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CURRICULUM REFORM AND TRANSITIONAL JUSTICE

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Title: Teaching the Past for a Better Future in Timor-Leste

Section 1: Introduction and Background

Timor-Leste straddles Asia and the Pacific, which is reflected in the diversity of its people and languages. Today Timor-Leste has a population of around 1.2 million people, one of the fastest growing in the world with a large youth population. Despite oil and gas reserves, Timor-Leste is one of the poorest nations in the Asia-Pacific.

From the 16th century, Timor-Leste was colonised by Portugal. In 1960, the United Nations listed Portuguese Timor as a non-self-governing territory, recognising its people's right to self determination. But the authoritarian regime in Portugal was late to decolonise, and only began a rushed process in 1975. Conflict between inexperienced Timorese political parties led to a brief civil war, and Portuguese authorities fled. Up to 3,000 people were killed and tens of thousands were displaced in a conflict which lasted about six weeks, a conflict whose divisions still resonate among older generations in the country.

During the occupation years the character of the conflict went through several changes with different impacts upon the population. The 1970s saw large-scale military operations directly affecting civilians, including bombardments and aerial attacks. This was followed by devastating conflict-caused famine in the late 1970s and early 1980s, which killed tens of thousands of people. To control the population, in the 1980s Indonesia installed a military presence to the village level across the country, including mobilising local people into grassroots militarised units: militarisation of the society became pervasive with violations occurring often in rural and remote areas, including massacres and rape as a weapon of war. A younger urbanised generation - educated under the Indonesian system - emerged in the 1980s and 1990s, to play a key role in the resistance. The infamous Dili massacre of 1991 saw mass shootings of students and young peaceful demonstrators and, because it was captured on film, stirred international attention on the almost forgotten conflict.

In the post Cold War era, the United Nations stepped up its engagement and an opportunity for self determination arose in 1998 after the fall of the Indonesian authoritarian leader Soeharto. In 1999, the UN organised a referendum on the future of the territory, and despite widespread intimidation and violence the people voted overwhelmingly for independence. The Indonesian military and its local militia proxies undertook a planned scorched earth policy after the vote, with up to 1,500 people killed, mass rape and the forced displacement of more than half the population either across the border into Indonesia or into the mountains. Up to 80 per cent of infrastructure was deliberately destroyed, including most schools.



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Under intense pressure the Indonesian military withdrew, the UN established a peacekeeping mission and transitional administration which operated until 2002 when independence was restored. In 24 years of conflict, human rights violations resulted in at least 100,000 people killed, rape perpetrated on a mass scale, political imprisonment and torture, abduction of children, and a wide range of abuses of social, cultural and economic rights.

The country faced an internal crisis in 2006, when widespread violence broke out in the capital Dili amid violent tensions within a factionalised military and between the military and police. Youth martial arts groups, many with political affiliations, rapidly escalated violence in the capital. More than 30 people lost their lives, tens of thousands of people were displaced and there was widespread destruction in Dili. Violence was largely limited to the capital, but the crisis shook the young nation.

History of Education System and School Curriculum Prior to Reconciliation-Oriented Reforms

During 450 years of Portuguese colonial rule, education was severely neglected and was effectively reserved for elite participation. Portugal regarded East Timor as an integral part of its empire. Moreover, for much of the 20th century Portugal was ruled by an authoritarian regime and its education system reflected this. There was no higher education in the territory. National languages were banned from schools (and other government functions); indigenous identity and culture was denigrated with a government “caste” policy meaning that a person was regarded as an “assimilado”, and of a higher social status, if they learned Portuguese. The Catholic Church operated a small number of schools.

From the 1980s Indonesia greatly expanded education in the territory, implementing its national system and curricula. Primary and secondary schools were built across the territory. Large numbers of teachers came from Indonesia. However, there was a strong perception that the purpose of the system was the “Indonesianisation” of the population. The language of instruction was Indonesian. The Catholic Church also operated a number of primary and secondary schools, which were required to teach the Indonesian curricula. In the 1980s, students were sent to Indonesian universities and in 1988 the first university was established in East Timor. Indonesia also banned national languages from the education system and other government services.

In 1999, with the violent withdrawal of the Indonesian military and administration, the country’s infrastructure was devastated and government services became non-existent. Up to 90 per cent of schools had been destroyed or severely damaged in the departing rampage of violence, there was an exodus of Indonesian teachers. The Indonesian curriculum, which had been in place for 20 years, was no longer relevant.

Under the UN transitional administration, emergency measures were undertaken to get the education system up and running. Emergency repairs were undertaken to destroyed and damaged schools. UNICEF, the UN’s children agency, assisted with emergency curricula development and international NGOs and donors assisted to stand up a make-shift system including some teacher training for a new cadre of teachers, many of them with low levels of education themselves.

Upon the restoration of independence in 2002, the Timorese government launched a national development plan across all sectors, with new objectives and strategies for education. It faced



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massive challenges to establish all aspects of an education system across the country. Curricula development was one among many priorities - for example, rebuilding schools, recruiting, retaining and training teachers, standardising the official language of Tetun, and increasing enrolment and retention of students especially girls. Teacher training largely took the form of Portuguese language training, as it was decided that Portuguese was to be the main language of instruction despite the fact that nearly all teachers and students could not speak the language. Increasing both the reach and the quality of education were fundamental objectives.

The new education ministry was committed to develop “a curriculum appropriate to East Timor’s contemporary needs, encouraging the development of cultural identity, and stressing the importance of the values of democracy, self-sufficiency, national unity and non-discrimination.”

The initial focus was to develop curricula for basic education, at this time the first six years of education.

Pathways and Processes of Reconciliation

During the turbulent period of 1998 and 1999, the Catholic Church played an important role in trying to promote reconciliation between pro-independence and pro-Indonesian political leadership. Ultimately this did not prevent the campaign of mass violence of 1999.

