



Australia Awards

# Australia Awards Global Tracer Facility

Timor-Leste  
Case Study: Disability  
and Development

November 2019



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Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

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## Abbreviations and Acronyms

<b>AHDMTL</b>	The Association of Vision Impairment Timor-Leste
<b>ADS</b>	Australian Development Scholarship
<b>ADTL</b>	Timor-Leste Disability Association
<b>AIP</b>	Aid Investment Plan
<b>ALA</b>	Australian Leadership Awards
<b>ASSERTS</b>	Assosiasaun Hi'it Ema Ra'es Timor
<b>AVI</b>	Australian Volunteers International
<b>CBR</b>	Community Based Rehabilitation
<b>CNR</b>	Centre for National Rehabilitation
<b>DFAT</b>	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Australia
<b>DPOs</b>	Disabled People's Organisations
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>GRM</b>	Now Palladium
<b>IAP</b>	Introductory Academic Program
<b>INGOs</b>	International non-government organisations
<b>KAP</b>	Knowledge, Attitude and Practices Survey

<b>LELI</b>	Lorosa'e English Language Institute
<b>MM&amp;M</b>	Monitoring Menu & Manual
<b>MSSI</b>	Ministry of Social Solidarity and Inclusion
<b>NAP</b>	National Action Plan for People with Disabilities
<b>NCP</b>	New Colombo Plan
<b>NDIS</b>	National Disability Insurance Scheme
<b>NGOs</b>	Non-government organisations
<b>NIH</b>	National Institute of Health
<b>OT</b>	Occupational therapy
<b>PHD</b>	Partnership for Human Development
<b>RHTO</b>	Ra'es Hadomi Timor Oan
<b>SCB</b>	Scholarships and Alumni Branch
<b>UNCRPD</b>	United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
<b>USAID</b>	United States Agency for International Development
<b>WDPTL</b>	Workforce Development Program Timor-Leste

# Executive Summary

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This report has been developed based on interviews with 16 alumni and various stakeholders to examine the long-term outcomes of Australia Awards alumni from Timor-Leste. The alumni of focus for this Case Study undertook scholarships and fellowships in Australia in studies relating to disability and development, and graduated between 2011 and 2016. This research was conducted by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade's (DFAT) Australia Awards Global Tracer Facility (the Facility) in November and December 2019.

The overall aim of the Australia Awards is to help 'partner countries progress their development goals and have positive relationships with Australia that advance mutual interests'. This aim is extrapolated in four long-term outcomes for the Australia Awards, which form the basis of the findings for the alumni from this Case Study.

## Outcome 1: 'Alumni are using their skills, knowledge and networks to contribute to sustainable development'

Alumni in this Case Study have used the skills and knowledge developed in Australia to make contributions in:

- **disability advocacy and policy development**—improving the rights of people with disability through multi-sectoral approaches to the development and implementation of disability-inclusive policies in Timor-Leste, including the National Disability Action Plan
- **improvements in clinical and professional allied health services**—through the implementation of patient centred assessment and healthcare services; improvements to professional practices; and access to community-based rehabilitation for people with disability in rural or remote locations
- **education, training and community outreach programs**—by mainstreaming inclusive education and training for people with disability
- **mentoring and capacity building**—sharing skills and knowledge learnt on award with colleagues, and supporting attitudinal change at the community level.

For the alumni in this Case Study, Australia Awards long-term Outcome 1—development contributions—is being **achieved**.

## Outcome 2: ‘Alumni are contributing to cooperation between Australia and partner countries’

Alumni in this Case Study have strong and ongoing relationships with Australians through connections that were developed while on their Australia Awards. Cooperation with contacts made in Australia include:

- **professional network** of Australia Awards alumni developed on award
- **collaboration** with Australian lecturers and professionals in the disability sector
- **friendships** with Australians and the Timorese community in Australia.

In addition, to the connections established on award, many of the alumni also have maintained regular contact with Australians and Australian organisations throughout their career. Most of these connections stem from the relationships forged while on award and reflect the strong bilateral interests between Australia and Timor-Leste across government and civil society organisations.

For alumni in this Case Study, Australia Awards long-term Outcome 2—cooperation with Australia—is being **achieved**.

## Outcome 3: ‘Effective, mutually advantageous partnerships between institutions and businesses in Australia and partner countries.’

There were strong examples of ongoing, formal partnerships with Australia facilitated as a result of the award among the alumni in this Case Study.

- **Professional and institutional partnerships** formed on award
- **Employment with Australian organisations** post award
- **Contributions to New Colombo Plan (NCP)** partnerships.

For alumni in this Case Study, Australia Awards long-term Outcome 3—partnerships with Australia—is being **achieved**.

## Outcome 4: ‘Alumni view Australia, Australians, and Australian expertise positively’

Alumni in this Case Study hold strong, positive views of Australia. Key elements in the building of these positive views are:

- **quality and prestige of Australian education** and the Australia Awards
- **a high regard for Australian expertise** in relation to disability inclusion
- **positive experiences** while studying in Australia.

For alumni in this Case Study, Australia Awards long-term Outcome 4—positive views of Australia is being **achieved**.

## Factors contributing to achieving these outcomes

Based on the evidence collected in this Case Study, the success in achieving the long-term outcomes of Australia Awards for these alumni has been due to a number of important factors, including:

- **strong personal motivation** among alumni to create a more inclusive society
- **fellowship course design** and scholarship qualifications aligned to the development needs of Timor-Leste
- **quality of teaching and learning** in Australia
- on-award **work experience and field placements**.

## Challenges to achieving these outcomes

Some alumni in this Case Study cited a lack of adequate funding and resourcing on return from award, which limited their ability to utilise their new skills. In addition some mentioned frustration with bureaucratic processes in Timor-Leste which impacted their ability to contribute further. Among the fellowship alumni in this Case Study, some also mentioned their limited English language proficiency as a barrier to maintaining connections with Australia organisations following their award.



## Global Tracer Facility

# Australia Awards alumni in Timor-Leste are supporting societal change through disability inclusion

## Australia Awards alumni are contributing to:



Disability advocacy and policy development



Improvements in clinical and professional allied health services



Mainstreaming education, training and community outreach programs



Creating a more disability inclusive society

## Australia Awards results

**1** Alumni provided strong examples of development contributions

**Achieved** ✓

“The result of the fellowship was the government developed a National Disability Action Plan for Timor. Now everybody is included in the Action Plan, the Secretary of State, Employment and other relevant ministries. So in each ministry there will be people with disability focus.”



**2** Alumni are contributing to cooperation between Australia and Timor-Leste

**Achieved** ✓

“Sometimes they send their experts from Australia to come and train us...A couple of months ago they came here and then we had a big seminar in the National Hospital.”



**3** Alumni support effective institutional partnerships between Australia and Timor-Leste

**Achieved** ✓

“We have done a lot of work with different universities in Australia, some send NCP student placements here on an annual basis.”



**4** Alumni view Australia and Australian expertise positively

**Achieved** ✓

“The quality and process of learning was great in Australia. It teaches you to be an independent learner.”



**Participants:** Alumni who completed scholarships and fellowships between **2011-2016**



### Case study participants:

- Female alumni
- Male alumni
- Employers/colleagues
- Host organisations
- Stakeholders

# 1. Introduction

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The Australia Awards Global Tracer Facility (the Facility) is a project which commenced in 2016 and is funded by DFAT. Through this project, DFAT assesses the development contributions and public and economic diplomacy outcomes of Australia's investment in the Australia Awards. The key research and reporting activities being undertaken by the Facility are a quantitative Global Tracer Survey and qualitative Case Studies, which are prepared concurrently throughout the project.

This report provides the key findings of the Timor-Leste Case Study, which focussed on Timorese alumni who completed their scholarship between 2011 and 2016 in areas relating to the disability and development sector. The majority of the data collection for this Case Study was undertaken by Facility researchers in Timor-Leste in November 2019.

## 1.1 Objectives

The Facility seeks to generate high-quality information on former scholarship holders, with a focus on less recent alumni. This information provides a strong evidence base for country programs and the Scholarships and Alumni Branch (SCB) of DFAT to evaluate the impact of Australia Awards on alumni and, on their home institutions and countries.

All research by the Facility is undertaken with close reference to the long-term outcomes of the Australia Awards. These outcomes underpin the interviews, surveys and the reporting of the Facility. The long-term outcomes are detailed in the *Australia Awards Global Strategy: Investing in the next generation of global leaders for development 2016–2018 (the Strategy)* and the *Australia Awards Global Monitoring and Evaluation Framework (the Framework)*. They are:

- **Outcome 1:** Alumni are using their skills, knowledge and networks to contribute to sustainable development.
- **Outcome 2:** Alumni are contributing to cooperation between Australia and partner countries.
- **Outcome 3:** Effective, mutually advantageous partnerships between institutions and businesses in Australia and partner countries.
- **Outcome 4:** Alumni view Australia, Australians and Australian expertise positively.

In addition to these long-term outcomes, gender and disability inclusion are overarching cross-cutting priorities of Australia's aid priorities outlined in the *2017 Foreign Policy White Paper* (Australian Government, 2017). These themes are incorporated in the analysis of this report where relevant.

## 1.2 Scope

The Facility's specific focus is on alumni of DFAT's Australia Awards and previous Australian Government-funded scholarship programs, awards and fellowships. For each Case Study undertaken by the Facility, this focus is further refined to a specific cohort of alumni based on the years they completed their scholarship or fellowship and particular field of education or sector.

For this Timor-Leste Case Study, the research focus is on alumni who completed their fellowship or scholarships between 2011 and 2016 and studied a course relating to disability, development and international relations in order to focus on the overall thematic theme of the Case Study—disability, inclusion and development.

## 1.3 Country context

Timor-Leste is one of Australia's closest neighbours, situated approximately 700km from Darwin. The two countries share a cultural and political history and strong people-to-people ties. Australia remains Timor-Leste's largest development partner with approximately \$110 million committed in official development assistance in 2019-20.

Timor-Leste gained independence after prolonged conflict ending in 2002. It has a population of around 1.3 million, with more than half under the age of 25, making it one of the youngest populations in the world (World Bank, 2019). Since independence, Timor-Leste has made significant progress in transforming its natural resource wealth into better living standards for its people. However, challenges remain with continuing high levels of poverty compared to the rest of the region and inequality in access to education and healthcare (World Bank, 2019). In particular, women, children and people with disability face significant barriers in accessing basic services and economic activities.

The country remains highly dependent on its oil revenues, which finances approximately 80 per cent of public spending (DFAT, 2019a). With projected declines in oil production in the next decade, focus on human capital development is critical for Timor-Leste's economic development. The country's Strategic Development Plan 2011-2030 (Government of Timor-Leste, n.d.) sets ambitious goals for reaching upper-middle income status, eradicating extreme poverty and an economy that is independent of the oil sector by 2030.

### Disability Inclusion in Timor-Leste

Of relevance to this Case Study is the context for promoting disability inclusive policies and services in Timor-Leste. According to the 2016 Demographic and Health Survey (General Directorate of Statistics, Ministry of Health and ICF, 2018), 15 per cent of the population aged five years and older reported difficulty in at least one domain of functioning.

People with disability are amongst the most marginalised in Timor-Leste, with limited access to healthcare, education and employment. The 2015 census reported that 68 per cent of people with disability have never attended school and girls with disability are less likely than boys to receive an education (General Directorate of Statistics, 2016). The high incidence of malnutrition is a particular concern, as it has become the leading contributor to premature death and disability in Timor-Leste (Provo et al., 2017). Social stigma remains a key challenge for broad disability inclusive development in Timor-Leste. According to a recent knowledge, attitude and practice (KAP) survey on the rights of people with disability, it was found that the general population lack knowledge about disability which perpetuates stigma and discrimination in the community (Fonseca & Bouwman, 2018).

The Timor-Leste Strategic Development Plan commits the government to improving services and living conditions for people with disability, underpinned by a National Action Plan for People with disability (NAP). The Ministry for Social Solidarity and Inclusion is the lead agency for coordinating the government's disability inclusive policies and programs and is undertaking a broad consultation process for the drafting of the new NAP. While laws and policies exist to protect people with disability, implementation has been limited due to a lack of regulations and poor resourcing of the disability sector. Disabled Peoples Organisations and NGOs are actively advocating for changes to government policies on disability inclusion, including the ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which would ensure adequate mechanisms and a budget are in place to support implementation.

## 1.4 Australia Awards in Timor-Leste

An integral part of the aid program in Timor-Leste is the Australia Awards initiative which provides scholarships for tertiary education and professional development training via short courses, and fellowships (now discontinued) in Australia. The aim of the investment is to build capacity and leadership skills of individuals so that they can contribute to sustainable development within Timor-Leste, and create ongoing people-to-people links with Australia and Australians. The initiative has been running since 1999 in Timor-Leste and has provided over 350 scholarships to Timorese citizens.

During the period of focus for this Case Study from 2011–2016, the Australian Government provided a number of tailored Australia Leadership Award fellowships as a mechanism to build capacity within the disability sector in Timor-Leste. These fellowships provided professional development training to key stakeholders from government, Disabled People's Organisations (DPOs), international aid agencies and the health sector.

## 1.5 Alumni and other interview participants

Sixteen alumni (11 men and 5 women) were interviewed for this Case Study. Each had studied in Australia and completed either their scholarship or fellowship between 2011 and 2016. All had undertaken studies relating to disability, inclusion and development. The sixteen alumni of focus are introduced below, with their scholarship details and current occupation. Detailed profiles are provided in Chapter 7.



**Ms Dulce da Cunha**

Master of Public Policy and Management, University of Melbourne

Disability Team Leader, Partnership for Human Development (Abt Associates)



**Mr Monrique dos Reis**

Bachelor of Disability and Developmental Education, Flinders University

Monitoring and Evaluation, Child Fund (Australia) Timor-Leste



**Mr Gaspar Afonso**

Fellowship: Disability Capacity for Improving Rehabilitation and Disability Policy and Practice, Flinders University

Director, Vision Impairment Organisation AHDMTL (Ezekutivu Asosiasaun Halibur Difisiente Matan Timor-Leste)



**Mr Joaozito dos Santos**

Fellowship: Increasing capacity for developing rights based disability policy in South East Asia, University of Sydney

Executive Director, National Disabled People Organisation Ra'es Hadomi Timor Oan (RHTO)



**Mr Joaquim Soares**

Fellowship: Community based rehabilitation programs for people with disability: building capacity for monitoring and sustainability, University of Sydney

Director, Klibur Domin Rehabilitation Centre



**Ms Fernanda Soares**

Fellowship: Disability Capacity for Improving Rehabilitation and Disability Policy and Practice, Flinders University

Occupational Therapist, Centre for National Rehabilitation (CNR)



**Mr Tomas Oqui**

Fellowship: Disability Capacity for Improving Rehabilitation and Disability Policy and Practice, Flinders University

Physiotherapist, Centre for National Rehabilitation (CNR)



**Ms Sara Miranda Gusmao**

Fellowship: Disability Capacity for Improving Rehabilitation and Disability Policy and Practice, Flinders University

Physiotherapist, National Hospital



**Ms Silvia Vicenti**

Fellowship: Disability Capacity for Improving Rehabilitation and Disability Policy and Practice, Flinders University

Director, Department for Protection and Rehabilitation of People with Disability, Ministry of Social Solidarity and Inclusion



**Mr Domingos da Silva**

Fellowship: Disability Capacity for Improving Rehabilitation and Disability Policy and Practice, Flinders University

Occupational Therapist, former Director for Rehabilitation, National Hospital



**Mr Antonio Moniz do Rosario**

Bachelor of International Relations, University of South Australia

Advocacy and External Engagement Manager, World Vision International



**Mr Antonio Noronha**

Fellowship: Disability Capacity for Improving Rehabilitation and Disability Policy and Practice, Flinders University

Technical Staff and former Head of Dept. of Social Protection and the Rights of People with Disability, Ministry of Social Solidarity and Inclusion



**Mr Pedro Emercio Freitas**

Fellowship: Disability Capacity for Improving Rehabilitation and Disability Policy and Practice, Flinders University

Media and Advocacy Officer, Klibur Domin Rehabilitation Centre



**Ms Silvia Soares**

Fellowship: Disability Capacity for Improving Rehabilitation and Disability Policy and Practice, Flinders University

Training Manager, National Disabled People Organisation Ra'es Hadomi Timor Oan (RHTO)



**Mr Francisco Baptista de Carvalho Soares**

Fellowship: Disability Capacity for Improving Rehabilitation and Disability Policy and Practice, Flinders University

Focal Point for Disability and Inclusion, Ministry of Health



**Mr Angelo Venceslau**

Bachelor of Community Development, Victoria University

Projector Coordinator, National Olympic Committee of Timor-Leste

In addition to the 16 alumni, interviews with a further 17 stakeholders were carried out as part of this Case Study. These were designed to build an understanding of the Timorese context, to further explore the contributions of alumni, and to better understand the Australia Awards in Timor-Leste. The 17 other participants included five employers/colleagues of alumni, three staff from the managing contractor, four staff from the Australian Embassy in Timor-Leste, two fellowship host representatives (one from Flinders University and one from Sydney University), and three disability sector stakeholders. Further details on interview participants can be seen in the Methodology section (Annex 1).

## 2. Development Outcomes

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This Case Study demonstrates the impact that alumni can make within the first five years post award.

