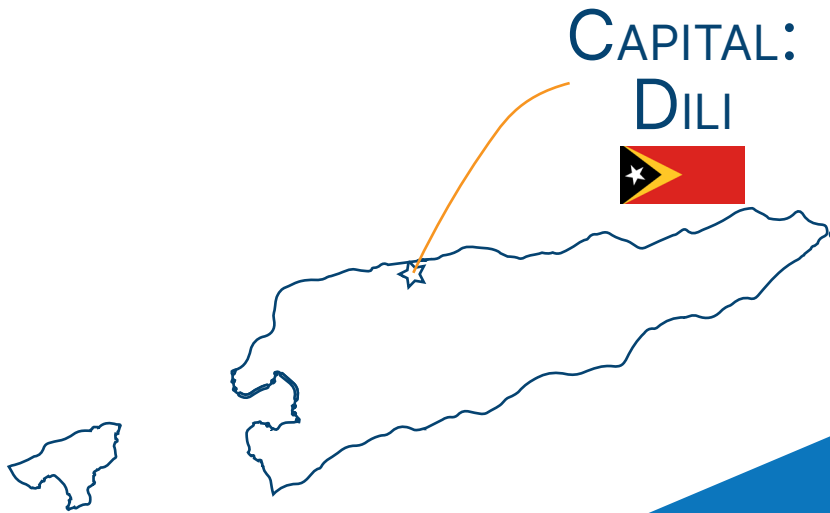


TIMOR-LESTE

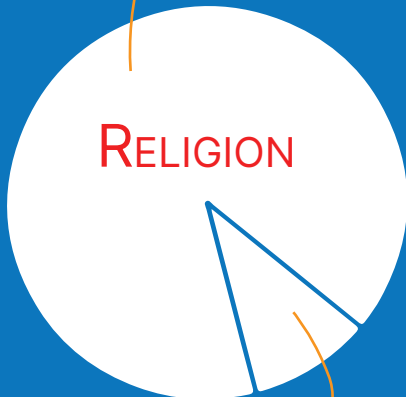


UNITED STATES
DOLLAR

POPULATION OF
1.3 MILLION



90% ROMAN
CATHOLIC



RELIGION

10%

OTHER: PROTESTANT,
MUSLIM, HINDU AND
ANIMISM

14,874 SQ KM
IN LAND SIZE

FAVOURITE SPORTS:

SOCCER
VOLLEYBALL
BASKETBALL



60.28%
OF POPULATION
ARE UNDER
25 YEARS OLD

LANGUAGES

TETUM &
PORTUGUESE

MAJOR INDUSTRIES:
NATURAL RESOURCES
AGRICULTURE
TRADITIONAL HANDICRAFTS



TIMOR-LESTE



Students outside the Uai-lili Youth Centre.



Uai-lili Youth Centre computer class.

Geography

Timor-Leste is the only Asian nation to be completely located in the southern hemisphere. Its territory covers the eastern half of the Timor island.

Formed by continental uplift along a major fault line, Timor-Leste is rugged with a mountainous backbone rising to over 2,000m. The highest peaks have marine fossils, and the forested ranges are riddled with caves. Almost half of Timor-Leste's land area has a slope of 40 degrees or more, making it scenically beautiful but difficult for road construction and cultivation.

There are magnificent beaches and world-class diving in its fringing reefs.

History

Timor-Leste is one of the youngest countries in the world. It only became an independent nation in 2002. This followed 450 years of Portuguese colonisation, 24 years of illegal Indonesian occupation, and almost three years of interim international administration led by the United Nations.

In 1999, the people of Timor-Leste voted overwhelmingly for independence. Unfortunately, when Indonesia gave up control, its military destroyed much of the existing infrastructure as part of a "scorched earth" policy.

This has created a lot of problems in the country and it has struggled in the past 20 years to rebuild. Just over a third of the country (37.8%) is employed.

Culture

Despite its challenges, Timorese cultures is diverse and vibrant. It has a strong focus on family, community, and religion. This is practised through traditions such as performing arts, local architecture, and handcrafts.

AMS Projects in Timor-Leste – Instituto Catholico Para Formacao De Professores (ICFP)

Timor-Leste is one of the least-developed countries in the world and the poorest in Asia. During the 1999 post referendum violence, as much as 70% of the national infrastructure was destroyed, including the destruction of 80% of schools and the burning of almost all books and materials, while almost 20% of primary teachers and 90% of secondary teachers returned to Indonesia. With 42% of the country's population below the age of 14 and the majority of Timorese teachers poorly educated and untrained, the current school system faces enormous challenges.

ICFP is a Marist-run Catholic Teachers College that offers an accredited Bachelor of Teaching and Bachelor of Education and is the only tertiary institution outside of the area of the capital Dili. It is also one of only two providers of primary education teacher formation in the country. The educational infrastructure in Timor-Leste is still weak, but ICFP's goal is to strengthen the Catholic School system and provide the country with fully qualified teachers.

The college empowers its students to become leaders in the field of primary education and leaders within their own local community as well.

Trained in critical thinking, pedagogy and child development, the students are readily offered employment upon graduation.

Further reading/resources:

SBS Cultural Atlas (www.culturalatlas.sbs.com.au)

World Atlas (www.worldatlas.com)