Immediately upon the withdrawal of Indonesia, a major priority was to assist the 300,000 Timorese who had fled the country to return, if they wished. UN agencies, international and national NGOs and religious organisations assisted with this work.

The Commission for Reception, Truth and Reconciliation (CAVR) was the major national initiative to address the legacy of more than 24 years of mass human rights violations and to promote reconciliation, especially between Timorese. In the aftermath of the 1999 violence, Timorese human rights activists and civil society organisations advocated for a truth commission and gained support of political parties. Recognised under the new constitution of independent Timor-Leste, the CAVR operated between 2001-2005.

The CAVR mandate covered both the period of the early brief civil war between Timorese and the years of conflict with Indonesia. The commission gave fundamental priority to assisting to restore the dignity of victims of human rights violations. It recorded nearly 8,000 testimonies from survivors, held more than 60 public hearings (many televised and radio broadcast), and conducted more than 200 community reconciliation hearings in all districts, to assist the reintegration of former relatively low-level pro-Indonesian militia members and community-level reconciliation.

The CAVR made more than 200 recommendations in its final report, *Chega! (Enough!)*, encompassing ongoing work to secure and promote peace, justice and reconciliation and respect for human rights - including work in the formal education system as well as more broad human rights and peace education and promotion.

For its headquarters, the CAVR rehabilitated a former political prison from the Portuguese and Indonesian eras. When the CAVR completed its work, this centre became a museum and human rights research centre as well as home to the CAVR archives.



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Implementation of the CAVR recommendations has been slow, and very partial to date. Civil society, including victims' groups, led advocacy for follow up and in 2017 a reinvigorated national process began with the establishment of the *Centro Nacional Chega!* (CNC) within the Prime Minister's Office, to coordinate implementation across government and other relevant organisations.

After the CAVR completed its work, a bilateral Commission on Truth and Friendship (CTF) was jointly established by the governments of Timor-Leste and Indonesia, operating between 2006-8. The CTF's mandate focused on violations in 1999 and its investigative work was based essentially on desk review of previous commissions and inquiries rather than original research or engaging victims and communities. As the name suggests, a major objective was to promote good relations between the two countries though this was largely limited to the political leadership level as the commission did not engage with the population of either country. It submitted a final report titled *Per Memoriam ad Spem (From Memory to Hope)*. There has been limited follow up, at the political rather than community level.

Following the crisis of 2006, many initiatives were undertaken to restore stability and promote peace within the community. Many programs were initiated to engage in dialogue with youth, especially in Dili, including martial arts groups which had been involved in violence. The government, national and international NGOs, religious organisations, and the UN all supported activities. In 2008 at a national youth peace festival, then President and Nobel Peace laureate Jose Ramos Horta announced the initiative of Dili as a City of Peace, largely as a response to the 2006 crisis. This led to a 2009 national dialogue with young people seeking to bridge the generational gap that was evident during the 2006 crisis, and led to a series of national sporting and cultural events promoting youth participation, opportunity and peace between 2009-2012.

The annual cycling Tour de Timor began, and in 2010 involved a Festival of Peace where villages along the 450km route held local cultural and sporting events to promote peace. Dili's first "Run for Peace" was held in 2010, with thousands of participants. This developed into an annual marathon along with shorter runs, promoting mass participation. Some described the introduction of these large-scale participatory sporting events as national group therapy, helping heal resentments and give hope. Many of these initiatives continue today as annual events.

Section 2: Reforms and Innovations

Formal and Informal Education and Curriculum Reforms

In the years immediately following independence, education efforts focused on rebuilding school infrastructure, replenishing and developing the depleted teaching force, and getting children back to school. There was a strong focus on basic education, the first six years of schooling, through the 2000s.

Early curricula interventions remained dependent on foreign assistance, in particular when in 2004-5 the government partnered with a Portuguese university to develop curricula for Years 1-12. However, this dependency on foreign leadership in curricula development, in addition to the

nascent state of indigenous reference and education materials more generally, led to curricula minimally adapted to Timorese culture, history and conditions.

In addition, through the 2000s a number of initiatives by NGOs and even the United Nations created materials. However, in many of these instances a challenge of adequate engagement with the Education Ministry was not overcome, and many initiatives were not formally adopted. For example, in 2008 the human rights team of the UN peacekeeping mission developed stronger human rights curricula material, but with limited pick up by the Ministry.

In 2010, the government launched its National Development Strategy 2010-2030, committing to a major overhaul of the education system, including developing new curricula for all classes as well as quality teaching and learning materials. Implementation of this vision has been slow.

In 2013, the government began the process of curricula reform for years 1-6. This was the first time the Timorese Ministry of Education led the curricula process, and the first time a uniquely Timorese curricula was being developed to be supported by content relevant to Timorese culture, history, and the environment. The Ministry team undertook broad consultation to develop the curricula, including with teachers, civil society, development partners, religious leaders, veterans, academics and other national figures.

Social sciences are introduced into the curricula for Years 4-6, which is the framework for human rights. The CAVR final report, *Chega!*, was utilised in both the curricula and learning materials.

While the new curricula for basic education was being introduced between 2015-17, the revision of curricula for Years 7-12 began. This included the subjects of human rights, civic education and history under the social sciences rubric. Both the Centro Nacional Chega and human rights consultants have been involved in preparations of draft curricula and materials. However, since 2017 Timor-Leste has had three changes of government including considerable flux among senior personnel in the Ministry of Education. As personnel and policies change, the revised curricula is yet to be finalised and students in Years 7-12 still use curricula created by the Portuguese university in 2004-5.

