Nutritious Foods Enterprises

Timor-Leste is one of the most food insecure countries in the world. It is also faced with the challenge of high unemployment and few employment opportunities outside of agriculture.

To address these two needs, ADRA Timor-Leste’s Nutritious Food Enterprises project, with funding from ADRA International, worked with women’s groups to experiment with cooking local foods to develop healthy recipes that promote nutritious food choices and diet diversity.

Through their experimentation, three groups in Carabalo, Luca, Uma Tolu communities have developed a method for producing tempeh—a soybean cake—that offers a valuable source of protein and nutrients. And it is popular! Because good quality tempeh is difficult to find outside of city centres, the groups have found a ready market for tempeh. The women have started businesses working together to produce tempeh and sell it to their neighbours and local restaurants. They are earning money that is contributing to the wellbeing of their families.

ADRA expanded the program to roll out a tempeh production “franchise” introducing the business concept to interested entrepreneurs in three new communities. Additional groups were provided with a starter pack of basic equipment and training and mentoring in how to run a tempeh production business from the previously-formed tempeh groups.