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**Peace Camp 4.7 - Empowering Timorese Youth Through Civic Engagement and Global Citizen Education**

**July 15, 2019 – July 22, 2019 (Dili, Timor-Leste)**

### **Background: A Glimpse into the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**

In September 2015, world leaders gathered together at the United Nations and agreed upon a set of 17 new global goals called Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) that aimed to eradicate extreme poverty, fight inequalities and injustices, and fix climate change by 2030. Goal 4 aims to ensure a quality education for all by 2030, and more than that, it aims to “*ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture’s contribution to sustainable development,*” (target 4.7 of the United Nations SDGs, hence the name of this project). I believe that in order to achieve these Global Goals, it is essential that young people are exposed to foundational knowledge of the sustainable development, in order to gain awareness about social issues around them, to spark the conversation around those issues, and learn how to fix them.

### **Country in Focus: Timor-Leste (East Timor)**

Timor-Leste is an island nation located in Southeast Asia, between Australia and Indonesia. The country gained independence in 2002 from Indonesia, and as a post-conflict nation, it has since worked its way towards integrating into the globalized world. However, the Government of Timor-Leste, while intensively focused on developing the country, has overlooked the human-capital development. In 2011, the Timorese Government developed an ambitious development framework to massively invest the state budget on infrastructures, building highways, international airports and oil-related mega-projects such as petrochemical and refinery LNG plants in the southern part of Timor-Leste, among many others. This comes at the expense of investment in the human capital, and furthermore, poverty and youth vulnerability are still considered top issues in the country. Nearly 70% of the population is under 30 years old, and most of the Timorese youths are unempowered: many are unemployed, young men live in the wake of conflict and violence, and in rural areas, many young women get married and have children before they reach 18-20 years of age, giving the country one of the highest teenage pregnancy rates in the region. As Timor-Leste is planning to join the ASEAN community, many young people are not yet ready to compete in a more globalized and economically integrated society. Furthermore, young people lack parliamentary youth representatives, effective civic education, and have limited political engagement – in short, they lack a political voice. If the SDGs are to be achieved, young people need to be empowered, and we need to equip them with essential knowledge on sustainable development so they can go back to their community and make a positive impact. While world leaders alone cannot achieve these Global Goals, if we can empower young people on a grassroots level, it may be possible to accomplish these targets that have been set for a better, peaceful, and more sustainable world.

### **Project Description**

With this in mind, Peace Camp 4.7 will be an educational camp that will select 40 high school student leaders (gender-balanced) from municipalities outside of the capital of Timor-Leste to attend the event. Specifically, the project will target underprivileged student leaders from rural areas. Students will be selected through nominations from their schools. A letter will be sent to principals of high schools to select their students who actively engage in their communities and schools, are civically ambitious, and obtain strong recommendations from their teachers. I will be recruiting approximately five highly-motivated volunteers from Timor-Leste Youth for Peace (TLYfP) to be the facilitators for the Peace Camp and help me carry out the project. TLYfP is a youth-run organization that works towards building peace amongst the youth and working for the protection of the environment. I have been a part of this organization in the past for almost four years. Selected campers will live together in a one-week intensive camp in Dili, the capital of Timor-Leste. Most of the activities will be conducted by the Peace Camp 4.7 facilitators. The format of the camp will consist of workshops, presentations, group discussions and group activities, icebreakers and games, community service, and visits to local organizations. I will be partnering with local human rights activists, environmentalists, policymakers, law experts, women activists, respected thinkers and doers from not-for profit and governmental organizations to speak at the camp (details below in Project Execution). By choosing local speakers, young people will be able to easily look up to these people with whom they share a similar background. Furthermore, local speakers tend to be more familiar with integrating and appreciating the local culture and its contribution to peace and sustainable development. Nonetheless, this does not bar international speakers from being guest speakers as well. Here is the breakdown of our objective and activities we will be conducting in the Peace Camp 4.7.

### **Project Execution<sup>1</sup>**

- Peace Camp 4.7 Recruiting Process – May 31, 2019: the facilitators will travel to remote areas in other municipalities outside of the capital to recruit the student participants for the conference.
- Deadline – June 31, 2019: followed by the announcement of selected applicants on July 5. 40 applicants will be selected; need-based participants from remote areas will be provided with small financial aid for transportation.
- Between July 5 - July 14 – there will be a short training for facilitators of Peace Camp 4.7 as well as logistical preparations prior to the camp day (e.g. transportation, first aid kit, food and drink, handbook guidelines, t-shirts and ID badges, etc).

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<sup>1</sup> Dates are tentative

- Peace Camp day – July 15, 2019 – July 22, 2019: participants will be gathered in Dili for one-week intensive camp, on the following schedule:

**Day 1 – Sustainable Development Goals Awareness and global citizenship:** during the first day, we will introduce the 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals, what the world collectively wants to achieve by the year of 2030, and the idea of what it means to be a proactive global citizen. Campers will then try to be policymakers by designing politics and policies that can enhance the lives of youth. In conducting the training, I will be working with the UNDP designated Youth Ambassador for SDGs, Ms. Ross Merry Martins Borges. Ms. Borges has agreed to join me, and is willing to work as one of the Peace Camp facilitators.