At university level, in 2018 the regional human rights NGO, Asia Justice and Rights, developed a university curricula and teaching materials on Transitional Justice, focusing on the measures taken in relation to Timor-Leste since 1999 to pursue truth, justice and reconciliation including court trials in Indonesia and Timor-Leste, the CAVR and the CTF. There are plans to introduce an accredited human rights curricula at university level.

Role of History, Arts, Culture and Human Rights Education in Post-Conflict Curricula

Social sciences enter the curricula in Years 4-6, and it is under this rubric that subjects such as civic education and human rights are incorporated.

History as a subject has proven difficult to develop. Not uncommonly in a post-conflict context, there remains the question of who writes this history, what is included in it and what perspectives it should take. There is still no History faculty at the national university, and the relative dearth of



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Timorese historians at this early stage of the young nation contributes to the lack of development of national materials.

The final report of the CAVR, *Chega!*, remains the single-most significant national resource in this regard, in particular because it is based on more than 8,000 personal testimonies of lived experience. *Chega!* has been utilised in the revised Year 4-6 curricula, lesson plans and learning materials, focusing on areas of the colonial era until the second world war, the independence struggle and occupation years and human rights and solidarity. It is yet to be incorporated into curricula or official materials for Years 7-12 or for systematic university learning and research. (See below for civil society and CNC development of educational materials based on *Chega!* and distribution to schools).

At university level there have been some initiatives. In 2007, the State university, UNTIL, established the Institute for Peace and Conflict Studies within the faculty of Social and Political Science - in part as a response to the 2006 Dili crisis after students and teachers conducted conflict resolution dialogues. In 2019, UNTIL partnered with the European Union to establish the Global Campus on Human Rights. UNPAZ - the private University of Peace - has established a faculty of human rights. In 2020, UNPAZ partnered with the NGO ACbit to host a human rights exhibition based on *Chega!* materials (see below). Especially at UNPAZ, *Chega!* Has been sourced by many students in their research papers and theses.

Also in 2018, AJAR launched a School of Human Rights and Social Justice (Activist School), providing 6-month courses on human rights, both contemporary and those related to transitional justice for historic violations. It utilises *Chega!* as a core teaching resource. The school targets post-school young people and emphasises inclusiveness and equity in enrolments, promoting participation by students from remote communities, women, children of victims of historic human rights abuses and others from marginalised communities such as LGBTQI and disabled people.

Development of Resources and Initiatives

When the CAVR completed its work at the end of 2005, the President established a small secretariat to publish and disseminate its final report and related materials, as well as manage its extensive archives and premises. Initial materials included the 2,500 page report itself (in English, Indonesian and Portuguese, but not yet Tetun), plus a short 1-volume version and a series of booklets providing first-person testimonies from the seven national public hearings. Film and radio versions of the report were also produced. While the *Chega!* Report was delivered to the President in 2005, it took some years to develop the final report in the three languages for publication and dissemination and some momentum was lost.

Centro Nacional *Chega!*

In 2017, after years of advocacy by NGOs and victims groups, that Centro Nacional *Chega!* was established by Decree Law to coordinate government implementation of the CAVR recommendations. The CNC is part of the Office of the Prime Minister, and with its official legal mandate it coordinates with all relevant government Ministries including Education.

An important first step was to develop a policy paper and then sign memoranda of understanding with all the key ministries, so they would engage with us. It took one and a



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*half years to achieve this. With the Education Ministry, the MoU focuses on CNC assistance to integrate *Chega!* Into the curricula and to coordinate extra curricula activities with schools. Hugo Fernandes, director CNC (17 September 2021)*

The CNC is based in the former headquarters of the CAVR. Today, CNC operates student and public education tours, with installations and exhibitions as well as presentations. It also houses the CAVR archives.

When I visited CNC, I learnt a lot of things that I have not known before such as the history from Portuguese to Indonesian occupation years which caused suffering and pain to many Timorese people and was a very cruel history ... when I entered the dark prison cell, without any light, I was unable to see: I felt aware of the people who were punished in that place and their suffering, their hunger, but also their effort to survive even in that pain. When I visited that place, I felt proud to be a Timorese who can understand a little about the country's history. Ernia Gorrete Lay Ximenes, student visitor to the CNC (2 October 2021)

When I entered to the dark cell, without light, I started to imagine if I was the person who is in that prison for many years. I have no idea if I could survive it. As a youth and a human, I think that this kind of punishment shouldn't happen. These experiences make me more aware that the process for independence was very tough, a very long process and which required such sacrifices. Francelino Octavio Gaiola da Costa, student visitor to the CNC (2 October 2021)

The CNC has worked with the Ministry of Education to review the Years 4-6 curricula, and to develop the new Years 7-12 curricula (both of which are pending sign off by the Ministry). The CNC has expanded distribution of the *Chega!* report and related materials to schools, creating and providing the *Chega!* Library, a growing collection of learning materials being developed from the report. It is creating a TV animation based on the *Chega!* comic books.

In 2019 the CNC with the Education Ministry introduced the annual national *Chega!* Schools Quiz, for schools throughout the country, where students compete based on questions related to Timor-Leste's history and human rights documented in *Chega!* The competition climaxes each year with finals in the capital televised nationally.

*The CNC is continuing to develop new programs. In 2020, we introduced the "Transmission of Memories" project, supporting schools to have students record oral histories from their family members about the conflict era. Later this year, we will host a *Chega!* Camp with 300 students from around the country, holding human rights training and commemorative events. Hugo Fernandes, director CNC (17 September 2021)*

NGOs and civil society organisations played an important role in the period between the closure of the CAVR in 2005 and the establishment of the CNC in 2017, and continue to implement innovative and creative programs related to historic memory, education and support for survivors of violations.



