement, the fun and the fact that so many people thoroughly enjoyed eight weeks of games and are already looking forward to the 2020 games, was priceless.

Thanks to Northern Beaches Council, the Penn Foundation, Rotary Clubs, (Brookvale, Epping, Frenches Forest, Eastwood-Gladesville, Balgowlah and the e-club of Greater Sydney), Ridley Bell from Mountain Blue Farms, Peter Fitzsimons from the Sydney Morning Herald and many friends who continually give me strength and support. None of this could happen without you!

The **Youth-in-Action GREEN Games 2019** was another outstanding success maybe even the best yet. To be part of the games is truly inspiring and to stand on the sidelines and know that this excitement is due to GREENTL and our Australian donors gives me a sense of pride. I am amazed at the effort and attention to detail which goes into organising the games, the fact that the games are so successful is particularly incredible in Oecusse where so much can so easily go wrong. The way the whole team pulls together in whatever task Luis sets them; mixing cement to repair courts, building a thatch hut for shelter from the sun, marking out white lines with local chalk, cooking the occasional feast of fish and chickens to celebrate milestones, checking IDs to ensure all players are recognised, rushing over the border to Keffer to buy equipment, welding and painting goal posts, repairing flat tyres, retrieving balls kicked way off field – all done with good grace and large smiles! The enthusiasm of the organising committee led by GREENTL staff and inspired to do their best by Luis Armando is wonderful to see.

Congratulations to Luis Armando, to Games Organisers Gil, Sikito, Lopo, the GREENTL team and the Lifau Games Committee.

The entire community of Lifau, all the players and their supporters say:

“Obrigada Barak por favour fila tinan ida oin!”

“Thank you very much, please come back next year!”

