

PROMOTING WELLBEING
IN TIMOR-LESTE
THROUGH THE CREATIVE ARTS

A RESOURCE FOR COUNSELLORS, THERAPISTS & FACILITATORS

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Many Hands International
culture based community development



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Women's wellbeing workshops in Timor-Leste

Authors Marita, Kim and Karma prepared this resource after visits to Timor-Leste to share their skills in creative arts and dance movement therapy, hosted by Many Hands International.

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Many Hands International (MHI) is an Australian registered not-for-profit organisation seeking to improve the lives of those who live in some of the world's most disadvantaged communities. We work from a cultural assets-based approach to community development.
Tetun translation of this document provided by Mayra Walsh.

Many Hands International: www.manyhands.org.au.
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Photo: Women's wellbeing workshop, Baucau, November 2014



Photo:
workshop, Los Palos, November 2014

Women's
wellbeing

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	5
DEFINITIONS	6
PROGRAM OPTIONS	9
INTRODUCTORY ACTIVITIES	10
DANCE AND MOVEMENT ACTIVITIES	13
MINDFULNESS ACTIVITY	18
ART MAKING ACTIVITIES	19
SELF-CARE ACTIVITY	28
CLOSURE ACTIVITIES	29
EVALUATION	29
CONCLUSION	29
REFERENCES	36

Introduction

This resource was developed to provide ideas and inspiration to individuals and organisations seeking to include creative arts activities in approaches to promote wellbeing. It includes a description of activities that use creative arts practices such as dance, movement, mindfulness, writing and visual art to promote health and wellbeing.

This resource was requested by community organisations that *Many Hands International* collaborated with in 2014 and 2015 to offer women's wellbeing workshops in the communities of Baucau and Lospalos in Timor-Leste. Our intentions in these activities were to offer participants experiences that:

- promoted enjoyment, self-expression, spontaneity and creativity
- assisted improved communication and relationships
- supported healing and recovery and working through of experiences of trauma

The workshops were received very favourably, as these responses from evaluations indicate :

"I feel from this workshop it's a new experience for me and during two days I feel happy to learn and get more experience"

"I (could) talk about the family - happy for the women, can keep away violence."

"I like to focus on our feet to head movement activity and to dance and to get many friends."

"...it's very beautiful for me: dance, creativity and art and the massage, because we can express our feeling, relieve sickness"

"...workshop is very good and gives lots of happiness to us"

"In this workshop we are very happy, with this method, creative as dance, drawing, and the sisters share their experiences with us"

"Good, in this workshop which experience I get from my sisters, as creative (tais, traditional dance and the other activities). In this workshop I feel very happy because we can get many experiences from Many Hands International and we can practice in life. Thank you very much."

"In this workshop it's very beautiful for me to dance and be creative. Very beautiful, when we relax as today we are happy and (when) we come back to home we (can) practice in all situations"

"... to relax together and dance together and shout together and to express out their problems."

Activities documented in this resource may be used or adapted by organisations that are facilitating group support programs for women or men. They may also be useful for counselling organisations and for empowerment, advocacy and leadership programs. They could also be adapted for use with young people in secondary schools and universities.

Definitions

This page offers a definition of key terms used and some background about approaches utilised.

Mental Health

The World Health Organisation defines mental health as ‘a state in which the individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community’ (WHO, 2001). Mental health can be another way of describing wellbeing, and although it mainly focuses on psychological health, mental health can influence all aspects of a person’s health.

Arts therapy

Arts therapy is a specialised form of using arts for health and wellbeing promotion. “The arts therapies are a form of psychotherapy utilising creative modalities, including visual art-making, drama, and dance/movement, within a therapeutic relationship to improve and inform physical, mental and emotional well-being” (ANZATA, 2016). For an activity to be defined as therapy, it must involve a qualified therapist, with both the client and therapist understanding that the process they are engaged in as ‘therapy’ (Dunphy, Mullane & Jacobsson, 2014). Linking to arts therapy is arts for health and wellbeing: There is growing interest internationally in the contributions that the creative arts can make to wellbeing and health, in both healthcare and community settings (Clift & Camic, 2015). Dr. Patricia Fenner describes the far reaching possibilities of arts in promoting mental health hinging its success on activities that can be flexible, adapted to a variety of contexts and support emotional, social, spiritual and creative needs (2015).