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In 2007, the international NGO International Center for Transitional Justice (ICTJ) began working with Timorese victims groups to socialise the *Chega!* report to district communities. It also worked with victims' groups to conduct school visits to the former CAVR premises with educational activities focused on *Chega!* In 2011, it developed *Chega!* Mobile, a mobile exhibition depicting the main findings and recommendations of the report to tour to district and remote communities - this mobile exhibition is still in use across districts by the local NGO ACbit (*Chega!* Ba Ita - *Chega!* Is Ours).

In 2011 ICTJ worked with local teachers and human rights experts to develop a 5-volume comic book version of the *Chega!* report for youth audiences, published in the national language Tetun as well as Portuguese. This popular version continues to be reproduced and disseminated in schools by the CNC.

When ICTJ closed down its Timor-Leste program, AJAR helped to establish a national NGO ACbit carried on this work. ACbit is a rare example of a national NGO being established following a truth and reconciliation commission, with the specific mission of seeing its recommendations implemented and its legacy expanded. It was formed at a time when there was a real lack of government action.

ACbit created a teachers' manual and gave training to primary teachers for the Years 4-6 curricula. It conducts school educational visits to the former CAVR premises as well as other sites of significance related to human rights, and takes *Chega!* Mobile to district and rural communities.

ACbit has worked with government ministries and UN Women on the Resolution 1325 Women Peace and Security action plan, highlighting the *Chega!* recommendations on reconciliation in this work. ACbit increasingly focuses its programs in district and remote communities, with a strong emphasis on empowering women survivors. ACbit takes a violence against women framework and applies it to working with survivors of historic violations. It seeks to help women survivors take control of their stories and restore their agency.

ACbit's ongoing participatory research with women survivors of historic violence is utilised to advocate for greater public education about women's experiences during the armed conflict to combat misperceptions that lead to victim-blaming and marginalisation of female victims of sexual violence. Programs are expanding local level history telling associated with women's experiences during the past conflict, as well as facilitating women survivors to participate in national level commemorative events for historic days. ACbit and AJAR played a significant role in advocating for the establishment of the CNC:

*AJAR works very closely with ACbit. One of the achievements of ACbit is the result of their push for an official follow-on institution to the CAVR, the CNC. Now that the CNC is up and running, it is adopting and expanding some of the ACbit and other NGO programs like school visits and the wider dissemination of the *Chega!* popular report. ACbit can focus more on its participatory research with women survivors, and work in rural and district communities as AJAR also develops its human rights education work. Jose Luis de Oliveira, AJAR (15 September 2021)*



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Six examples of creative, innovative educational work include:

- ***Pirilampu: women survivors participatory theatre, music and popular publication:***
Pirilampu (Tetun for fireflies) was a creative project with women survivors of human rights abuses, involving theatre, Hip Hop and traditional music, as well as the publication of a popular comic-style book of women's experiences and resilience during the conflict years.

In 2017 ACbit held a national workshop with over 130 women survivors from all districts focused on sharing stories of their experiences, as well as expressive activities such as music and dance. From this emerged the story of one woman, Olga, who was trapped one night hiding in the forest during the war years - and who managed to escape soldiers by following the flickering light of the forest fireflies. Working with theatre specialists as well as young Timorese musicians, women survivors created a participatory theatre performance held in the former prison that was the CAVR premises. Young musicians performed specially created Hip Hop songs, and women survivors played traditional music and sang. Audience members re-enacted the escape through the forest following the light of the fireflies.

When we shared our own stories this helped lift us from our own frustrations and feelings of sickness. When we shared what we experienced and felt, our hearts were more peaceful and we could live our daily lives with our families better ... We felt happy and very excited when the youths, both men and women, participated in Pirilampu. Because they had the opportunity to hear our history, so that they can avoid conflict and never again suffer the way we did in the past. Josefa Adão da Silva, woman survivor and former prisoner in the Comarca Balide (CNC premises.) (7 October 2021)

What I remember the most about the program is when they told their painful stories ... what hit me the most was that the strong women always got such cruel treatment from the Indonesian military ... We heard that there were only men who were punished in prison, but actually the Pirilampu stories showed that women also experienced the same thing ... when I heard the women survivors tell their painful stories ... I felt very upset ... on the other hand, I felt proud and excited because they were strong and brave enough to share their experiences ... Celestina de Almeida, student participant/audience member. (7 October 2021)

Pirilampu, the performance and the book, not only recognised the suffering of women in the conflict, it celebrated the resilience of these women survivors which was the small light in the dark night. Manuela Pereira, ACbit (17 September 2021)

The performance was conducted on 7 December, the anniversary of the Indonesian invasion. ACbit brought women participants from all districts, who were also given places of honour in official government commemorations of the solemn day during their visit to the capital.

- **District walking tours, local conflict history, Baucau:** To better engage with often marginalised survivors in rural and district communities, and to foster better understanding the impact of the conflict in local areas, ACbit developed "district walking tours". ACbit



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works with local survivors of abuses and local organisations to map sites of significance in relation to local human rights history, and survivors lead walking tours of community members holding discussions of events during the conflict.

In 2018 in the eastern city of Baucau, the district walking tour was developed with women survivors. On 8 March, International Women's Day, the tour led women survivors, students and community members throughout the town to sites that were known as well as others less well known where violence was committed against women. Women shared their stories at different locations, and community members were encouraged to share their stories of the conflict period. Students and young people participated, with a focus on cross-generational learning. The aims included developing solidarity with women survivors of violence, especially to counter stigma and victim-blaming of survivors of sexual violence as well as their children, and to listen to their aspirations.

Women told youth and other community members about the places they were taken and abused. There is the notorious Hotel Flamboyan which was a torture centre. But there were other places people were not aware of. As the group walked through the town a woman stopped everyone at a pharmacy store and told them that this was where she had been taken and abused. No-one knew of this. The woman felt empowered to speak as she was with other women who had shared their stories. Manuela Pereira, ACbit (1 October 2021)

The walking tour was preceded by two days of the *Chega!* Mobile exhibition and a one-day non-violence workshop for local youth. ACBit partnered with local women's organisations, the Catholic Church's Peace and Justice Commission, the local administration as well as the UNDP and UN Women.

