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Subject: Many Hands e-bulletin September: research project celebration, September 14 in Com
Date: 13 September 2013 10:26 pm
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Many Hands International

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culture based community development

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News from Many Hands International, September 2013

Dear friends and supporters

With so much happening since our last newsletter, we have plenty to report on. The overwhelmingly positive outcomes of our activities for communities in Timor-Leste demonstrates the efficacy of our cultural-assets based approach to development. Read on to hear more about what's happening in the office and on our projects. We encourage you to recommend MHI to your families, friends and colleagues: use the green Forward button at the top of this newsletter and 'like' us on [our website](#) and our [Facebook page](#).

Best wishes,

MHI Staff and Directors

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MHI a finalist in inaugural Australian Arts in Asia Awards

MHI was honoured to be a finalist in the Australian Government's inaugural Australian Arts in Asia Awards in August. The awards recognise, celebrate and promote the significant number of Australian artists and arts organisations engaging in Asia, contributing to stronger, deeper and broader cultural links with Asian nations. Finalists were nominated in 14 categories: partnerships, philanthropy, Indigenous, community engagement, innovation, individual artist, small to medium arts organisations, major arts organisations, visual art, literature, theatre, dance, music, and digital and film. MHI was a finalist in the community engagement category for our work on the Lautem Cultural Festival.



In announcing the finalists, Arts Minister Tony Burke said "This event is a celebration of diversity in Australia and across the region and how making connections through art promotes understanding and appreciation of all cultures."

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Staff News

In March we welcomed Australian curator and art gallery director Lucia Pichler to the new role of Creative Arts Capacity Building Officer, supported by Austraining International through AusAID's Australian Volunteers for International Development Program. Lucia is living in Lospalos for a year where she will support our local staff and partners in the implementation of our projects. We are thrilled to have Lucia and the skills and experience she brings to Lospalos. Her expertise in all aspects of art gallery management will be invaluable as we continue to work with the Government of Timor-Leste on the establishment of the Centre for Traditional and Contemporary Arts and Culture in Lospalos.



MHI congratulates former MHI volunteers Samantha Cooper and Sarah Daley-Madeira on becoming mothers. Sam and her husband Warwick have a baby boy, Lomoso, and Sarah and her husband Andre have a new baby daughter, Zoa. We also congratulate staff members Khey Gandara and Rico Gaetano on the birth of their third child and first daughter, Rahel.

Photo: Lucia Pichler (left), MHI Director Kim Dunphy and building foreman Zequito on the building site.

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Intangible Cultural Heritage Research Project: Closing Event this weekend

Our research project, *Preserving Endangered Forms of Fataluku Cultural Expression*, winds up in October. Over twelve months of intensive fieldwork, our team of researchers, Justino Valentim, Maria dos Santos, Idllefonso da Silva and Walter Frederico Caetano, have travelled the length and breadth of Lautem district recording endangered traditional Fataluku knowledge and practices, including stories, poems, music, dance and craft production. The team have presented their work at several public events, including the Lautem Cultural Festival in April, the Baucau Community Festival in May and the Timor-Leste Studies Association Conference in Dili in July. During the last month of the project they will travel throughout the Lautem district presenting the project's findings to communities, particularly to those that contributed to the project.



A special closing event celebrating the project will take place this weekend in the picturesque fishing village of Com. The event will begin with a community meal followed by speeches by local dignitaries and Jennifer Harris Baxter, Director of Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs at the U.S. Embassy in Dili. The MHI research team will then present some of their findings in a two-hour documentary. Local performers will showcase traditional dance and music throughout the evening.

The information collected during the research project will be stored in the new cultural centre in Lospalos where it will be accessible to current and future generations of Fataluku and other people. Some of our upcoming activities will include developing the research material for display and developing articles for publication in professional journals.

We thank the U.S. Embassy and the U.S. Ambassadors Fund for Cultural Preservation for their support of this important project.

Closing Event:

Saturday 14 September, 6:30 – 9.30pm, Com Village, Laute'in District

More information: Lucia Pichler (+670) 7799 7661 or lucia.pichler@manyhands.org.au

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Lautem Cultural Festival Success

The inaugural Lautem Cultural Festival in Lospalos, held over the weekend of 5–7 April, was a great success. The festival theme for 2013 was *Protecting Our Endangered Cultural Heritage*. Hundreds of performers from the five sub-districts and three



language groups of the Lautem district shared their cultures with each other and visitors from near and far. Endangered forms of cultural practice, such as vaihoho singing, shared mainstage with newer ideas, such as the Funny Fashion Parade that had the audience in stitches. Audience members observed demonstrations of soap-making, traditional cooking and storytelling, as well as traditional and modern music and dance. The Festival Fair featured cultural products, food and drinks for locals and tourists alike. An estimated 4000 people enjoyed participating in the Festival over the weekend. Read more about the event and see a collection of photos on the [MHI website](#) and on our [Facebook page](#)



The Festival was made possible by a grant from AusAID under the East Timor Community Assistance Scheme. We thank AusAID for its support.