Strengths Based Approach

This resource takes a strengths-based approach in the use of arts therapy for promoting wellbeing for people in Timor-Leste. Previous initiatives that have used such an approach include Australian dance movement therapists Dunphy, Jordan and Elton (2014) dance movement therapy activities for stress management, wellbeing and active relaxation in Timor-Leste.

“Strengths-based approaches concentrate on the inherent strengths of individuals, families, groups and organisations, deploying personal strengths to aid recovery and empowerment. In essence, to focus on health and well-being is to embrace an asset-based approach where the goal is to promote the positive” (Pattoni, 2014, 1). Patricia Fenner reflected that arts function as assets when the modalities used are relevant to a particular community and that a combination of traditional and introduced art forms could be used.



Image: A participant's art piece created at the Women's wellbeing workshop, Baucau, November, 2014

Taking care for the safety of participants

The power and the risk of the work

Creative arts therapy is a powerful way of working, as it invites people to focus on their feelings, their bodies and their life stories. These kind of activities may bring up strong feelings and painful memories and emotions for participants. Many people in Timor-Leste may have experienced distressing events or trauma that they may not have had the chance to recover from. Creative arts workshops may be the first time they may be invited to share their stories or re-experience difficult emotions. Trauma can have an impact on all aspects of the body, mind, emotions and social connections, so it is important that activities are offered in a sensitive and empathic way, within a trusting relationship. Therefore, we highly recommend that only trained group facilitators, counsellors or therapists should use these activities.

Confidentiality and privacy

Firstly, it is recommended that participants are invited to feel free to share as much or as little as they feel comfortable to do so. It is important to create a safe space for participants by asking that all personal information that is shared be kept confidential. This means asking the group not to discuss personal material that was shared in the group with other group members or non-group members outside the group. This helps participants to feel safe to share personal information and also protects their privacy outside the group.

Setting up the space

These workshops are based around the form of the circle, where everyone has an equal and valued place. The circle also creates a safe space that participants can come back to after different activities. The art works created by participants can be placed in the centre of the circle and this can be added to throughout the

workshop. A beautiful focal point for the centre of the circle can be created with flowers. The centerpiece can also be cleared away quickly if more open space is needed for dance and movement activities.



Photo: Women's wellbeing workshop, Baucau. February 2015

Inviting people to work at their own pace

At the beginning of the workshop, facilitators should let participants know that they can take a break from the activities if they need to. They can move in and out of the group as needed. It is good to allow lots of time for participants to ask questions, discuss their feelings and have time to reflect, so that each person can come to their own understanding about the feelings brought up in the activities and deepen their understanding of themselves. After activities that might stir up emotion, it is good to offer relaxation and movement-based experiences to help participants to feel safe and cared for and support them to slowly make sense of their experiences. Activities that help people to feel safe and strong in their bodies such as guided body awareness and breathing, or a hand massage or a dance movement activity can be helpful.

Group leaders should think about each person in the group as well as the whole group's energy, to make decisions regarding the appropriate timing of planned activities during a workshop.

Offering extra support during and after the workshop

Women may not feel comfortable to talk about challenging experiences in a group setting, so facilitators need to look out for participants who might be finding the activities confronting or upsetting. They may need to have some private space to talk with a group leader, or some time away from the whole group. Leaders should make sure to follow up with those participants at the end of the session by asking some questions about how they are feeling,

ask if they have someone to travel with to get home with support and ask if there is someone who they can talk to in their home or village. If it is possible to check on them with a phone call, offer to do this for the person the next day. If possible, invite the person to visit a local community centre or arrange a meeting with the organisation who hosted the workshop, to make contact with this person and offer support.

Referring people on for more support

If participants have become distressed, upset or seem to be not coping with the activities or information shared in the workshop, the group leader might suggest that they seek some support after the workshop. They may need a referral to further counselling or support. If this can be arranged, it is best if it can happen soon after the workshop. Ideally the group leader can provide participants information about how they can contact a health professional for support in their district. If this is not possible, the group could be set up to become a support network for participants. This could be discussed with the group to explore if they would like to provide support to each other and it could be planned with the group so that each person has a small number of others they can reach out to if they need extra support.

Program options

This table gives an overview of options about activities and processes that could be included within a wellbeing, therapy or advocacy program.