- **Marabia. A local *Chega!* Interactive exhibition: bringing *Chega!* back to the community:** In 2019, ACbit collaborated with the regional human rights NGO AJAR to work with community members from the village of Marabia, situated in the hills above the capital Dili, to create a localised exhibition of the *Chega!* report on events which occurred there in 1980. This followed years of engagement with community members, who felt strongly that their experiences were little understood outside their village.

In 1980 the Indonesian military cracked down on village members who had risen up in defiance of the occupation at a time when the military thought that resistance was pacified. The brutal response saw many killed and disappeared, others exiled for years to the prison island, Atauro, as well as widespread sexual violence. These events were little known in the national conscience until the CAVR conducted research with the community and documented the local history from first-hand accounts.

ACBit worked with a creative artist to develop an interactive exhibition highlighting sections of the *Chega!* report on Marabia, including testimonial accounts. The exhibition was installed in the village for five days, and people came from surrounding communities and the capital to see it and to listen to survivors recount their experiences. ACbit organised student tours and engagement with local community members. ACbit also took survivors to



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the island of Atauro, for their first return since their years of incarceration. In 2020, the exhibit was relocated to UNPAZ, the University of Peace.

Highlighting the detailed local stories in Chega! is a powerful way to bring back the CAVR report to the people who really made it. In Marabia we wanted the exhibition to help bring to life the testimonies that were told to the CAVR. We took photos of survivors as they are today, as well as historic materials we could find. Community members were happy that people visited from other villages and towns and the capital to learn about what happened. It helped make their story, before almost invisible, part of the national story. We had a large banner with a list of the disappeared, and over the five days we found that family members came and added names to it. The truth telling doesn't end with Chega! Galuh Wandita, AJAR (1 October 2021)

- **Other civil society peace and human rights promotion programs:** A number of NGOs and civil society organisations have sustained years of work promoting public education on peace and human rights, some have emerged especially in response to the 2006 crisis.

In 2007, the international NGO, Interpeace, established a presence with its local partner Centre of Studies for Peace and Development (CEPAD). Focused on the cycles of political crises and violence since 1999, Interpeace and CEPAD highlighted a gulf between citizens, authorities and elected representatives, disenfranchised youth, land disputes and domestic violence as threats to peace. In its program work, CEPAD focuses on addressing the issue of corruption, nepotism and collusion (popularly known as KKN). Much of CEPAD's work is at the policy level, though it has also built five Peace Houses in Timor-Leste. The Peace Houses are based on the traditional custom of *Fatin Nahe-bitu*, or "meeting at the mat" to discuss and resolve disputes.

Following the 2006 crisis in Dili, students of the East Timor Students Solidarity Council and others who went on to establish the Peace and Conflict Studies Institute initiated conflict transformation dialogues with young people in some of Dili's most affected neighbourhoods. They organised a national youth dialogue later that year, with youth from all 13 districts. In 2007 they held a national Peace Camp, fostering peace building and conflict resolution leadership among young people.

Following on from the work of the Peace and Conflict Studies Institute at the State university, its founder recently established an independent Peace Centre in Dili, which focuses peace education and promotion around environmental issues, children and youth as well as engaging with rural farmers.

There have also been some notable achievements leveraging popular Timorese culture in support of peace and human rights following the 2006 Dili crisis. Music and visual arts in particular have been used by young people to express their desires for peace, inclusiveness and a better future.

Music, especially singing, is probably the most widespread popular culture of Timor-Leste. Young people in villages, towns and cities throughout the country love to sing - in choirs,



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bands and individually. Since 1999 there have been countless community as well as national level music events promoting peace. Perhaps Timor-Leste's most internationally known musician is Ego Lemos - a former human rights worker during the Indonesian occupation and also a renowned permaculturalist. His songs are mostly in the Tetun language, and many celebrate human rights and peace as well as a strong affinity for the land of Timor-Leste. In 2009, Lemos won an Australian national film industry award for his song *Balibo*, which featured in the movie of the same name based on the story of the killing of Australian journalists in 1975 by the Indonesian military.

- **Arte Moris (Living Art) - Dili's free art school:** In 2003 Arte Moris, a non-profit free art school and artists association, opened in Dili and has fostered a movement of young Timorese artists which has seen a new wave of Timorese creativity and vernacular expression. The group conducts workshops in Dili as well as districts. Many art works stand out for their visible signals of local Timorese traditional symbols at the same time as exploring contemporary artistic styles. The results have been a powerful expression of youth identity in a time when younger generations have often felt marginalised from the political space. Many art works explore human rights, not through the prism of past conflict but through the everyday challenges and hopes for young people.

In 2005 Arte Moris collaborated with the CAVR to create a public exhibition creatively expressing human rights highlighted by the commission's work.

Following the 2006 crisis in Dili, Arte Moris and young artists initiated, with government support, a public mural campaign to promote peace and unity. Large murals featured in public spaces throughout the city, and in many other towns across the country. Murals and graffiti art continue to be popular ways for youth to express themselves across Timor-Leste, and many themes relate to peace, inclusiveness and human rights.

In 2007, Arte Moris supported the establishment of the Afalyca Art Centre in Baucau, the second city. Afalyca is a cooperative community-focused organisation which holds after school classes for youth in drawing, painting, music and dance. Artists have also participated in public mural projects, supporting campaigns of peace.

Operating for nearly 20 years as a free art school for Timorese youth, in 2021 Arte Moris faces a crisis which threatens its ongoing existence as it has been evicted from its Dili premises.

