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[Forward](#)

[Website](#)

In this issue

- [Welcoming New and Returned Volunteers](#)
- [Friday 30 November: Annual General Meeting and End of Year Celebration](#)
- [New Volunteer Position: Creative Arts and Cultural Development Officer, Lospalos.](#)
- [Inaugural Lautem Cultural Festival: 15-17 February 2013](#)
- [Cultural Research Project](#)
- [Exploring the Potential of Dance-Movement Therapy in Timor-Leste](#)
- [Traditional Culture and Sustainable Livelihoods through Music Project](#)
- [How You Can Help: Purchase of Musical Instruments for Schools in Ainaro](#)

Welcoming New and Returned Volunteers

Dear friends and supporters,

As the year draws to a close, we are pleased to be able to report significant progress in our work in Timor-Leste, which we achieve through a cultural assets approach to community development.

This month MHI welcomes returning volunteer and Many Hands International Director Holly Schauble and family back home to Australia. Holly spent twelve months in Lospalos, Timor-Leste, working with the General Directorate of Culture and other stakeholders to progress the Lospalos Centre for Traditional and Contemporary Arts and Culture Project and other activities.

Great progress was made during Holly's tenure, including finalised architectural plans, funding for the first stage of the building, funding for the Lautem Cultural Festival and the recruitment and employment of eight project staff. Many Hands is currently a nine person outfit, up from zero staff this time last year!

We've been fortunate to find an excellent staff member to replace Holly on the ground in Lospalos. Samantha Cooper comes to MHI with much valuable experience working in community cultural development in Australia, the Solomon Islands and South America. We're also grateful to Sam's fiance, Warwick, for the personal and professional support he will provide Sam as she takes on this new challenge. MHI are also grateful to Red Cross whose volunteer program supports Sam's position.

Photo: *Holly and her son Cai Qehry with Prime Minister Xanana Gusmao during his visit to Lospalos.*

[back to top](#) ↑



Friday 30 November: Annual General Meeting and End of Year Celebration

MHI will hold its Annual General Meeting for members on Friday 30 November. This will be followed by our end of year celebration to which we invite all our friends and



celebration to which we invite all our friends and supporters. We'll celebrate the year's many achievements, a highlight of which is the commencement of the first stage of the rehabilitation of the Merkadu Antigu (Old Market) in Lospalos into the Centre for Traditional and Contemporary Arts and Culture. Theatre Director Catherine Simmonds will be guest speaker, sharing some highlights of her residency in Lospalos in 2011–2012 that culminated in an exciting community performance *Our Culture: Many Different Stories*.



AGM: Friday 30 November 6 –7 pm, followed by celebratory drinks and finger food until 8.

Meeting Room (upstairs), East Melbourne Library, 122 George St, East Melbourne.

[back to top ↑](#)

New Volunteer Position: Creative Arts and Cultural Development Officer, Lospalos.

As the Australian Partner Organisation, we're pleased to invite applications for our new supported volunteer position: *Creative Arts and Cultural Development Officer*. This is a twelve month assignment starting in March 2013 and is based in the regional town of Lospalos. Responsibilities include staff and community training and skill development, cultural development programming and production of community arts events in the Lospalos Centre for Contemporary and Traditional Arts and Culture.

The Host Organisation for this position is the General Directorate of Culture and the position is supported by Austraining International through AusAID's Australian Volunteers for International Development Program (AVID).

Closing date 21 November: More details including job description:

<http://www.volunteering.austraining.com.au/assignment?AyaCode=AV1112ET13P>.

More information: holly.schauble@manyhands.org.au

[back to top ↑](#)

Inaugural Lautem Cultural Festival: 15–17 February 2013

2013 will see the staging of the inaugural Lautem Cultural Festival in Lospalos. Supported by a grant from AusAID through the East Timor Community Assistance Scheme, the festival will bring artists, performers and cultural knowledge holders together in a celebration of the diverse and rich cultures of the Lautem district.

The festival will present a unique opportunity for community members and visitors to see a range of forms of cultural expression and to participate in workshops that develop cultural knowledge and skills. The potential of the festival for tourism and economic development is an important focus of the project. We are pleased to have the support of AusAID, the University of Melbourne and the Yothu Yindi Foundation for this initiative.



