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Subject: News from Many Hands International July 2012 - Preview
Date: 17 July 2012 8:28 am
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culture based community development

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In Brief

Dear Friends and Supporters

Since you last heard from us, our plans for supporting sustainable development in Timor-Leste by focussing on cultural assets are bearing much fruit. Many Hands International Director and AVID volunteer, Holly Schauble, has been hard at work on the ground in Lospalos progressing, developing and implementing cultural projects with the local community and staff from the State Secretariat of Culture. More about all of these and others below.



Photo: Holly recently met with the Australian Ambassador, Miles Armitage, and Country Head of AusAID, Vincent Ashcroft, at the site of the cultural centre in Lospalos. Several of our community partners, including Director of Education Lautem district, Sr. Armando Lopes, cultural advisors Justinho Carvalho and Armindo Benezato, and Lospalos' Angel Girls One dancers were present as well.

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Lospalos Cultural Centre infrastructure development

In the most exciting development for Many Hands International to date, we are pleased to report that infrastructure development for our Centre for Traditional and Contemporary Arts and Culture in Lospalos is just about to begin. The contract has been signed with non-profit building company Community Housing and work is expected to start next month. By the end of the year we expect to have a functional performing arts centre (with two stages, dressing rooms, backstage storage area, office and small cafe) as well as some multi-purpose exhibition



and small care) as well as some multi-purpose exhibition spaces, an office and a recording studio. This project is largely being funded by the Government of Timor-Leste, but thanks also go to Annette Dunphy and friends from Melbourne who have raised \$11,00 towards the cost of much-needed public toilets and water fountains at the centre. We're most grateful to our building team, architects Richard Blight and Josh Ho, engineer Paul Callum of Bligh Tanner and builder Andrew Lucas who've invested a huge effort in getting the plans to the final stage.

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Dance for health and well-being project, July 16-31

Many Hands Director Kim Dunphy will call her specialist skills as a dance-movement therapist and community dance artist into play this month with a series of events focussing on the role of dance in health and well-being. Three Australian dancers with expertise in this area (Alex Jordan, Meredith Elton and Erika Goldsmith) are accompanying Kim and all four are excited to share their skills with people in Timor-Leste. A fortnight's activity will include a series of workshops in community organisations in Dili, Baucau and Lospalos where they will introduce the potential for dance as a tool for different client groups, especially people with a disability and children with special needs. The group's visit to Lospalos will culminate in a Big Dance – *Dansa Boot* – in Lospalos, where community members who have attended dance workshops will come and share their learnings and skills. The dancers will also lead professional development activities in Dili during a weekend workshop on 21- 22 July and a public forum on the role of dance in health and well-being on Monday 31 July.



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Showcasing talent in Lospalos

With so much cultural knowledge, skills and creativity in Lospalos, Director Holly Schauble and Lospalos *raí nain* (traditional land owner) and restaurateur Anita Quintas decided it was time there was a platform for showcasing local talent. Every second Sunday afternoon now sees the Merkadu Antigu, site for the Lospalos Cultural Centre, massed with local community members who have come to see those who want to perform: dancers, musicians, poets and more. After a year of practicing and performing to their younger siblings in the back room of a house, a group of teenage dancers were the first to kick off this program. One performer, aged 12, said of her experience after their first ever public performance "I am so happy, it makes my spirit fly!".



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Great progress on book publication from the First Language First Program

Our collaborative community publishing project with Alola Foundation, World Vision (Timor-Leste) and Kids' Own Publishing (Australia) is meeting with great success. The team have created nine new books in local languages: two in Galolen language (Manatuto), four in Fataluku language (Lospalos) and three in Baikenu language (Oecusse).

Artist Kathy Holowko from Kids' Own publishing visited Timor in April and led a number of book-making workshops with communities and project staff. Now local workers, including Alola staff member Anita, are designing and editing newly created books themselves using computer programs Photoshop and Indesign. The books have simple and clear text with illustrations to match for the purpose of



supporting student's engagement with reading. It is expected that this will contribute to the development of literacy in Timor-Leste where illiteracy rates are as high as 50% in most rural communities. The project has engaged young people from Lautem district and university students from Dili who have brought their knowledge of language and artistic skills to the book-making process. Project worker Sarah Daley reports: 'As all voices in Timor have yet to be heard in the publishing arena, people of all ages are benefiting from the process of making these books together'. The project team hope to send twelve books to print by next week. The photo here shows the creative team working with children from Lospalos on Holly's front verandah.

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New developments with Traditional Culture and Sustainable Livelihoods through Music Project, Ainaro

The first half of 2012 has seen this project get off to a great start after a long gestation. Many Hands International is working with local NGO Haburas Timor to deliver the activities. In a number of small villages in the district of Ainaro, training has begun on the making of traditional instruments. This training involves the transmission of specialist knowledge and skills in instrument making from elders to youth. It is anticipated that the project will lead to a revival of interest in traditional music making and the development of a market for sustainable cultural products. The instruments made will be purchased by the project for local schools. In early August, two major events for the project will be held in the township of Ainaro: a public forum about the importance of supporting local culture on Thursday 2, and a professional development day for teachers about using music in their classrooms on Friday 3.



Many Hands International is grateful to Ballarat Friends of Ainaro Committee who recently raised an extra \$3000 for the project through their 'Tunes for Timor' concert. These funds will be used to purchase the musical instruments for local schools.

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Article in Community Music Journal

We are pleased to report the publication of an article about our work in the most recent volume of the *International Journal of Community Music*; *Toka Boot/The Big Jam: Making music in rural East Timor* written by Gillian Howell and Many Hands Director Kim Dunphy. Gillian was an Asialink resident supported by Many Hands in the development of a range of musical activities with various community groups and individuals in Baucau and Lospalos over the summer of 2010-2011. The article by Gillian and Kim provides an in-depth description of Gillian's process in making community music as well as responses from the community as reported by Kim through her PhD research on the role of the arts in social change in Timor. You can find the article here: www.intellectbooks.co.uk/journals/view-Article,id=12871/

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Get involved with Many Hands International

MHI is keen to hear from artists, cultural development practitioners and arts/cultural management professionals interested in volunteering their time and skills as part of the Lospalos Centre for Traditional and Contemporary Arts and Culture Project. We are looking for people who can assist with running skills development activities and projects in performing and visual arts, cultural research and heritage protection and arts management. If you're interested, please contact us at contact@manyhands.org.au.

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How you can contribute: building a children's playground

Many Hands International wishes to complement the



development of the Lospalos cultural centre by building an accessible playground for the children of Lospalos. There are currently no playgrounds in Lospalos and no accessible playgrounds for children of all abilities in the whole of Timor-Leste. We'd like to offer all children in Lospalos the opportunity to engage in creative outdoor play. If you're interested to assist us on this project with skills, materials, ideas or funding, we'd be very pleased to hear from you.



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