Introductory activities	Group welcoming, starting circle ritual and setting up a safe space	Name game with movement	Sharing about yourself	Group mandala/circle art
Dance and movement activities	Warm up dances	Mirroring movement activity	School of fish	Timor-Leste cultural dances
Mindfulness Activities	Guided body self-awareness activity	Focus with fresh flowers	Looking at each person's art work, slowly and carefully	Creating a circle by standing side-by-side
Art making activities	Body mapping	Wellbeing art making	Personal wellbeing circle art/mandalas	Tree of life process
Self-care activities	Giving and receiving massage	Taking time out of the activity if needed	Speaking to the facilitator if the sessions activities are too distressing	Ask about setting up extra supports within the district
Closure activities	Repeat: Body Mapping	Group sharing, dance and ritual	Setting up supports within the group or referrals	Evaluations

Activity descriptions

Each activity is described with the goal, the materials needed and instructions about how to do it. In some activities, instructions have been provided for the facilitator to read out to participants. This has been written in *italics* and can be used as a guide that can be adapted by the facilitator.

Introductory activities

Name game with movement

Goal: A playful way for people to introduce themselves and become more comfortable in the group space and to help the group remember each person's name.

Materials needed: A large open space

How to do it: Everyone stands in one large circle. One person at a time introduces herself by coming into the centre of the circle, saying their name aloud and making a movement gesture that shares something about themselves. Then the whole circle of women mirrors (copies) their gesture and says that person's name aloud.

Sharing about yourself

Goal: To introduce participants to each other and 'break the ice' for the group

How to do it: Everyone stands in a large circle. Then, participants are invited to respond to a series of questions. To say "yes" to the question being answered they move into the centre of the circle, and to say "no" to the question they stay where they are.

Materials needed: Large open space

Questions may include:

Who lives in (name) of this place?

Who lives outside this place?

Who has children?

Who has one child, two children, three children...etc. then keep asking until the highest number of children is reached.

Who has grandchildren?

Who works for an NGO (Non-government organisation)?

Who weaves tais?

And other similar questions to learn more about the group members – this can be adapted depending on the group focus.

Group mandala/circle art

Goal: To create a meeting point for the start of the workshop and place for reconnection with the whole group - using the art that is being made during the workshop.

Materials needed:

- Material to create the centerpiece and fresh flowers
- Paper hearts on different coloured paper
- Drawing materials such as pens or textas
- Basket filled with items from nature: such as shells, coral, sand, leaves, seedpods, fresh flowers

What is a mandala/circle art?

The word "mandala" means "sacred circle" in Sanskrit language. Mandalas or circle art appears around the world in diverse cultural contexts based on the basic geometric template of the circle. The circle is a basic universal theme seen throughout nature such as the sun and moon, so there is a direct connection to nature through the use of mandalas. Also, a circle suggests a central point that draws one's attention to it, so the creation process of making a mandala may help focus one's concentration and bring relaxation to the creator.



Photo: Mandala art making, Women's wellbeing workshop, Baucau, February 2015

How to do it:

Set up: The center of the mandala is set up at the beginning of the workshop with a basket containing paper hearts. The image below shows how materials have been used to create a colourful centerpiece with paper hearts laid out in the centre.

Noticing and group mandala: Invite each participant to choose a nature object from a basket, then spend a few minutes in silence looking at their object and noticing everything they can about it such as its color, form, shape, size, texture, markings, etc.

Then invite them to discuss with the person next to them five things they noticed about their nature object. After this, invite each participant in turn to place their object around the central circle.

Explain that the group will be adding to the circle art throughout the day and will start to see a pattern forming.

This activity can also be used at other time in the workshop to encourage participants to regroup in the circle. The leader can invite participants to come back to the sitting circle and choose a nature object from a basket that holds a selection of natural objects – such as leaves, flowers and seeds.

Center of circle dance: Participants can celebrate throughout the workshop by dancing around the mandala.

Self-care discussion: Invite participants to sit in a circle around this circle art and open up a conversation on what different people do for their self-care. The circle acts as an imaginary vessel or bowl to 'hold' participants in safety. They may share personal stories, challenges and tactics for self-care, dealing with stresses and ways of relaxation. After the conversation, participants can be invited to choose a paper heart from the basket in the centre of the circle,

and write or draw on it an idea about self-care, then place it back in the centre of the circle.