Alumni are making development contributions in the disability sector in Timor-Leste through disability advocacy and policy development, improvements in clinical and professional practices among allied health care workers, inclusive education, training and community outreach programs, and mentoring of colleagues and community members which has impacted and improved societal attitudes towards people with disability.

### 2.1 Introduction

This chapter details the development impact of alumni and Outcome 1: 'Alumni are using their skills, knowledge and networks to contribute to sustainable development'. The analysis and discussion explore the following Case Study propositions:

- alumni use their skills, knowledge and networks to contribute to partner-country development goals
- alumni develop skills, knowledge and networks on-award that enable and are used to contribute to achieving partner-country development goals
- alumni understand, value and want to contribute to partner-country development goals.

The alumni who are the focus of this Case Study are each making contributions to development. The examples in this chapter highlight these contributions across a variety of activities spanning: disability advocacy and policy development, improvements to allied health, child protection, gender and social inclusion and education. The examples discussed in this chapter help to show that for the group of focus in this Case Study, Outcome 1 is being achieved.

## 2.2 Background

The focus of this Case Study is on Timorese alumni who undertook an Australia scholarship or fellowship in a field of disability and development between 2011 and 2016.

At the time, Australia was at the forefront of disability-inclusive programming as part of the *Development for All* strategy (DFAT, 2015). The Australian Government prioritised and invested in a range of disability-inclusive programs in Timor-Leste during the period of focus, creating an enabling environment for progress in the sector. As part of this investment, Australian scholarships and fellowships were employed to build human resource capacity in areas such as health and rehabilitation services, government: inclusive policy design and implementation, and civil society through Disabled Peoples Organisations (DPOs) and agencies working in the field of disability inclusion.

This Case Study reflects the Australian Government's three key sectors and development priorities in Timor-Leste: enhancing human development, strengthening governance and institutions and improving livelihoods and economic development of people living with disability.

This particular Case Study is unique as it showcases three Australian Leadership Awards fellowship programs which were specifically designed to build capacity in the disability sector in Timor-Leste during the period of focus. These fellowships provided a multi-sectorial approach to capacity building in the disability sector, and teamed up professionals from government, DPOs, international aid agencies and the health sector.

According to fellowship alumni and stakeholders interviewed as part of this Case Study, these programs had a transformational effect on the participants and provided them with valuable skills and knowledge which has significantly improved their professional practice and contributed to disability rights and services in Timor-Leste.

One of the fellowship programs in scope was the 2015 'Disability Capacity for Improving Rehabilitation and Disability Policy and Practice' hosted by Flinders University. It was designed specifically to meet the needs of the disability sector at the time and brought together 25 key stakeholders from across Timor-Leste. The program's aim was to forge cross sectoral relationships and provide specific skills and knowledge to help participants facilitate disability inclusion in allied health, public policy, employment and social protection.'

Ten alumni from this program participated in this Case Study.

In addition, two alumni who undertook Australian Leadership Awards fellowships at the University of Sydney in 2013 are included in the Case Study. One alumnus studied 'Increasing capacity for developing rights based disability policy in South East Asia' and has been active in the development and implementation of National Disability Policy as the Executive Director of the National Disabled Peoples Organisation. While the other alumnus studied Community based rehabilitation programs for people with disability: building the capacity for monitoring and sustainability and is active in improving allied health services in Timor-Leste.

## 2.3 Skills developed on award

This chapter highlights examples of a range of skills that alumni have developed and utilised on their return from Australia. While these skills are implicit throughout the analysis that follows, a list of skills identified by the alumni is provided in Table 1 to highlight the breadth in knowledge gained by alumni on award.

**Table 1: Skills developed on award**

<b>'Soft'/interpersonal skills include:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• communication</li> <li>• advocacy</li> <li>• networking</li> <li>• diplomacy</li> </ul>
<b>'Hard'/ technical skills include:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clinical skills based on the social model of disability                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- patient centred assessment and rehabilitation</li> <li>- professional standards</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Policy development                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- strategic planning</li> <li>- stakeholder engagement</li> <li>- cross sectoral coordination</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Applied research skills in the field of disability, gender and inclusion</li> <li>• English language</li> </ul>

## 2.4 Alumni contributions

The alumni in this Case Study are between three and six years post-graduation or completion of their fellowship and are early to mid-career in their sectors. All are making significant contributions to the sustainable development of Timor-Leste. Of the 16 alumni in focus, four work for international non-government organisations (INGOs), three for Disabled Peoples Organisations (DPOs), six work within the allied health sector and three work in government. These alumni are contributing skills and knowledge gained in Australia to improve the rights and health outcomes of people with disability in Timor-Leste.

The impact of the contributions made by these alumni occurs at both the organisational and societal level and is helping to support attitudinal change and improved outcomes for people with disability in Timor-Leste. The strong, positive contributions of this group of alumni tend to align with other research about Australia Awards alumni outcomes undertaken by the Facility. Data from the Facility's Global Tracer Survey show that among Timorese alumni from the 2011 to 2016 cohort, all had indicated they had used the knowledge and skills from their scholarship or fellowship to improve practices or implement change within their workplace. In addition, all Timorese alumni who participated in the survey indicated that they have passed on their new knowledge since returning home (Edwards & Taylor, 2019).

Alumni in the Case Study are contributing to four main areas, these are summarised in Table 2:

**Table 2: Key contributions in development among the alumni of focus in this Case Study**

<b>Disability advocacy and policy development</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>introducing cross-cutting approaches to the development of the National Disability Action Plan and disability and social inclusion policies</li> <li>promoting the rights of people with disability and advocating for the ratification of the UN Rights of People with disability</li> <li>improving access to social protection, education, employment and health care for people with disability</li> </ul>
<b>Clinical and professional allied health improvements</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>implementation of patient centred assessment and rehabilitation programs</li> <li>improving professional practices making treatment more inclusive, interactive and confidential</li> <li>providing inclusive community-based rehabilitation services to people with disability living in rural or remote locations</li> </ul>
<b>Education, training and community outreach programs</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>mainstreaming inclusive education and training for people with disability</li> <li>supporting attitudinal change at the community level through social inclusion programs</li> <li>improving access for people with disability wishing to undertake the Australia Awards</li> </ul>
<b>Mentoring and capacity building</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>introducing professional standards and inclusive practices to colleagues working in the health sector</li> <li>utilising strong connections made on award with Australian academics and other awardees to mentor and train others within the sector</li> <li>supervision and mentoring of Australian students participating in clinical placements as part of the NCP</li> </ul>

### 2.4.1 Disability advocacy and policy development

Eight of the 16 alumni in focus are contributing to the development and implementation of a National Disability Policy in Timor-Leste through advocacy and policy development. These alumni come from a range of sectors including government, Disabled People Organisations (DPOs), and the international development sector. They are using skills and knowledge developed on-award such as strategic planning, inclusive stakeholder engagement, networking and policy design and implementation to create cross-cutting, disability inclusive policy in Timor-Leste.

One of the key alumni involved in this process is **Ms Dulce da Cunha** who is the Disability Team Leader at the Australian-Timor-Leste Partnership for Human Development (PHD)<sup>1</sup>, an AU\$20 million, Australian-funded aid program managed by Abt Associates (2016 to 2021). With a background in health and development, Ms da Cunha received an Australian Development Scholarship and studied a Master of Public Policy at the University of Melbourne (2012-2013). Ms da Cunha is responsible for overseeing the disability portfolio for both disability specific activities and disability mainstreaming activities with PHD partners.

As part of her role, Ms da Cunha is co-ordinating the extensive public consultation phase of the implementation of the new National Disability Policy in collaboration with the Ministry of Social Solidarity and Inclusion. As part of the process, she is liaising with 10 ministries within the Timor-Leste Government to embed cross-cutting disability and inclusion policies, while also including DPOs and other key stakeholders in the development of strategic initiatives to implement the changes at the regional and national level.

**Mr Monrique dos Reis** studied a Bachelor of Disability and Development at Flinders University from 2012 to 2016. Although, Mr Reis has been unable to find employment specifically in the disability sector since returning to Timor-Leste, he has used the skills and knowledge learnt while on award to embed disability and gender inclusion into his development work in organisations such as ChildFund Australia, and CARE Australia.

*Disability is a cross-cutting issue, so is gender and working with children. ChildFund, CARE, they are working with women and children. There is always a role there you can play,... you can address disability issues in there. [Even though] you don't directly work with disability.*

Mr Reis first became interested in disability and inclusion while working for the newly formed Ministry of Social Solidarity and Inclusion (MSSI) in 2003, and participated in the drafting of the first National Policy for People with Disability funded by USAID. His community work includes improving data collection into the challenges faced by people with visual impairment in accessing education in rural areas and creating a small handbook in Tetum on disability inclusive language both of which were funded by the Australia Awards Alumni Small Grants program.

Coordinating the National Disability Policy consultation process at the MSSI are two Flinders University fellowship alumni, **Ms Silvia Vicenti** from the Department for Protection and Rehabilitation of People with Disability, and **Mr Antonio Noronha** former head of Social Protection and the Rights of People with disability.

On their return to Timor-Leste, these alumni were instrumental in setting up a new division within the Ministry of Social Solidarity. Ms Vicenti outlines the impact of the course on their organisation.

*After taking this fellowship program, we came back and we opened a new department to be able to support people with disability specifically, and plan for people with disability, so looking for ways how we can support people with disability to get jobs. And also we have a youth program that supports youth with disability to be able to access job opportunities and to career plan. Also we work mostly with schools to promote and to explain to them exactly the rights of people with disability, what disability [is].*

The new department also provides support to the national consultation process and work closely with government, civil society and other stakeholders. According to Mr Noronha, the MSSI were able to gain traction and embed disability inclusion across different ministerial portfolios on their return from their award.

*The result from the fellowship is that they [government] developed a National Action Plan for Timor, everywhere. Now everybody is included in this action plan, the Secretary of State of Employment and other relevant ministries, so they can plan in all ministries as well, so they can plan for their roles in the action plan. So in each ministry there will be people with disability focus.*

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.dfat.gov.au/geo/timor-leste/development-assistance/Pages/enhancing-human-development-in-timor-leste.aspx>

Mr Noronha and Ms Vicenti now work closely with 10 different ministries in the Timor-Leste Government. For example, they have a strong working relationship with fellow alum **Mr Francisco Baptista de Carvalho Soares**, who is the disability and inclusion focal point at the Ministry of Health.

**Mr Joaozito dos Santos**, the Executive Director and founder of the National Disabled Peoples Organisation, Ra'es Hadomi Timor Oan (RHTO) is playing a key role in shaping national policies by contributing the drafting of the National Disability Action Plan and providing 'technical advice to the government' to support better integration of people with disability into all sectors of society. This includes the use of inclusive language and assessment tools to promote better access for people with disability to government subsidies, justice, livelihood opportunities and health care. Mr dos Santos studied the 2013 University of Sydney Fellowship- 'Increasing capacity for developing rights-based disability policy in South East Asia'. Working closely with Mr dos Santos at RHTO is **Ms Silvia Soares** who studied an Australia Awards fellowship at Flinders University. She provides disability inclusion training and advocacy through RHTO's network as the Gender and Inclusion Manager.

RHTO is a key disability implementing partner for various international aid agencies and donors including the Australian Government under the project 'Disability Inclusion in Timor-Leste'. It works closely with government, civil society and international organisations to improve health, accessibility, education, and employment opportunities for people living with disability at the national and district levels.

Also working in disability advocacy is **Mr Gaspar Afonso**, the Director of the Association of Vision Impairment Timor-Leste (AHDMTL) and the Vice-President of the fifth largest political party in Timor-Leste. Mr Afonso studied an Australia Awards fellowship at Flinders University in 2015 and is using his experience studying in Australia to frame disability rights around issues of accessibility. He is working closely with government and DPOs, promoting access to education and employment for people with disability, as well as calling for universal design principles to be employed in Timor-Leste to ensure public amenities are accessible to all citizens.

*A big success that's going to happen and has been going on is that we have been advocating a lot to parliament, so there is now a national consultation process for the National Action Plan for people with disability, and we will have a meeting of the National Disability Council. There has been one resolution signed by a parliament member, so it will be heading to the ratification of the International Convention on the Rights of People with Disability in the future. I am leading this discussion.*

**Mr Pedro Emercio Freitas** is the Media and Advocacy Officer at Klibur Domin, a not-for-profit, community-based rehabilitation (CBR) centre, which provides education and respite care for children and adults with disability and tuberculosis. He attributes his fellowship at Flinders University as providing him with the opportunity to build his knowledge about the disability sector and the treatment of psycho-social disability. On his return to Timor-Leste, Mr Freitas was able to work with colleagues to create a new division and secure funding to support outreach programs for people suffering with mental illness. In his current role Mr Freitas is using knowledge and skills from his fellowship to 'disseminate information', reduce stigma and 'advocate for the rights of people with mental disability'.

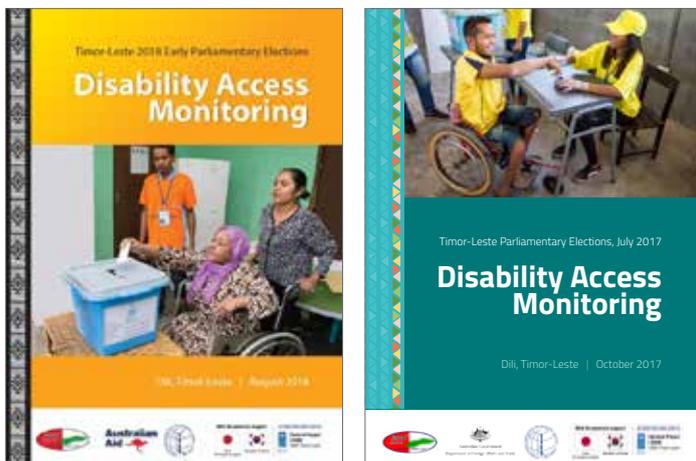


Figure 1: Examples of recent RHTO publications on Disability Access Monitoring (photo Australia Awards Global Tracer Facility)

### 2.4.2 Clinical and professional allied health improvements

Six alumni in this Case Study work in the field of allied health and undertook fellowships in this area during the period of focus. They are making significant contributions to inclusive, patient-centred care and assessment of people with disability at the municipal and national level. These alumni are helping to improve professional practices of health care professionals within their organisations.

Alumni, **Mr Joaquim Freitas Soares** is the Executive Director of the Klibur Domin Rehabilitation Centre. He studied 'Community based rehabilitation programs for people with disability: building capacity for monitoring and sustainability in South East Asia' at Sydney University in 2013. As a result of the fellowship, Mr J. Soares has improved the way health data is recorded and collected in Timorese communities, which has led to better access to services for people with disability in rural areas.

In addition, Mr J. Soares represented Timor-Leste and collaborated with other fellows from his fellowship to develop resources for monitoring CBR programs in the region. This resulted in the publication of the CBR Monitoring Menu & Manual (MM&M) in 2014 through the University of Sydney's Centre for Disability Research and Policy.

Working in front line disability assessment and rehabilitation are four fellowship alumni who studied the fellowship at Flinders University, **Ms Fernanda Soares, Mr Tomas Oqui, Mr Domingos da Silva** and **Ms Sara Miranda Gusmao**.

Ms F. Soares is an occupational therapist, and Mr Oqui is a physiotherapist at the Centre for National Rehabilitation (CNR). They are both senior department leaders and provide assessment and specialist rehabilitation care to people with disability. Since returning from their fellowship Ms F. Soares and Mr Oqui have improved assessment processes at CNR, implemented zoned treatment areas, recognising the different types of treatment required for different groups. For example, they encouraged developing specialist treatment spaces for children, and set up activities to engage patients in their rehabilitation through music, art and play. Mr Oqui stated:

*After returning, the impact for us is like: we need to make everything separate, not together in one place. But with [old] age problems, we need to treat them like this, and if it's children with problems, you have to go to [a different] place. So we can separate them now. That's the impact.*

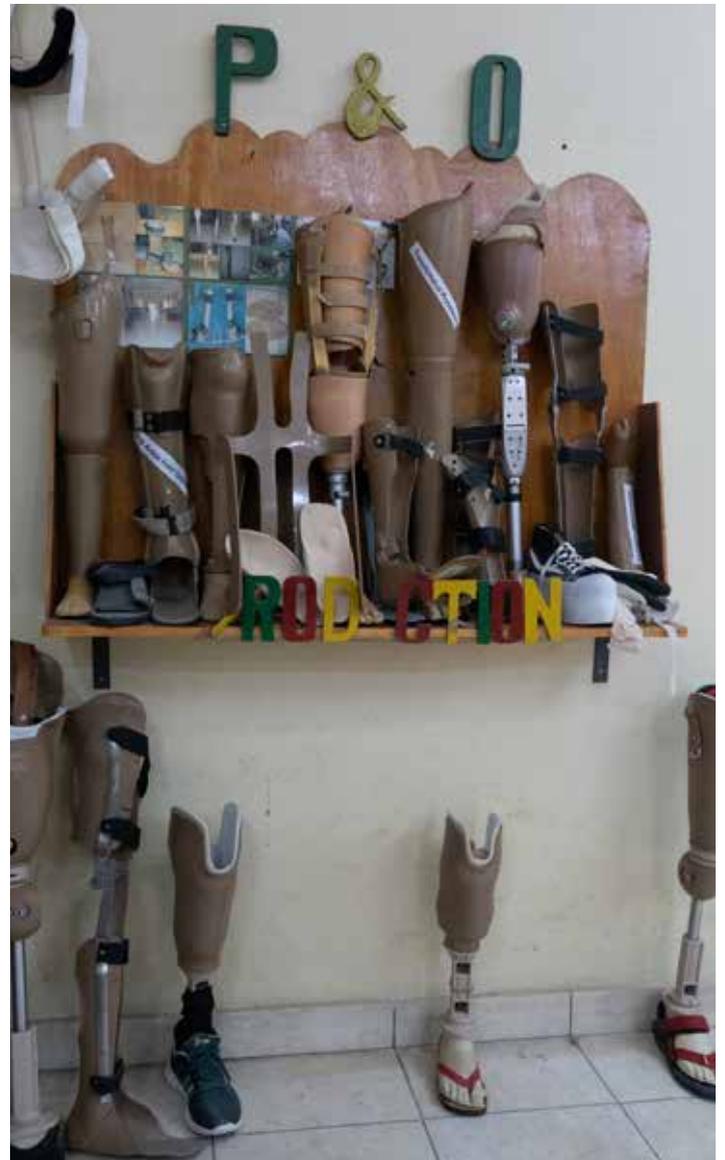


Figure 2: Custom made prosthetic legs at the Centre for National Rehabilitation (CNR). Photo: Australia Awards Global Tracer Facility

Alumni working in allied health care have also contributed to improvements in professional practices of clinical staff within their organisations through training received on award. Areas of impact include improvements in assessment and reporting, patient confidentiality, and inclusive language used by staff when speaking with patients and their families.

