



ETF NEWSLETTER:
MARCH EDITION

MONTHLY UPDATES

INDUCTION SESSION

Towards the beginning of the month, Educating The Future conducted the first induction session, welcoming 19 new members to our volunteer team. Held in the heart of Sydney, volunteers got a feel for the Non-For-Profit industry and the expectations and challenges of working in this sector. An introduction to our programs and the team

A clarity of organisational processes and the delegation of roles saw individuals slot into areas of personal expertise and interest. The evening was a huge success, introducing and formalising the team that will be responsible for the legwork and results of ETF throughout 2017 and into the future. Team members were able to familiarise themselves with each other, ETF and our mission.

“It was a good way to get to meet each other and find out our roles in ETF. The induction gave me a better sense of what my role entails and we managed to get a good start on some of our programs.”

- Matthew Dunne – ETF volunteer team member

“The initial induction session was a great way to reconnect with people from ETF and get to meet the new members joining the team. From the outset, everyone bonded really well and it was clear everyone was on the same page in line with the ETF mission.”

- Natalie Del Vecchio – ETF leadership Team member

WORKSHOP 1

Later on in the month, ETF's newly established volunteer team gathered at the footholds of UNSW library for the first workshop of the year. A separation into relevant groups on the basis of areas of operation saw gargantuan success in the line of international program development and domestic program ideation.

Significant headway was made on a strategic level, clarifying short term goals as well as areas of technology, domestic fundraising and awareness based events. Through working with a primarily student based volunteer body, the depth and diversity of innovative and inventive ideas continues to astound us. Through having innovation at the crux of our mindset, the team is able to build upon the past and forge a better future.

NORTH BONDI BBQ

On Sunday the 12th of March, Educating The Future was given the opportunity to jump on board with the weekly fundraising BBQ hosted by the of North Bondi Surf Life Saving Club. Through donations and support from Lucas Meats and Baker's Delight, we were able to carry on after the SLSC were finished and host a successful BBQ fund and awareness raiser in the heart of Bondi Beach.

The success of the day can be characterised by a four-figure profit of \$1,333 in little over three hours of operation! Much of the triumph must be attributed to the members of the surf club who imparted their knowledge, expertise and effort to help us raise an amazing total. Furthermore, the volunteering of friends and family was very much appreciated. Through a collective effort, we were able to bring the much needed message of educational awareness to the shores of Australia's most famous beach.

Through the ongoing support of Lucas Meats and Bakers Delight, ETF was able to combine for our most successful BBQ event to date!

RELEVANT EDUCATION; THE KEY TO CLOSING THE GAP?

In each country a national curriculum is set. In each state teachers communicate it to their students. In every school students will be taught these concurrent things. Granted if all goes well, in the simplest form, Sam in Perth and Jasmine in London will both learn that $2+2 = 4$. What needs to be mutually defined and understood is the individual contextual concerns of nations, and the need for specific education catered to the needs of the surrounding areas. There is of course the dialogue that 'there needs to be a global standard' of curriculum to equally raise the quality of education around the world. Thus initiating the debate 'contextually relevant education' vs. 'necessary global education.' In my opinion, they can do more than coexist.

Contextually relevant education focuses on the relevant issues and intricacies of a local region for the shared benefit of communities. This articulates the pressure to learn about life lessons, that have an everyday use in a particular place. As such, it would be beneficial to farmers to understand the movement and formation of pressure systems for example, as in

Timor-Leste there is a pressure to understand basic hygiene practices, agricultural skills and life skills such as writing a resume or conducting oneself during a job interview. These are particularly relevant to the developing world and are often passed up or considered 'implied knowledge' in some areas of the developed world. Education on contextually relevant

issues reaches further than domestic borders, there is an international application. For example, It'd be useful for communities in Brazil who speak portuguese to learn spanish, opening doors for communication in the South American region.

The 'other side of the coin' so to speak argues that only through a consistent basic curriculum implemented on an international scale, can the gap be closed between the developing and the established modern world. This argument is consistent with the ideology that 'if individuals in proximal regions are learning different things, more of a gap is being created' thus *creating* more issues than it is *solving*. The dialogue is constant, on an argumentative 'seesaw' to put it simply.

When it boils down to it however, in spite of their differences, both these ideals have a homogeneous goal; to **raise the quality of life globally through the power of education**. Funnily enough, we share that goal. Further so, we'd suggest that it is not just that these two notions should coexist. Rather that they are codependent, that you can't have one without the other for the sake of an educated future. There is always the need to learn about contextually relevant facts and aspects that will make life easier and more enjoyable in a particular domestic context. However it is equally potent to suggest that Sam and Jasmine must both be taught that $2+2=4$. Provided Sam thinks the sum equals 8 and Jasmine, 19, the concept of international travel would shatter!

We must appreciate these ideals in a codependent sense. It is necessary that contextually relevant education and necessary global education are equally appreciated and continue to be taught. That's how we fight futility, perhaps even, that's how we close the gap?



AN INSIGHT TO ERMERA

Occupying over 700 square meters of predominantly lush tropical forest, hiding sprawled communities under tall trees, Timor-Leste's Ermera District is a melting pot of natural beauty, history and of course, culture.

The absence of infrastructure in the region, despite hindering the development of local communities does have a silver lining provided you wish to find it. In the lack of development, the zest of nature has blossomed. Through limited physical development, natural beauty has thrived. The region is

renowned for its dense bushland and mountainous ascents that offer amazing sites of both the region and the northern coastline of Dili. The beauty of the region does not however, exempt it from the severity and abundance of educationally based issues that are far too prevalent.

