



NEWSLETTER

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Since our last newsletter we had a guest staying at our place, a priest from Soibada, Fr Abel. We showed him around St Mary's Parish in Upper Coomera which is a sister Parish to the Parish of Soibada. He met and spoke to numerous people. Due to our involvement with Soibada we asked him if he would like us to establish a computer room with computers, printer and books in Tetum, English and Portuguese. He welcomed the idea that it would be good for the children and the community of Soibada to learn the computer technology.

In May Mario & I travelled to Soibada, East Timor and what a journey that was. It is definitely a 4WD country – Indian Jones eat your heart out. 10 Minutes up the road from Dili (the capital of East Timor) we encountered our first scare, they were doing roadwork's to stabilise the side of the mountain after a land slide and it was very slippery, wet and muddy. So with a bit of luck and holding of breath, we slip slid our way through the first barrier. As we descended the mountain to the valley below (Hera) the river bank had washed over the road during the night and left a bit of damage near the bridge and on the road (lucky for 4WD) we had to go extremely slow on our drive as we could not see the road or the potholes because of the water still flowing across. From then on everything was ok through the spectacular scenes of the mountains and valleys that makes you forget about the chooks, dogs, pigs, goats, buffalos, kids and the potholes that you have just missed but the eyes fully focused on the road for the next encounter of the same. We were nearly at Laclubar, the turn off to Soibada, were we had to drive up this steep mountain in a foot deep wet mud/clay we had to use the 4WD to make it through but just as we got through tragedy struck. There was a truck stuck in the road going nowhere fast. The mud this truck was stuck in was about 1 and ½ feet deep and it was blocking all traffic, with all the experts, including families and children, trying to do their best and help the driver. It was nice to see the expression on the children's faces as though they were trying to learn what to do if they themselves had this kind of problem in the future. It was also a camaraderie atmosphere where everyone, including us, was trying to pull the truck out of the bog. We were there for about an hour trying to pull the truck out with our car when finally after lots of attempts and broken ropes, success, the truck was free. So once again we are on our way. The car was covered in red mud but

that was ok because we still had the river crossing to do. We were told that this month of May was the wettest they had seen for a long time (just our luck). Well we finally reached the raging river (**no bridge**) in a way we were lucky because the car was going to get washed even though I felt we were going to be swept away down the river while trying to cross. Then these 2 Timorese guys came running towards us to help us cross the river (for a fee). The two guys directed us across the river this worked out ok until we nearly ran them over while crossing as we could not slow the car in case it got swamped and they had to swim out of the way. But we made it to the other side with a clean car and we have it all on video, we can laugh about it now. We made it to Soibada without any further dramas and was able to present Father Abel with the 3 computers and a printer. While there we helped them set them up with the teachers of Soibada. Fr Abel also asked Mario to make a speech during the church service and to talk to the teachers. He was a bit embarrassed as we were not prepared but we hope that it all went ok. Now we just had to make it back down the mountain and go through the whole thing again, the river, the mountains but this time there had been another landslide across the road, but we will leave that for now.

Fr Abel is yet to let us know about the room which will be used as a “Resource Room” with the computers and library – we will keep you posted on the progress of this room.



MEETING WITH FR ABEL AND THE TEACHERS IN SOIBADA