

STORIES OF IMPACT AND RESILIENCE

FROM PEOPLE WITH DISABILITY

Sharing lived experiences gives planners and policy makers valuable insights into the needs of those impacted by their decisions.

My name is Vitorina Sarmento Savio and I have total vision impairment. I am from Baucau municipality, administrative post of Venilale.

BEFORE THE PANDEMIC

I was involved in the East Timor Blind Union (ETBU) organisation where I was responsible for the Cooperative program but I only received 'transport money'. Then I found work with the UNDP to train vision impaired people in Baucau for one month. I received a full salary at that time. After that contract finished I continued my activity with ETBU.

DURING THE PANDEMIC

During the pandemic everyone was asked to isolate and there was no public transport. I did not earn money because there was no cooperative activities, and it was hard to get food or daily needs. I contacted the director of ETBU who provided some food. After the COVID-19 restrictions were loosened, I travelled to my family in Venilale, and I stayed there for more than two months. It was good to be at home because we had many types of local foods available. The only thing that was difficult to get was rice. During the pandemic, the Government of Timor-Leste provided \$200.00 subsidy to each household, including my family. The money that my family got was used to respond to family needs, such as to buy rice, cooking oil and vegetables.

VITORINA S TIMOR-LESTE



AFTER THE PANDEMIC

After the situation got better, I travelled back to Dili to continue my job as the person responsible for cooperative program at ETBU. It was easier to travel and work then because public transport was allowed again. Now, I work with The Association of People with Disability (ADTL), where I am responsible for the advocacy program. I receive a monthly salary and I feel very happy. The money that I earn, I use to help my family and to look after my daily needs.

This publication has been funded by the Australian Government through the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) and produced by RHTO and Nossal Institute for Global Health, University of Melbourne, through the CBM-Nossal Partnership. The views expressed in this publication are the author's alone and are not necessarily the views of the Australian Government.



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