- **Laloran Justicia (Waves of Justice) Television drama series:** In 2017 the Timor-Leste Provedor for Human Rights and Justice partnered with regional human rights NGO, AJAR, and local producers Dili Film Works to develop a 20-part television drama series focused on human rights education. The Tetun-language series was described as presenting "high stakes law and order drama, family tensions, football, music and love stories in combination with important human rights and democracy themes." One episode focused on the story of a child of the "stolen generation" during the conflict years, when Timorese children were abducted to Indonesia - utilising the *Chega!* report as a resource. Launched at the capital's

cinema complex, the series was broadcast on the national television network, especially targeting youth audiences.

Successes and Challenges

Successes:

Success 1: A fundamental success of the new nation has been the embedding of a constitution with strong human rights guarantees and the creation of a society that aspires to respect the fundamental rights and freedoms of all its peoples. Timor-Leste has robust political debate, civil society organisations and freedom of the press.

In education, a major success has been the establishment of a new, Timorese education system and significantly increased student enrolment and attendance, especially at primary level. The development of a Timorese curriculum for Years 1-6, completed in 2015, was a significant success, including the incorporation of material from the CAVR *Chega!* report in curricula and support materials.

Success 2: The achievement of Timorese human rights experts and activists to put a truth and reconciliation commission on the transitional agenda bore fruit in the establishment and work of the CAVR. The CAVR itself has been assessed by international experts as among the most effective truth and reconciliation commissions worldwide: it conducted a highly participatory program of work across the whole country, delivered a detailed report based on first hand accounts of thousands of Timorese people as well as detailed secondary research, and laid out a pathway for action with regard to safeguarding human rights, justice and peace including in formal and informal education related to human rights, history, justice, reconciliation, peace and conflict studies. It left an unparalleled archive of Timorese resource material for future human rights, history, peace and conflict studies.

Success 3: The CTF is the first example worldwide of a bilateral truth commission by two countries previously at war. While the CTF received significant criticism from human rights organisations, ultimately its final report was a rare example of an Indonesian State body documenting the responsibility of Indonesian institutions for crimes against humanity and war crimes. The report was officially accepted by the President of Indonesia, providing a rare acknowledgement of this State responsibility.

Success 4: Civil society production of the 5-volume youth comic book version of the CAVR final report has created an education resource for use in schools, in the Tetun language. It continues to be an important resource today. Innovative NGO programs initiated school study tours to the museum at the former CAVR headquarters and other sites of human rights significance. Significant achievements have been made by civil society outreaching to district and rural communities, to bring the *Chega!* report to the people, and to foster new community and educational activities at local level to promote understanding of the conflict, human rights and peace. They have also promoted the resilience of some of the most vulnerable survivors of violence, in particular women, and helped them be community educators.



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Civil society organisations created innovative and creative programs to engage young people following the 2006 crisis, leveraging popular culture including art, music and sport to promote positive youth engagement, participation and leadership.

Success 5: After many years of civil society advocacy, the establishment of the legally mandated Centro *Chega!* Nacional created a politically and organisationally sustainable mechanism to coordinate systematic implementation of the CAVR recommendations. This is one of the few such official follow up institutions worldwide established at the completion of a truth and reconciliation commission. The operation of the former prison as a museum, research and archive centre offers a place of continued memorialisation and learning.

Challenges

Challenge 1: At the end of 24 years of conflict, there were many competing priorities as the new nation-State established institutions and programs with limited human and financial resources. Since 2002, the people of Timor-Leste have been engaged in a challenging process of State- and nation-building at the same time as addressing a history of conflict which wrought enormous damage at all levels of society as well as on individuals. Major social challenges include the steep divide in economic and social opportunities between the capital city and regional and rural communities. Poverty, especially outside the capital, is still pervasive. The high birth rate has led to a large youth population which suffers high rates of unemployment and lack of opportunities. Youth disenfranchisement and alienation from the small political class is a persistent risk. An effective political voice for young people remains a challenge. Domestic violence against women is recognised as a major social problem. There have been periods of political instability, including the major crisis of 2006 when the actions of political actors and the military and police led to a spiral of violence.

Challenge 2: In education the start up challenges were exacerbated by the need to address virtually all aspects of standing up a new education system suitable for Timorese culture and society with very few resources, from rebuilding destroyed schools, recruiting and training a whole new cadre of teachers, and a lack of any Timorese oriented curricula or educational materials. Language has also proved a challenge in the education system, since both students and teachers have been required to learn Portuguese as the main language of instruction.

A lack of experience among Timorese educationalists required the new Ministry of Education to turn to external sources to develop the first national curricula in the years following the restoration of independence. Combined with the lack of developed Timorese source material, especially at this time before the CAVR, this did not result in curricula rooted in Timorese culture, history and experience. Since this first curricula, the planned process to reform the school curricula has been slow in implementation - with primary education curricula completed in 2015. The reform of secondary education curricula has not been completed.

This has resulted in important national resources such as the CAVR final report and other archival materials being underutilised at a time when there are few if any such comparable source materials. Continued reliance on bilateral support for development of education materials, from Portugal,



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presents the risk of a lack of Timorese perspective and cultural and historic foundation in subjects such as human rights, history, peace and democracy.

Challenge 3: In schools, a major factor remains the quality of education. In addition to reformed curricula and more Timorese educational materials (especially in the Tetun language), sustained teacher training is required to develop pedagogical skills. Since independence, much focus of teacher training has been on Portuguese language skills, leaving a gap in teaching skills. This affects teaching related to human rights, history and peace especially at middle and high school levels where - combined with a lack of a reformed Timorese curricula and adequate materials - teachers are not well prepared in this field.

The Catholic Church is a highly influential institution across Timor-Leste, and an important actor in the education field. Especially in the field of teacher training, it would play a more leading role in human rights training practices including utilisation of the *Chega!* report.