The event is being directed by the Lautem Cultural Festival Commission under the guidance of Commission President, Jose Monteiro. The Commission aims to continue to host an annual festival in Lautem to support maintenance and promotion of Lautem's unique cultural heritage, as well as social and economic development across the district.

Photo: *Lautem district lia nain (traditional knowledge holders) in performance*

[back to top ↑](#)

Cultural Research Project

Our new project, *Preservation of Endangered Forms of Fataluku Cultural Expression*, is focussed on recording critically endangered forms of Fataluku intangible cultural heritage in Lautem through audiovisual and written documentation. MHI has employed four local researchers to research and record their own culture and, where allowed by the knowledge holders, to share this information with the broader community. MHI welcomes our new staff members researchers Justino, Maria, Rico and Ildefonso, and our fabulous administration and language support officer, Nelinha. One of only forty-three successful applications worldwide, this project is funded by the U.S. Ambassadors Fund for Cultural Preservation through the U.S. Embassy in Timor-Leste.



Photo: Our new research project staff with Holly and Sam.

[back to top](#) ↑

Exploring the Potential of Dance–Movement Therapy in Timor-Leste

In July 2012, MHI Director and trained dance–movement therapist Kim Dunphy led a team of colleagues from Australia (Alex Jordan from Darwin and Meredith Elton and Erika Goldsmith from Queensland) to explore the potential of dance–movement therapy in Timor-Leste. Over a fortnight, the team led a range of activities in Dili and Lautem districts.



A weekend workshop on *Movement and Dance for Health, Well-Being and Peace* attracted much interest from professionals from a range of health and well-being agencies and members of *Circle for Peace*, a women's social support group. The team enjoyed meeting young people from troubled communities in an all day movement workshop at Ba Futuru's Centre for Peace in Comoro. At ASSERT Disability Service, great fun was had introducing dance as a therapeutic activity to children with physical disabilities and their support staff in an afternoon workshop.

In the district of Lautem, the team were pleased to be introduced to the community of the remote village of Leoru by local NGO Ica Tutunu. What was expected to be a small dance session for young children ended up being a riotous whole-of-community celebration and dance exchange. In Lospalos, professional development workshops were offered to staff of local NGOs *Ica Tutunu* and *Fundamore* to support their work with children and young people. The team also enjoyed connecting with young dancers from performing arts group Sanggar Haburas. Good feedback and requests for more workshops indicated much potential for future collaborative and healing dance activities.

Photo: Cross-cultural dance exchange, Leoru village, Lautem district.

[back to top](#) ↑

Traditional Culture and Sustainable Livelihoods through Music Project

This project, a partnership with Alnaro based NGO Haburas Timor, is entering its final stages.

A series of traditional musical instrument making programs have been successfully implemented in four small communities in the mountainous district of Ainaro throughout the year. The programs are intended to assist the development of new small business possibilities and to encourage transmission of skills in traditional instrument making between generations. Professional development activities to encourage the use of music in schools are planned for early 2013 using the instruments made in the programs. A pilot program of the use of those instruments is currently underway in two rural schools.



A community forum about the project's goals and broader aspirations for culture within the community was held in July this year, with participants walking down from distant villages as much as three hours away. One of the outcomes of the forum was the discovery that the traditional singing practice of *sergala* is endangered, with only a few experts left who have sufficient skill to teach it. A community group training program in *sergala* was instigated following this feedback, funded and supported by Many Hands.

Photo: *Culture forum participants, Ainaro, July 2012*

[back to top ↑](#)

How You Can Help: Purchase of Musical Instruments for Schools in Ainaro

Our instrument making project in Ainaro offers the possibility that every school in the district could have a set of traditional musical instruments made by local experts and their trainees through our program. To fund this, we need an extra \$3000. If you are interested in supporting children of rural Timor-Leste to practice their culture through traditional music, we'd be happy to have your support. It's easy to donate through our website: go to http://manyhands.org.au/get_involved/.



Photo: *Instruments being made in the project*

[back to top ↑](#)

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