According to alumna Ms Gusmao, a physiotherapist at the National Hospital in Dili, the department was able to implement changes in exercise techniques they observed while on-award and improve professional practices based on equal and inclusive treatment of all patients.

*It's not only about physical things that we changed, it's also about behaviour, language in terms of your attitude, your body language. Priority of service as well...*

Alum Mr da Silva, an occupational therapist in the same department, added that they have changed the way they now interact with patients at an organisational level, making it more inclusive and professional.

*In terms of the treatment, so that's equal treatment for all, the treatment is the same whether you are rich or not. And also one of the most important things that we learned is about confidentiality, privacy of your clients.*

He felt that his experience on award has 'changed' the way he now communicates with his patients and the way he shares information with their families and other health professionals.

### 2.4.3 Education, Training and Community Outreach

The mainstreaming of education and training of people with disability in Timor-Leste has been at the forefront of social inclusion. Through her work with PHD, Ms da Cunha is working to improve access to basic education and training at the municipal level for people with disability. She works closely with DPOs and the MSSI to facilitate 'mainstreaming activities within PHD centres'.

One of the organisations funded under the PHD program is RHTO. As the Gender and Inclusion Manager at RHTO, alumna Ms S. Soares helps coordinate training and capacity, incorporating disability inclusion in numerous organisations in Timor-Leste including government ministries, international organisations and DPOs. Ms S. Soares believed that inclusion training is starting to change societal attitudes towards people with disability in Timor-Leste.

*A big success is that I have been advising, I have been promoting and socialising some terminologies like disability friendly language so more people are now starting to use correct terminologies when speaking with people with disability, not like they used to.*

The team at RHTO, led by alum, Mr dos Santos is currently working with the Ministry of Health and the National Institute of Health (NIH) to provide training to doctors and medical professionals to provide disability inclusive health care and CBR. It is currently being piloted in a number of regional municipalities and aims to help medical staff provide better services to people with disability and ensure early interventions and access to social protection. According to Mr dos Santos the RHTO team are helping to raise awareness of the importance of 'using the proper terminology' when treating people with disability, and are collecting valuable data to improve health services at the municipal level.

As the Director of AHDMTL, Mr Afonso has been a vocal advocate for access to education and training for people with disability. His organisation runs braille training at a community centre level and works closely with government and international agencies to build awareness about the challenges people with disability face due to social and economic exclusion.

*All the skills and knowledge I learned from Flinders on the scholarship, every time I went to the districts to do programs like an awareness raising campaigns about disability rights, to national level with the ministers and the directors from different ministries, [it is] specifically about accessibility.*

Both Mr dos Santos from RHTO and Mr Afonso from AHDMTL have worked closely with the Australian Embassy and the Australia Awards office over the last few years to advocate for better access for people with disability wishing to participate in the Australia Awards. The Australia Awards now reserves one scholarship per year for people living with disability and the scholarship is open for people wishing to study from Diploma or Advanced level. This provides better access to people with disability and recognises the 'educational challenges people with disability face in Timor-Leste'. In addition, the Workforce Development Program Timor-Leste (WDPTL) recently provided a three-month intensive academic English course for up to 20 people living with disability at the Lorosa'e English Language Institute (LELI) in Dili which will conclude at the end of June 2020.

Working closely with Dr Ellison from Flinders University, Mr Reis helped facilitate the establishment of a new disability department at the National University of Timor-Leste which is funded by the British Council. He volunteered as a guest lecturer three times and shared information he learned on-award.

#### 2.4.4 Mentoring and capacity building

There is clear evidence of alumni building the capacity of others within their organisations through formal training workshops and informal mentoring of colleagues since returning from being on award.

According to alumni, there is a requirement for those working in the government sector to share what they learnt on award with colleagues on their return, either through formal training sessions and presentations, or by mentoring other staff, thus contributing to capacity building at an organisational level. Mr Noronha stated:

*It has become tradition or common in the ministry. So, when you learn something abroad, you have to come back and share with the others internally and to other people that can share that. All are shared lessons of what we learned there. We have to share with others. I wrote a report of what I learned in Australia.*

Alumni working at the MSSSI, and the Ministry of Health are also sharing expertise learnt on-award to train staff in different departments sharing knowledge of disability inclusive policy as part of the NAP. Mr F Soares notes:

*...we explained to them, "We have learned this in Australia but it's relevant to your ministry, so can your minister do something for people with disability in this area, employment, education, and some other areas?"*

Mr da Silva was a senior manager within his department at the National Hospital when he returned from his award in 2015. He recalled briefing a range of stakeholders about what he had learnt during his time at Flinders University and outlining priorities for organisational change.

*I did a presentation, not only here but to the community, to the ministers, to the people in the ministry and the health department. [It was] a presentation about the plan: this is what we have done, this is what we have learned and this is the plan for what we are going to do. So, the big thing is to build everything accessible for people with disability.*

At present, the allied health care sector is under resourced in Timor-Leste. There are only five trained occupational therapists and 35 trained physiotherapists in the country. Alumni featured in this Case Study are active in training others, sharing skills and knowledge learnt on award with colleagues to improve rehabilitation services and professional practice in their organisations.

Other alumni such as Ms S. Soares, Mr Freitas, Ms da Cunha, Mr Afonso, Mr Reis, **Mr Antonio do Rosario** and Mr dos Santos are actively sharing their skills and knowledge learnt on award with the greater community through training programs and advocacy work. For example Mr Afonso is using his presentation skills learnt on award to act as a public disability advocate and is often appears as a disability spokesperson in the Timorese media. Alumni are helping to change societal attitudes towards people with disability.

Alumni are also volunteering in their local communities. For example, Ms da Cunha is a mentor to students from a local high school and provides support to the deaf community.

*We started small group activities with the deaf community, just on learning some language and helping them with reading, writing, things like that, small things that sometimes people don't think are valuable but I think if it can help inspire them to reach higher education... I know the education system in Timor is yet to accommodate those needs: the deaf and the vision impaired, but it's not impossible.*

## 2.5 Factors influencing these outcomes

In exploring their post-award experiences, a number of factors were identified by the alumni in this Case Study as enablers or challenges to being able to use their new skills and knowledge in the workplace and contribute to development. An important context in thinking about the outcomes of this group of alumni is the relatively recent time since graduation (between 2013 and 2016).

The common factors raised by alumni which impacted their ability to contribute to development are summarised in the Table 2 below and further discussed in this section.

**Table 3: Common factors which impacted alumni’s ability to contribute to development**

Enabling contributions to development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• strong motivation among alumni to improve living standards and social justice in Timor-Leste</li> <li>• course design and relevance</li> <li>• quality of teaching and learning</li> <li>• on-award work experience</li> </ul>
Challenges in contributing to development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• job availability post award</li> <li>• political instability and red tape</li> <li>• lack of funding and resource constraints</li> <li>• lack of reliable internet service</li> </ul>

### 2.5.1 Enabling factors

While the nuances and combination of the enabling factors differ between individuals, in this section, broad enabling factors are outlined with examples from alumni.

#### Strong motivation among alumni to improve living standards and social justice in Timor-Leste

The motivation of the alumni in this Case Study is a significant factor in their achievements and contribution to development. All alumni in this Case Study cited a strong motivation to improve the living standards in Timor-Leste and create a just, stable, and inclusive society. Many of the alumni in focus are vocal advocates and activists for vulnerable populations including people with disability, children, rural and remote populations and those living below the poverty line. Mr do Rosario, refers to it as a type of ‘calling’, a desire ‘to serve people who have been left behind’ and improve outcomes for all Timorese.

Four of the Case Study alumni have a disability and cite a strong motivation to be ‘mentors’, to improve the rights and living standards of people living with disability in Timor-Leste through sharing their positive experiences studying in Australia. Ms S. Soares stated:

*In every training I always mention, to motivate people, that they are not alone and that they are able to do things. Even if you’ve got vision impairment, in Australia there is assistive technology to help you, even if you are blind or have vision impairment, you can still study. You can go to university. You can get a higher degree.*

### Course design and relevance

Another key enabling factor identified by alumni was the course content and design. Each of the three fellowships represented in the Case Study were specifically designed to provide valuable skills and knowledge to build capacity in the field of disability, rehabilitation and policy development at the country and regional level.

Professor Gwynnyth Llewellyn, who coordinated both of the University of Sydney's fellowships in focus as the former Director of the Centre for Disability Research and Policy at the University of Sydney, stated that the core 'program logic' behind the two fellowships was 'to remove 'silos in the country at the same time as building individuals' capacity'. This was done through the recruitment of participants from across the sector (government, DPOs, INGO and NGOs) and encouraging them to create 'networks' at both the country and regional level while learning valuable sector specific skills.

According to Professor Llewellyn, this builds 'individual capacity, capacity within the country across different sectors and then capacity across the region'. For those participants with disability this 'empowered' them to have a voice in the sector and collaborate in building rights-based change at the organisational and societal level. Professor Llewellyn noted:

*I think we can't underestimate the role Australia played, actually, in getting that disability inclusive development. The Australian Aid was known everywhere in the world for leading that, what they called a twin-track approach where there are disability specific projects or programs and then there's mainstream programs which include people with disability, but all of it about people with disability and DPOs, the representative organisations, being the leaders and actually actively involved. And Australia led the world in that.*

In addition to the mix of participants, another key factor of the success of the fellowships was the tailored course content, designed specially to provide much needed practical skills and knowledge within the disability sector.

For example, Dr Ellison from Flinders University worked in collaboration with participating organisations in Timor-Leste to 'co-design' the fellowship to help meet gaps identified by the sector. According to Dr Ellison the four week program covered 'a combination of theoretical social model of disability, the UNCRPD, and what Timor's doing to fit into the international scene of disability'. It provided theory-based lessons in the morning and field visits in the afternoon and covered topics such as models of social protection, inclusive employment programs, universal design and accessibility, rights, representation and decision making, and 'person-centred approaches' to health care and rehabilitation.

Dr Ellison added that alumni visited a range of different agencies and services as part of their field work and participated in a number of tailored workshops, often led by people with disability, as part of their immersive program.

*We tried to intermingle the heavy theoretical learning ...we'd either go visit somewhere or we would bring a person with a disability in or we'd do something practical, like, "Let's paint, let's do drumming, let's do visual arts. How can you go back to Timor and engage people with a disability in these activities?"*

For those allied health professionals, Dr Ellison and her team included practical skills with a focus on 'learning through play' for the therapists treating children with disability, and providing practical examples on how to enrich rehabilitation on a limited budget. The program also included sessions every Friday on leadership, management and professional ethics. Alumni were given time with a senior leader in the disability sector each week to brainstorm solutions to issues they may be facing in Timor-Leste.

Flinders University fellow, Mr Afonso found the fellowship transformational, allowing him to build his leadership and technical skills within the DPO sector. It also provided him with improved advocacy skills framed around inclusion and accessibility.

*It really helped a lot. Personally, for me it has helped a lot, for instance, in terms of management level, leadership level. So, I've done a lot of presentations, how to do presentations and also how to advocate, representing civil society, talking with my stats team. That has given me confidence, built my confidence. My career has developed a lot after completing this fellowship.*



Figure 3: ALA drumming workshop in 2015. Photo: courtesy of Flinders University

Studying a Master of Public Policy, Ms da Cunha found her course provided her a firm foundational understanding of the larger issues involved in policy design and implementation such as ‘research skills, networking, coordination, stakeholder engagement and communication’. This is closely aligned with the work she is doing with PHD.

*I think having that policy study helped me a lot, actually, in this current job, because my job was not only program development but also we have to develop more strategy for the organisations, also helping our implementing partners, the disability organisations with their policy development and strategies, for some of their programs.*

Over the last 12 months Ms da Cunha has really used skills learnt on award to support the government, through the MSSSI, to develop the implementation of the National Disability Policy. Ms da Cunha stated:

*I think you need to also be able to have that kind of diplomacy language as well when you speak with them [government], also being able to translate some of the complex terminologies into simpler language. That’s why the document is now written in Tetum instead of English, as it was before.*

### Quality of teaching and learning

All alumni interviewed cited that they experienced a high standard of teaching and learning while on-award. This includes advanced teaching and learning facilities and dedicated international support services such as preparatory English language programs, academic support, and counselling.

Ms da Cunha found the Introductory Academic Program (IAP) for Australian scholarship students extremely helpful when arriving to study her masters at the University of Melbourne as it provided an overview of the services available to students as well creating links with other scholarship students from across the region.

*Because it’s for all of the [scholarship] students, it’s kind of helping you establish your friendships, the people that you’re going to study with and forming the networks and so on, and understanding the system of the university, access to the library and so on. I think it was a really good process to start. The office for international support, especially for us, was always open, it was always reachable.*

*I was part of the ADS scholars, who have an association that we have activities regularly and so on, which was really good, just to help us not miss home so much.*

For those alumni with disability, another key enabling factor were accessible learning environments and inclusive teaching practices. Fellowship alumni recall being provided with mobility support, assisted technologies and translated course materials while on award which enriched their learning experience. According to Ms S. Soares, Flinders University supplied an electric wheelchair during her four week fellowship and 'were really supportive, providing all the materials and everything, accessible in both languages' for those fellows who had a basic level of English. Ms S. Soares added:

*The first impression I got from this fellowship was: after arriving at Flinders University, I could see almost everything is advanced and accessible for people with disability and they were very supportive of people with disability. I received an electric wheelchair.*

Another enabling factor is the close support given by Australia Awards for people with disability while on-award. They work closely with each host university to ensure they are able to support awardees during their studies. Ms Lu who is responsible for managing Australia Awards selection in Timor-Leste stated:

*We try to make sure the university meets whatever the needs the awardee has, meets their requirements during their study. We support it with close monitoring and communication from Angela, our disability consultant.*

While studying at Victoria University, **Mr Angelo Venceslau** found the experience inclusive. 'Whether you are disabled or not, you have the same opportunity to study' and can participate equally in the classroom and group work.

*They wanted to hear about the experiences I brought to the classroom. So, the process of learning from the lecturers and also from the other fellow students was very positive.*

### On-award work experience

For those alumni in this Case Study who participated in a long-term scholarship, all four undertook some form of work experience as part of their time in Australia and attribute this as improving their confidence and providing valuable insight into skills like strategic planning, project management and community engagement.

For example, both Mr Reis and Mr Venceslau undertook community-based placements during their studies. Mr Reis was able to undertake a part of his placement in Australia, and the other part in Timor-Leste with the support of his supervisor. Mr Venceslau recalls that working in a range of organisations in Melbourne as part of his community development placements had a large impact on his confidence and ability to interact with different types of people.

Encouraged by a tutor at University of South Australia, during his scholarship, Mr do Rosario volunteered at a busy foodbank in Adelaide run by Anglicare. Through this experience, he gained an insight into the challenges vulnerable groups face in Australia.

*I learned that life is very tough for everyone... I realised that is not only happening in Timor but, of course, it's happening everywhere.*

In addition to her scholarship, Ms da Cunha was awarded in an internship that was part of the (now ceased) Australia Awards Prime Minister's Pacific Program<sup>2</sup> while studying her masters. It provided her with an industry-based internship and leadership training which has assisted her work at PHD.

*I did my internship in one of the organisations in one of the suburbs in Melbourne, with disability organisations doing a lot of cognitive-based therapy with autistic children and also [in the] community with mental illness. So, it was a really good experience for me to see that, because, since coming back to Timor, working in this sector, one of my programs was supporting mental health organisations, and mostly they are just taking medication, and that's really high. So, I'm really thinking about what we can do in terms of alternative treatments.*

2 <https://scopeglobal.com/program/australia-awards-prime-ministers-pacific-program/>

Placements and field visits also provided fellowship alumni with the opportunity to meet with Australian DPOs, and observed allied health professionals working with people with disability. Ms Gusmao recalls:

*When I was in Australia, in the placements and in the field, I learned specifically, for instance, how to do assessments, how to collect data and information... Even during the placements I always called here to Timor-Leste and said, "We need to do things like this because the work we did in our industry is not correct. It's not complete or detailed or comprehensive. We have to make it like this." Here we learn more things.*

Mr Afonso was able to meet with DPOs and advocacy groups while on-award including Kelly Vincent from then South Australian, Dignity for Disability Party (now Dignity Party) which had a 'significant' influence on his move into politics.

