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EAST TIMOR

SUCCESS STORY

First-Ever Health Clinic Opens in Malabe

New health clinic replaces a weekly mobile health unit



Photo: NCBA

A father shows his clinic registration card while waiting in line with other patients at the new USAID-sponsored rural health clinic in Malabe, Ermera District.

The new USAID-sponsored health clinic is part of a network that provides health care to more than 15 percent of East Timor's population.

Telling Our Story
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The official opening of the new clinic in the village of Malabe, East Timor, by a USAID-sponsored program was marked by a community-wide celebration. More than one hundred residents arrived in full traditional dress to celebrate with government representatives and USAID officials. The clinic is the first permanent health facility for the community in this highland area of the western Ermera district, three hours south of Dili, the capital.

At the new facility, residents will be able to visit two general nurses and a midwife. A doctor and a laboratory technician will make scheduled visits every week. The clinic's opening means that Malabe's community now has greater access to medicines and basic medical procedures and tests, prenatal care and birthing services, nutrition education for children under five, and immunizations. Such services are vital in a country with low life expectancy and high infant and maternal mortality rates.

The new clinic is part of a USAID-sponsored network that provides health care to more than 15 percent of East Timor's population, mainly in the country's coffee-growing areas. Originally envisaged as a service provided as part of a USAID family farming program, the role of the clinics expanded after the country's separation from Indonesia in 1999. They are open to everyone, and complement the government clinic network in other areas of the country. The clinics are independent, but work closely with the government on special programs and health initiatives.

The clinics are part of a USAID-supported program that aims to improve the livelihood and health of East Timor's citizens. Through partnerships with business associations and other organizations, USAID is reaching this goal by strengthening the country's agricultural sector and bringing medical care to people in remote areas like Malabe.