On the contrary to the beauty of the physical geography and the uniquely preserved historical sites, the bleak reality of the region is one concurrent with many other parts of Timor-Leste. A report conducted by UNICEF identified

Ermera as 'in need' with specific reference to educational and health related issues. This issue somewhat takes away from the panoramic vistas and reiterates a topic of concern, that being; the juxtaposition between the paradisaical land and the struggling inhabitants. You'd never think, upon the sites of dense forests creating an aura of life through the constant song of native fauna, that the local communities are in an everyday struggle with both survival and prosperity. The harsh reality is that delving below the surface of Timor's picturesque country peels back the layers of a deeply imbedded educational issue.

From an overview of the statistics provided by UNICEF in a 2012 report, evidence of these rampant issues don't hide. From primary school attendance rates of 71% to secondary completion rates of 40% a habit of truancy is more pervasive in the regions than in the city. Synonymously, gender inequality and favouritism inculcate on a greater scale in these rural and remote areas. Holistically, women receive 46% of the share of education across all grades and according to the UNDP, receive a mean of 3.6 years of education to

the 5.3 years of the average male. Much of this boils down to the access to education in many ways. The children living in rural and remote TL are given a trifling share of the opportunities given to those in the city, thus pressuring the need for intervention. Additionally, when compared to geographically proximate neighbours, the issues duplicate. According to the UNDP, the mean years of schooling in Timor-Leste sits at 4.4 years, quite a poor statistic in comparison to Fiji's average of 10.5 years, or the Pacific Islands' 7.7. In the spirit of raising the quality of a nation collectively, equal emphasis must be placed on each of Timor-Leste's 13 municipalities.

Ermera is a region in need, a region with immense potential, yet to be realised. Yet to be given the chance to blossom. By ourselves, we will have an impact. By yourself, you too can have an impact. But together, together, we can have a reality changing impact.

STORIES FROM STUDENTS: **JAYDEN GILBY**



On the 18th of March 2017, representatives from ETF had the pleasure to talk to **Jayden Gilby**, an Australian student out of the Northern Territory conducting some very inspiring work. We had the chance to discuss with the 17 year old; his ambitions, inspirations and most importantly, his *'Teaching Timor'* campaign.

Born and raised in Alice Springs, NT, an exposure to less than adequate living conditions around his hometown sparked his desire to help from a young age. Away from his "secluded and easy life" in Alice Springs, an awareness of the prevalence of domestic violence cases, the scale of poverty and motifs of gender inequality opened his eyes and drew an empathetic reaction but never tempted action, stating "the scale of domestic violence in the Northern Territory is really inexcusable - 13.8% of domestic violence cases in Australia come out of the NT, a disgusting stat". 'As a young person' he states, *you're closed off almost and immune to the issues that pervade around you.* "They don't seem to bother you" at first, speaking collectively, this is a theme aligned with many young people across Australia. It wasn't until a trip to

Timor in June of 2016 that Jayden's understanding and scope of the issues facing the modern world became starkly apparent. As it happened to Alessandro and Adam back in 2014, a desire to help was ignited inside.

'In the van from the airport to our accommodation, the holistic aura of Timor-Leste hits you hard.' From walking off that plane and into the nation's capital each issue becomes drastically more apparent. Aligning with many, Jayden's perspective reiterates that many of the issues *"have a base with education"* and in many instances there needs to be a definition and appreciation of the *'line between culture and education'* in order to move forward. Especially on issues of female empowerment and breaking the chain of the mentality towards education he states, *"the emphasis must be on communicating inalienable human truths such as gender equality and following your dreams."* Furthering to say "These are not western ideals, these are human ideals." Drawing connections back to Jayden's roots in the NT, he recognises that "In Alice Springs the government pushes families to push their kids to go to school" but in many

instances this governmental ideal is not realised as there is a failure to recognise the benefits of education. In Timor, individuals often pursue farming and agricultural degrees because they are *"safe"*.

Coming back from his experience in Timor-Leste, Jayden didn't want to *"Wash his hands of the experience and return to daily life"* something he continued to state "happens quite often when people come back from poverty stricken places" They *'immerse and acknowledge'* the issues but that's the extent of it once they come home. He continued to state that "In Australia, we have the power to create change" and unsurprisingly,

Tracing back to Jayden's motivations and his desire to donate to Educating The Future, *'like minded people with similar values'* an understanding of the issues and a desire to find solutions was paramount. Whilst in Timor Jayden reiterates that his main motivator was the *"Intensity, audacity and sheer will power of the children and people to better their lives in spite of all the circumstances they face on a daily basis."* Speaking from collective experience, *'the desire to change present situations and brighten futures'* is something we've only witnessed in Timor to such a dire extent. It was rather coincidental Jayden heard of ETF through Facebook and decided to donate the proceeds of his independent mission to *"help those who deserve it most."* With a clearly defined set of shared goals, the future for Jayden is full of untold possibilities.

If you'd like to read more about Jayden's *'Teaching Timor'* project or donate, please visit: <https://chuffed.org/project/teaching-timor>

that's exactly what Jayden did. Soon after returning, the *'Teaching Timor'* project was off the ground, currently sitting on an impressive total of \$6000. You can support Jayden's mission through raising awareness for the importance of education and supporting his various events and initiatives. In recent weeks, Jayden ran a lawn sale in his hometown in which *"everyone really pulled together for the cause."* The community involvement and support from 'friends and family' resulted in the day being *"really successful."*