*When I came back, I did a lot of promotions about the rights of people with disability to be involved in politics, and now a lot of people with disability are being involved in politics and becoming politicians.*

### 2.5.2 Challenging factors

The challenges the alumni in this Case Study have navigated to fully utilise their skills and knowledge reflect the short time since completing their course (three to six years) and their stage of career progression (early to mid-career). The following section outlines the factors experienced by alumni, which can be broadly categorised as challenges related to:

- job availability post award
- political instability and red tape
- lack of funding and resource constraints
- lack of reliable internet services.

### Job availability post award

Three of the 16 alumni in this Case Study were required to leave their jobs in the NGO sector to undertake their Australia Awards scholarships. Of this group, two alumni stated their job search post award was challenging due to high unemployment and limited roles, especially in the disability sector. Mr Reis recalls it was:

*It's easy to get a job, but your preferred job is not there... you feel bad because 'what's the point of me spending five years in Australia if I can't use this knowledge?'*

Mr Angelo Venceslau also struggled to find work on his return to Timor-Leste in 2016 after completing a Bachelor of Community Development. He applied for many jobs within the disability sector and was unemployed for three years. He recalls trying to work out why he couldn't get past the interview stage and began to 'question' himself and felt 'disempowered' by the process of looking for work as a person with disability.

*They highly encourage people with disability to apply for the positions. As a disabled person, I'm happy to apply for that position but I did four or five interviews for a position that I really want to work in, and then I'm not selected... [But the selection process doesn't try] to understand what social inclusion is, even though we advocate for a program, advocate that people with disability should be going to school, create this opportunity, but we didn't include this into real practice in Timor-Leste...*

He sought help from the Australia Awards Alumni team in Timor-Leste to help improve his resume writing and interview skills and they recommended applying for positions that were open to people with disability at organisations supported by DFAT. Unable to gain work in the disability sector Mr Venceslau eventually began paid employment as a coordinator at the National Olympic Committee of Timor-Leste in early 2019.

### Political instability and red tape

Bureaucracy and political instability were cited as common challenges experienced by alumni in focus. While working with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on behalf of the European Union (EU), Mr do Rosario was involved in the allocation of €50 million Euros and found the process 'very, very challenging' due to political instability and red tape.

*I was managing nutrition, roads and also health promotion. That's €50 million Euros for two years. But then we were [only] able to spend about 25.7 million at the time because Timor-Leste's political situation was up and down, there were the changes of the leaders, so they were not able to make decisions to spend all this money.*

Changes in political leadership was also cited by alumni as affecting the workplace and the capacity of senior leaders to make change over time due to the fact that management roles within the Timorese public service are political appointments.

### Lack of funding and resource constraints

According to the majority of alumni in this Case Study, inadequate Timorese government funding remains a huge barrier to the implementation of inclusive public policy and the creation of accessible public services and infrastructure. For disability advocates like Mr Afonso, who campaigns to make public institutions accessible, funding remains a huge problem.

*The issue here is about budgeting, about money to be invested there, because even the National University is funded by the government, and, in fact, there's no money to put there to make everything in the university accessible in terms of teaching and learning, physical accessibility.*

The alumni in this Case Study working in the public health sector also cited a lack of funding for rehabilitation equipment or dedicated facilities as acting as a real barrier to utilising some of the skills and knowledge learnt on-award. In relation to this, Mr da Silva noted:

*The thing is because we just got independence we didn't have facilities to do all this stuff. So, we kept the knowledge there, but we only did what could be done in Timor, simply because...you have to have facilities available to do some of the things that we learned there.*

Those working in government also cited funding difficulties. Without the support of a specific champion or leader to push their policies through, it can be difficult to get adequate funding to implement their ideas fully. Ms Vicente reflected:

*Sometimes there is a challenge because it [government] is top down. So, for the implementation, there is lack of funding and decision-making power.*

### Lack of reliable internet services

Timor-Leste is a mountainous country and telecommunications are unreliable not only in the regional areas but also in the capital Dili. Poor access to reliable internet services is seen by all alumni participating in the Case Study as a major challenge in conducting their day to day work. The use of email is very limited, even within the public service in Dili. Most government departments have no access to internet services, or at best a sporadic connection. According to Mr Noronha at the Ministry for Social Solidarity and Inclusion:

*It's very hard to access the internet...so it's hard to connect with each other making it very difficult to work collaboratively between different departments and ministries on cross cutting issues such as disability and inclusion.*

## 3. Public Diplomacy Outcomes

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Alumni in this Case Study have maintained strong personal and professional links with friends, students and professionals who they met while on award. Given the small number of professionals working in the disability sector in Timor-Leste, all alumni working in this area are closely connected with each other. This creates a vibrant network of disability experts and advocates who are deeply committed to improving disability inclusive policies and services in Timor-Leste.

This Case Study provides one of the strongest evidence to date of alumni facilitating formal partnerships between Australian and Timorese organisations as a result of the connections made while on award. Examples include institutional links between Australian institutions and Timorese partner organisations which have been facilitated by alumni through opportunities provided by the Australia Awards fellowship and NCP. Alumni are also fostering ongoing professional and personal connections with each other and Australians they met on award through their work or professional affiliations.

One of the key enabling factors that facilitated these links is the high level of investment in disability inclusive development by DFAT at the time alumni returned to Timor-Leste. This was coupled with ongoing Australian government funding through the Australia Awards and NCP, which provided the resources to deepen the bilateral partnership through study and workplace exchange programs.

### 3.1 Introduction

This chapter explores the extent to which alumni are contributing to two of the Australia Awards long-term Outcomes:

- Outcome 2: 'Alumni are contributing to cooperation between Australia and partner countries', and;
- Outcome 3: 'Effective, mutually advantageous partnerships between institutions and businesses in Australia and partner countries.'

The *Australia Awards Global Monitoring and Evaluation Framework* (the Framework) describes Outcome 2—cooperation—as being the connections and networks between alumni and Australia which represent the people-to-people links such as alumni associations, friendships, or professional connections with former lecturers. Outcome 3—partnerships—has a slightly different emphasis, and 'looks beyond the individual links'. By doing this, Outcome 3 'articulates Australia's intention to see organisational links' occur as formal partnerships (DFAT, 2017).

The 'seeds' for these outcomes are intended to have been developed on award. The Framework suggests that during their time on award, scholars 'build relationships with Australians, other awardees, and Australian organisations and businesses' and act to catalyse or enhance links between organisations. Further to this, it is anticipated that alumni engagement and support then assist as a post-award mechanism to maintain alumni relationships with Australia.

This chapter explores the extent to which alumni in this Case Study have been able to develop and maintain connections and professional networks with people and organisations based on their time on award in Australia. The findings from this group of alumni suggest that both Outcome 2—cooperation and Outcome 3—partnerships, are being **achieved** for the group of focus in this Case Study.

## 3.2 Background

Due to the geographical proximity between Australia and Timor-Leste, the people-to-people links between the two countries have been cultivated by decades of shared political, social and cultural history. In 2018, Australia and Timor-Leste committed to strengthening the bilateral relationship, culminating in the signing of a joint communiqué on 'a new chapter and revitalised partnership' which focuses on enhanced trade, investment and economic links, defence cooperation, social and economic development (DFAT, 2018).

Since 2002, Australia has been Timor-Leste's largest development partner (estimated at \$110 million in official development assistance in 2019-2020) (DFAT, 2020). Of particular relevance to this Case Study, is the strong focus of the Australian aid program on disability inclusive development, which underpins the Aid Investment Plan (AIP) Timor-Leste 2015/16 to 2018/19 (DFAT, n.d.a) to improve access to services for people with disability and their participation in policy decisions.

The aid program is also supporting private sector growth in Timor-Leste through vocational skills training and labour mobility schemes, which have further strengthened people-to-people links between the two countries. Since 2012, over 3,400 Timorese workers participated in seasonal employment in Australia (DFAT, 2019b). According to the latest Australian census, the Timorese diaspora in Australia has grown to nearly 10,000, beginning with the first arrival of Timorese during World War II (ABS, 2019). Many Australians have forged strong ties with Timor-Leste through government, business, community and friendship groups, including the Australia-Timor-Leste Friendship Network and Rotary clubs around Australia.

Australia Awards and other Australian-funded programs, such as the NCP and Australian Volunteers International, are regarded as an important mechanism for fostering ongoing people-to-people links between the two countries. Between 1999 and 2019, Australia provided 350 Australia Awards scholarships to Timorese students, and in 2019 supported 200 NCP students to undertake practical placements in Timorese institutions (DFAT, 2019b).

## 3.3 Networks and links developed on award

There is strong evidence from this Case Study of alumni contributing to ongoing cooperation and enduring partnerships with Australia and Australians. One of the key features of this Case Study is the well-connected community of professionals working in the disability sector across different government, civil society and international aid organisations. Their shared experience in Australia has helped to create a critical mass of people who are using their skills and networks to advocate for the rights of people with disability in Timor-Leste by influencing public policy and changing community attitudes.

Alumni have continued to maintain personal and professional networks with each other and with Australians they met on award. One of the clearest examples of this, is the formal partnership developed between an Australian university and Timorese partner organisations which was facilitated by an alumnus. Importantly, this partnership created a catalytic effect in the disability sector in Timor-Leste, by building a stronger network of Timorese professionals with improved skills and knowledge and an enduring link with Australia through their former lecturer.

Most alumni in this Case Study (11 out of 16) have continued to facilitate formal partnerships or organisational links with Australian organisations on their return to Timor-Leste, therefore, demonstrating achievement of Outcome 3. Five alumni have been directly employed by an Australian institution or have worked under an Australian-government funded program, while six alumni are helping to cultivate a formal partnership between their workplaces and an Australian organisation or community service group under an existing formal arrangement.

The following list summarises the cooperation and partnerships alumni in this Case Study developed as a result of their experience on award and after their return to Timor-Leste. The discussion in the sections below elaborates on these types of cooperation and partnerships with examples from the alumni interviewed.

Table 4: Summary of cooperation and partnerships of alumni

<b>Outcome 2—Cooperation</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ongoing professional network of alumni</li> <li>• Friendships with Australians and the Timorese community in Australia</li> </ul>
<b>Outcome 3—Partnerships</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Professional and institutional partnerships formed as a result of Australia Awards</li> <li>• Employment with Australian organisations after Award</li> <li>• Contributions to NCP Partnerships</li> </ul>

### 3.3.1 Professional and institutional partnerships

All alumni in this Case Study reported an ongoing professional connection with their Australian lecturers or other professionals working in the disability sector which was developed as a result of their Australia Awards.

Evidence of a formal partnership identified in this Case Study, forged directly as a result of an alumnus' time in Australia, and was the collaboration between Mr Reis and one of his Australian lecturers. During his scholarship at Flinders University, Mr Reis developed a strong connection with his lecturer Dr Caroline Ellison and encouraged her to visit Timor-Leste to see first-hand the challenges within the disability sector. Dr Ellison had previously hosted fellowships with Indonesia and with Mr Reis' support, capitalised on the opportunity of the Australia Award fellowship to establish a formal partnership between Flinders University and Timorese partner organisations to deliver the 2015 fellowship "Disability Capacity for Improving Rehabilitation and Disability Policy and Practice". Through his networks, Mr Reis was instrumental in introducing frontline disability professionals, DPOs and government stakeholders to Dr Ellison, which enabled Dr Ellison to identify capacity gaps and co-design the program specifically for the needs of the sector. This program has had a large impact on building capacity within the disability sector and key examples of its impact has been explored in Chapter 2 of this Case Study.

On his return to Timor-Leste, Mr Reis and a number of Flinders University fellowship alumni continued to engage the professional assistance of Dr Ellison to facilitate the establishment of a new disability department at the National University of Timor-Leste (funded through the British Council). Drawing on his connections with Dr Ellison and Flinders University, Mr Reis has also facilitated the ongoing organisational links between Flinders University and a number of Timorese institutions under the NCP Mobility program. Mr Reis helped to arrange for Australian students to volunteer with Ismara Alma (a Catholic School and Orphanage run by the Alma Sisters) and Klibur Domin Rehabilitation Centre. Students worked with staff from MSSSI, DPOs and students from National University as part of their project work. This partnership has created an opportunity to deepen the connection between Australian and Timorese students and organisations. Dr Ellison confirmed:

*I went back with students on a New Colombo Plan. That's how I was able to get the resources to go back, which was a good thing... I still get messages from Timor and the students I took on the New Colombo Plan too. Some of the other people that helped me from Flinders with the [Australia Awards] still have contact with some of the Timorese.*

For the alumni who participated in the Flinders University fellowship, Dr Ellison, was singled out as a highly-respected professor and mentor who has provided ongoing support long after alumni have returned to Timor-Leste. This includes technical advice, career guidance and introductions to Australians and Australian organisations. For Mr Afonso, Dr Ellison facilitated a meeting with a DFAT officer at the Australian Embassy in Dili to advocate for people with disability to gain access to Australia Awards. He recalled:

*There has been a lot of progress with mentoring...and advice in terms of advocacy, and Caroline also enabled me to meet... one of the Australian DFAT people there [to advocate for] giving scholarships to people with disability and...consider enabling people with disability to study English and to be able to study abroad.*

There is also evidence of ongoing professional collaborations with colleagues and professional alumni met on award. As a result of a 2013 fellowship at the University of Sydney, Mr J. Soares collaborated with fellows from the Asia Pacific region and researchers at the University of Sydney Centre for Disability Research and Policy, to develop the Monitoring Manual and Menu (MM&M) for community based disability inclusive development programs. The MM&M was the first of its kind at the time, and was later published by the University of Sydney in 2014.

Other ongoing professional links formed on award were related to people alumni met during their placements. These types of cooperation have been particularly beneficial for those working in allied health, where they have been able to draw on the expertise of Australians working in the same profession, for practical and technical advice that could be adapted in their own organisations. Mr da Silva, an occupational therapist from the National Hospital has maintained contact with one of the occupational therapists he met on award to 'ask for ideas when [he] has some difficulties'. Mr Oqui, who is head of physiotherapy at the Centre for National Rehabilitation is working with the Australian Physiotherapists Association in Australia to set up a similar professional structure in Timor-Leste.

*I still keep in touch with them and will in the future. Sometimes they send their experts from Australia to come and train us...A couple of months ago they came here and then we had a big seminar in the National Hospital.*

### 3.3.2 Professional network among alumni developed on award

There is a relatively small number of professionals working in the disability sector in Timor-Leste, including only five occupational therapists and 35 physiotherapists in the whole country. This creates an opportunity for alumni to foster close professional connections with each other, to engage in professional development, share information, collaborate and provide technical support for each other. Notably, alumni in this Case Study have shown an enduring personal commitment to improving disability inclusion in Timor-Leste throughout their careers and all have remained deeply involved in disability support or advocacy in their current roles.

For alumni who undertook a fellowship together, this has been an important mechanism for them to continue the relationship established on award. As Mr Freitas explained:

*...we are in the working group, though some are not active but most of us are still going on chat groups, so we share what we've done after going to Australia and also not only the fellowship but the Australian Alumni. So a few weeks ago, there was a Flinders reunion where all alumni from Flinders were together.*

The network also extends beyond those who have undertaken the fellowship and includes Timorese students who studied in different courses and at different universities in Australia. Although they are working in different organisations and across different sectors, the informal network of alumni is an important source of professional and personal support for alumni to remain connected. Mr Noronha noted:

*Some Flinders alumni, not specifically studying about disability, but some who were studying about health, created a good relationship with Timorese students who studied at Flinders, and sometimes through work, though this international agency or in the partner organisations, they can meet and chat.*

Given the high cost of internet services and poor internet connections in Timor-Leste, social media platforms have been an important communication tool for alumni to stay in touch on a regular basis. Alumni have identified a Facebook group set up by Flinders University as a particularly useful means of communication among the group.

### 3.3.3 Friendships with Australian and international students

Many in this group of alumni continue to have a personal connection with Australians and other students they met while on award. Ms da Cunha was an active member of the University of Melbourne student association and has remained in contact with many of her international friends from the same course. Mr Oqui, who was on a fellowship for one month still keeps in touch with the people he met during his time in Australia.

*We still keep in touch with some of the Australian people there, and also we went to some centres and then we observed what they were doing there and everything, and then we know them. And after that we have kept in touch with them until now, so I think it was the very best experience.*

Alumni noted that the use of social media has helped them to stay closely connected with their Australian and international friends. Most of the interactions are informal and offer a means for checking in with their friends to 'update each other on what they are doing' and to see if 'they have found work and are happy'.

### 3.3.4 Institutional partnerships formed after Award

While all alumni have reported an ongoing connection with Australia through their personal and professional networks, some institutional links with Australian organisations have only been forged after alumni have returned to Timor-Leste. While the examples below are not a direct result of experiences or interactions during alumni's time in Australia, these links are equally important in strengthening ongoing cooperation between the two countries and are discussed in light of alumni's contributions towards Outcome 3 after their Award.

