Report on the Certificate II library training course, Dili, East Timor

The first certificate based library training course has been completed in Dili, East Timor . Fifteen students from several districts including Baucau, Lolotoe, Auturo Island, and Dili started classes at the Dili Institute of Technology (DIT) Bairo Pite campus in February 2006.

Half of the training was completed when, in April 2006, teaching was interrupted by the civil unrest in Dili. Gratifyingly, thirteen of the original fifteen students who began the course completed it in December 2006. Their commitment to finishing the course was astounding, as they endured ongoing civil unrest in Dili, daily power cuts, and the resulting stifling humidity in the classroom!

As well as technical library subjects, the students studied Tetun,(the local lingua franca) English, and computer subjects. 'Block' style teaching (one week of full time training per month for six months) was adopted, allowing students from more remote districts to attend the course. They enthusiastically embraced their time in Dili (prior to the deterioration of the situation anyhow!) for networking.

The most popular aspect of the course has been the onsite visits to other libraries. Student visits included the library of the National University, The Xanana Gusmao Reading Room, and the Library and Archive of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (CAVR). These onsite visits were invaluable for students. They gained a sense of the number and types of libraries and the different services they provide for their clientele. The enthusiasm of the students during these visits in terms of interest level and input was certainly unlike anything I had witnessed on similar library tours in Australia!

One of the most telling comments was expressed in a final report prepared by the students:

> We hope that an opportunity like this will be realised for other young Timorese to improve their knowledge and to develop Timor-Leste to be a big nation in the future and to stop the violence.

DIT plans to offer Certificate III and IV level courses in the future.

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