

CHIQUITO'S STORY

Timor-Leste

Watch Chiquito's story

Or

Read Chiquito's story
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Chiquito's Story

Seeds of Hope:
Responding to '*the Cry of the Earth and the Cry of the Poor*'



Chiquito is 35 years old and lives in Timor-Leste with his wife, two young children and his extended family. When his father died, he had the additional responsibility of looking after his mother, two sisters and their children and making sure there is enough food to feed the whole family.

"Our lives were simple, however we faced challenges when we did not have enough funds to respond to urgent needs, such as urgent medical bills or whenever there were traditional ceremonies," Chiquito said.

Timor-Leste is one of Australia's closest geographical neighbours, located just an hour's flight from Darwin. However, the standard of living between the two countries could not be more different with nearly half of the population (42%) in Timor-Leste live in poverty.¹

In Timor-Leste, the impacts of climate change such as unpredictable rainfall, drought and high temperatures have made it much harder for families like Chiquito's to grow enough food to eat.

Chiquito explains, "We consume what we grew from our vegetable gardens. We had very limited cash, so buying food was not an option for us. This year the impact of climate change is felt more compared to previous years. The previous year had its challenges, however we were able to get good results. The changing rain patterns make it difficult to decide when to plant our crops, if we make the wrong decision to plant and the rains do not come, we lose the whole crop for the year."

¹ Source: [The World Bank](#)

Chiquito's Story | Seeds of Hope: Responding to '*the Cry of the Earth and the Cry of the Poor*'



Chiquito heard about a program run by one of Caritas Australia's partners in Timor-Leste, Caritas Diocesana Maliana. The 'Sustainable Livelihoods/Disaster Risk Reduction' program aims to reduce the impact of climate change on communities.

The challenge for farmers like Chiquito is the lack of opportunity and support to learn new techniques to increase the amount of food they can grow and to be able to access markets to sell extra food they don't eat.

Through the program, Chiquito learnt new skills that helped make the most of the land he had to grow a wide variety of crops. He also learnt business skills which helped him increase the amount of money he could earn by selling his vegetables to supermarkets in Timor-Leste's capital city, Dili.

Chiquito is now growing more vegetables to eat and sell which means his family has enough income to meet their needs. They no longer have to worry about not having enough cash to buy food or pay for basic medical expenses.

Chiquito's determination has made him a role model for other people in his community. He is using the money he earned from selling his vegetables to invest back into the farm and also provide employment to two other people to work with him. He also volunteers to help at the farm of the orphanage just across the road, sharing his skills and knowledge with the nuns.

The new skills Chiquito has learnt through the program have provided seeds of hope for the future.

Along with your generous support, this program is also supported by the Australian Government, through Australian NGO Cooperation Program (ANCP).



Photos: Tim Lam/Caritas Australia

Chiquito's Story | Reflection (See – Judge – Act)



Photo: Tim Lam/Caritas Australia

Reflect on Chiquito's story following the Cardijn See–Judge–Act rhythm.

See

- How is the changing climate making it hard for Chiquito and his family to have enough food to eat?
- How is Caritas Australia helping?

Judge

- How do you think God wants us to care for each other and the environment?
- Which Catholic Social Teaching principles are evident in Chiquito's story?
(Human Dignity, Preferential Option for the Poor, Solidarity, Participation, The Common Good, Care for Our Common Home)

Act

- What can you do to care for our common home?
- What can you do to support communities like Chiquito's?
- How can you and your community work towards the Laudato Si' Goals?



ADOPTION OF SUSTAINABLE
LIFESTYLES



ECOLOGICAL
EDUCATION



ECOLOGICAL
SPIRITUALITY



COMMUNITY RESILIENCE
AND EMPOWERMENT