An important contextual consideration is the timing of alumni's return to Timor-Leste at the completion of their studies between 2011 and 2016. During this period, disability inclusive programming was a high priority for the Australian Government in Timor-Leste, and equipped with highly relevant skills, as well as English language proficiency, alumni in this Case Study were at the forefront of disability inclusive programming and public policy discussions. Some alumni, particularly those who completed an Australia Awards scholarship, were well placed to find a job with an Australian organisation delivering disability inclusive programs. Examples of Australian organisations in Timor-Leste employing the alumni in this Case Study include Cardno (Ms da Cunha), Charles Darwin University (Mr Reis), and Credit Union Foundation of Australia (Mr do Rosario).

Given the prominence of the DFAT-funded PHD (\$120 million 2016-2021) in addressing human development needs in Timor-Leste, including the delivery of services for people with disability, four alumni in this Case Study were able to find employment or funding support to work with PHD. Mr do Rosario was the Disability Officer in PHD from 2016-2019, a role that has been taken over by Ms da Cunha who is the current Disability Team Leader. PHD also funds RHTO to delivery education, training and services for people with disability in Dili and surrounding districts. Mr dos Santos and Ms S. Soares are both alumni working at RHTO, which has been implementing PHD activities since 2016 across 13 municipalities in Timor-Leste. RHTO has also hosted Australian Volunteers International (AVI) and in 2016 Mr dos Santos published a joint paper for the Australian National University State, Society and Governance in Melanesia to promote disability inclusion in Timor-Leste.

Alumni in this Case Study have also made positive contributions to strengthen the ongoing partnership between their organisations and community service groups in Australia. For example, Klibur Domin has a long-established relationship with Australia and Australians. It was created in 2000 through funding from Australian charity organisation Ryder-Cheshire Australia, with the aim of providing residential and outreach health care and rehabilitation services for people with multi-drug-resistant-tuberculosis and disability. Since then, Klibur Domin has also worked with a number of Rotary clubs in Australia through grants and Australian volunteers to continue providing its services to the Timorese community. Alumni Mr J. Soares and Mr Freitas, through their work at Klibur Domin, are facilitating the institutional links between the organisation and their Australian counterparts. An Australian occupational therapy student who has recently returned from her placement at Klibur Domin spoke highly of the experience and knowledge she gained and the support she received from staff (Ryder-Cheshire Australia, 2019):

*From the friendly and supportive staff to the highly motivated inpatients and outpatients in the community, my time in Klibur Domin facilitated and strengthened my learning and knowledge of the occupational therapy rehabilitation process... It is my future goal to return to Klibur Domin as an Occupational Therapist and to work with my friends Carlos and Pedro again.*

### 3.3.5 Contributions to New Colombo Plan partnerships

Alumni working in allied health services are making a significant contribution to the Australia-Timor-Leste partnership through their mentoring and support for Australian students under the NCP (NCP, Box 4). Ms Levita Alves, Head Palliative Care at the National Hospital explained:

*We have done a lot of work with different universities in Australia, so some of them come under an agreement with the government, some of them come to placement here... have signed a memorandum of understanding. The last year of their placement, they need to come here and do their last placement in Timor-Leste, so it's done on an annual basis.*

The University of Queensland and Flinders University have had formal arrangements in place with the National Hospital, the CNR and Klibur Domin Rehabilitation Centre and have regularly sent their students over the past few years. Mr Oqui sees the mutual benefit of having NCP students at his centre. As he described:

*When they came...I said, "Thank you for coming, and then this is the centre so you can learn new things in the country and we also learn from you." So you were the other students but some of the experience was different, so I think it's very healthy for us.*

This sentiment was reflected by the experience of an NCP speech pathology student from the University of Queensland, who completed her placement at CRN (University of Queensland, 2017):

*I enjoyed working with the people of Timor-Leste. Learning from them, developing an understanding and respect for the way they work—which is more of a relationship centred model of care—was so rewarding.*

As mentioned previously, Dr Ellison from Flinders University's took a group of ten students studying Disability and Development Education to Timor-Leste as part of a NCP student mobility placement. They worked at a number of organisations including Klibur Domin. Dr Ellison, highlighted the project as beneficial for both the Australian students and the organisations they visited (flindersblogs, 2016):

*This project has been a win-win for everyone involved. It helps our Timorese friends living with disability, our Timorese colleagues, the broader Timorese community... Those who have these experiences outside Australia, be they staff or student, return richer and better professionals and richer and better people.*

These examples demonstrate that alumni are playing a key role in fostering the formal partnerships between their workplaces and organisations in Australia. They are making a significant contribution to the positive people-to-people and organisational links between the two countries through professional collaboration and cross-cultural understanding.

#### The New Colombo Plan

The NCP is an initiative of the Australian Government to strengthen people-to-people and institutional links between Australia and the Indo-Pacific region. The program was established in 2014 to support Australian undergraduate students with studies or internships to build their knowledge and understanding of the region.

There are two supported programs under NCP. The *scholarship program* supports undergraduate students for up to 19 months of studies in 40 countries across the region. The mobility grant program is more flexible, providing both short and longer-term study, internships, mentorships, practicums and research.

The program is valued at around \$51 million annually from 2019-20 and supports up to 10,000 students each year (DFAT, n.d.b). DFAT (n.d.c) estimates that by the end of 2020, there will be over 40,000 NCP alumni. In 2019 alone, Timor-Leste hosted 200 NCP students (DFAT, 2019b). Alumni in this Case Study are making a significant contribution to the NCP partnership by mentoring NCP students on placements or internships at their organisations.

### 3.4 Factors influencing these outcomes

The table below summarises the factors that have influenced the outcomes of this group of alumni to maintain cooperation and partnerships with Australia. These factors are explored further in the discussion that follows.

Table 5: Factors that have influenced the outcomes of alumni to maintain cooperation and partnerships with Australia

Enabling cooperation and partnerships
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Close alignment between Australian aid priorities and alumni skills gained on award</li> <li>• Support under Australia Awards and NCP</li> <li>• Placements while on award</li> <li>• Support from Australia Awards Alumni (activities, events, grants)</li> </ul>
Challenges to cooperation and partnerships
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poor internet services limit opportunities to remain connected</li> <li>• Language barrier</li> <li>• Contextual factors due to the introduction of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) created challenges for Australian organisations to engage</li> </ul>

#### 3.4.1 Enabling factors

The findings from this Case Study suggest that there were different types of enablers that facilitated the cooperation and partnerships alumni developed with Australia, including the policy environment, resourcing, on-award experiences and post-award support.

As discussed previously, disability inclusive programming was a priority for DFAT in Timor-Leste during the focus period of this Case Study. Around the time that most of the alumni in this Case Study returned to Timor-Leste in late 2015, DFAT was designing the new multi-sectoral PHD to address human development needs in Timor-Leste. The budget for disability inclusive programming was targeted at over \$1 million in 2016-17 (Abt, 2017). This created a unique opportunity for alumni returning from their Award with relevant skills and knowledge in the disability sector to contribute to the implementation of PHD. As a result, the program directly employed two alumni (Mr do Rosario and Ms da Cunha), while another two received funding from PHD for their organisation to deliver disability inclusive activities (Mr dos Santos and Ms S. Soares at RHTO).

Australian Government funded programs such as Australia Awards fellowships and NCP, provided an important mechanism for fostering ongoing formal partnerships and people-to-people links between Australia and Timor-Leste. By capitalising on his connections with Flinders University while on award, Mr Reis collaborated with his lecturer to design a fellowship under Australia Awards to bring Timorese disability professionals to Australia for capacity building. This resulted in a cascade effect, where further professional and personal connections were created between fellows and their lecturers, and institutional links between Flinders University and several Timorese government, civil society and disabled peoples organisations. Similarly, the NCP has enabled the strengthening of people-to-people and organisational partnerships between Australian students and Timorese disability organisations through volunteering and work placements.

Alumni were also able to take advantage of the connections with Australians created on award through their placements and workshops. In particular, the design of both the 2015 Flinders University and 2013 University of Sydney fellowships were deliberate in providing students with the opportunity to visit disability organisations and engage in practical activities. Some alumni have been able to leverage those experiences and turned them into enduring friendships and organisational links with Australia. On a personal level, Ms S. Soares noted that 'the experience that impressed me the most was being able to make friends...with people with Down syndrome and autism in the drama club'. She still maintains the friendship and hopes to invite them to Timor-Leste to perform in the future. In contrast, Mr Freitas was able to leverage the connections he made on award into a professional relationship, which he continues to foster in his current role:

*Yes, we created relationships, we kept in contact with disability organisations in South Australia, specifically those who produced artificial legs and hands, and also those with vision and hearing impairment.*

The Australia Awards Alumni network in Timor-Leste is a mechanism that helps alumni stay connected through social and professional activities. These include thematic workshops and seminars, Alumni Showcase of research, Alumnus of the Year award and a small grant scheme to support professional development and leadership activities. Some alumni in this Case Study are more actively engaged in alumni activities than others, but all are members of the Australia-Timor-Leste Alumni Association. While most alumni indicated that they have attended a social networking event, Mr Reis has been a successful recipient of the small grants award to conduct research into accessibility challenges faced by people with visual impairment in remote areas.

As this group of alumni have only recently returned to Timor-Leste from their studies in Australia, there exists a genuine effort and commitment among them to stay connected with each other and to their Australian counterparts through social and professional links. Given the small number of professionals working in the disability sector in Timor-Leste, this small cohort of alumni share a particularly strong bond through their professional and personal commitment to the rights and protection of people with disability in Timor-Leste.

### 3.4.2 Challenging factors

One of the key challenging factors limiting the opportunities for alumni to remain connected with their Australian counterparts is the prohibitive cost and unreliability of telecommunication services in Timor-Leste. For example, alumni working at MSSJ have reported not having access to their emails for the last six months due to poor internet connections. However, within the alumni group, social media platforms, such as Facebook and WhatsApp, are a more cost effective means of communication, and have facilitated more frequent and instantaneous contact among them. This has also allowed alumni from the Flinders University fellowship to stay connected with their former lecturers through a Facebook group established while on award.

The lack of English language proficiency among many of the fellowship alumni was also observed as a barrier for maintaining links with Australia. This is not surprising as the English literacy rate in Timor-Leste was only 22.3 per cent, compared to 77.8 per cent for Tetum and 39.3 per cent for Portuguese which are the two official languages (National Statistics Directorate, 2010). Dr Ellison noted that while the fellowship program run by Flinders University provided many opportunities for alumni to meet with disability organisations in Australia to promote institutional links, it was difficult to maintain these links due to the language barrier.

*It was okay when they were in Australia and trying to link to these organisations when we had interpreters with them, but when the interpreters were gone, that was the downside of me not bringing people that spoke English. But maybe that's an unrealistic expectation of the program... So while we didn't achieve the ongoing organisation to organisation links, that didn't happen because of language...I think that both sides would have probably liked to continue it, but without interpreters, it was really difficult.*

However, there seems to be a growing demand in Timor-Leste for English as a working language and more and more people are undertaking English language training. In recognising these constraints, particularly for people with disability, the Workforce Development Program and Australia Awards in Timor-Leste have introduced measures to support people to find employment or pursue an award (DFAT, 2018b). This includes a new academic English short course for people with disability to help prepare them to apply for the Australia Awards.

The policy context relating to disability services around the time that many alumni were studying in Australia may have also contributed to difficulties in creating links with Australian disability service providers. As Dr Ellison explained, the introduction of the NDIS created a lot of uncertainty for many organisations in the disability sector, which may have limited the opportunities for long-term engagement with alumni and their organisations:

*...when they came, Australia was going through a transition to the NDIS [National Disability Insurance Scheme]...So most of the Australian organisations were swinging from the chandeliers because they were transitioning to the NDIS or the NDIS was coming in, and Australian disability services are businesses now and what was in it for them? At the time, the advocacy bodies had been disbanded.*

## 4. Alumni Views of Australia

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Alumni have demonstrated an enduring, positive view of Australia, which have been developed as a result of the high quality of Australian education they received, high regard for Australian expertise in disability and inclusion and their social and academic experiences while studying in Australian.

### 4.1 Introduction

The aim of Outcome 4 of the Australia Awards is that ‘alumni view Australia, Australians, and Australian expertise positively’. To achieve Outcome 4, the Australia Awards Monitoring and Evaluation program logic (DFAT, 2017) identifies three key components for building a positive view of Australia:

- alumni were able to establish links within Australia
- alumni had positive experiences on award in Australia, through both living and studying in Australia
- alumni continue to have positive experiences in their interactions with Australia and Australians post award.

Outcome 4 of the Australia Awards recognises that long-lasting positive personal and professional attitudes to Australia are ‘fundamental to alumni contributing to cooperation between Australia and their home countries, and more broadly to the bilateral relationship’ (DFAT, 2016). As is apparent through this quote from the Monitoring and Evaluation Framework, this outcome is also a significant basis for the achievement of Outcome 2—cooperation, discussed in the previous chapter.

The alumni in this Case Study all expressed a positive experience in Australia, which has contributed to an enduring positive view of Australia and Australians. Alumni recognised the quality teaching and learning they received in Australia compared to other countries, which has enhanced their academic experience. In addition, alumni benefited from exposure to the high standard of Australian expertise in the disability sector which has strengthened their own attitudes and practices towards disability inclusive treatment and care. Cultural and social aspects of their time in Australia, through interactions with Australians and support from their universities, have also contributed to a positive experience for alumni while on award.

## 4.2 Examples of positive views of Australia, Australians and Australian expertise

Consistent with the findings from previous case studies undertaken by the Facility, alumni from Timor-Leste highlighted three broad factors that have shaped their views of Australia: 1) the quality and prestige of Australian education; 2) high regard for Australian expertise in disability and inclusion; and 3) experiences in Australia. All alumni spoke fondly of their time in Australia and expressed their gratitude for the valuable experience and knowledge they gained on award. For some, the experience was 'transformational' not only for themselves, but for their families. Examples of the enduring positive views alumni have of Australia, Australians and Australian expertise relating to the three overarching themes are discussed below.

### 4.2.1 Quality and prestige of Australian education

Both Australia Awards fellowship and scholarship alumni in this Case Study highly valued the Australian education they received. This stemmed from two factors relating to the quality of their courses and the prestige of an Australian qualification. Many of the alumni have travelled to other countries for their studies or professional development opportunities and can attest to the comparatively high standards of an Australian education. Ms Vicente from MSSSI stated: "It's a high quality program, it's a very advanced program and people benefit more from that". For Ms da Cunha, the prestige of gaining a qualification from an internationally renowned Australian university gave her an advantage over other students and helped her secure employment before returning to Timor-Leste.

*Being an alumna of Melbourne Uni, I think it's a prestigious university ... I know that my qualifications are at an international level, so I can compete with anyone from any country in terms of my qualifications, so I think that in itself says a lot about the quality...I just went straight into work without having to deal with the stress of looking for a job. I think that speaks volumes about the qualification if you get it from Australia. It makes getting a job easier as well.*

Alumni also highlighted the quality of teaching and learning they experienced while on award. This included the positive interactions they had with their lecturers and tutors and their teaching practice, which encouraged skills such as independent learning and practical applications of knowledge. For Mr Venceslau, it gave him the confidence and the skills that helped him later in his career.

*The quality [and] the process of learning it was great...so in terms of the institution and delivering the education is to teach you how to be independent and to manage things. That's the difference to what we have in Timor-Leste...and you have to adapt yourself to [be] independent in learning to become a good professional.*

Mr do Rosario recalled the relaxed and open communication style of one of his tutors.

*One of my tutors ...he's a very, very good gentleman, maybe because his attitude is very close to all the students. So we got on very well with him, and every time if we got some difficulties, when we went and knocked at the door, he never got mad. He said, "Come and see, discuss."*

As discussed in Chapter 3, many alumni still enjoy a personal and professional relationship with their former lecturers, who they rely on for technical guidance, career advice and professional support.

### Prestige of Australia Awards in Timor-Leste

Australia Awards are well-regarded and highly competitive in Timor-Leste. Currently, scholarships are offered annually in the priority areas of economics, nutrition and social inclusion for undergraduate and postgraduate studies (Australia Awards, 2020).

Australia Awards is recognised for its pre-departure training, on-award and post-award support. People with disability are well-supported and encouraged to apply, with one scholarship allocated to people with disability each year (Australia Awards Timor-Leste, 2015). In addition, the Australian Government Workforce Development Program Timor-Leste is funding an English academic short course for people with disability to enhance their eligibility to apply for an award. Those who go on-award are provided with tailored support, (such as additional training and/or access to assistive technology) to ensure they have a positive academic experience in Australia (DFAT, n.d.d).

Australia Awards alumni are highly sought after by employers in Timor-Leste. According to the 2018 alumni reintegration survey, 94 per cent of alumni are currently employed by the government, NGO or private sector (Palladium, 2019). Twenty three of those are currently in senior positions and four are appointed as ministers or secretaries of state. This attests to the quality of Australian education and the prestige of Australia Awards. According to Mr Ximenes, Monitoring and Evaluation, Workforce Development Program Timor-Leste:

*The strength [of Australia Awards] I can count from the beginning, which is that the recruitment process is very competitive, so when they can come back, it's very easy for them to find a job, to find work. And the participants, mostly they share their skills and knowledge with their workplace, their area of work, and with this, they directly or indirectly contribute to the development of Timor-Leste.*

### 4.2.2 High regard for Australian expertise in disability and inclusion

Alumni in this Case Study cited a high regard for Australian expertise in relation to disability inclusion.

