Prepara Ami ba Serbisu (PAS) began in 2007 as a three-year pilot program. Its primary objective was to provide out-of-school men and women aged 16-30 from rural communities with opportunities for workforce development training in their districts. Between 2007 and 2010, PAS partnered with 14 local NGOs to provide such training to over 2,000 youth in nine districts in Timor-Leste.

PAS is a foundational training program designed to prepare school drop-outs for entrance into further learning and earning activities, including return to formal education; transition to further training; or employment. Phase I classroom instruction included five core learning objectives: basic literacy and numeracy; leadership and life skills; work readiness; introduction to business and entrepreneurship; and introduction to technical and income-generation skills. In Phase II of the program, PAS participants received guidance and mentoring while they pursued one of three livelihood pathways over the course of four months: internships; non-formal education or training courses; or initiation/expansion of a small business.

Background

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The Basics of Foundational Training

What is foundational training? It’s all about building the confidence and know-how to take the next step in life. In PAS, out-of-school youth learn work readiness skills, including leadership, time management, proper conduct, effective communication, working in a team and public speaking.

By practicing these skills in work experience simulations, program participants cultivate the attitudes and practical knowledge necessary to access further learning and earning opportunities in their communities, including return to formal education, transition to further training, or employment. By opening new pathways for integration to marginalized rural youth, PAS supports SEFOPE’s mission to create a more accessible vocational training system.
As of December 31, 2010

The Oecusse District Model of Multi-Stakeholder Collaboration

To date, 40% of the nearly 1,600 youth who have graduated from the PAS program have accessed employment, including 339 participants who progressed to contract jobs and 340 who have initiated or improved a small business.

In many instances, PAS participants were the first youth to be hired by their employers: through the work ethic and responsibility they have demonstrated, these young women and men are helping to enlarge the network of receptive employers and livelihood sponsors willing to provide opportunities to low-skilled rural youth.

Almost a third of all PAS graduates are in Oecusse, with many already running businesses, employed or entering vocational training. PAS is working with the SEFOPE Oecusse District Office and local NGO training providers to link program graduates to further livelihood opportunities in their communities.

As part of the model, PAS and SEFOPE are fostering the collaboration of local stakeholders around a series of specially designed initiatives for these graduates, based on their aptitudes and interests.

Thus far, 63% of Oecusse PAS graduates are earning income, studying, or completing internships, including 227 graduates who have accessed employment, 79 who have entered formal training, and six who have returned to school.

Gender Balance and Rural Outreach

PAS is one of the few programs in Timor-Leste that explicitly promotes a 50% gender balance of incoming participants at each learning center. 54% of PAS graduates are women, as are 51% of employed graduates. Through its Rural Learning and Earning Network of community-based learning centers, PAS has provided Work Readiness training to 2,078 school-leavers across nine rural districts, including in some of Timor-Leste’s most marginalized, rural communities, where youth face serious barriers to economic integration.

**Numbers from Baucau include two pilot cohorts that have not been assessed**
Leveraging Community Assets and Ensuring Sustainability

PAS engages community-based trainers and youth livelihood facilitators while improving the capacity of local institutions to address the socio-economic needs of marginalized rural youth.

To date, PAS has provided training to 14 local NGO partners, assisting six with initiating registration with SEFOPE as certified training providers.

PAS complements and builds upon local communities, civil society actors, and government through Workforce Development initiatives that foster collaboration and support the National Youth Employment Action Plan and SEFOPE.

Over 200 local stakeholders across nine districts have participated in such initiatives.

In 2011, PAS will focus on fostering the organizational development of local NGO training partners who have implemented the PAS work readiness training program and now seek accreditation as training providers.

PAS in 2011

On April 8, representatives of PAS and the Secretariat of State for Vocational Training and Employment (SEFOPE) signed a Memorandum of Understanding to work together in 2011 on a set of special workforce development initiatives to address the needs of youth in some of the country’s most isolated rural communities, including:

1. Formation of a government-led working group to adopt an accredited foundational training course as part of the Timor-Leste National Qualifications Framework (TLNQF).
2. Designing and implementing a model of stakeholder collaboration on livelihood development for out-of-school youth in Oecusse, with a special emphasis on expanding access to private sector employment.
3. Fostering the organizational development of local NGO trainer providers and improving their ability to provide quality programs for rural youth.

During the MoU signing ceremony, a Tetum-based training curriculum developed by PAS and local NGO training partners was formally presented to the Government of Timor-Leste as a model for an accredited foundational training course to be included in the National Qualifications Framework (TLNQF). Finalization of this course as part of a more accessible vocational training system will be a centerpiece of the collaboration between SEFOPE, PAS, and the National Institute of Workforce Development (INDMO).

Check out the PASsages film online at: [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H8UFTWQ_jw](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H8UFTWQ_jw)
Like many program participants, 30-year-old entrepreneur Josefa Soares joined PAS in search of new ideas on how to improve her business and expand her financial management skills. “I have always learned from being a business owner, and was happy to get more ideas for my business,” Josefa says of her experience with PAS. Before joining the program in Baucau in May 2009, she and her husband sold household goods, such as plastic plates, glasses and chairs from a little kiosk in Baucau town. A seed grant and business training from PAS allowed Josefa to employ new strategies for selling, including adding a “mobile market” or pushcart that she and her husband took from house to house, bringing goods directly to consumers and expanding their customer base in Baucau. Moreover, in PAS, she learned not only how to attract new customers, but how to keep her regulars and beat the market competition through better customer service. Today, her household goods business brings in between $300 and $400 USD a week.

Achieving success as a small business owner awakened in Josefa a desire to help others find their own opportunities in life. “I believed that I could help other people with the skills and certificate that I received from PAS, so when I heard about the Ministry of Education vacancy for a literacy teacher, I applied and I got the job,” she explains.

Now an entrepreneur and a part-time literacy teacher, the middle school graduate says she did not begin work with the Ministry of Education for the money. As she explains, the income she receives from her business is enough to support her family. Instead, what keeps her in the classroom is the joy she receives from helping others and seeing her students learn.