

The role of arts programs in social change in Timor-Leste

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Presentation outline

- **Introducing topic:**
Investigating the role of arts in social change in Timor-Leste
- **Brief overview of current initiatives around arts and social change in Timor**
- **Methodology and data collection strategies:**
in-depth interviews, Most Significant Change,
Theory of Change
- **Some challenges.....**

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Some challenges for Timor

Highest fertility rate in the world, maternal mortality ratio of 660 per 100,000 and an infant mortality rate of 44 per 1,000 live births (UNICEF, 2006).

Three in four households rely exclusively on income from subsistence agriculture (Poverty Assessment, TL Govt, 2003).

Primary school education completion rate of 25%. This MDG seems the most challenging.

Human Development Index: In 2009, based on data collected from 2007, East Timor fell to 162 (of 182 countries on the list), compared to 150 in 2007/2008, and 140 in 2005.

Why focus on arts and culture in the world's third poorest nation?

Policy frameworks: International:

UN: Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, and to enjoy the arts and share in scientific advancement and its benefits (Article 27, 1).

UN: The International Covenant Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

All peoples have the right of self-determination.....(to) freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development (Article 1, Part I, 1976)

UNESCO: Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity (2001) and Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (2005), link culture and human rights

Cultural diversity can be protected and promoted only if human rights and fundamental freedoms, such as freedom of expression, information and communication, as well as the ability of individuals to choose cultural expressions, are guaranteed. Article 2.1

Four Pillars of Sustainability (Hawkes, 2001)

economic viability, social inclusion/equity, environmental sustainability, cultural vitality
Adopted by Agenda 21 for Culture, United Cities for Local Government international peak body

Arts and social change

*I am a pebble
that you throw into the pond*

Abe Barreto Soares
Timorese poet and author
Founding member *Circle of Poets*



Arts and social change



Variation in culture

Marqi da Costa
Founder, *Arte Moris Afalyca*
(Wild Arts People)
Baucau, Timor-Leste

Millennium Development Goals

Respond to the world's main development challenges to be achieved by 2015

- *Goal 1: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger*
- *Goal 2: Achieve universal primary education*
- *Goal 3: Promote gender equality and empower women*
- *Goal 4: Reduce child mortality*
- *Goal 5: Improve maternal health*
- *Goal 6: Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases*
- *Goal 7: Ensure environmental sustainability*
- *Goal 8: Develop a Global Partnership for Development*

Arts for economic development

Related to MDG 1, eradication of poverty and hunger

Well established focus with many national and international NGOs supporting projects involving weaving and textile arts, especially tais production. Financial support and training for weavers, provision of equipment, and market development and sales support often provided. Strong focus on weaving and textile arts, tais production



Alola Foundation Oxfam report 2002

Arts for education, skill development, training and leadership development



Related to MDG 2, education;

Emerging area; new initiatives instigated by international artists;

eg. Arte Moris art school in Dili and Baucau;
Haduhor music school directed by Australian musician Ros Dunlop

some work by international NGOs such as
PLAN International, for example in early
childhood education

Loke Kurtina theatre conference, Maubara,
2006

Gembel art collective, building capacity of
young people as print makers and trainers

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Arts as awareness raising, advocacy



Related to MDG 8, global partnerships for development;

Many projects especially led by international artists and NGOs seek to raise public awareness of the political and social issues facing the nation, eg. Balibo movie;

Suia mediaspace: stories written by participants in a digital stories workshop, Suai Youth Centre in June 2008, in response to a request for stories that symbolise Suai for the project supporters and others

Hamutuk (Connections) East Timor Australia
arts and disability cultural exchange
Creative possibilities for people with a disability:
Arts Access Australia, 2006

Ahisaun participants and artists Zoe Scrogings and Guida Freitas created a short film of themselves



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Arts for health and well-being

Related to MDGs 4, 5 and 6, health issues;

Developing practice; arts used to disseminate health information; themes include maternal and child health, human rights, workers' rights, child protection and youth issues. Very useful medium given linguistic challenges and high rates of illiteracy.

Knua Buka Hatene (Place of Learning) Expressional Arts theatre group. Performance about health issues affecting IDPs after the crisis in 2006, radio plays aimed at peace building for community radio stations (Union Aid Abroad, 2006). Theatre pieces relating to some of the issues and challenges facing workers.

Health Alliance International (US) included community theatre activities as part of community education about child-spacing. A performance focusing on pregnancy and childbirth and conflicting cultural issues around childbirth was developed and presented by local theatre troupe, *Bibi Bulak*.



