**PEACE JAM Timor-Leste 2018 Overview**



The PeaceJam Foundation is an international organization whose mission statement is "to create young leaders committed to positive change in themselves, their communities, and the world through the inspiration of Nobel Peace Laureates who pass on the spirit, skills, and wisdom they embody." Its mission is to create young leaders committed to positive change in themselves, their communities, and the world through the inspiration of 14 Nobel Peace Laureates who pass on the spirit, skills, and wisdom they embody. The Laureates include: The Dalai Lama, Archbishop Desmond Tutu, Rigoberta Menchú Tum, President Oscar Arias, Jody Williams, Máiread Corrigan Maguire, Adolfo Pérez Esquivel, Shirin Ebadi, José Ramos-Horta, Betty Williams, Sir Joseph Rotblat, Leymah Gbowee, Tawakkol Karman, and Kailash Satyarthi.

Ba Futuru has been partnering with PeaceJam for several years, and has been ramping up our efforts to engage youth in year-round programming to enhance the leadership and social change capacity of young people. In Timor-Leste, Ba Futuru and PeaceJam partner with Rotaracs (the youth Rotary Club, which are some of the most dynamic emerging young Timorese leaders) and PeaceCorps, young people from the United States who work with local youth leading PeaceJam programming in their placement communities and then they accompany some of these youth to the national conference; and Dili International School who share PeaceJam programming with their high school age students and encourage them to attend the conference.

Ba Futuru, and our partners, provided life-enhancing PeaceJam leadership education programming, including facilitating 42 youth-led community service projects across Timor-Leste - for hundreds of youth. The PeaceJam training activities included young people learning about Nobel Peace Laureates life stories and actions, and helping them to gain key life skills. Through this program they learn how to be community activists for peace and development, including engaging directly in tackle social issues, and learning how to energize their communities to undertake positive actions to take care of their environment and to resolve conflicts, and find win-win solutions through mediation.

Ba Futuru undertook pre and post PeaceJam training surveys with 60 youth to gauge the impact of the training, and found the following:

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Location | Covalima | | Bobonaro | |
| Survey | Pre | Post | Pre | Post |
| Participants knew about what is positive social change | 3% | 73% | 7% | 77% |
| Participants knew what community service is | 0% | 80% | 17% | 83% |
| Participants stated that they wanted to improve themselves | 20% | 87% | 17% | 97% |

A male youth aged 21, from Raifun (Maliana), said that: “I feel really pleased to attend this training because through this training I now know about the way to build peace and work with communities. And I know about the history of the people who got the Nobel Peace Prize as well and through their history and messages I am inspired to continue to learn and go forward.”

A female youth aged 18, from Ritabou (Maliana), noted that: “I feel really content about this training because I now know deeply about the Nobel Peace Laureates, and they have inspired me as a youth to prepare myself better for the future.”

After participating in this programming, the majority of these youths came together in September 2018 for a national PeaceJam conference hosted by Ba Futuru. This two-day conference, on September 18 and 19, engaged 218 youth, 14 PeaceCorps volunteers, 44 youth mentors and 31 teachers from Dili, Lautem, Covalima, Bobonaro, Aileu, Liquica, Ermera and Baucau. Various external stakeholders including Marie Stopes Timor-Leste, Blue Ventures, UNDP’s Knua Juventude Fila-Liman and Ba Futuru staff provided skill building workshops and informative sessions as part of the conference:

The topics included:

1. the use community theatre for social change,
2. conflict resolution skill-building,
3. protecting the environment on both the land and in the sea,
4. clean water for everyone,
5. medical check-up and information tent,
6. understanding mental health issues,
7. looking for employment opportunities and how to be work ready.

We also had the special guest speakers in order to inspire the youth with their experiences in social transformation including Timor-Leste Peace Prize Nobel Laureate, Jose Ramos-Horta, who attended both days of the conference; a former child activist in the Timorese resistance movement, Naldo Rei; and the Secretary State Equality and Inclusion, Maria Jose Fonseca Monteiro. The youth who participated felt engaged with several action projects that also took place during the conference including cleaning rubbish around a market area and the main road and a petition to the government to install more rubbish bins in public places, peace mural paintings, and a march advocating for stopping sexual harassment in the public spaces. The youth also had the opportunity to present on the service projects they had undertaken prior to the conference in their own communities.

Dili International School, which sent a group of Grade 10 and Grade 11 students to attend the conference, reported: “The Conference provided a wonderful leadership opportunity for our students and allowed them to undertake an in-depth exploration of the current challenges facing Timor-Leste and work with students from other schools to find solution to these challenges. We give thanks to the Peace Corps and Rotaract volunteers who acted as mentors and to Ba Futuru for hosting the conference.”

During the conference, Ba Futuru’s Domin Nakloke ‘Love is Respect’ Episode was also screened for 70 young people. This film encourages healthy relationships and deals with issues related to teenage pregnancy prevention and support. Afterwards many of the young people shared the film on social media. The impact of the screening is summarized below:

75% said that watching this episode motivated them to be more supportive of pregnant teenagers in their community and school

75% said that it motivated them to speak with their boyfriend or girlfriend about the consequences of teenage pregnancy

* 76% said that the episode motivated them to look for information about contraception.
* 63% said that they will share the information from the episode with other people
* 75% percentage reported knowing after watching the film that teenage pregnancy (19 years of age and under) has higher health risks than for older women

**The power of diversity**

It was very powerful to have so much diversity at the Timor-Leste 2018 PeaceJam conference. There were many participants from remote areas of Timor-Leste due to the partnership with Peace Corps and ChildFund. The diversity of participants, including youth from Dili International School, American Peace Corps volunteers, young Timorese with disabilities and other young people from 8 municipalities of Timor-Leste, allowed for a wealth of sharing of experiences.

At the end of the conference we also had a survey for participants to gauge the change brought about for them through the conference:

85% of youth participants said they agree or really agree that they can now help create peace in their community better than before

88% agree or really agree that they have learnt a lot about creating peace from PeaceJam

74% agree or really agree that they will take an active role in their community in the future

This year was focused on empowering youth to make a change through helping them to realize that they, too have the power to create change. This was partly achieved by creating service projects that could be stand-alone events in participants own communities, and which did not require a whole lot of work to set up: participants saw that doing simple things can lead to big changes. This was also accomplished by encouraging workshop presenters to make their presentations hands on, and by empowering young American PeaceCorps volunteers as educators utilizing the PeaceJam curriculum.

The PeaceJam Timor-Leste programming and conference in 2018 had a huge impact on the lives of the youth involved and allowed them to build essential skills to engage in social change, thus we look forward to continuing this important work with additional young people in 2019.