While in Australia, many alumni experienced a positive attitudinal change in relation to the treatment and care of people with disability. As discussed in Chapter 2, this includes approaches to patient-centred and self-directed care, inclusive language and equity in the provision of services which promote independence of people with disability. This is a shift in approach from the traditional Timorese medical model of disability towards a social model of disability like there is in Australia. Mr Reis explained “from my placement in Australia I learned that people with disability can do that in Australia. So you have to look for facilities, something that can enable them to do it.”

For many alumni, having access to field visits and placements while on award provided them with the opportunity to observe Australian professional standards and practices which they then brought back to their organisations. Mr Afonso observed:

*There are a lot of things that I've learned from Australia, basically about the services the government provides to people with disability. Starting from the way they speak to them, services, they have almost one person with disability has got a support worker, and the way they interact with people with disability with respect. Everywhere you go, to public office or any public facility, any services, people prioritise you, and the language itself is respectful and there is friendly language when you speak to people with disability in terms of lack of stereotypes. And there is enough pension subsidy for people with disability, unlike Timor-Leste.*

Comparing his training in Indonesia to that experienced in Australia, Mr Oqui observed “in terms of technology, Australia is more advanced, using technology to support people with disability, doing some rehab as well, and also it's based on in the individual.” He found his fellowship course provided him an opportunity to learn about the practical application of theory, which he has been able to implement as part of his patient treatment plan since returning to Timor-Leste:

*In terms of rehabilitation, in Indonesia, mostly they talk about theories, but then there is lack of implementation...But in Australia... they implemented theories through different ways, [for example] some exercises are done...through a game or some drama or some drumming...*

Alumni also learned the importance of a bottom-up approach to policy development that is consultative and nationally-led from their studies in Australia. Ms da Cunha and Mr Noronha are applying these skills in their current roles in the development of the NAP, working across the sector to implement change. Mr Noronha stated:

*There was a professor who spoke to us who said that we need to have a proper policy or law because it's a big amount of time, like proper consultation process so you don't have to copy and paste someone's policy from some other countries and just use it, but it has to be your own and go through a very long special process to make it a better policy.*

#### 4.2.3 Experiences in Australia

As with other case studies conducted by the Facility, the social and cultural aspects of the alumni experience on award also added to the positive impression they gained about Australia. Overall, alumni enjoyed the social interactions they had with Australian friends and being part of the Australian community. Mr Rosario recalled: "I went to see the Australian football with friends, twice, even though I didn't know about the game itself. But I went there and we were able to enjoy the time together with my classmates." Mr Reis joined the university's soccer team and made a wide circle of friends during his scholarship.

One of the key elements of success in creating a positive in-Australia experience for alumni on fellowship was design of their course which incorporated professional and cultural immersion activities. Alumni were provided with opportunities to meet with experts in their field and experience Australian workplace culture through field visits or placements within the disability sector. Alumni were able to see first-hand the services provided to people with disability, speak with advocates and interact with people with disability living in Australia.

In addition, these programs also provided alumni with social activities such as visits to popular tourist attractions, meals with teachers or members of the local Timorese community, and visits to the theatre. For example, as part of the Flinders University fellowship, alumni visited tourist attractions such as Cleland National Park, Handoff and Victor Harbour. Dr Ellison explained:

*We took them out to places and visited places that were accessible from a tourist perspective. So we looked at tourism and accessible tourism. We looked at our public transport system in Adelaide, which is actually really quite exceptional. Every moment was a learning moment.*

For Mr Oqui, one of the highlights of his time in Australia was his visit to Cleland National Park where 'everyone was holding koalas and we ate kangaroo meat'.

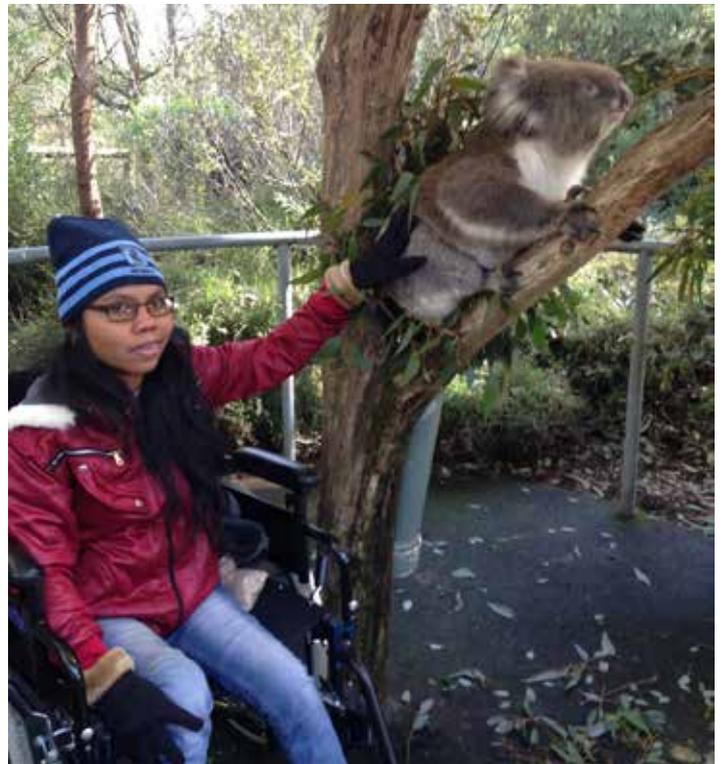


Figure 4: Ms Silva Soares at Cleland National Park, Adelaide in 2015. Photo courtesy of Flinders University.

#### 4.2.4 Academic and student welfare support

Support from the universities including facilities and services for learning and student welfare enhanced alumni's academic experience while on award. Mr Reis and Mr Rosario identified student support services at their universities as particularly important resources during their scholarships. Mr Reis noted that the student support services at Flinders University provided a range of services including counselling and academic support. Mr Rosario spoke highly of the assistance he received from the English Language Unit and the friendly approach of its staff: "The English Language Unit...were just fantastic. Most of them are really good people. They were always welcoming and the door is always open."

Ms da Cunha was grateful for the opportunity to undertake the Introductory Academic Program at the University of Melbourne, which provided the ideal setting to make new friends and ease into her studies. As she explained:

*Because it's for all of the students, it's kind of helping you establish your friendships, the people that you're going to study with and forming the networks and so on, and understanding the system of the university, access to the library and so on. I think it was a really good process to start.*

## 5. Conclusion

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**This Case Study explored the development contributions and public and economic diplomacy outcomes of Australia Awards alumni from Timor-Leste, who studied disability and development between 2011 and 2016. Since their return to Timor-Leste, alumni from this cohort have been at the forefront of disability inclusive development through active engagement in advocacy, policy implementation and service delivery in the disability sector. Their shared experience in Australia has helped create a critical mass of professionals who are using their skills and networks to advocate for the rights and protection of people with disability in Timor-Leste.**

Around the time that most alumni returned from their award, disability inclusive development was a high priority for DFAT in Timor-Leste. As a result, a number of initiatives were launched to support disability inclusion, including the PHD (\$120 million over 2016-2021) which had an initial injection of funds of over \$1 million in 2016-17 for disability support activities. This created the necessary resources and structures to support an enabling environment for progress in the sector. In addition, three Australia Awards fellowships were conducted during the period of focus, which were specifically designed to build capacity in the disability sector in Timor-Leste.

Alumni in this Case Study have all remained involved in the disability sector through formal employment and voluntary positions, with responsibilities for disability policy implementation, program delivery, training and capacity building, research and advocacy. Working across different government, DPOs and international organisations, alumni are using skills and knowledge gained on-award to develop a multisector NAP through broad consultation with government and civil society

partners. Those working in allied health are using their expertise to improve professional practices of health care professionals within their organisations. A combination of factors have enabled alumni to successfully apply their skills in the workplace and contribute to the development of the disability sector. These relate to a strong personal commitment to disability inclusion and positive on-award experiences, such as academic support and professional and social immersion activities.

As alumni have progressed in their careers, the connections they have made on award have continued to develop into ongoing professional and personal relationships with lecturers, disability professionals and Australian organisations. This Case Study provides clear examples of alumni capitalising on the links they made while studying in Australia, to establish formal partnerships between Australian and Timorese organisations in various ways. Some alumni have contributed to the deepening of these partnerships through their work as direct employees of Australian companies. Others have enhanced existing partnerships between their workplace and Australian institutions through their involvement in Australian initiatives, such as the PHD and NCP. Importantly, funding support by the Australian Government through Australia Awards and NCP have enabled alumni to foster enduring connections with Australia and Australians.

Overall, the findings of this Case Study demonstrate the impact that this group of alumni is having in the disability sector, at both the national policy and community levels. Their Australian education and experiences in Australia have contributed to alumni's positive views of Australia, which have formed the basis for maintaining ongoing professional and personal links with their Australian counterparts. Through their workplaces and networks, alumni are helping to further cultural understanding and bilateral interests between the two countries.

## 6. Alumni Profiles

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Mr Monrique dos Reis

I always address disability in every single work I do... Disability is a cross-cutting issue, so is gender and working with children... There is always a role there you can play.

### Scholarship

Australian Development Scholarship

### Years

2012–2016

### Degree

Bachelor of Disability and Developmental Education

### University

Flinders University

### Current position

Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, Child Fund Australia (Timor-Leste)

### Brief biography

Mr Monrique dos Reis has over 15 years' experience working in the development sector in Timor-Leste and he is currently employed as a Monitoring and Evaluation Officer for Child Fund Australia, based in Dili, Timor-Leste.

He first became interested in disability and inclusion while working for the newly formed MSSl in 2003, and participated in the drafting of the first National Policy for People with Disability funded by USAID. In 2006, he joined the United Nations Children's Fund and assisted MSSl in the development of a National Child Protection Program to reduce child trafficking and reunite child refugees with their families.

In 2007, Mr Reis worked for the Alola Foundation, founded by Dr Kirsty Sword Gusmao, co-ordinating income generation training programs for rural Timorese women. In 2010, he took up a role at the Asia Foundation as a Program Officer for the Access to Justice Program, which provided pro-bono legal aid services to vulnerable groups, including victims of gender based violence.

On his return to Timor-Leste in 2016, Mr Reis began working as a freelance consultant, translator and disability advocate. He successfully applied for a number of small alumni grants from the Australia Awards Small Grants Program to conduct research on the challenges faced by people with visual impairment in accessing education in rural areas and to create a small handbook in Tetum on disability inclusive language. In 2019, he was awarded a New Zealand Government scholarship and plans to study a Master of Disability and Inclusion Studies at the University of Waikato in 2020.



Mr Antonio Moniz do Rosario

Most of the course I took had to do with how you're dealing with different actors in order to achieve the particular objective. So, of course, international relations are about collaboration, coordination, interaction with everyone in order to achieve a particular thing you can't achieve alone, so you need other people to support you to do that. So those are lessons we learned at the school... You need to work as a team... We [World Vision, Timor-Leste] have about 13 projects. They are very huge projects and my job is to deal with every one, and the focus is on child protection, how all of these projects are really targeting protection of the children.

#### Scholarship

Australian Development Scholarship

#### Years

2012–2015

#### Degree

Bachelor of International Relations

#### University

University of South Australia

#### Current position

Advocacy and External Engagement Manager,  
World Vision International

#### Brief biography

Mr Antonio Moniz do Rosario has had a long career in the development sector in Timor-Leste. He is currently the Advocacy and External Engagement Manager at World Vision International, coordinating the campaign to reduce violence against children across Timor-Leste.

Prior to going on scholarship, Mr do Rosario worked for seven years at the Leprosy Mission International. He decided to upskill and left his job to undertake a Bachelor of International Relations at the University of South Australia in 2012.

In 2015, Mr do Rosario returned to Timor-Leste and began working in the development sector across various international organisations. His first role was in microfinance for the Credit Union Foundation of Australia (CUFA), and then for the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the European Union, supporting the role out of large public health funding aimed at improving nutrition and public health promotion. In 2016, he took the role of Disability Officer at the Australian funded Partnership for Human Development (PHD) program and worked closely with DPOs to advocate change and promote inclusive development.

In June 2019, he joined the team at World Vision International and is leading the campaign to end violence against children in Timor-Leste through advocacy, community based education programs and is working with government and development partners.



## Ms Dulce Natividade Fatima da Cunha

I think having that policy study helped me a lot in this current job, because my job is not only program development but also ... to develop more strategies for organisations, helping our implementing partners—the disability organisations with their policy development and strategies... I think the skill has become much more putting into practice and use in the last maybe about 12 months now, when we supported the government through the Ministry of Social Solidarity and Inclusion to develop the implementation of the National Disability Policy.

### Scholarship

Australian Development Scholarship

### Years

2012–2013

### Degree

Master of Public Policy and Management

### University

University of Melbourne

### Current position

Disability Team Leader, Partnership for Human Development, Abt Associates

### Brief biography

A former midwife and nurse, Ms Dulce da Cunha received one of the first Australia Development Scholarships (ADS) in 2000 after Timorese independence and studied Occupational Health and Safety at Newcastle University.

On her return to Timor-Leste, Ms da Cunha worked for four years at Assoiasaun Hi'it Ema Ra'es (ASSER), the first national rehabilitation centre in Timor-Leste (now the Centre for National Rehabilitation - CNR). This led to an opportunity to work directly with the government through GRM (now Palladium), who were providing technical support to the MSSI, to implement disability inclusive programs. She worked as a national advisor on the first National Disability Policy in 2011.

Working in policy development, Ms da Cunha was inspired to study public policy abroad and applied for another ADS, and went on to study a Master of Public Policy and Management at the University of Melbourne (2012-13).

Returning to Timor-Leste in 2013, Ms da Cunha has worked for a number of international development contractors. In her current role as the Disability Team Leader at the Australian Government funded, PHD program, Ms da Cunha is working closely the Timor-Leste Government to prioritise disability through an extensive consultation process. Her work is contributing to the development of a new National Disability Policy for Timor-Leste.



Ms Fernanda Soares

We have learned a lot [in Australia]. It's not only about technical skills like how you are there in the field supporting people in their rehabilitation, but it also boosted our confidence and also gave us skills and all this knowledge, how to do things, planning and so on.

#### **Fellowship**

Australian Leadership Awards

#### **Year**

2015

#### **Course**

Disability Capacity for Improving Rehabilitation and Disability Policy and Practice

#### **University**

Flinders University

#### **Current position**

Head of Department, Occupational Therapy, Centre for National Rehabilitation (CNR)

#### **Brief biography**

Ms Fernanda Soares is one of five trained occupational therapists in Timor-Leste and works as the head of department in charge of occupational therapy at the Centre for National Rehabilitation (CNR). She provides specialist care to people with disability and supports them and their families to provide rehabilitation and mobility support.

Studying Occupational Therapy (OT) in Solo, Indonesia from 2007–10, Ms F. Soares began working for CNR in 2010, as the only occupational therapist. Ms F. Soares was awarded an Australian Leadership Awards fellowship in 2015 and undertook a one month course at Flinders University focusing on building Disability Capacity for Improving Rehabilitation and Disability Policy and Practice.

One of the highlights during her time in Australia, was her placement at the Nazareth Catholic Community in Findon, South Australia, where she worked with school children needing OT support. She was able to bring back new ideas to CNR. With help from her colleagues, she set up separate spaces for children and adults, and began implementing new ways to engage children in their rehabilitation, through art, music and drama.

In addition to her work as the Team Leader, Ms F. Soares is actively involved in mentoring Australian OT students from the University of Queensland. These students undertake a four week clinical placement at CNR in Timor-Leste as part of the NCP Mobility program. It provides both the Australian students and the three OT staff at CNR a great opportunity to learn from one another.



Mr Tomas Oqui

From the experience that we got from Flinders, we have already implemented in the centre... personal assessment ... and also how to motivate the clients to be more active, to participate in the treatment, so I think that's the big change.

#### Scholarship

Australian Leadership Awards

#### Year

2015

#### Course

Disability Capacity for Improving Rehabilitation and Disability Policy and Practice

#### University

Flinders University

#### Current position

Head of Department of Physiotherapy, Centre for National Rehabilitation (CNR)

#### Brief biography

Originally from the Special Administrative Region of Oecusse in Timor-Leste, Mr Tomas Oqui trained as a physiotherapist in Indonesia and became one of the first physiotherapists in the country.

Now the Head of Physiotherapy at the Centre for National Rehabilitation (CNR) in Dili, Mr Oqui provides physical techniques to improve movement and mobility and the quality of life for people with disability.

In 2015, he was awarded an Australian Leadership Awards fellowship and studied for one month at Flinders University as part of the Disability Capacity for Improving Rehabilitation and Disability Policy and Practice program. The fellowship allowed him to see new ways of interacting with patients and making the rehabilitation process more participatory and inclusive.

Returning to Timor-Leste, he worked with his colleagues to change assessment processes, zone treatment areas and set up activities to engage patients in their rehabilitation through music and art.