Arts for healing and trauma recovery, peace-making

This area is as yet not strongly developed in Timor. These possibilities seem very appropriate given the priority need for peace, stability and security and that so many Timorese have experienced trauma directly or indirectly.

- Timor Aid and PRADET womens health clinic exploring arts therapies
- *'Here at Last: East Timorese asylum seekers and transition'*, PhD thesis, and creative process that used participatory, narrative, and imaginative paths to understand the impact of marginalising experiences upon wellbeing and meaning making of East Timorese Asylum Seekers, Kit Lazaroo, playwright and researcher, 2009.

Arts and cultural exchange

Related to MDG 8, global partnerships for development.

Emerging area of activity; inbound initiatives such as ETWA Womens Weaving tours and artists residencies (Asialink, AYAD, VIDA); outbound such as the Boite Millenium Chorus exchange.

Gembel artists collective artists exchange:
Australia-Timor Leste-Indonesia

The Boite choir visit, August 2009

Asialink and AYAD residencies with Bibi Bulak, Arte Moris

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Cultural tourism

ETWA weaving tours



Future possibility

Many Hands

International cultural centre project

Cultural maintenance and transmission

Focus on intrinsic value: Many initiatives celebrating Timorese arts and culture for its own sake are supported by individuals, local and international NGOs and government.

- *From the hands of our ancestors* exhibition, Museum and Art Gallery, NT with Director of Culture, TL
- *Changing Tais: Fabric of a Nation* book documenting weaving practice by photojournalist students, Liang Kaixin and Neo Xiaobin, 2007.
- *Coro Loro Sa'e Choir*, (Sunrise Choir) Portugal, 1975, formed under the direction of Cornélio da Cruz.
- Australian musician Ros Dunlop's work documenting traditional music, academic Sara Niner's work documenting weaving practices
- Surik East Timorese Performing Group, Tebe: Dance of Life documenting songs



Research questions:

for exploration with project leaders

- Documenting arts and cultural development programs undertaken in Timor-Leste since 1999
- Motivation of individuals and organisations involved- what outcomes have been sought through these activities?
- the 'theories of change' employed by project leaders; ie. how they conceptualise the changes they seek and how their arts programs are devised to meet those changes.
- how impacts of the work are considered; what evaluation strategies, if any, are employed by project organisers and how effectively these capture the impact of their work.



Issues for exploration (with other stakeholders)



Stakeholders:

project patrons, funders,
other supporters,
host organisations,
project managers,
project artists,
project participants,
their families and communities
and wider communities who may
be impacted

- what the outcomes of the projects are, according to the different stakeholders
- impact on international workers, volunteers and sponsoring communities: in what ways are they changed through their experience; personally, professionally, artistically, politically?
- best/ promising practice: what are the factors to which stakeholders attribute the success of such arts programs?

Data collection

Case studies, initiatives led by Timorese nationals and foreigners, might include :

- visual arts school Arte Moris in Dili and Baucau
- Arts Access arts and disability initiative 2010, led by Aust visual artist
- Ba Futuru youth and peace project; including dance, photography and traditional cultural performance projects led by national / international volunteers
- Haduhor Music School led by Australian musician Ros Dunlop
- 'Weaving Tour' annual cultural exchange project led by Aust NGO ETWA
- the informal 'Circle of Poets' of Dili, all Timorese nationals
- Capoeira martial arts/dance group for young people from Dili, led by Brazilian and American capoeira leaders

Methodologies

In-depth interviews

Theory of Change
(Anderson 1995)

Most Significant Change
(Davies and Dart 2005)



Theory of Change

...will be used with project managers and artists to help explore the links between their activities and expected outcomes.

The term *theory of change* a way of describing the set of assumptions that explain both the mini-steps that lead to the long-term goal of interest and the connections between program activities and outcomes at each step (popularised by Carole Weiss 1995) .

Articulates exactly what propositions and assumptions the work is testing and what could be assessed in an evaluation plan.

