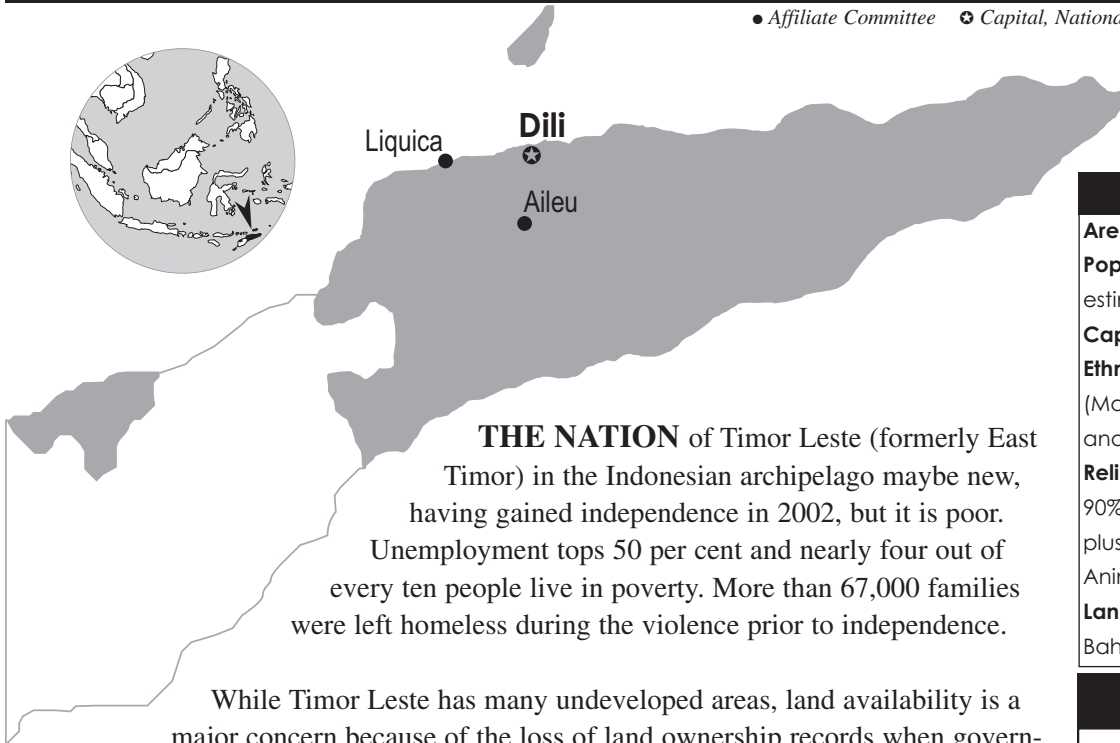


# East Timor (Timor Leste)

## Country Profile

● Affiliate Committee   ✳ Capital, National Office and Affiliate Committee



**THE NATION** of Timor Leste (formerly East Timor) in the Indonesian archipelago maybe new, having gained independence in 2002, but it is poor. Unemployment tops 50 per cent and nearly four out of every ten people live in poverty. More than 67,000 families were left homeless during the violence prior to independence.

While Timor Leste has many undeveloped areas, land availability is a major concern because of the loss of land ownership records when government buildings were destroyed in 1999. Habitat continues to do house renovations as well as building house using the core house designs.

Habitat for Humanity first set up operations in 2000, and formally began operations with a program of renovations in 2002 in Liquica and Aileu districts, over 40 km from the capital Dili.

HFH Timor Leste concentrates on repairing and rehabilitating homes using “Save & Repair”, a variant of the “Save & Build” micro-finance concept, which encourages groups of families to save together. Savings groups are known locally as *arisan*. A housing renovation costs about US\$500, one-third of which comes from the savings group and the rest is provided by matching funds from HFHI and others. Renovations typically involve up to three cycles with savings for smaller renovations staggered as houses made from concrete or soil blocks as well as timber dwellings.

A new incremental “Save & Repair” program for the very poorest families involves starting with a US\$21 loan cycle – with each family saving only US\$7 – in order to provide much-needed anti-mosquito protection screens for doors and windows.

The Timor Leste program also builds new houses. Core houses designs are of two sizes, 36 or 42 sq. m. and use cement blocks combined with traditional materials such as palm stock for walls.

Partner homeowners' monthly repayments begin from just US\$6.25. Repayments, even for renovations, are spread over as long as five years.

### Habitat Highlights

- ‘Project 21’, an incremental “Save & Repair” partnership with local AGAPE Fellowship in late 2004, aims to help 100 families in Fatomasi, in Bazartete, Liquica.
- Affiliate committees organized in Liquica and Aileu as well as in Dili.
- Plan to renovate 500 homes in Liquica and Aileu by 2006 with funding from Australian's charity.
- In March 2004, the first team of international volunteer builders to Timor Leste - from Wollongong Church, Australia - worked in Hekar village, Liquica.

### COUNTRY FACTS

**Area:** 15,007 sq. km.  
**Population:** 1,019,252 (low estimate 800,000: July 2004)  
**Capital:** Dili  
**Ethnic groups:** Austronesian (Malayo-Polynesian), Papuan and small Chinese minority  
**Religions:** Roman Catholic 90%, Muslim 4%, Protestant 3% plus Hindu, Buddhist, and Animist  
**Languages:** Tetum, Portuguese, Bahasa Indonesia and English

### HABITAT FACTS

Families Helped

**388**

Cost Of One House\*

**US\$2,206**

As of December 2004

\* international sponsorship cost



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