

From: Many Hands International contact@manyhands.org.au
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News of MHI's activities in and through culture

Dear friends and supporters of Many Hands International

We write to share updates on our activities in Timor-Leste and Australia, contributing to better future for the people of Australia's nearest neighbour. This edition we share news about our work, since our transition from a team of Timorese locals supported in country by a full-time Australian volunteer, to a self-managed group led by Team Leader Nelinha Pereira. Nelinha has been an MHI staff member since 2012, and we congratulate her on her new role.

We offer grateful thanks to Lucia Pichler, our Australian-government supported volunteer who lived and worked in Lospalos town for three years, assisting our local staff to develop skills in office and financial management, community engagement and much more. Lucia offered wise counsel to our team and made an amazing contribution to MHI's work. Here's what staff member Thomas Lopes has to say about [her](#).



We also thank New Zealand volunteer Tim Ballagh who volunteered for MHI between August and December 2015, offering additional support to Lucia and our staff, as they prepared for the transition to self-management.

Best wishes

Kim Dunphy, Holly Schauble and Vincent Ashcroft (Directors)

Photo: MHI staff and volunteers Cesario Lourdes, Lucia Pichler, Kim Dunphy, John Toumbourou, Khey Gandara, Lina Andonovska, Thomas Lopes

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Web resource launch: endangered forms of Fataluku cultural expression

Melbourne: Wednesday August 17, 4.30–6 pm, followed by drinks, Seminar Rooms 3 and 4, 7th floor, Storey Hall, RMIT, Swanston St. All welcome.

This month, we've hosted two launches in Timor–Leste to celebrate the completion of the first stage of our research project on endangered forms of Fataluku cultural expression. We've got one more coming up in Melbourne in August hosted by RMIT. Our team of local researchers were trained by MHI Director Holly Schauble to collect information about Fataluku culture and record it in writing, photos and film. Thirty elements of intangible Fataluku culture across the forms of musical instruments, rituals, songs, traditional knowledge and craftsmanship were documented, as well as a range of regional variations within these. The findings and recordings have since been edited and translated from Fataluku into English and are now available on our [website](#) in both languages.



This material is intended to provide information for a museum which is planned as part of the next stage of the Centro Cultura Lautem's development. Before that time, it is available on–line for people throughout the world to enjoy and learn about Fataluku culture. This is very important given that many of these forms of cultural expression are only practiced by a very small number of people in the later stages of their lives. Without this recorded information, much of Fataluku cultural heritage might be lost forever. A very pleasing and surprising finding, given the low access to technology in rural Timor–Leste, is that many of the videos are attracting hundreds of hits within days of being uploaded. MHI thanks the US Ambassadors' Fund for Cultural Preservation and Deakin and Melbourne Universities for supporting this project. We're now looking for funding to enable the whole resource to be translated into Tetun for Timorese people to access more easily.

Image: *MHI team launching our work at the US Embassy.*

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Musician–in–residence: successful collaboration

Australian flautist and MHI artist–in–residence Lina Andonovska completed her highly successful residency in Timor–Leste in January. Lina collaborated with Timorese guitarist Savio Freitas to produce a concert featuring Timorese traditional music arranged for the duo. This sell–out event was also a fundraiser for the Safrei music school Savio has just established in Dili, and the proceeds of almost \$2000 enabled the purchase of a range of instruments to be used by his young students. Savio recently reported to MHI's evaluation team that working with Lina was a very positive experience and helped him develop confidence in his ability to lead a music school for children of Timor–Leste. Lina also contributed to a concert in the Centro Cultura Lautem for Restoration of Independence celebrations and led participatory music workshops in Kakavei village. Our thanks to Lina for her fantastic contribution and to Friends of Lospalos – Mornington Peninsula which supported the purchase of musical instruments for the community workshops. Find out more about Lina [here](#).



Image: *Lina and Savio rehearsing*

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Artist in residence: MHI hosts Australian–Japanese dancer choreographer Yumi Umiumare

Internationally recognised Australian–Japanese dancer–choreographer Yumi Umiumare visited Timor–Leste this month as artist–in–residence with MHI. Yumi's visit was supported by a Fellowship from the Australia Council for the Arts (Dance Board) to explore new artistic directions around the ideas of spirit, ritual and magic. This has led to the development of her Pop–Up Theatre series that has been performed around the world. In



tearoom series that has been performed around the world. In Lospalos, Yumi collaborated with MHI staff member Cesario Lourdes and his students to create a site-specific pop-up Tearoom space, inspired by MHI's goals of offering local communities opportunities for new forms of cultural expression. Yumi and students explored ideas about art-as-rubbish or rubbish-as-art. This event was definitely something new for Lospalos, adding a very exotic extra experience to our research launch celebration.



For more information: [yumi@yumi.com.au/](mailto:yumi@yumi.com.au) yumi.com.au/in-development/popup-tearoom-series.

Image: *Yumi shares tea with Sr Jose Monteiro, our colleague from District Administration and German tourists, a rare event in Lospalos*

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Exhibition: *Kultura no Dame* (Culture of Peace), Lospalos

Young people in Lospalos have had new opportunities to explore their creativity in our regular program led by MHI staff member Cesario Lopes, one of Timor's most well-known visual artists. The group recently launched their first exhibition, *Kultura no Dame* (Culture of Peace), in the *Vida Arte Galeria* (Gallery of Art and Life) in the Centro Cultura Lautem. The exhibition explores the relationship between culture and peace, with artworks inspired by young people's ideas of how Timorese society can be more peaceful. Media include painting, painted pottery, linoprints, sand painting and murals. The exhibition is open for viewing weekdays until 15 August or at other times by request.

Image: *portrait by student Amiceto Nato de Jesus, of local character Mario*



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Significant progress for the National Alliance for Tobacco Prevention

MHI's Health Promotion Officer Thomas Lopes is making marvellous progress towards reducing the harmful effects of tobacco use in Timor-Leste. This goal is very significant because Timor has the highest rate of male smoking in the world, almost 70%. Thomas recently spent three months in Australia successfully studying units for a Bachelor of Health Promotion at Deakin University, sponsored by Deakin and MHI. He has returned with new knowledge and skills to lead the National Alliance for Tobacco Prevention, a group of passionate young volunteers he inspired to join him on this task. The group's lobbying efforts have borne fruit in their first year with the Government recently passing long-stalled laws about comprehensive tobacco control. Now the challenge is to support implementation of the laws.



The Alliance has attracted 14 civil society organisations from around the nation as members, has an office sponsored by the National Council of Timorese Youth, computers provided by WHO and seed funds for their first initiatives from Deakin University. The Alliance is now looking for funding to enable them to establish operations as an independent advocacy group.

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Supporting our work

We welcome your support for all of our activities promoting peace and prosperity in Timor-Leste through culture