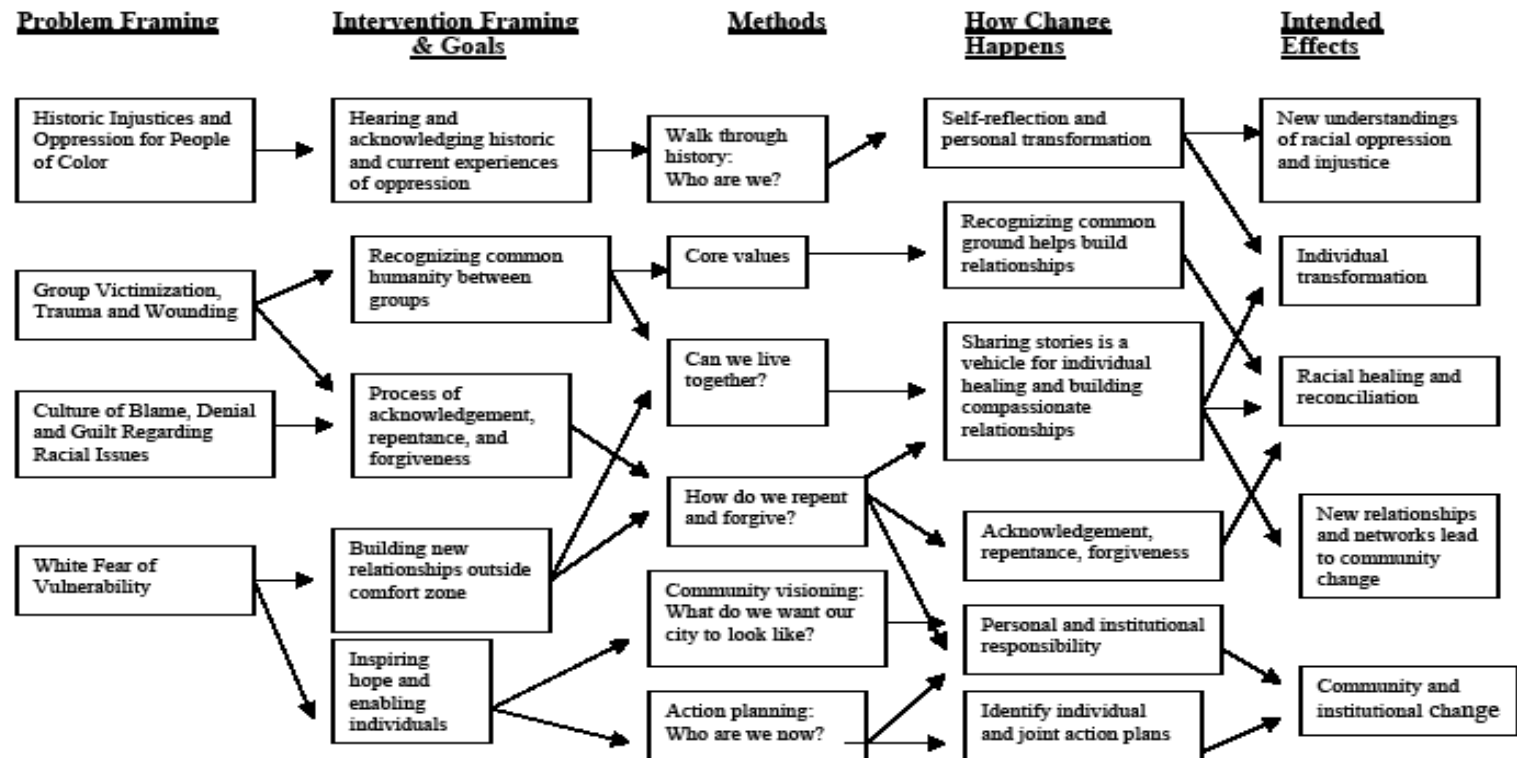
TOC uses [backwards mapping](#) ; requiring planners to think in backwards steps from the long-term goal to the intermediate and then early-term changes that would be required to cause the desired change...‘pathway of change’

Theory of change

Five stages:

- Identifying long-term goals and the assumptions behind them
- Backwards mapping and connecting the preconditions or requirements necessary to achieve that goal.
- Identifying the interventions that the initiative will perform to create the desired change.
- Developing indicators to measure outcomes to assess the performance of the initiative.
- Writing a narrative to explain the logic of the initiative.

FIGURE 2a: Example of Healing and Reconciliation Theory of Practice and Change Flowchart



Adapted from: Shapiro, I. (2002). Training for racial equity and inclusion: A guide to selected programs. Washington, D.C.: The Aspen Institute

Most Significant Change

(Davies and Dart 2003)

MSC is particularly useful for complex projects that have a social change agenda.

Used to examine the experience of the various levels of stakeholders involved in the arts projects.



MSC can be conceived as a form of dynamic values inquiry whereby designated groups of stakeholders continuously search for significant program outcomes and then deliberate on the value of these outcomes. This process contributes to both program improvement and judgment' (Davies and Dart 2003:140).