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Lautem Cultural Centre: Stage One Building Completion

This month will see the finalisation of Stage One of the building of the Lautem Cultural Centre. Thanks to the hard work of the team from Community Housing Limited over the past nine months, a large open-air performing arts centre with its dressing rooms, cafe, ticket box and stages is now receiving its finishing touches. A feature of the design is the decorative stonework using local limestone on the stages, as well as the many banks of seats created for the Centre. The second building, which includes a large dance studio, small gallery, curation space, recording studio and office space, is also close to completion. The final and very important buildings for this phase of the project are the public toilets; two newly constructed and two rehabilitated. These will be the first functioning public toilets in the township of Lospalos and a great community asset.



With the finalisation of Stage One, we looking forward to working with the State Secretariat of Art and Culture to support the development and implementation of the centre's programs and activities. We are also looking forward to developing the detailed plans for Stage Two of the building project, which includes the construction of new buildings to house a museum and large gallery.

Photo: MHI staff Thomas Lopes, Nelinha Periera and Maria Dos Santos and the new stonework on the Centre's main stage.

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Cultural Tourism

Our staff in Lospalos have recently begun offering cultural tourism opportunities for visiting groups, as part of our long term vision to create employment and business opportunities in the district. Groups visiting in the last month include tourists with Timor Adventures (run by Timor residents Dave and Shirley Carlos), a study group from the Victorian Local Government Association and the Mornington Peninsula Friends of Lospalos. Activities offered for the visitors include traditional performances by local dance group Sanggar Alegria, delicious lunch catered by a local restaurant and a tour of the near-complete Centre for Traditional and Contemporary Art and Culture. MHI local staff also presented an overview of MHI and our projects, which provided an excellent opportunity for practice of public speaking skills in English.



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Friends of Lospalos Harmonica Workshop

Before visiting Lospalos in August, the Mornington Peninsula Friends of Lospalos group conducted a small fundraising campaign to purchase harmonicas to share with the community of Lospalos. MHI was delighted to work with the Friends group to organise two workshops with a local youth group of CVTL (Red Cross Timor-Leste). The Friends group presented



harmonicas to each participant and taught the participants the basics of harmonica playing. At the conclusion of the workshops, participants were able to play some simple tunes and rhythms.



MHI thank the Mornington Peninsula Friends of Lospalos for creating this wonderful opportunity and to Jenny Macaffer, in particular, who was an outstanding and energetic harmonica tutor!

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More Children's Books for Lautem

This month the community in Lospalos will receive 2500 copies of books created by Natasha Tremain, a University of Melbourne cultural material conservation student who lived and worked with us in Lospalos for six months in 2012. The books were developed with the support of Kids' Own Publishing using stories and artwork Natasha created with members of the local community in Lospalos. The books are written in Fataluku and reflect local themes and images, including colours (fruits and vegetables at the market) and Prezepio (the colourful nativities that feature in Timorese gardens at Christmas time).



Natasha's work complements the project we reported on in the last newsletter, the *First Language First* book publishing project. This project was undertaken in partnership with Alola Foundation and Kids' Own Publishing and saw thousands of community-created local language books being distributed throughout Timor-Leste. We're delighted that Natasha's project increases opportunities for children and their families to engage in reading by providing books that are relevant and accessible. The project was supported by a grant from the University of Melbourne. The books are available under a Creative Commons licence so that they can be freely reproduced in the future.

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Open Garden Fundraiser: Brighton, 5-6 October

As a fundraiser for MHI, keen gardener Maxine Bourke is opening her garden to the public as part of Victoria's Open Garden Scheme. Please join us to enjoy the garden, music and lovely homemade Devonshire teas and support culture and development in Timor-Leste.

Maxine's Garden
25 Meek St, Brighton Victoria
10am – 4.30 pm, Sat 5 and Sun 6 October.

Guitar music 1pm-3pm. Refreshments served.

Entry \$7

"A cottage garden in blues and whites perfectly frames the timber Victorian cottage. Hardy agapanthus, euphorbias, giant liriopie, lavatera and echiums complement beds bursting with roses, gardenias and other colourful perfumed plants intermingled with herbs and citrus. Azaleas, acanthus, bulbs, ornamental pears."

More information: www.opengarden.org.au/regions/vic_calendar_oct.html

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