

## **Tetum**

# Tetun, Lia-Tetun

**Spoken in:** East Timor, Indonesia

**Region:** Southeast Asia

**Total speakers:** 800,000

**Genetic Classification:** Austronesian Malayo-Polynesian Tetum

**Official language of:** East Timor

Tetum is the national language of East Timor. It is basically Austronesian with many words derived from Portuguese, with which it has equal status as an official language, as well as Malay or Indonesian.

Tetum arose as a contact language in the 16th century after colonization by Portugal. The main dialect that of the capital Dili, is called either Tetun Dili, or Tetun-Prasa, while the more traditional form spoken in the countryside is called Tetun-Terik. A form of Tetum known as Tetun-Belu is also spoken in Indonesian West Timor, but has no official status or recognition.

Currently SSWAHS Health Care Interpreter Service employs 3 Tetum sessional interpreters.