

2025

# Autumn Newsletter



Photo: Mal Campbell 2024



## Reflections on Timor Leste 2024

by Jess Ruhle

In November 2024, I travelled to East Timor with the intention of meeting local people, strengthening TCF relationships, and celebrating my recent university graduation!

Arriving in Dili for the first time in over a decade was a surprise. While the island has many more cars, and more access to technology, the extent of the poverty was unchanged.

Our first morning in Dili was spent meeting TCF scholarship students. TCF currently transfers \$30,000 a semester to support 275 university and technical college students. Each student told us about their study and how much the TCF scholarships allowed the quality of life of their whole family to improve.

Having recently graduated from university myself, I had a lot of empathy for these students who were finding study stressful, yet I knew that I could not comprehend the extent of the challenges they each faced. I have never known the responsibility of providing for my family, but they all did it every day.



On Sunday morning, we attended the IPTL congregation for church, followed by a picnic with Samaria Children's Home. This was a time of gratefulness and celebration, and we enjoyed sharing food and time together. Once again, I was amazed by the resourcefulness of the children and how many games they knew requiring only a handful of rocks or seed pods. After approximately 20 years of support the TCF Committee have ceased providing financial support to Samaria Children's home at the end of 2024. This decision has been made in conjunction with the local leadership of the children's home and has happened in a staged manner over the past three years.

Our time in Timor ended with a lovely stay at Barry's Place on Atauro Island where we enjoyed fresh coconuts and snorkeling in some of the most diverse reef in the world. It was hard to reconcile both the extreme poverty and beauty of the island.

Overall, I enjoyed my time in East Timor and valued the opportunities to explore the country and meet local people. It is always a pleasure to see first-hand how far the TCF donations can go, and how worthy the recipients are of this support.

Jess Ruhle is a current Phd student in the field of Speech Pathology

## TCF Timor Scholarship Admin Assistant

by Julmia Lamhot

I, Julmia Lamhot, am very grateful to take part in this scholarship program, getting to know the team from TCF, and being able to share stories and convey what children in Timor Leste face in their respective family lives.

Many people have big dreams, but because of limited economic factors, they do not continue their education and choose to have a family. Because in this era in remote areas there are still parents who think that women do not need to pursue what they want, but only men. Through this program, it really helps friends in Timor Leste who have dreams of improving their respective family lives, as well as improving a better generation in the future.

Until now, many students have completed their studies, and found work. As said by Rev. Moises Antonio da Silva that, when at the beginning the children came to see him, they told him many things, telling stories while crying sadly but had very high hopes. And in the end they came back with tears of happiness, because they were able to complete the studies they dreamed of. TCF has successfully helped many young people.



Our prayers are always with you. You are a family sent by God to help many people in need. I write this with tears and mixed feelings, feeling sad and happy because I can also feel what the children here feel and what the team trying to do to help children in Timor Leste.

On behalf of all the children who received assistance through this Scholarship program, I would like to express my gratitude for everything. May the Lord Jesus abundantly bless the team and your family so that you can continue to help anyone who needs help.

## Stay in touch...

**Instagram:** [www.instagram.com/timorchildrensfoundation](https://www.instagram.com/timorchildrensfoundation)

**Facebook:** <https://www.facebook.com/Timor-Childrens-Foundation-172077809471012>

**Website:** <https://www.timorchildren.com>

**Live Chat:** call John Ruhle on 0406 123 498

## Building Local Dental Care in Timor-Leste

**Nov 2024 Trip** *Dr. Malcolm Campbell, B.D.Sc., FICD, FADI  
Co-Director, Timor Children's Foundation Dental Project*

For many people in Timor-Leste, access to even the most basic dental care is almost impossible. Toothaches that could be easily treated with a simple filling or extraction go unattended for months or even years. In 2024 as part of ongoing dental project the **Timor Children's Foundation (TCF) Dental Project** has worked alongside the **Balibo House Trust Dental Clinic**—not just to provide urgent treatment, but to **mentor and equip local dental professionals** to continue caring for their own communities. In November, a team of six —**Dr. Trish Morrison, Dr. Mark Tuffley, Karen Flynn, Dr. Malcolm Campbell, Grace Kessels (our photographer) and Mia Noronha (our local translator)** —travelled to Balibo and Maliana. Our aims were to support local dentist **Dr. Octavia** and her team in the oral health work they do in the district. We arrived with over **\$2,000 worth of dental materials and instruments**, that we gave to the Balibo clinic. These donations were made possible from the money given by our generous supporters.



*Dr. Mark Tuffley and Balibo House Trust Dental Clinic's Dr. Octavia*

One of our key focuses was **mentorship and training**. We worked side by side with Dr. Octavia and her team, guiding them through patient diagnoses, treatment planning, and hands-on procedures. We also joined **Sidonia, the clinic's dental nurse/hygienist and oral health trainer, on school visits**, helping to triage the young students who needed urgent care. For many of these children, this was their first ever visit to a dentist. Midweek, we travelled to the government-run clinic in Maliana, where the situation was even more challenging. The dental chair had no working suction, limited equipment and materials, making even basic dental treatment extremely difficult.

*Cont.*

The clinic lacked essential tools and essential dental materials and medications. Thanks to our **portable dental unit**, we were able to set up a separate treatment space and support the local staff in providing care they otherwise couldn't provide.

While we treated dozens of patients during the week, the real impact of our visit wasn't just in the work we did—it was in **building up the confidence and skills** of the local dental staff so they can continue providing care long after we've left.



*Balibo House Trust Dental Clinic dental nurse, Sidonia, conducts dental outreach education at local school.*

We're already planning our next trip later this year, and with your support, we can expand our mentorship, supply more equipment, and reach even more people in need.

👉 **Report and photos** from our 2024 dental trip:  
<https://www.timorchildren.com/projecto-3>



**Want to help? You can support our work by donating, volunteering, or even buying coffee! Every contribution helps improve dental health in Timor-Leste. Thanks for your support!**

👉 **To donate** visit:  
<https://www.timorchildren.com/donate-now>

👉 **To buy coffee** visit:  
<https://www.timorchildren.com/buy-timor-coffee>

## Annual Fundraising Luncheon 2025

*Save the date!*

**Saturday 6th September**

Please come and celebrate, share stories and updates on TCF projects in Timor-Leste

**For more information contact:  
0406 123 498**

### *2025 Annual Fundraising Luncheon*

**SATURDAY 6 SEPTEMBER 2025**  
**Tickets \$25**

12pm presentation - 1pm light lunch served  
The Gap Uniting Church  
1050 Waterworks Rd. The Gap

RSVP: [info@timorchildren.org](mailto:info@timorchildren.org) by 4 September 2025  
Ph 0406 123 498



**TIMOR  
Children's  
FOUNDATION**

**ABOUT US**

Timor Children's Foundation is a Queensland based charity raising money to assist with projects in Timor Leste. Our main areas are tertiary & vocational scholarships and dental visits.



[www.timorchildren.com](http://www.timorchildren.com)