



Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: [24 October 2014]



Health Alliance International & Catalpa International Announces a Partnership with Timor Telecom in Support of the Liga Inan *mHealth* Project

Liga Inan: Improving Access to Maternal Care in Timor-Leste

On the 24th of October, Health Alliance International and Catalpa International signed an agreement with Timor Telecom in support of the Liga Inan program.

Liga Inan, a mHealth program is using mobile phones to connect expectant mothers with health care providers in Timor-Leste to improve the likelihood of a healthy pregnancy and birth. Liga Inan, generously supported by the American people through USAID, was officially launched in March 2013 by Health Alliance International (HAI) and Catalpa International in partnership with the Ministry of Health in Manufahi District. The mobile service was designed and developed by Catalpa International, a software development and services firm which provides innovative, simple and effective solutions in a development context. The Liga Inan service sends maternal health-related text messages twice weekly to pregnant women enrolled in the program. Liga Inan also facilitates contact between pregnant or postpartum women and their midwives, including regular phone contact around the time of delivery. In June 2014, the Australian Government awarded funding to HAI to expand Liga Inan into two additional districts, Liquica and Aileu. To date, over 2,310 women have been enrolled in the program as of October 24 2014. Now, Timor Telecom comes on board to support the Liga Inan program.

"We realized that one basic reason that many women didn't give birth with professional help was that their contact with midwives was so brief that they weren't able to develop a sense of trust and confidence," said Che Katz, HAI Country Director based in Timor-Leste. "There also was a lot that women could do to have a healthy

baby that they didn't know about, and it couldn't be conveyed in the usual two or three short prenatal care visits."

The Liga Inan mHealth program is the first of its kind in Timor-Leste and ultimately aims to improve birth outcomes. Early results from Manufahi District, where the project has been running the longest, are promising with increases in women coming in for maternal care services. More information about Liga Inan can be found at the project website at www.ligainan.org.

"Distance and a lack of information have kept mothers from accessing health services. This new partnership helps close those gaps by enabling Liga Inan to deliver more information to more mothers than ever before", said Anders Hofstee, Executive Director of Catalpa International. "We are proud of the hard work of the midwives who have used Liga Inan to re-connect with their communities. Liga Inan isn't about the technology, it's about giving midwives the tools to help provide mothers with the support they need."

When Timor Telecom, the largest telecommunications operator in Timor-Leste with a 12 year history operating in the country, heard about the Liga Inan program they contacted HAI and Catalpa to see how they could get involved in support of the project. Timor Telecom is excited to offer their sponsorship to support Liga Inan to improve the health and well-being of Timorese mothers and babies.

"We are very excited to be enrolled in a project of this importance and dimension. Timor Telecom has supported social responsibility projects ever since it began in Timor and has always had a strong commitment to the welfare of Timorese society. The Liga Inan project embodies Timor Telecom's main guidelines towards sustainable development." -Manuel Amaro Capita, CEO Timor Telecom

The corporate sponsorship from Timor Telecom will support the cost of thousands of text messages sent to pregnant women about how to have a healthier pregnancy. This important partnership between HAI, Catalpa and Timor Telecom, the Ministry of Health and with generous support from the Australian Government to expand the program will result in Liga Inan being offered to many more Timorese families.

Contact:

Che Katz, che.katz@healthallianceinternational.org

Health Alliance International

www.healthallianceinternational.org

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Health-Alliance-International>

Box 226, Dili, Timor-Leste

Ph (670) 78266247



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Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade