



Media Release

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KIWI CONTRIBUTIONS HELP WEST TIMOR CHILDREN

New Zealanders often take education for granted but in countries like Indonesia education is not so readily available.

Save the Children NZ (SCNZ) staff member Katherine Richards, who lives in Roseneath, recently travelled to West Timor to see first-hand a new early learning centre that New Zealand donors have contributed to.

Katherine, who works as a Donor Development Co-ordinator, says, "The harsh reality for children living in the poor and remote town of Kefameanau, is that they usually don't learn to read until the age of eight years old.

"Parents struggle to make a living here so their children don't have books to read at home. But now the children have plenty of reading books at school to fuel their imaginations."

Since June 2015 Save the Children have been supporting a programme that brings early childhood and primary school education to children living in remote communities in Indonesia. SCNZ has provided cash grants for the refurbishment of 30 early childhood centres and 30 primary schools across the West Timor district.

In one village, a sustainable water-piping system has been installed so that children no longer have to carry jerry cans of water to school each day to wash their hands and to drink from.

One big boost has been the establishment of weekly reading events and activities in around 57 communities which are attended by around 1,434 children.

Katherine said, "The special reading camps are held after school and provide many children with the only opportunity to continue improving their literacy skills outside of school hours."

These community driven events are run by trained volunteers and enable children to read with their siblings and parents. The book banks, which are part of the reading camps, also stay in the communities so they will be able to continue their education after the project has finished.

The programme also provides teachers with ongoing training to improve the learning environment of the classrooms and encourage interactive teaching practices. SCNZ also support early childhood teachers with curriculum training particularly in literacy and maths.

ENDS

Caption: Katherine Richards of Save the Children with five year old Dita* reading a book about a nurse. If it wasn't for support from donors she would never have known that she too could be a nurse one day. Credit: Mahyuddin Hatma/Save the Children

*not her real name

About Save the Children

Save the Children believes every child deserves a future. In New Zealand and around the world, we work every day to give children a healthy start in life, the opportunity to learn and protection from harm. When crisis strikes, and children are most vulnerable, we are always among the first to respond and the last to leave. We ensure children's unique needs are met and their voices are heard. We deliver lasting results for millions of children, including those hardest to reach. We do whatever it takes for children – every day and in times of crisis – transforming their lives and the future we share.

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