Related to this is the persistent lack of relevant education materials in the official language most understood by teachers and students alike, Tetun. In classes, a common practice is to use text books written in Portuguese, and then for teachers to explain and lead discussion in Tetun so that students can understand issues. There is a significant need to invest more in the development of Tetun as a written language, and to develop more educational materials in Tetun including in relation to peace, human rights and democracy.

Challenge 4: Slow engagement with CAVR recommendations: a lost decade. The National Parliament and successive governments did not engage with the CAVR final report. In some respects, the 2006 Dili crisis deflected political attention for several years. The result is that the opportunities presented by the CAVR final report, including in formal and informal education, have not been fully seized. The 2005 report has still not been adequately utilised for education purposes.

Challenge 5: The CAVR recommendations on justice were robust, including calling for action in relation to senior Indonesian figures. These were not welcomed by senior Timorese leadership who pursued a policy of friendly relations with its large and powerful neighbour, Indonesia, for political reasons including security, stability and economic well-being. It is possible that reluctance to engage with these justice recommendations also affected follow up on less controversial recommendations such as those on education. In this sense, there can be a tension between a focus on human rights and a political focus on peace, or at least stability.

Challenge 6: The CAVR final report narrative is a history of the conflict and struggle for self determination through a human rights lense, based largely on the voices and experiences of Timorese victims of violations. Since the early years of nation-building senior political leadership and successive governments have invested heavily in a different narrative of these years, one based on valorising the Resistance in particular its armed wing. This narrative does not focus on victims of violations, but on those who directly fought for victory. This victory narrative does not fully align with the people's narrative of suffering recorded in *Chega!* Over time, Timorese historians and political scientists are likely to constantly revisit these themes and find that it is possible to develop a multi-stranded national narrative and educational materials, but in the early days of independence the emphasis by successive governments has been more single tracked.



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Challenge 7: Timor-Leste has limited national resources for the development of national history and peace and conflict studies. With no History faculty at university level, there are missed opportunities to develop new research and educational materials based on the CAVR final report and archives and to conduct new research.

Challenge 8: Timor-Leste is only now developing a legislative framework for the custody and management of the national archives, including the CAVR archives. This means that until now the main effort has been limited to preservation of archives. Policies of access to archives for educationalists, researchers, historians and others need to be developed and the management of active “live” archives will require skilled human as well as financial resources. This is essential if future educational materials are to be developed, especially by Timorese.

Section 3: Lessons, Reflections and Recommendations

Lessons Learned: Peace and Human Rights in Curriculum Reform

- Development of curricula and educational materials centred on Timorese culture and experience has been a challenge, and progress has been slow. It took years for the Ministry of Education to develop capacity to manage this process, and reliance on international actors has been heavy - at times influencing the perspective of content. This continues to affect the curricula for Years 7-12.
- There is a major challenge to develop and access Timorese content for education, in all fields. For human rights, peace, democracy and history studies, *Chega!* and other CAVR resources represent a unique and still largely untapped Timorese source for educational content, especially for middle and high school as well as higher studies and research in subjects such as human rights, peacebuilding, democracy, history and gender studies.
- Even with curricula reform, there is a need to develop more Timorese-centred educational materials including in the most widely used official language, Tetun.
- Teachers and students seek more creative tools like videos and exhibitions to enhance learning on issues related to human rights, historical conflicts and peacebuilding.
- Teacher capacity is another major factor to effective learning. There is a significant need for systematic teacher training on pedagogy and specifically related to human rights, peace and democracy studies. In Timor-Leste, since 2002 time and resources have been largely focused on training teachers in the Portuguese language.

Role of Multi-Stakeholder Participation

- The lesson of the 2013-15 process of curricula review for Years 1-6 is that multi-stakeholder consultation led by a specialist curricula team in the Ministry of Education can elicit and utilise valuable inputs from a wide range of society. This was a better model for developing a Timorese-centred curricula than outsourcing to international organisations such as foreign universities.

Outcome of Informal Initiatives

- Victims associations are an important stakeholder in driving discussion of how to address the legacy of mass human rights violations, including reconciliation. They have much to contribute, and by actively driving policy discussions and programs this also



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helps restore their agency and dignity. However, survivors of historic abuses are often among the most marginalised in society, and it takes sustained advocacy to them to gain a seat at the table.

- State and government programs in districts and rural communities are limited. Survivors and communities in these areas often feel excluded and marginalised. It has taken NGOs' and civil society organisations' innovative programs to try to fill this gap.
- While civil society initiatives resulted in production of valuable educational materials based on the CAVR report, *Chega!*, much more could have been achieved in the first 15 years after the commission if there had been early full buy-in by the Ministry of Education as well as the Catholic education system.

Adoption and Inclusion of Curriculum Reforms

- The establishment of the CAVR as an official State institution facilitated an authoritative nationwide truth and reconciliation process which garnered widespread buy-in by victims of violations and communities across the country.
- While it was belated, the establishment of the Centro Nacional *Chega!* has enabled a system-wide planning process with all of government on the implementation of CAVR recommendations. This has given clarity and legitimacy to engagement with the Ministry of Education in a way that was not possible for civil society organisations.
- The inclusion of *Chega!* in the reformed Year 4-6 curricula made a big difference to focus on its educational value; with the reformed curricula for Years 7-12 still pending, there is much more ad hoc utilisation of *Chega!* materials by teachers.

Improvements for the Future

- If it could have been politically achieved, it would have made a big difference to have the CNC follow on institution to the CAVR established immediately at the close of the commission. Alternatively, the CAVR could have had its mandate extended for a period to enable the authority of its mandate and leadership to maintain momentum on publication and dissemination of materials and engage with educational authorities without the years of delay that occurred.
- Despite efforts at the time, there was a need to foster more political champions to support utilisation of *Chega!* and implementation of its recommendations - including full utilisation within the education system.
- The CAVR could have brought in Timorese educationalists during the process of its work to demonstrate the value of its report and other resources for future curricula and educational materials. A committee could have been established to carry this work forward, to maintain momentum when the CAVR completed its work and closed.

