



## Garden of Hope School & Family Sponsorship

*Escola & Família - Jardim da Esperança*

Partnering with the Church in Gleno/Timor Leste

01.12.2017

Dear sponsors and friends,

Our friends from Garden of Hope in Gleno have reached a very exciting milestone – On the 24<sup>th</sup> November the Kindy/Pre-primary School turned 10!

We think of the beginning at other times, of course, but allow us to share our reminiscing with you at this special time...

For Sylvia and I, the connection with Gleno began in July 2007, when we went into the mountains to visit our friends Eliana and Regina. Regina and Eliana came from Brazil and had responded to the call from the Gleno Church to work alongside of them. The Church wanted to re-start their pre-school ministry and restore the building which was badly damaged during the 1999 destruction of Timor Leste. As is the case in many situations, only the lack of funds held them back. Praise God, our short visit led to a very generous donation from a congregations in Geraldton, and after a lot of hard work, the school was ready to be opened again.



The school pre-restoration...



Concreting creative Timor style...



The school post-restoration...

I clearly remember our excitement when we received the invitation to attend the opening ceremony, and the generous financial help from a friend, so that Sylvia and I **both** could go to Timor at such short notice. I also remember that, due to some miscommunication, we arrived in Dili on the very morning the official opening was to take place, and how we were promptly picked up at the airport and whizzed up into the mountains... (Well, we were "whizzed" rather slowly, as it took almost 2 hours to travel the 50 km to Gleno). Everyone was waiting for us, and as soon as we arrived, the proceedings began.



The Official Opening – the guests...



cutting the cake...



leaders of the community sharing their thoughts...

There were speeches, praise songs, prayer, the cutting of ribbons and a cake, the handing over of the key to the building, lunch for all, an inspection of the class rooms by the grown-up guests and the test run of small tables, chairs and toys by their children.

The full use of the facilities was reserved, however, for the 20 four and five year olds that started school at Garden of Hope. We even discovered that three of the students were “stowaways” and already of primary school age. - In 2007 preschools were still quite rare in Timor Leste and the Education Department turned its focus to formal early childhood education a little away down the track.



VIP guests flanked by Eliana and Regina... The first day at preschool – 20 kids, 2 teachers, 2 Aussies and many onlookers

We want to congratulate our friends in Gleno on reaching this wonderful milestone. They are the ones doing the “hard yards” day in and day out. They face most of the challenges and deal with the obstacles. They have grown tremendously and they are faithful.

We want to thank you, the friends and supporters, for faithfully getting alongside our friends at Garden of Hope. Some of you have been part of this ministry from the beginning.

Most importantly we want to thank our God for sustaining the school and ministry in Gleno, for providing everything that we need, for being our wisdom and anchor and strength. The Lord's plans are the very best plans, and it is such a privilege to participate with Him to make them happen.

*A new edition of a short film that gives a glimpse into “Garden of Hope” can be found on our website <https://gardenofhopetimor.com/>*

Blessings,  
Elke

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Elke Graham

*(Garden of Hope Sponsorship Publicity & Communication)*  
<https://gardenofhopetimor.com/>

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"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD,  
"plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."

Jeremiah 29:11

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