**Day 2 – Peace and Conflict Resolution education through the perspective of local culture and tradition:** I will be collaborating with the local NGO Ba Futuru that specializes in conflict prevention and reduction locally and from the outlook of local culture. During this day, campers will learn essential fundamental skills related to communication and action in resolving conflict, building peace, and the appreciating the role of local traditions and practises for conflict resolution and prevention, such a *Tara Bandu*.<sup>2</sup> (read more <http://bafuturu.org/>)

**Day 3 – Human Rights Day:** I will be collaborating with Ombudsman for Human Rights and Justice (PDHJ), a national body that works to protect human rights, to lead the presentation. PDHJ strives to strengthen integrity and promote good governance in Timor-Leste. Campers will learn and practice how to address concrete social and economic problems that act as barriers to peace and justice. These barriers include poverty, discrimination, refugee crisis and political turmoil. Human rights day will encompass topics such as gender equality, social inclusion, refugees, and the LGBTQ+ community. In addition, I will also be working with Hatutan, an organization that works for youth empowerment and social inclusion, particularly the inclusion of the LGBTQ+ community. Hatutan recently held the first Pride march in Timor-Leste, one of the few Asian countries to organize the event. (more on PDHJ <http://pdhj.tl/?lang=en> and on Hatutan <https://www.facebook.com/HatutanYouth/>).

**Day 4 – Reproductive education and increase the awareness of menstrual hygiene for girls:** In Timor-Leste, contraception tends to be a taboo topic, surrounded by silence and shrouded in myths. The goal of Day 4 event is to educate students on the misconceptions and negative perceptions of contraception and access to reproductive rights. Day 4 will also focus on raising awareness on the subject of menstruation. Menstruation and menstrual hygiene are emerging as pivotal issues for gender equality, human rights, and development. Campers will be given safe spaces for both sexes and two trained mentors armed with the goal of breaking the silence and openly discussing the unspoken problems of the sexual, reproductive, and menstruation situations in their communities. These discussions will also include what individual campers can do to address these issues effectively in their schools and communities. I will be working with Marie Stopes International in Timor, a not-for-profit international organization that provides sexual and reproductive healthcare services (read more on <https://www.facebook.com/Mariestopestl/>).

**Day 5 – Community service, volunteerism and social activism:** There will be a half day of workshop on the importance of volunteerism and social activism. Campers will spend another half day paint the school building of a selected elementary school. There are several public elementary schools in Dili that are in poor infrastructure condition. At the end of day, campers will be guided to design their action plan at their schools or communities upon the completion of Peace Camp 4.7. Facilitators will come up with list of possible projects that are low-cost and feasible to be implemented in campers’ schools and communities.

**Day 6 – Environmental and sustainability education:** I will collaborate with an environmental organization called Movimento Tasi Mos, and several timorese environmental activists, such as Mrs. Bella Galhos, the founder of Leublora Green School. Day 6 will cover topics such as the negative impact of uses of plastics-based products, deforestations, house-level incineration, climate change and what can be done to protect and preserve the environment. Movimento Tasi Mos seeks to increase the awareness of population regarding the impact of plastics to the life in ocean. Mrs. Galhos is a timorese environmentalist and a human rights activist.

### Feasibility and Project Impact for Sustainable Peace

This project is feasible because the organizations and individuals listed above have agreed to collaborate with me, and provide the project with the energy and resources needed in making this Peace Camp happen. This project aims to create a learning platform where young leaders can be empowered with global citizen education and become civically engaged in order to contribute to peace and sustainable development in society. This will be accomplished through learning from the works of influential local individuals that we believe will have tremendous contribution and positive impacts to our campers. At the end of the camp, campers will be asked to come up with their own action plans to be completed in their hometown based upon what they have learned during their stay at the Peace Camp. Action Plans could take in the form of volunteer work, small workshops in their local community, or forums focusing on the most alarming issues from the participant’s area. TLYfP and Peace Project 4.7 facilitators will assist the campers to design low-cost projects that can impact the community. Assistance include project management training, providing small grants as well as logistical support for campers (if available), and do follow-ups. Furthermore, campers will be invited to join and become members of Timor-Leste Youth for Peace. As members, they will be able to meet other young peacemakers as well as establish networks for ideas for their projects. This way, more underprivileged young people in rural areas could be reached as a part of this project; it will act as a reminder that they themselves are part of something big and that they too have the potential and power to drive positive change wherever they are.

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<sup>2</sup> “traditional Timorese custom that enforces peace and reconciliation through the power of public agreement to define social norms and practices to a given community”.