



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

ALLIANCES IN ACTION

TIMOR-LESTE HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGE

A decade after voting to end Indonesia's 24-year occupation, Timor-Leste is struggling to lift itself out of poverty. One of the 10 poorest countries in the world, its small domestic market, geographic isolation, mountainous terrain, and poor infrastructure represent formidable challenges to economic growth. Timor-Leste ranks as one of the least developed countries in Asia, and counts approximately 20 percent of its 1.1 million citizens as unemployed. Because of these high rates of unemployment, job creation has become vital to securing Timor-Leste's long-term economic and political stability.

BUSINESS CHALLENGE

Both local and foreign businesses find it challenging to navigate Timor-Leste's business environment. Currently, the country ranks 164th out of 183 on the World Bank's Ease of Doing Business Index. One industry experiencing growth, however, is the hospitality and tourism trade, which has been bolstered by the large international donor and diplomatic presence. What's more, the industry is hampered by a workforce not trained in customer service and fluent in English.

APPROACH

To support the growth of this burgeoning industry, USAID partnered with local hotel owners and a tourism association to provide Timorese youth with hands-on training in the Hospitality Internship Program (HIIP). Partners collaborated on the design of the alliance, which provided 31 youth with intensive training in front office management, housekeeping, and food and beverage services. Participating hotels provided paid, on-the-job internships to help interns build their skills. Upon completion of the program, 85 percent of interns received offers of employment by alliance partners.

PARTNERS



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RESULTS

- 85% of the interns were offered full employment by one of the HIIP partners.
- The HIIP partnership was such a success that the project was replicated and more hotels and restaurants have joined the partnership.
- As of September 2009, an additional 68 interns -- more than half of which are women -- were placed in internships.

FAST FACTS

START: 2007 END: 2010

PARTNER CONTRIBUTIONS:

Technical Assistance & Training

November 2009