Each year CNR hosts a number of NCP Mobility students from the University of Queensland as part of their clinical placement. Mr Oqui mentors these students as part of the program and enjoys the exchange of new ideas with students and academic staff from the University of Queensland.



Mr Pedro Emerico Freitas

[In Australia we learnt] how to work with people with mental disabilities. We brought back the knowledge...we established how to support people with mental disability. So we created a division here, a section here for mental health support. We secured funds and we are now funded...we also learned how in Australia people with disability promote and advocate for the rights of people with mental disability. So again, I also brought back that idea here and disseminated information on how we can best support people with mental disability.

**Fellowship**

Australian Leadership Awards

**Year**

2015

**Course**

Disability Capacity for Improving Rehabilitation and Disability Policy and Practice

**University**

Flinders University

**Current position**

Media and Advocacy Officer, Klibur Domin

**Brief biography**

Mr Pedro Emerico Freitas is the Media and Advocacy Officer at Klibur Domin, a not-for-profit community based rehabilitation centre which was established in 2000 by Ryder-Cheshire Australia. The centre provides education, respite care and rehabilitation programs for children and adults with disability and tuberculosis.

In 2015, while working on the Klibur Domin's CBR program, Mr Freitas was encouraged to apply for an Australia Leadership Award fellowship by a representative of the MSSI and went on to study the four week Disability Capacity for Improving Rehabilitation and Disability Policy and Practice program at Flinders University.

The course provided Mr Freitas the opportunity to build his knowledge about the disability sector and the treatment of psycho social disabilities. He also had the opportunity to visit volunteers from Rotary Australia who had worked at Klibur Domin and make ongoing connections with a range of disability support services in Adelaide on behalf of his organisation.

On his return to Timor-Leste he was able to work with colleagues to create a new division and secure funding to support programs for those suffering with mental illness. In his current role, Mr Freitas is involved in promoting disability rights and he works closely with other organisations to reduce the stigma attached to those with disability in Timor-Leste.



Mr Joaquim Freitas Soares

Actually it's a very useful program to join. I had the opportunity to observe and work with the management of the two rehab centres... most of the time I observed how they manage people with disabilities that come in to attend training and rehab: physiotherapy or occupational therapy or other rehab. Most of the time I saw clients with cerebral palsy, spinal cord injuries.

#### Fellowship

Australian Leadership Awards

#### Year

2013

#### Course

Community based rehabilitation programs for people with disabilities: building capacity for monitoring and sustainability

#### University

University of Sydney

#### Current position

Executive Director of Klibur Domin

#### Brief biography

Mr Joaquim Freitas Soares is the Executive Director of the Klibur Domin a not-for-profit, community-based rehabilitation (CBR) centre which provides education, respite care and CBR programs for children and adults with disability and tuberculosis.

An active disability advocate, Mr J. Soares has held a number of senior board positions within the sector and is the current President of the Board of the Timor-Leste Disability Association of Timor-Leste (ADTL).

In 2013, he studied an Australian Leadership Awards fellowship at the University of Sydney's Centre for Disability Research and Policy. The four week course, provided fellows from the Pacific and South East

Asia the opportunity to visit CBR programs across western New South Wales and observe how these regional organisations operate with limited resources in the Australian context.

As a result of the fellowship, Mr J. Soares collaborated with other fellows to develop a CBR manual for practitioners. It was published by the University of Sydney's Centre for Disability Research and Policy in 2014.

In recognition for his work as a disability and health care advocate, Mr J. Soares received a national human rights award in 2014 from the President of Republic of Timor-Leste, Mr Taur Matan Ruak.



Mr Francisco Baptista de Carvalho Soares

An achievement is reporting to the minister and the other superiors about what I've learned from Australia. For me, I consider this is a good achievement. And the minister can listen to me. My personal achievement is that after learning from this fellowship program I come and make a difference like creating a new division

**Fellowship**

Australian Leadership Awards

**Year**

2015

**Course**

Disability Capacity for Improving Rehabilitation and Disability Policy and Practice

**University**

Flinders University

**Current position**

Focal Point for Disability and Inclusion, Ministry of Health

**Brief biography**

Mr Francisco Baptista de Carvalho Soares is the focal point for the elderly and people with disability at the Ministry of Health in Timor-Leste where he is responsible for developing policies and guidelines. He works closely with DPOs, aid agencies and other government departments to improve the health outcomes of people living with disability.

With a background in social work, Mr F. Soares has participated in a number of international training programs as part of the capacity building initiatives within the Ministry of Health. In 2015, he studied at Flinders University as part of a four week course with a focus on building 'Disability Capacity for Improving Rehabilitation and Disability Policy and Practice'. He has since been able to use the training he received in Australia to develop new assessment procedures for identifying eligibility for the disability pension. This is currently being piloted in Timor-Leste.



Ms Sara Miranda Gusmao

When I was in Australia in the placements and in the field, I learned specifically, for instance, how to do assessments, how to collect data and information ... Even during the placements I always called here to Timor-Leste and said, “We need to do things like this because the work we did in our industry is not correct. It’s not complete or detailed or comprehensive. We have to make it like this.”

#### **Fellowship**

Australian Leadership Awards

#### **Year**

2015

#### **Course**

Timor-Leste Health Leaders Program

Disability Capacity for Improving Rehabilitation and Disability Policy and Practice

#### **University**

The University of Sydney

Flinders University

#### **Current position**

Physiotherapist, National Hospital

#### **Brief biography**

Ms Sara Miranda Gusmao is a physiotherapist at the National Hospital in Dili. She provides rehabilitation support services to in-patients who have suffered stroke, fractures or mobility issues due to illness or injury.

Ms Gusmao studied a Diploma of Physiotherapy at the Fiji School of Medicine, graduating in December 2011 and began working at the National Hospital as a physiotherapist in 2012.

As one of the few physiotherapists in Timor-Leste, Ms Gusmao has participated in two capacity building training programs funded by the Australian Government. In 2013 she attended the Timor-Leste Health Leaders Program at the University of Sydney’s Office of Global Health, and in 2015 she attended the Disability Capacity for Improving Rehabilitation and Disability Policy and Practice at Flinders University in South Australia.

Since studying in Australia, Ms Gusmao has been able to improve her clinical expertise and has helped to change professional practices at the hospital to ensure a more inclusive, engaged and confidential work environment.



Mr Domingos da Silva

For me, the biggest achievement is that I was able to change my way of communicating, like supporting the clients and also at the departmental level... In terms of the treatment, so that's equal treatment for all, the treatment is the same whether you are rich or not. And also one of the most important things as well that we learned is about confidentiality, privacy of your clients.

#### **Fellowship**

Australian Leadership Awards

#### **Year**

2015

#### **Course**

Disability Capacity for Improving Rehabilitation and Disability Policy and Practice

#### **University**

Flinders University

#### **Current position**

Occupational Therapist, National Hospital and former Head of Department

#### **Brief biography**

Mr Domingos da Silva is one of five occupational therapist working in Timor-Leste. He is currently employed at the National Hospital in Dili, providing rehabilitation support to patients suffering stroke, cerebral palsy, or mobility issues due to illness or injury.

As the former Head of Department, Mr da Silva attended the 2015 Disability Capacity for Improving Rehabilitation and Disability Policy and Practice fellowship at Flinders University in South Australia. He credits the fellowship in providing him a new perspective regarding the importance of inclusive, confidential, patient-centred care. Since returning from Australia, Mr da Silva has worked to improve policies and procedures for practitioners within the hospital.

He is actively engaged with other fellows from the disability sector and continues to share his skills and knowledge as a trainer, supervising NCP students from the University of Queensland as part of their occupational therapy placement at Dili Hospital.



Ms Silvia Vicente

So after taking this fellowship program, we came back and we opened a new department to be able to support people with disabilities.

#### **Fellowship**

Australian Leadership Awards

#### **Year**

2015

#### **Course**

Disability Capacity for Improving Rehabilitation and Disability Policy and Practice

#### **University**

Flinders University

#### **Current position**

Program Coordinator of Accessibility for People with Disabilities, Division for the Promotion of the Rights of People with Disabilities, Ministry of Social Solidarity and Inclusion

#### **Brief biography**

Ms Silvia Vicente has been employed at the MSSSI since 2011 and is currently the Program Coordinator of Accessibility for People with Disabilities. She is responsible for the planning, coordination and monitoring of programs and works closely with DPOs, the national hospital and rehabilitation centres.

Together with a number of other colleagues from MSSSI, Ms Vicente undertook the 2015 fellowship at Flinders University "Disability Capacity for Improving Rehabilitation and Disability Policy and Practice". On return from Australia, Ms Vicente and her colleagues were able to share their new ideas and knowledge with senior management at MSSSI and were instrumental in the establishment of a new division within MSSSI to support people with disability.

Ms Vicente has been able to use the skills and experience she gained on the fellowship to develop a program to promote access to employment opportunities for youth with disability. The program is being piloted in Balibo with the aim of being expanded to other regional areas in the future.



Mr Antonio Noronha

My personal achievement is that after learning from this fellowship program, I came [back] and [made] a difference, like creating a new division...drafting the national [action plan].

#### Fellowship

Australian Leadership Awards

#### Year

2015

#### Course

Disability Capacity for Improving Rehabilitation and Disability Policy and Practice

#### University

Flinders University

#### Current position

Technical Staff and former Head of Dept. for the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of People with Disability, Ministry of Social Solidarity and Inclusion

#### Brief biography

Since 2008 Mr Antonio Noronha has held various positions at the MSSSI, including Head of the Department for the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of People with Disability from 20015–2019. He is currently a technical staff member and works closely with other line ministries, district governments and DPOs in the drafting of the National Disability Action Plan.

Mr Noronha participated in the Disability Capacity for Improving Rehabilitation and Disability Policy and Practice Fellowship at Flinders University in 2015. His Australian experience provided him with new insights into different support services for people with disability, which he has been able to integrate in his current role at MSSSI. He is also using the valuable communication skills gained during his fellowship to coordinate consultation workshops with key stakeholders on the National Disability Action Plan.

Mr Noronha is passionate about learning and has undertaken numerous training opportunities in Timor-Leste and overseas. He continues to promote capacity building within MSSSI by sharing his knowledge and experience with colleagues and other partners.



Mr Joaozito dos Santos

What I learned about being a leader on the Australian [fellowship] course was, “To be a leader, you don’t have to look like a boss, but you are working with them, working as a team and listening to each other and others’ collective ideas and you decide together. But you are the one who decides what is the best option”.

#### **Fellowship**

Australian Leadership Awards

#### **Year**

2013

#### **Course**

Increasing capacity for developing rights based disability policy in South East Asia

#### **University**

University of Sydney

#### **Current position**

Executive Director, Ra’es Hadomi Timor Oan (RHTO)

#### **Brief biography**

In 2006 Mr Joaozito dos Santos established the national disabled person’s organisation, Ra’es Hadomi Timor Oan (RHTO) to advocate for the rights of people with disability in Timor-Leste. He is currently its Executive Director and oversees a staff of 22 people. As a leader of his organisation, Mr dos Santos is taking an active role in mentoring and building the capacity of his staff.

RHTO is a key implementing partner for various international aid agencies and donors including the Australian Government under the project “Disability Inclusion in Timor-Leste”. It works closely with government, civil society and international organisations to improve health, education and employment activities for people living with disability at the national and district levels.

Mr dos Santos is playing a key role in shaping national policies by contributing the drafting of the National Disability Action Plan and providing technical advice to the government to support better integration of people with disability into all sectors of society. This includes the use of inclusive language and assessment tools to promote better access for people with disability to government subsidies, justice, health care and livelihood opportunities.

In recognition of Mr dos Santos’ work in advocating for the rights of people with disability, he was nominated by the United Nations Mission in Timor-Leste for the Defender of Human Rights for People with Disability award in 2010.



Ms Silva Soares

Even with [a] disability, there is no discrimination, so that made an impact on me, so I learned a lot about that. There is no discrimination at all; everybody is looked after equally.

#### **Fellowship**

Australian Leadership Awards

#### **Year**

2015

#### **Course**

Disability Capacity for Improving Rehabilitation and Disability Policy and Practice

#### **University**

Flinders University

#### **Current position**

Gender and Inclusion Manager, National Disabled People Organisation Ra'es Hadomi Timor Oan (RHTO)

#### **Brief biography**

Ms Silvia Soares is currently the Gender and Inclusion Manager at RHTO, is responsible for developing and delivering training modules on disability inclusion to numerous organisations including government ministries, international organisations and DPOs. Ms S. Soares has developed her skills as a trainer by participating in various international training workshops including the 2015 Disability Capacity for Improving Rehabilitation and Disability Policy and Practice fellowship at Flinders University.

Ms S. Soares is a strong advocate for people with disability, particularly in campaigning for improved disability pensions and subsidies for people with disability in Timor-Leste. As a person with disability, Ms S. Soares gained a positive impression of Australia due to the equal treatment and support she received on the fellowship. She credits her experience in Australia with changing her outlook and work practices to promote greater independence and equal opportunities for people with disability in her home country. She is applying the knowledge and skills gained from her fellowship to teach about the rights of people with disability, including accessible services and the use of inclusive language in the workplace.

Since returning from Australia, Ms S. Soares has been actively engaged with other fellows in the disability sector to continue advocating and promoting the rights of people with disability.



Mr Gaspar Afonso

There are a lot of things that I've learned from Australia, basically about the services the government provides to people with disability. Starting from the way they speak to them, services, they have almost one person with disability has got a support worker, and the way they interact with people with disability with respect. Everywhere you go, to public office or any public facility, any services, people prioritise you, and the language itself is respectful and there is friendly language when you speak to people with disability in terms of lack of stereotypes. And there is enough pension subsidy for people with disability, unlike Timor-Leste.

#### Fellowship

Australian Leadership Awards

#### Year

2015

#### Course

Disability Capacity for Improving Rehabilitation and Disability Policy and Practice

#### University

Flinders University

#### Current position

Director, Vision Impairment Organisation AHDMTL (Ezekutivu Asosiasaun Halibur Difisiente Matan Timor-Leste)

#### Brief biography

Mr Gaspar Afonso is the Director of the Association of Vision Impairment Timor-Leste (AHDMTL) and the Vice-President of the fifth largest political party in Timor-Leste. He studied an Australia Awards fellowship at Flinders University in 2015.

As a disability advocate, Mr Afonso works closely with government and Disabled People's Organisations (DPOs), promoting access to education and employment for people with disabilities in Timor-Leste. He works closely with government and international agencies to build awareness about the challenges people with disability face due to social and economic exclusion.

Since studying in Australia, Mr Afonso has begun to frame disability rights around issues of accessibility, calling for universal design principles to be employed in Timor-Leste. He is a well-known disability spokesperson in the Timorese media.

Most recently Mr Afonso is working with the Timorese government on the National Action Plan for People with Disabilities and is leading the push towards the ratification of the International Convention on the Rights of People with Disability.



Mr Angelo Venceslau

Whether you are disabled or not, you have the same opportunity to study. That's what I learnt from the Australian teaching process.

#### Fellowship

Australian Leadership Awards

#### Year

2012–2016

#### Course

Bachelor of Community Development

#### University

Victoria University

#### Current position

Coordinator, National Olympic Committee of Timor-Leste

#### Brief biography

Mr Angelo Venceslau has been working in the disability sector for over 15 years, first volunteering with disabled people's organisations and later as a finance officer for KATILOSA, a local organisation advocating for the rights of children and youth with disability. He is currently employed by the National Olympic Committee of Timor-Leste and is responsible for liaising with the International Olympic Committee to provide training and education programs for sporting federations and athletes in Timor-Leste. Recently, Mr Venceslau was successful in securing funding for Timorese athletes to participate in the 2020 Summer Olympics and 2022 Winter Olympics. He is also leading the Olympic Solidarity Program and is working closely with the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Youth and Sport to promote peace, education and social inclusion in sport.

Mr Venceslau completed his Bachelor of Community Development in 2016 from Victoria University. He was motivated to apply for the Australia Awards because he wanted to contribute to the development of Timor-Leste, particularly to promote the rights of people with disability. Prior to undertaking his degree, in 2009, Mr Venceslau participated in a short course at the University of Melbourne with a focus on disability inclusion in water and sanitation. He has further developed his skills through other training programs in community development, public health and disability inclusion.

As the only person with disability working for the National Olympic Committee of Timor-Leste, Mr Venceslau is committed to raising awareness and advocating for the inclusion of people with disability in the Olympic Games.

## 7. References

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# Annex 1: Methodology

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This chapter includes an overview of the Case Study design, development and implementation. This is the 17th Case Study of the Facility. Timor-Leste is one of five Case Study countries proposed in the Year 4 Facility Annual Plan. Timor-Leste was selected as a Case Study country on the basis there was a core group of alumni identified who had studies which focussed on the disability and development, key areas which are of importance to development in Timor-Leste.

## Overall Case Study design

The purpose of the Facility Case Studies is to collect detailed qualitative data on the impact and benefits of the Australia Awards. The Case Study methodology is based on the Facility Case Study Approach, which was developed in the inception phase of the Facility and reported in the Annual Plan for Year 1.

The Global Strategy and Australia Awards Global Monitoring and Evaluation Framework (the Framework) form the basis for the Case Study design. The research questions, propositions, data collection instruments, and report template are built around these frameworks. Findings reported by alumni are triangulated with relevant stakeholders such as employers and colleagues, and industry bodies thereby strengthening findings by providing further evidence to support or refute propositions. This methodology was developed by the Facility and SCB.

