

## **Rosaria Martins da Cruz – Coordinator of HIAM Health**

Rosaria is a single Mum of four children. Three are school age 12, 7, and 6 and the youngest is 3 years old. Rosaria has dedicated her life to help the poorest of the poor and socially disadvantaged in Timor Leste.

She is an East Timorese native from the small suburb of Liquiça. Born on the first of June 1975, (the year when the Indonesians invaded and colonized East Timor). Rosarias father was a delegate with the Falintil (Timorese military) so the family went to live in the mountains with other members of the Falintil. This was a time of great poverty and suffering and her family moved to the Ermera district in 1979 to surrender to Indonesia Military.

During her childhood, Rosaria was been disturbed by the injustices and violence from the Indonesian occupation. *“When I was young my eyes were opened and I saw it all around me. I thought in my head “Rosaria! What can you do to help them? Why is this happening in your country?”* Rosaria said.

She finished her schooling in 1994 at a Catholic college in Dili but was unable to continue her education in Indonesia due to family circumstances. She began studies in Dili University but this ceased in 1996 when her first son was born. It was at this point Rosaria developed an interest in general health and travelled to Indonesia to do a six month course which allowed her to work with a private clinic in Dare with Brother Ornelas from the Jesuit Congregation. This was a mobile clinic and community counseling for two districts. Rosaria also worked for the Christian Brothers at the Edmund Rice Centre.

In 1999 amid all the dramas of independence Rosaria worked for Interfet (International Force in East Timor). She worked with them as an interpreter for a doctor, in mobile clinic. In 2000, The Christian brothers returned back from Australia and Rosaria continued to work with both program until 2001.

It was on the weekends Rosaria began the voluntary community and pastoral support at the Dili National Hospital on the weekends. It was from these humble beginnings that Rosarias vision of HIAM Health eventuated.

Rosarias hard work and dedication have created HIAM Health. Facing the obstacles of a patriarchal society she has never faltered in her vision to create a healthy Timor Leste.

Rosarias concern for the future involves the education of her children and the long term success of HIAM Health.

Rosaria says *“My only personal concern is finding someone who might sponsor my children to go to university. My wage is \$325 dollars a month. At the moment I can pay for most things but there is no extra for schooling. I also would love to study how to manage an organization and do capacity building because my training is not in this*

*field. I worry about the future when there are no more volunteers like Mana Jill- what will happen to HIAM Health? I have dedicated my life to HIAM Health and want it to continue for many years to come.*