

MEDIA RELEASE



Assisting The Hearing Impaired In Timor-Leste

According to the 2010 Censes, there are over 17,000 hearing impaired adult and children in Timor-Leste, however it is believed this number is higher due to barriers some people face in accessing public services or from a number of families not acknowledging that a family member has hearing issues or a disability. Barbara Knight arrived in Dili Oct 2016 on a six-month contract as a manager advisor. During this time, she met an adorable little girl next door, who was shy and appeared to be living an isolated life with staying close to home and not playing with other children. Barbara was informed that there was something wrong as she refused to speak, but it didn't take long before Barbara realised that the little girl had difficulties hearing. Prior to Barbara leaving Dili she was hoping to have the girl's hearing assessed and possibly get her a hearing aid. Barbara accompanied her and her mom to the paediatrician and then to the ENT doctor (only one in Timor). Barbara was surprised to discover that there was no audiologist in Timor-Leste and nothing available to test and assess hearing and no hearing aids available. Barbara escorted the girl and her mom to Bali to have her hearing assessed, with hopes of receiving a hearing aid to improve the girl's life. Unfortunately, the girl is profound deaf due to having severe meningitis at the age of two and a hearing aid would not assist. Upon returning to Dili, the young girl has advanced by leaps and bounds now that the family and others in the community understand how to interact with her and realising that she doesn't have a mental condition. The young girl has gained confidence, now playing outside for hours with a number of children in her community, taking swimming lessons, learning her alphabet and to print, attending kindergarten with other children at the Heritage International School. It is heart-warming seeing her extremely happy now playing with numerous children, interacting with her teachers, parents and other adults. This is due to her being able to access an audiologist, appropriate testing and assessment which changed her life. Upon Barbara observing how the little girl's life was enhanced with some assistance and with the understanding that there was minimum support or services accessible in Timor-Leste for the hearing impaired, so she started up Hearing First Steps to help in an area that was neglected. In less than a year Barbara has had four teams and individual overseas audiologists visiting Timor-Leste, conducting testing, assessment and providing over 75 pairs of donated hearing aids to suitable children and adults. The Arafura Audiologist overseas team are committed to work in conjunction with Hearing First Steps to continue to come to Timor-Leste twice a year to assist with a pop up hearing center and to bring with them donated hearing aids. In addition, Barbara (Hearing First Steps) regularly visits the Bairo Pite Clinic, schools and every second Thursday is at Ordem De Malta Medical Clinic behind Timor Plaza, conducting free hearing test, checking and cleaning ears. To date over 400 children and adults have benefit from these services.



Hearing First Steps has also been engaged in educating adults and children on ear care, as many of the ear infections, issues and hearing problems could be minimised if people adhere to the following:

- **NEVER** clean ears with any objects including cotton buds, sticks, chicken feathers, keys, hairpins, pencil etc, as it is very dangerous and can infect the ear and cause damage to the ear drum, which may lead to hearing issues. The ear canal is short, leading to the fragile ear drum and if it is punctured or scraped, hearing ability could be lost or minimised.
- Using an object in the ear can also push wax further into the ear, impacting it closer to the ear drum and causing hearing difficulties.
- Some wax in the ear is healthy as it is designed to stop dirt, dust and other objects entering the ear and traveling further down the canal.
- Usually nonimpacted wax can naturally make its way out of the ear; when the ear is wet after washing, swimming or from moving the jaw with chewing, yawning and talking or sleeping with the head on the side.
- If the ear is itchy or feels as though there is something inside the ear the only object that should go into the first part of the ear is a soft tissue. Roll the end of the tissue into a spear shape and only enter the outer part of the ear (the area that you can see) turn the tissue to dry the ear or to remove excess wax or dirt at the opening. If the feeling continues then see a doctor or Hearing First Steps, do not try to clean further into the ear canal.
- To help prevent infections and itchy ears, use a soft tissue in the first part of the ear to dry the ear after swimming or washing hair etc.
- When the nose is congested from a cold, flu or allergies it can result in clogged sinuses and affect the pressure in the ears. As the sinuses are connected to the inside of the ears, it is important to gently blow the nose to help prevent the bacteria going to the ears, causing an infection or pressure in the ears and / or some hearing loss. If this occurs go see a doctor.
- It is essential to learn how to equalize ears when diving in water while swimming or fishing, otherwise you might pop the ear drum and have hearing loss.
- At no time should any person hit or slap anyone (adult or child), especially in the head or near the ear as it can lead to hearing loss and other serious issues.



To date **Hearing First Steps** has been **self-funded by Barbara, as she is driven to help make a difference, however with the growth of HFS and to ensure it continues she is now looking for a partnership / funding to ensure this important initiative of changing lives continues.** Please contact Barbara on Barbknight.HFS@gmail.com if you have any suggestions on funding options for operational cost or if an organisation is interested in funding a hearing mobile facility, such as a bus containing a sound proof room for hearing assessing and testing.



Let's work together to continue to enhance lives!!!!

Any questions or concerns contact your doctor or Barbara through email Barbknight.HFS@gmail.com or visit Facebook (Hearing First Steps – East Timor)

MEDIA RELEASE



Ford Donates US\$10,000 to Quality Schools International as Part of Conservation and Environmental Grants Programme

- Quality Schools International will use the grant to install rainwater harvesting systems at QSI International School of Dili
- Grants programme in East Timor is part of Ford's broader conservation and CSR programmes across Asia Pacific



DILI, East Timor, 09 November, 2018 – Ford Motor Company and its local distributor, Entrepoto Comercial de Timor, today announced a US\$10,000 grant to Quality Schools International under the Ford Conservation and Environmental Grants initiative.

Quality Schools International (QSI) is a non-profit school organization that provides English language quality education for students in 31 different countries.

The US\$10,000 grant from Ford Motor Company Fund – the philanthropic arm of Ford Motor Company – will be used to install a sustainable rainwater harvesting systems at QSI International School of Dili. The water will be used to support the existing plumbing system, as well as other activities including school garden irrigation.

"The Quality Schools International's proposal demonstrated a genuine commitment to environmental conservation while addressing the most urgent needs for these communities – lack of access to water during the country's dry season," said Jorge Vale, managing director, Entrepoto Comercial de Timor.

"This is exactly what the Ford Conservation and Environmental Grants programme stands for, and is one of many ways that Ford goes further to improve the quality of life in the communities where we live and work," explained Vale.

Quality Schools International will also educate local communities on how sustainable rainwater harvesting systems can allow local residents to have access to clean water all year round. Earlier this year, Ford and Entrepoto Comercial de Timor, recently announced a grant to Ra'es Hadomi Timor Oan (RHTO) – The National Disabled People Organization in East Timor – to provide safe water sources and improved sanitation for local residents in four rural villages.

Ford's Conservation and Environmental Grants Programme Founded in 1983, the Ford Conservation and Environmental Grants programme was created to empower individuals and non-profit groups to conduct research and projects which help preserve the environmental well-being of their communities and provide solutions contributing to a sustainable planet.

In the Asia Pacific, Ford has played a pivotal role in advancing environmental initiatives for more than a decade across multiple markets, from protecting wildlife and preventing forest fires, to funding cultural heritage projects and replenishing resources in rural communities.

For more information about Ford, please visit www.entrepoto.tl.



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