It can facilitate program improvement by focusing the direction of work towards explicitly valued directions and away from less valued directions (Davies and Dart 2003:137)

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Most Significant Change

(Davies and Dart 2003)

- Involves the collection of significant change (SC) stories emanating from the field level, and the systematic selection of the most significant of these stories by panels of designated stakeholders or staff.
- Question might be: *During the last month, in your opinion, what was the most significant change that took place in the program?*
- Designated staff and stakeholders initially 'search' for project impact. Once changes have been captured, various people sit down together, read the stories aloud and have regular and often in-depth discussions about the value of these reported changes. When the technique is implemented successfully, whole teams of people begin to focus their attention on program impact.
- (Davies and Dart, p. 8. <http://www.mande.co.uk/docs/MSCGuide.pdf>)

Most Significant Change

(Davies and Dart 2003)

- Most significant of the stories then passed up the organisational hierarchy.
- At each level, they are read, discussed and the most significant are selected. Feedback is given to the lower levels, particularly as to the reasons why individual stories have been accepted for passing up, or set aside.
- The process reduces a large number of stories considered important at the local level to a smaller set that are most important at a higher level within the organisation.
- The refined set is discussed by senior management or funding bodies and taken into account in subsequent strategy development

Challenges for the practice of arts and culture in development



- new and emerging field. Not strongly prioritised in development literature and theory.
- much work undocumented, unpublished, or in grey literature
- low value ascribed to research amongst artists and other practitioners; no tradition of 'evidence based' practice, few journals, and not a strong culture of publication.
- not as yet a strong culture of partnerships between researchers and arts practitioners
- arts projects very often include no evaluation component, especially in funding considerations

Challenges for the practice of arts and culture in development

- Contested opinions about intrinsic/ instrumental and other values of the arts
- Perceived challenges about measurement of intangibles of the arts such as creative experience, quality of artistic outcome.
- Paradigm clash between ways of knowing: (Conquergood, 2002), academic valuing of text-based knowledge and non-text based valued by artists and others including Timorese community members
- Possible ambivalence around 'culture', especially beliefs that adherence to traditional cultural practices and beliefs can actually impede development.
- Perhaps we are as yet to fully realize, as a human race, the value of cultural diversity.

Future possibilities

- Artists/artswriters and other practitioners ascribe greater value to the contribution of evaluation
- More, and more effective, partnerships between artswriters and researchers/evaluators are developed
- Evaluation methodologies consider 'ways of knowing' that include scientific and positivist, but also creative, mystical, spiritual.
- Funders and planners place greater value on the contribution of arts and cultural development to goals, including MDGs.....

and

MDGs include an additional goal:

*recognise and value
cultural vitality and diversity*



Arte Moris

www.artemoris.org

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Main players

- **NGOs:** eg. Alola Foundation, OxFam, VIDA, AVI, Timor Aid
- **government:** especially local government in Australia through Friends Groups, VLGA, also AusAID
- **other organisations:** AHPEDA Union Aid Abroad, ETWA
- **arts organisations:** Arts Access Australia, the Boite, AsiaLink
- **individual artists and artswriters:** Gabrielle and Luca Gansser, Arte Moris, Annie Sloman, Rosalyn Guy, Jen Hughes

International government support for arts and cultural development in Timor-Leste 2002-2008

Donating country/ group	Initiative supported	Amount	Dates
Portugal	support for cultural activities	\$2961	2002/03
	support for art school Arte Moris	\$4107	2006/07
	support for Portuguese cultural centre of Dili	\$606,972	over six years
USA	market development and promotion of traditional tais	\$28,589	2002-2003
	a pilot project to stimulate the pottery industry	\$53,013	2002
	the Land of Discovery and photographic archive project	\$46,118	2002
Japan	capacity building for the East Timor national museum and cultural centre	\$110,222	
Korea	Music concert	\$100,000	
Switzerland	the development of a school of art- <i>Arte Moris?</i>	\$55,500	2002
	Baucau local craft and adult education- <i>Arte Moris?</i> .	\$15,000	2004
Indonesia	scholarships for studies in arts and culture	\$54,000	
UNESCO	the Museum to Museum Partnerships Project	\$30,000	2006

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International government support for arts and cultural development in Timor-Leste 2002-2008

Out of a total donations of \$2,075,213,718, those specifically designated for arts and cultural initiatives were \$1,106,482 (.018%).

No Australian initiatives named in the Rea report had an artistic focus. Nor did any of the \$226 million provided by Ausaid over the past three years appear to be designated for arts initiatives.

Rea report, 2008

Issues considered

- Arts and cultural development activities undertaken (in and about Timor-Leste since 1999)
- Motivation of individuals and organisations involved- what outcomes have been sought through these activities?
- Strategies for monitoring and evaluation: how has impact been measured?
- Challenges of the work
- Future possibilities