

From: Kim Dunphy and Holly Schauble contact@manyhands.org.au
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To: Kim.dunphy@manyhands.org.au

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Many Hands International

culture based community development



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So much to tell!

Since you last heard from us, so much has happened here at Many Hands, all of it positive. We've had our first modest success with grant-writing which included two special awards; great assistance from supporters in Australia with fundraising; two new Directors; an art exhibition and several great new initiatives on the boil. More about these below.

The best news is that we now have our first on-the-ground staff member in Timor. Many Hands Director Holly Schauble began her AVID placement in October. She is living and working in the small town of Lospalos for a year, where she is progressing Many Hands projects with staff from the General Directorate of Culture. Holly is working to build the capacity of these staff to implement cultural development projects. Particular focus is being given to plans for our major initiative, the Lospalos Centre for Traditional and Contemporary Arts and Culture.

Holly is accompanied in Timor by her children, Haraani and Cai Query, and Tash Treneer, University of Melbourne art conservation student, as nanny. We were delighted when Holly secured Tash's services, because, in addition to her major responsibilities with the children, she will use her expertise in community publishing with indigenous communities to lead her own children's bookmaking project. Both Tash and Many Hands were thrilled when she procured a small grant from the University to support this project.

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Social action theatre project with Asialink resident Catherine Simmonds

Our big event for this summer is a social action theatre project in Lospalos, to be led by theatre director, Catherine Simmonds. This is the second part of Catherine's Asialink residency, following her work in July with Ainaro (mountain town)-based group Nafa Fila. (Their name means *New Stars Shining Brightly*)



group *Nafo Fila*. (Their name means *New Stars Shining Brightly for the Children of Ainaro!*). We've just had the good news that UNMIT will provide some financial support for the project. This will fund *Nafo Fila* to visit Lospalos for a week. They will provide mentoring for young people undertaking theatre for the first time there and support Catherine in her work. The residency will culminate in a community performance in Lospalos over the weekend of 4–5 February, 2012.



There were several other very pleasing outcomes of Catherine's work during July, notably a weekend intensive workshop. Staff and volunteers from community disability organisations who attended decided to establish their own theatre group. They are keen to promote messages of human rights for people with a disability through theatre and will continue meeting in 2012. Theatre is particularly important in Timor where many people have very little access to any kind of new information. We linked up two young workshop participants from human rights NGO *Ba Futuru* with an international community theatre conference in Thailand and they were able to accept an invitation to attend. This was their first time out of Timor and a marvellous opportunity to develop skills and share knowledge with peers from across Asia.

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And there's more in Lospalos this summer

The University of Melbourne's grants have enabled us to send two teams of experts across to Lospalos this summer. A team of building related experts; engineer Paul Callum, architect Josh Ho and builder Andrew Lucas, under the leadership of architect Richard Blight, will visit Lospalos. They will begin the serious work of preparing for our proposed building project. Will the structure be strong enough to build from, or will we need to start again?



A second team, of researchers, will also visit Lospalos in January. University of Melbourne staff Professor Helen Herrman and Lindy Joubert, led by co-ordinator Dr. Violeta Schubert, will begin a project of evaluating the outcomes of Many Hands' work. They will particularly focus on the community theatre project to understand its impacts on participants and their communities.

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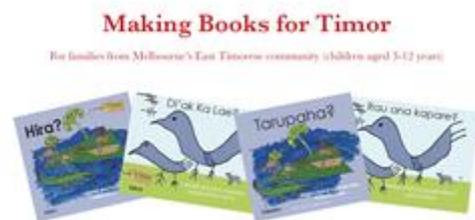
Community publishing project: First Language First

In another pleasing development, Many Hands has begun a new partnership with Timor-based NGO *Alola Foundation*, an organisation that was established by Kirsty Sword Gusmao, the wife of Timor's President Xanana Gusmao. The project, entitled *First Language First*, will involve a range of activities in Australia and Timor in 2012, in which community members will create books in their own mother tongue language. Melbourne-based arts organisation *Kids' Own Publishing* will be sharing their model of inclusive community engagement through training and project delivery. *First Language First* kicks off in February with a book-making activity in Melbourne that will involve Timorese people living here. All partners share interests in promotion of literacy and engagement with education through developing of culturally appropriate reading materials.

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Traditional Music Skill Sharing in Ainaro

One final initiative this summer is the



Come and join a special project to support the Alola Foundation's 'First Language First' initiative in Timor-Leste. Families with children aged 3-12 years are invited to join a team from Timor-Leste to learn how to make and publish books.

In workshops we will create stories and images for our own mini books. Our words and illustrations will be included in a collaborative book that will be published and launched. The visiting team will return to Timor-Leste to set up their own community publishing projects, using your book as inspiration for children and communities. All participating families will receive a copy of their book.

The workshops will be facilitated by Kids' Own Publishing with support from Melbourne-Timorese photographer/artist Jorge de Araujo and a visiting team from Timor-Leste.

