



Closing the Loop

A large part of the work of MAF in Timor-Leste—around 80% of its programme activity—is based around the provision of medical evacuations (medevacs) to those in isolated places. Through their partnership with the Timorese Ministry of Health, each year MAF brings around 260 people into the capital Dili from the outlying districts for urgent treatment.

But until now, that is where our role has ended.

I will let Nick and Ruth Hitchins from New Zealand tell the story. Nick is serving as both pilot and Country Director in Timor-Leste, along with his wife Ruth and their children.



Nick, Ruth and their three children

Nick says, “Think about it for a moment. One day you are going about your life in a village you have known all your life. Then you become seriously sick. Or you may be a mother in labour and there is threat to the life of both you and your child. You are picked up by a MAF plane (terrifying because this is the first time you have ever flown) and suddenly find yourself in an unknown city and taken to a hospital that is anything but ideal. Most Timorese live surrounded by family, and this sudden separation adds yet another layer of stress and

sadness in an already difficult scenario. Then, if you recover, you are discharged from hospital onto the street with little or no money, no supplies, no family and no way (or the slow way) home.”

He continues, “We don’t think this is what the Lord had in mind for them, and we want to change this! What if we could ‘close the loop’ for people during this frightening and overwhelming experience and provide support through every step of the medevac journey?”

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