Recommendations for Other Contexts

- It is necessary to build coalitions of multi-stakeholders to support development of human rights and peace education. Political and high profile champions, as well as leading educationalists, are needed to help gain priority for this work. This is especially important in post conflict societies, where there are many competing priorities and limited resources and where politics can be unstable.
- Helping victims of historical human rights violations galvanise into associations or NGOs assists them to be effective advocates for programs such as human rights education.



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Well organised, victims groups are likely to be among the most persistent voices for quality education about human rights and peace, to ensure non-repetition of their terrible experiences.

- Identifying authoritative national sources for curricula content in subjects such as history, human rights and peace studies can be challenging in post-conflict periods. Political divisions often date back to conflict era issues, and it can be difficult to get agreement on content which relates to this era. There may also be strong counter narratives driven by political forces, which over-ride the focus on human rights. When there is an authoritative national human rights institution such as the CAVR, with well documented human rights material, this should be utilised for educational purposes. Teaching human rights through lived experience and the history of a society grounds the lessons in a way that is applicable to students' lives.
- In addition to curricula, class plans and educational materials, teachers need training on human rights and peacebuilding programs.
- It is important to develop participatory and educational opportunities for youth outside the formal education system, to engage them in building a culture of peace and human rights. This need is heightened in countries with high youth unemployment where alienation and marginalisation are serious issues. Tapping into popular culture and supporting youth to express themselves in their own ways can be powerful. This needs to be connected to developing economic opportunities for young people, for a culture of inclusiveness and hope.
- Inter-generational learning is a powerful tool. School children visiting local sites of historical violations, participating in commemorative events, listening directly to those who experienced violence and conflict are powerful learning tools which can complement more formal education approaches. Survivors themselves can be powerful educators, adequately supported.
- Special efforts need to be taken to ensure students and teachers in rural and remote regions have access to educational materials and experiences. Organised educational trips to the capital city to visit sites of conscience are one useful initiative. Also, localising learning by enabling communities and students to explore their families' and community's human rights history can produce powerful educational experiences.

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Pat Walsh
Galuh Wandita
10 Teachers and Students

CHEGA recommendations related to human rights curricula, programmes etc:

3.4.4. The public campaign to raise awareness and support for the prevention of domestic violence be continued and intensified, particularly in the districts.

3.4.6. The education system in Timor-Leste, both governmental and private, promotes values in education and develops courses and teaching methods to impart skills and a culture of peace, respect, and non-violence to students, including exposure to East Timorese and other figures who achieved their goals, both big and small, peacefully.

3.4.7. The power of sport, music, drama and other arts in Timor-Leste are harnessed as tools to promote peace, non-violence and the building of positive values and community relations, especially among youth.

3.6.1. A comprehensive civic education programme is implemented that is focussed on the structure, institutions and processes of democracy and the rights and obligations of citizens; this programme should also be taught in the schools.

3.7.3. The Government and Church education systems collaborate to develop a human rights curriculum and teaching methodologies for use at all levels of the education system and that makes use of this Report and related materials to ensure the course is grounded in Timor-Leste's lived experience.

3.7.5. The Department of Education, teachers and academics make use of the multi-media resources created and collected by CAVR - during its work on reconciliation and its inquiry into the period 1974-1999 - as a way of enriching East Timorese content in the education curriculum and to assist in the teaching of history, political science, conflict resolution, international relations and law.

4.1.1. The diverse contributions of women involved in the Resistance – internally and in the diaspora - be more fully recognised and that additional ways of documenting and disseminating their contribution be developed, including for teaching in the schools.

4.1.6. The National 16 Days of Activism against Violence against Women be continued each year and be intensified particularly in the districts.

4.1.8. The harmonisation of Timor-Leste laws with the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) is continued, that adequate capacity is provided to institutions responsible for the implementation of CEDAW and reporting to the UN on Timor-Leste compliance with CEDAW, and that understanding of CEDAW is promoted in the community, particularly through the education system, the media and the Church.



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4.2.2. A public education campaign similar to that already underway on domestic violence be undertaken to educate parents, teachers and the community about the effects of physical and emotional violence on children and to provide alternative forms of behavioural control and character development.

5.6.4. The (Catholic) Church develops a programme of human rights education, which includes due emphasis on the rights and duties of citizens, for dissemination to the community through its network of parishes and schools.

6.1.1. A public education programme be undertaken to deepen community understanding of Timor-Leste security policy and the role, limits and accountability of the police and armed forces. [and see Rec 6.1.2 for the proposed details of the education programme)

6.2.5. In addition to technical training all police personnel, including senior officers, receive ongoing training in both the theory and practice of human rights as part of their professional development as protectors of human rights.

6.3.6. On-going training in international human rights, humanitarian law and civic education is provided to the members of the Defence Forces, including senior leadership.

7.4.2. The Ministry of Education in the Government of Timor-Leste works with the post-CAVR institution to utilise the Final Report and other Commission materials in the development of curricula and other educational resources related to human rights, reconciliation, history, law, gender studies and other relevant disciplines.

7.5.3. The archives form an integrated part of an active human rights centre to be developed in the former Balide Comarca whose overall purpose will be to remember, honour and learn from Timor-Leste's recent human rights history.

9.7. Civic education programmes make use of the material in this Report to impress on the community the importance of non-violence and the appalling cost of political violence.

10.3. That the Government of Indonesia undertakes a revision of official accounts and education materials relating to Indonesia's presence in Timor-Leste to ensure that these give the Indonesian people an accurate and comprehensive account of the period 1974 to 1999, including the UN conduct of the 1999 Popular Consultation, and contribute to reconciliation.