The project is free of charge for all participants. Please contact Jorge de Araujo by Monday 23 January to reserve a place for your family. jorgaphoto@me.com, 0419 183 829. Limited places available. All children must be accompanied by an adult. We encourage families to attend all 3 workshops. We look forward to seeing you there!

Workshop 1: Saturday 4 February 2012, 2-4pm @ Belgium Ave Neighbourhood House, 9 Belgium Ave, Richmond

Workshop 2: Sunday 5 February 2012, 2-4pm @ Belgium Ave Neighbourhood House

Workshop 3: Sunday 11 February 2012, 2-4pm @ Belgium Ave Neighbourhood House

Book Launch: Friday 17 February 2012, 6-8pm @ MESH, 19-21 Belgium Ave, Richmond

This project is supported by Kids' Own Publishing, Many Hands (International), MESH, the Alola Foundation and Alola in Timor-Leste.



project entitled 'Supporting Rural Livelihoods and Education Through Traditional Music and Dance'. Working with local NGO Haburas Timor, we plan to link master musical instrument makers with young people who are keen to learn those skills. We hope that this will have the potential for income generation through instrument sales, as well as the important cultural maintenance through sharing of



skills held by the older generation. We're grateful to project supporters so far that include community development volunteer Kate Owen, the US Ambassador's Fund for Cultural Preservation and Friends' groups from Ballarat, Blue Mountains and Madison, USA.

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Project: AYAD volunteer Sarah Daley finishes her placement

Many Hands was pleased to act as host organisation for Sarah Daley who has just finished a 12 month volunteer placement with regional disability organisation Katilosa. Sarah reports: *My work as an Australian Youth Ambassador for Development has been challenging, inspiring, frustrating and educational. With local staff, I set up an inclusive Arts Program and Play Group program for children with disabilities in Darasula, a remote village in the Baucau District. We worked with children with intellectual and physical disabilities and included children without disabilities from the local community to promote inclusive education. We collaborated with local community arts organisation Afalcya to train local staff to develop an arts program. Children now attend weekly art classes and they are currently painting a mural at the centre. I have worked with persons with disabilities to develop a sewing and craft group to use as a form of income generation and with local staff to develop a radio advocacy program around the rights of persons with disabilities.*



Timorese people have taught me so much about life and resilience. They always have high spirits and enthusiasm, and given their history and poverty, I am amazed at their ability to just keep going. I have also learnt so much about patience and acceptance whilst working in an uncertain environment; the centre is very remote and at times inaccessible in the wet season due to bad roads. For an organisation that works with persons with disabilities it is very inaccessible, but as are many of our clients who also live in very remote inaccessible communities. The unpredictability and frustration of working in a post-conflict environment is difficult, but at times when I look around and notice that people are just surviving day to day living, in a country where families need to walk kilometres to access water, and are surviving off minimal food without electricity, I remember that the fact we have been able to develop programs that are fun, educational and inclusive for these children, who only ten years ago were forgotten about and often hidden because of the stigma they experienced by the community because of their disabilities. The year has been successful and I hope to return some day to continue supporting the work at KATILOSA.

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Thanking our supporters

Lina Andonoska's music concert: Young flautist Lina



Andonovska and several musician colleagues performed a beautiful concert in September in the atmospheric North Richmond Uniting Church. Funds raised on the night and later donations of \$1500 will support the Ainaro music project.

University of Melbourne: Many Hands was pleased to receive two Vice-Chancellor's Awards from the University of Melbourne this year, DreamLarge and Staff Engagement Awards. Both of them, pleasingly, came with projects funds to support our work.

Equipment donations and transport: We thank William of Beach Road Cycles, Brighton, who rehabilitated two donated bikes that our project workers will use for transport around Lospalos. Thanks, too, to Rotary who transported them and large containers of donated toys and play equipment to Katilosa Disability Centre.

More fundraising projects: Annette Dunphy is our most faithful fundraiser, selling second hand books in empty shops and from a stall at the beach at Brighton on sunny weekends. Annette is halfway to her target of \$10,000 for our first public toilet project. Thanks to Michael Gibson and Stewart Lopez of Kay and Burton Real Estate for loan of the shop.

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How you can help us

This month as we begin an intensive phase of planning and scoping for our building works, we seek financial support for materials. We will soon begin the rehabilitation of a currently existing (but non-functioning) amenities block on the site of our planned Cultural Centre and begin to build another. There are no functioning public toilets in the town of Lospalos, so this project will be a welcome contribution.

If you'd like to contribute, visit our donations page for quick and easy ways to do so. http://manyhands.org.au/get_involved/

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Season's Greetings!

Many Hands wish all our friends and supporters a safe and happy festive season. May you enjoy good times with those you love. Thankyou for your interest in our work with and for the people of Timor-Leste.

Kim Dunphy and Holly Schauble, Colin Neave and Lisa Mori,

Directors,

Many Hands International.

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Many Hand International | Suite 1201, 377 Burwood Rd Hawthorn, VIC, 3122, Australia

