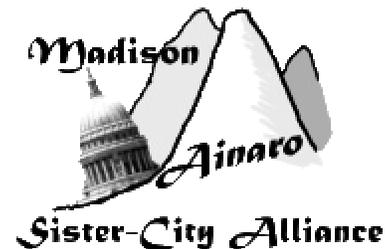


*Madison's newest sister city ...
with the world's newest country, East Timor!*



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*Organizations are listed for
identification purposes only.*

Excerpts from Jen Laakso's October 18th 2000 report from Ainaro, East Timor for the Madison-Ainaro Sister-City Alliance (MASA) :

More than a year after nearly the entire district of Ainaro was destroyed in the wake of the ballot, dozens of homes and buildings stand deserted. Many of those that are lived in are covered by tarps and other such emergency adaptations. Over 95% of the homes and infrastructure in the town of Ainaro was destroyed, forcing the people of Ainaro to start from zero ...

The educational system in Ainaro is of great importance right now. Classes are to begin in mid-October, but the buildings are far from ready. Every school in the town of Ainaro was destroyed... Primary school is to be held in the church yard under a very large tree. The schools are now in desperate need of supplies such as paper, pencils, books, and pens, as well as desks and chairs. There is also a severe lack of teachers... only one teacher per 50 students. There are virtually no secondary teachers, and there is currently no secondary education.

As for the medical situation in Ainaro, there is no local doctor. Currently there is ... one foreign doctor, a nurse, a medical student, and many more Timorese nurses. The foreign doctors are rotated out every month, which is frustrating for some people that I spoke with...

The water situation in Ainaro is not good. There was no water at our house for two days. The water for the people in the city of Ainaro comes from the villages above. There are problems with broken pipes, culverts, etc. As for agriculture, it is a huge issue at the moment, as this is the dry season. Late October and November will bring the much-needed rain. Farmers want and need seeds to plant.

Projects: The people of Ainaro have asked for help with education, healthcare, agriculture, construction, women's groups, and many other things...

Specific projects suggested by the people of Ainaro for MASA include sending school supplies, setting up a fair trade exchange with women's sewing and weaving collectives, supporting a town carpentry shop for community rebuilding projects, sending commonly needed medicines, helping to provide seeds and farming tools, and facilitating exchanges between American and Timorese women's groups and agricultural collectives. As you can see there is no shortage of important projects for MASA to work on! We hope that you will support us in our efforts to work alongside the Ainaro community as it addresses these and other issues!

**For more information or to join MASA,
e-mail madison@etan.org or call Diane at 255-4598**