



Dillydallying in Dili

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East Timor: Overview

- Population: Somewhere between 800 and 900,000
- Capital: Dili (not Delhi, that's in India)
- Area: 14,609 km² (5,641 sq miles for those metric challenged).
- Major languages: two "official" languages—Tetum and Portuguese. Indonesian and English are working languages.
- Major religion: Christianity—over 90% of East Timorese are Catholic. Muslims and a few Protestants make up the rest.
- Life expectancy: 50 years for women, and 49 years for men.
- Economy: Coffee, marble, and potential oil exports form the base of East Timor's economy. The potential for tourism exists. The massive influx of United Nations workers and peace keepers has created a temporary market in Dili, but this will last only until the UN leaves.
- GNI per capita: \$430 (World Bank, 2003)



Once again I find myself in East Timor...my fourth visit in the past 12 months to this tropical dot on the map. And once again, from 2 to 23 November, I'm

working with Family Health International (FHI) on their HIV/AIDS prevention programme.

For the past few weeks I've been working with local FHI partners in Dili to design a variety of print materials (leaflets, posters, booklets, etc.) for use in their peer education and HIV awareness programmes. Local

FHI partners include the East Timor Red Cross, *Timor Hari'i*, a non-governmental organisation and Caritas, a Catholic development and social service organisation.

Target groups reached by FHI partners include female sex workers (FSW), their clients, university and high school students (photos above), men who have sex with men (MSM) and members of uniformed services (the military and police).

I've also working on a set of promotional materials encouraging members of high-risk groups who suspect they may have contracted an STI...or HIV...to access FHI-partner VCT clinics (voluntary counselling and testing) for counselling, a blood test, and if necessary treatment.

The process began with a set of workshops with NGO and clinic partners, peer educators, and



Boyz in the hood...two of our "youth" models strike a pose (with attitude).



Members of “uniformed services” (above) and youth (below and right) are two of the target groups that FHI and partner NGOs are working with in Dili.

Obtaining permission for police and military to serve as models for our HIV/AIDS prevention materials was not a problem. We approached army and police officers who had a chat with their troops. Immediately we had a half dozen eager volunteers.

Getting permission for school kids, on the other hand, was a bit more tricky. The kids had no problem with it, in fact they really got into striking poses. The tricky part was with the church—the kids below are from one of the larger Catholic high schools in town. After a couple of meetings with church and school officials explaining the purpose of the photographs and materials to be developed, permission was finally granted.



which can contribute to rapid HIV spread and 15% of sex workers and MSM have curable sexual infections such as gonorrhoea and chlamydia.

Among groups of men who have cash and are frequently away from their families, visits to sex workers are very common. Condom use is extremely low among all groups at risk of HIV infection: not one sex worker consistently uses condoms. Risky sex is the norm among MSM, and 50% of MSM also have sex with women including FSW, forming a “bridge” between MSM, FSW and heterosexual married men and their families.

representatives of target groups to identify what materials exist, what materials are needed and what information needs to be included in new materials. This was followed by individual meetings with the FHI partners to try and “fine tune” their material needs...and determine their expectations (there’s only so much we can do in three weeks). We also held meetings with members of the target groups to find out from them what they know, don’t know and want to know about HIV/AIDS.

During the past three weeks we’ve managed to design a set of draft materials and pretest materials among target group members. I’ve been working with Tony Viegas, an FHI/East Timor staff responsible for the Behaviour

Change Communication (BCC) programme.

Tony is an East Timorese who’s spent the past 25



years (most of his life) in Australia. Together we’ve drafted six leaflets, two posters and a 32 page booklet (not bad for three weeks). We hope to have some (maybe even all) of the materials printed and ready for World AIDS Day on 1 December.

While East Timor can’t compare with Cambodia or Vietnam on the scale of the HIV “epidemic”, HIV is present in East Timor and some people have died of AIDS.

Fortunately recent research shows that the virus has not yet spread widely. Even so, the same research also shows that, in Dili, 3% of FSW and 1% of MSM are HIV positive, 30% of high-risk men and up to 60% of sex workers are infected with Type 2 herpes,