The overarching theory that has guided the design of this Case Study methodology is based upon the goal of the Australia Awards that ‘... partner countries progress their development goals and have positive relationships with Australia that advance mutual interests’.

The Case Study research questions are framed by the intended long-term outcomes of the Australia Awards as guided by the Framework:

1. How do alumni use the skills, knowledge and networks gained on award to contribute to achieving partner-country development goals?
2. How are Australia Awards contributing to Australia’s economic and public diplomacy outcomes?
3. How has being an Australia Awards alumni impacted alumni?
4. Are the benefits of receiving a scholarship experienced equally by all groups who have received them?

The primary unit of analysis for this Case Study is the alumnus or alumna. Case studies seek to explore how alumni of Australia Awards have acted to contribute to the achievement of the goal and objectives of the Australia Awards.

The case studies are being conducted via an iterative approach whereby the qualitative phase can be designed based on what is learned from the initial quantitative phase. In essence, the Facility implements this by drawing on data collected through a Global Tracer Survey and using this data as one of the means of developing the focus and scope of a number of case studies carried out in the following year.

As such, the planning and initial scoping of this Case Study was undertaken on the basis of the Facility’s Year 3 Tracer Survey, which surveyed alumni who completed their scholarships between 2011 and 2016.

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## Methods

The data collection method used for this Case Study was through interviews. A set of questions were developed for each key participant group, namely alumni, colleagues and employers (both of alumni and generally), alumni associations; and the DFAT staff, managing contractors, and coordinating authorities working on the Australia Awards in partner countries.<sup>3</sup> Questions for each key participant group align with the research propositions (located at Annex 2) and long-term outcomes of the Australia Awards. This ensures that data collected directly relate to the key questions the case studies are seeking to answer and that there is consistency across each case study.

## Sample

The alumni selected for this Case Study were chosen based on two key criteria: 1. that they had undertaken study in areas relating to disability and development; and 2. that they completed their study between 2011 and 2016. Within the sample selected for the research, the Facility also took into account where possible—gender representation, the inclusion of persons with disability, and a variety of employment types (e.g. sector and level of seniority).

The Global Alumni database, fellowship data supplied by SCB, and the Year 3 Tracer Survey were the key means for identifying the potential sample for this Case Study. The research team looked at these sources, and focussed on alumni who had completed their studies in the fields of disability and development in order to focus on the overall thematic aim of the Case Study.

In total, based on analysis of the Global Alumni database, 29 alumni were determined to have potential ‘fit’ within the population of focus. Of these alumni, one alumnae had also completed the Year 3 Tracer Survey.

Within this sample, alumni where additional information was available—i.e. the development sector of focus from their scholarship, their current employment, contact details—were selected to participate in the Case Study. The Facility were unable to connect with alumni through email and worked closely with alum, Mr Monrique dos Reis to facilitate a schedule of interviews with the eight selected alumni. Three alumni were unable to participate due to their geographic location or work commitments and these alumni were replaced. Due to the support of alumnus, Mr Reis’, the Facility interviewed 16 alumni and 17 stakeholders.

As per the table below, the sample included five women and eleven men.

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<sup>3</sup> Case Study Interview Guides can be found on the Facility's website: [www.australiaawardstracerfacility.org](http://www.australiaawardstracerfacility.org)

**Table 6: Timor-Leste Case Study alumni participants**

<b>Interview Date (2019)</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Scholarship years</b>	<b>Scholarship</b>	<b>Course &amp; University</b>	<b>Current Position</b>
18/11	M	Antonio Moniz do Rosario	2012–2015	Australian Development Scholarship	Bachelor of International Relations, University of South Australia	Advocacy and External Engagement Manager, World Vision International
18/11	M	Monrique dos Reis	2012–2016	Australian Development Scholarship	Bachelor of Disability and Developmental Education, Flinders University	Monitoring & Evaluation, Child Fund Australia (Timor-Leste)
19/11	M	Gaspar Afonso	2015	Australia Leadership Award (Fellowship)	Fellowship—Disability Capacity for Improving Rehabilitation and Disability Policy and Practice, Flinders University	Director, Vision Impairment Organisation AHDMTL (Ezekutivu Asosiasaun Halibur Difisiente Matan Timor-Leste)
19/11	M	Pedro Emercio Freitas	2015	Australian Leadership Awards (Fellowship)	Fellowship—Disability Capacity for Improving Rehabilitation and Disability Policy and Practice, Flinders University	Media and Advocacy Officer, Klibur Domin Rehabilitation Centre
19/11	M	Joaquim Soares	2013	Australian Leadership Awards (Fellowship)	Fellowship—Community based rehabilitation programs for people with disabilities: building capacity for monitoring and sustainability, University of Sydney	Director, Klibur Domin Rehabilitation Centre
20/11	F	Fernanda Soares	2015	Australian Leadership Awards (Fellowship)	Fellowship—Disability Capacity for Improving Rehabilitation and Disability Policy and Practice, Flinders University	Head of Occupational Therapy, Centre for National Rehabilitation (CNR)
20/11	M	Tomas Oqui	2015	Australian Leadership Awards (Fellowship)	Fellowship—Disability Capacity for Improving Rehabilitation and Disability Policy and Practice, Flinders University	Head of Physiotherapy, Centre for National Rehabilitation (CNR)
20/11	F	Sara Miranda Gusmao	2015	Australian Leadership Awards (Fellowship)	Fellowship—Disability Capacity for Improving Rehabilitation and Disability Policy and Practice, Flinders University	Physiotherapist, National Hospital

<b>Interview Date (2019)</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Scholarship years</b>	<b>Scholarship</b>	<b>Course &amp; University</b>	<b>Current Position</b>
20/11	M	Domingos da Silva	2015	Australian Leadership Awards (Fellowship)	Fellowship—Disability Capacity for Improving Rehabilitation and Disability Policy and Practice, Flinders University	Occupational Therapist, former Director for Rehabilitation, National Hospital
20/11	F	Silvia Vicenti	2015	Australian Leadership Awards (Fellowship)	Fellowship—Disability Capacity for Improving Rehabilitation and Disability Policy and Practice, Flinders University	Director, Department for Protection and Rehabilitation of People with Disability, Ministry of Social Solidarity and Inclusion
21/11	M	Francisco Baptista de Carvalho	2015	Australian Leadership Awards (Fellowship)	Fellowship—Disability Capacity for Improving Rehabilitation and Disability Policy and Practice, Flinders University	Focal Point for Disability and Inclusion, Ministry of Health
21/11	M	Antonio Noronha	2015	Australian Leadership Awards (Fellowship)	Fellowship—Disability Capacity for Improving Rehabilitation and Disability Policy and Practice, Flinders University	Technical Staff and former Head of Dept. of Social Protection and the Rights of People with Disability, Ministry of Social Solidarity and Inclusion
22/11	M	Joaozito dos Santos	2013	Australian Leadership Awards (Fellowship)	Fellowship—Increasing capacity for developing rights based disability policy in South East Asia, University of Sydney	Executive Director, National Disabled People Organisation Ra'es Hadomi Timor Oan (RHTO)
22/11	F	Silvia Soares	2015	Australian Leadership Awards (Fellowship)	Fellowship—Disability Capacity for Improving Rehabilitation and Disability Policy and Practice, Flinders University	Training Manager, National Disabled People Organisation Ra'es Hadomi Timor Oan (RHTO)
22/11	F	Dulce da Cunha	2012-2013	Australian Development Scholarship	Bachelor of International Relations, University of South Australia	Advocacy and External Engagement Manager, World Vision International
19/12	M	Angelo Venceslau	2012-2016	Australian Development Scholarship	Bachelor of Disability and Developmental Education, Flinders University	Monitoring & Evaluation, Child Fund Australia (Timor-Leste)

In addition to the alumni who participated in the Case Study, 17 other people were interviewed in order to provide context, triangulate alumni perspectives and better understand the impact of the Australian scholarships and fellowships on the outcomes for Timor-Leste and Australia. These additional interviews included stakeholders such as the colleagues

The table below lists these participants. In total, 17 people were interviewed for the Timor-Leste Case Study.

**Table 7: Key stakeholder and employer/colleague interviews**

Alumni employers or colleagues	Date (2019)	Name	Position
	17/11	Mr Mateus da Silva	National Director, Division for the Protection and Promotion for the Rights of People with Disability, Ministry of Social Solidarity and Inclusion
	19/11	Hon Signi Verdial	Vice Minister, Ministry of Social Solidarity and Inclusion
	19/11	Mr Joaquim Soares	Director, Klibur Domin Rehabilitation Centre
	20/11	Ms Levita Alves	Head, Palliative Care Unit, National Hospital
	20/11	Mr Domingos da Silva	Occupational Therapist, former Director for Rehabilitation, National Hospital
Australian Embassy, Timor Leste	18/11	Ms Erin Gleeson	First Secretary, Development, Australian Embassy in Timor-Leste
	18/11	Mr Troy Skaleskog	First Secretary, Education and Nutrition, Australian Embassy in Timor-Leste
	18/11	Ms Emma Hanks	Second Secretary, Workforce Development, Australian Embassy in Timor-Leste
	18/11	Mr Manuel Guimaraes	Senior Officer, Workforce Development, Australian Embassy in Timor-Leste
Host Institution	030/9	Dr Caroline Ellison	Former Coordinator, 2015 Fellowship—Disability Capacity for Improving Rehabilitation and Disability Policy and Practice, Flinders University
	13/12	Professor Gwynnyth Llewellyn	Former Coordinator of two 2013 fellowships hosted at the University of Sydney. Head, WHO Collaborating Centre for Strengthening Rehabilitation Capacity in Health Systems Co-Director, NHMRC Centre of Research Excellence Disability and Health
Other stakeholders	31/10	Ms Jen Blyth	Disability Inclusion Advisor, CBM Australia
	18/11	Mr Henrique Ximemes	Monitoring and Evaluation, Workforce Development Program Timor-Leste, Palladium
	18/11	Ms Joaninha Lu	Scholarships, Workforce Development Program Timor-Leste, Palladium
	18/11	Ms Imogen Wilson	Deputy Team Leader, Workforce Development Program Timor-Leste, Palladium
	19/11	Mr Cesario Adabel	Director of National Disability Association ADTL
	21/11	Ms Noberta da Cruz	Community Based Rehab Network

## Exclusions

As noted in the section above, all Case Study alumni were selected from the Year 3 Tracer Survey and the Global Alumni database. These sources only include those who have successfully completed their degree. Accordingly, this study excludes anyone who did not complete their scholarship.

## Data collection

As part of the development of the interview questions for case studies, the Facility piloted all instruments with Australia Awards alumni who resided in Australia. Subsequently, questions have been reviewed annually and refined over the four years of the project. All interview guides can be downloaded from the Facility website: [www.australiaawardstracerfacility.org](http://www.australiaawardstracerfacility.org).

This Case Study was conducted by Ms Jo Doyle and Ms Yung Nietschke, core Facility staff who bring relevant expertise in qualitative research and international development. These researchers worked together to undertake data collection and report writing: one conducted the interview and the other recorded and took notes. This enabled high-quality reliable data to be gathered. At the conclusion of interviews, the researchers discussed and verified the data to ensure completeness and accuracy.

## Process

The Case Study field research was undertaken in Timor-Leste from 16–22 November 2019. Most interviews were conducted face-to-face during this period. The exception to this was the interview undertaken with alumnus Mr Venceslau which took place on Skype on the 19 December 2019.

Alumni were requested to provide their resume to researchers where available for further background information. Participants were provided with background information relating to the research and the Facility, and all provided written informed consent to their participation and identification in reporting.

## Data management and reporting

Interviews were voice recorded (with approval granted to do so). In addition, the Case Study researchers annotated responses during the interview. A transcription specialist transcribed all interview recordings. After the completion of the interview and transcription process, the Case Study researchers consolidated the written and oral recordings into a single near-verbatim transcript (with restarting of sentences and fillers excluded).

## Coding and review

Interview scripts were subsequently coded using computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software, NVivo. This enabled emerging themes to be identified and links to be made between participants that supported or refuted the research propositions, as aligned with the long-term outcomes of the Australia Awards.

Analysis of the Case Study data involved a strategy that was guided by the theoretical proposition developed under the conceptual framework for the Case Study and by the techniques identified in the Facility's Case Study Approach document.

Case Study participants were sent segments of the report where clarification or review and approval were necessary—for this Case Study, this primarily involved cross checking with the Australian Embassy interview participants. Review by participants is not consistently used in qualitative research but was done so here to ensure the validity of the data and avoid errors.

## Limitations

There were a number of limitations of this research that were inherent to both the nature of the research and the research process, as discussed below.

### Positive response bias

It is probable that alumni who felt that they had a positive experience as an Australian Government scholarship recipient and/or had success in their career following their award are more likely to agree to participate in Case Studies. In a study by the Commonwealth Scholarship Commission in the UK (Mawer, 2014), recognition of positive response bias is highlighted:

*...there is widespread recognition that a more pressing problem is nonresponse bias in which those who reply to sample surveys are likely to be engaged with alumni associations or tracing (e.g. Day, Stackhouse and Geddes, 2009) and disproportionately represent the 'successful' outcomes of scholarship programmes (p.9).*

Accordingly, it is likely that the alumni in the Timor-Leste Case Study had a positive bias towards their experience, outcomes and views of Australia. The Facility has developed interview questions and analyses approaches to reduce the impact of this bias—these are applied consistently across all case studies. Through this approach, leading questions are avoided and alumni are offered opportunities to reflect on their outcomes at the beginning and at the end of the interview without specific questions to guide their answers.

### Nature of the research

Outcome 1 of the Global Strategy is: 'alumni are using the skills, knowledge and networks gained on award to contribute to achieving partner-country development goals'. However, some alumni have *shaped* development goals rather than contributed to them, and while it may be outside the purview of partner-country development goals that this research is being evaluated against, such contributions are still significant.

Throughout the research it has conducted, Facility has consistently experienced difficulty in evaluating Outcome 2 'alumni are contributing to cooperation between Australia and partner countries', and Outcome 3 'effective, mutually advantageous partnerships between institutions and business [have been developed] in Australia and partner countries'. These two outcomes are aligned with the second research question for the Case Study 'How are Australia Awards contributing to Australia's economic and public diplomacy outcomes?' There is an overlap and difficulty in differentiating 'cooperation' and 'partnerships'. The research team delineated them by determining that Outcome 2 relates to people-to-people links including informal relationships; whereas Outcome 3 specifically relates to institutional links between the partner country and Australia, which alumni have contributed to establishing.

No issues were encountered by the research team in collecting, collating, coding or analysing data related to Outcome 4 of the Australia Awards—'Alumni view Australia, Australians and Australian expertise positively'.

### Research process

The ability to code the interview transcripts effectively is dependent on understanding the partner-country development goals, at the time these alumni were awarded their scholarships. Researchers involved in the Case Study made concerted attempts to identify relevant secondary data such as policy documents, papers, books and digital resources to provide background and insight into development plans, policies and changes over the time span of 2013 to 2016, the years of focus for when these alumni completed their scholarship.

### Translation

All interviews were conducted in English, with the support of a Tetum speaking interpreter. Due to the nature of cross-linguistic interviewing, the Facility notes that many answers were paraphrased in English by the interpreter and were not translated verbatim. These answers were transcribed and used by researchers as part of this report.

## Annex 2: Case Study Propositions

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Explanatory case studies require the development of propositions that are intricately linked to the original research questions. A proposition is a statement that helps direct attention to something that should be examined in a Case Study. The researcher has to make a speculation, on the basis of the literature and any other earlier evidence, as to what they expect the findings of the research to be. When a Case Study proposal includes specific propositions, it increases the likelihood that the researcher can limit the scope of study and complete the project. The researcher can have several propositions to guide the study, but each must have a distinct focus and purpose. The data collection and analysis can then be structured in order to support or refute the research propositions.

For the Facility, propositions were formed using the Global Strategy outcomes as the basis. Sub-propositions were formulated by speculating on the underlying assumption or enabling factors that realise the proposition. In alignment with the methodology, instruments will be designed to collect data that both support and refute the propositions.

1. Alumni use their skills knowledge and networks to contribute to achieving partner-country development goals<sup>4</sup>.
  - a alumni develop skills, knowledge and networks on award that enable and are used to contribute to achieving partner-country development goals
  - b alumni understand, value and want to contribute to partner-country development goals.
2. Alumni are contributing to cooperation between Australia and partner countries
  - a alumni possess and are able to leverage their useful networks and relationships.
3. Effective, mutually advantageous partnerships between institutions and business [have been developed] in Australia and partner countries
  - a alumni possess and are able to leverage their useful networks and relationships
  - b partnerships that are developed are effective and mutually advantageous to participating countries.
4. Alumni view Australia and Australian expertise positively
  - a alumni's views are underpinned by their experiences in Australia.
5. The benefits of receiving an Australia Awards or scholarship are experienced equally by all alumni.
  - a receiving an Australia Awards or scholarship positively addresses, rather than reinforces, imbalances that are associated with gender and disability.

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<sup>4</sup> This proposition differs from Outcome 1 in order to link this proposition to the Goal of the Australia Awards Program. The use of the term 'partner-country development goals instead of 'sustainable development' makes the proposition and ensuing questions more relevant and relatable to alumni.