Photo: Women's wellbeing workshop, Baucau, February 2015

Dance and movement activities

Warm up dance: body part warm-up

Goal: To increase participants' body awareness and to support the group to feel comfortable, safe and familiar with each other

Encourage this as a fun and energising activity, to help reduce any anxiety that participants may have starting the group together and as a way for people to have fun together and to meet each other with movement.

Materials needed: A large cleared space, uplifting music for dancing. Use music from Timor-Leste that is special and possibly familiar to people

How to do it: Invite the group to meet each other in the open dance space by saying 'Bondia' with different body parts. For example, invite them to greet each other using their elbows, by moving them in different ways as they move around the room and make contact with other people. Then invite them to move a new body part, such as shoulders, or knee.

Continue to guide the group to move and dance in the space, focusing on one body part at a time. Invite them to greet other participants by moving this body part together for a few moments, before moving on to meet the next person.

Photo: Women's wellbeing workshop, Baucau. November 2014



Guided body self-awareness activity

Goal: To increase body awareness and strengthen participants' capacity to be fully present in the moment

Materials needed: Relaxing music if available. Silence is also good

How to do it: Start with standing in a circle, invite group members to stretch out their arms so that they can just touch the fingertips of the person on either side. This helps to create enough space between each person for the movement that will occur. It is also a way for each person to experience a sense of connection and equality in the circle. This action can also help participants to develop awareness of their own body sphere – the space around the outsides of their body, before they tune in to focus on the inside space of their bodies.

Give the following instructions to participants

Start by bringing your awareness to the ground you are standing on and your feet in shoes. Notice the sensations of your feet, for example, whether they are hot, sweaty or cold. Notice the sensations of your feet touching the lining of your shoes.

Using your hands to touch your lower legs, pat, massage and stroke your legs to bring your complete focus on them. Continue this all the way up your legs. Then stretch each leg out, and move your feet in small circles. Then touch your knees and move them in small circles.

Then place your hands on your hips and make small circles of your hips. Bring your attention to the whole of your pelvic

region, by moving it in larger circles. Become aware of your backside also moving in a circle.

Bend your knees and bounce gently to really feel your weight on the ground.

Bring your awareness to your spine and your back. Notice how you are holding your head. Focus on your breathing for a few breaths. With one hand on your stomach and one hand on your heart, feel the slight movements with each in breath and out breath.

Now focus on your arms. Use some pats and a gentle brushing action with your hand, as if you are lightly brushing an ant off your arm. Do this down to your hand and fingertips. Then make small circles with your arms stretched out.

Bring your attention to your neck by gently touching it. Use your hands to cover your whole face, as if you are washing your face. Then give yourself a gentle massage to your face and head.

Now start to move your body with slow gentle movements. Starting at your feet, using a swaying motion. Move your hips in small circles and extend your arms out and move them in open and closing movements. Add in gentle movements of your neck and head so that your whole body is moving at a speed that feels comfortable. Then move your whole body, by loosely shaking it out.

To finish this activity take some deep breaths, then focus on feeling your feet on the ground and the strength of your spine supporting you to stand up. In your own time slowly bring your body to standing still.

Mirroring movement activity

Goal: To increase participants' self-awareness and to improve positive non-verbal connection with others

Materials needed: Large open space. Instrumental music or classical music without lyrics.

Who can do it: This exercise requires two people working as partners. It could also be tried with children: for parents to connect with children or for children to try it with each other in pairs.

How to do it: Offer this as a relaxing exercise, so request that the group do not talk during this activity. It can be done sitting down or standing opposite each other, depending on how much energy the group has and how much space is available.

One person takes the turn to be the leader, whilst the other person (follower) follows their movements as if they were looking into a mirror. Each person can be the leader for a few minutes.

Begin with both partners facing each other and connecting by touching each other's fingers. The follower keeps an invisible connection with the leader by moving their finger to copy (or mirror) the leader's movement of their finger. The invisible connection can be imagined as a piece of string that is held between the pair. For example the leader may reach their arm up high, with their finger pointing at the ceiling, and the follower mirrors this movement. The leader may draw circles in the air; and the follower mirrors this movement.



Photo: Women's wellbeing workshop, Baucau, November 2014

School of Fish

Goal: To assist the group to connect with each other, and experience being a leader in a fun, safe and supported way. This activity offers people to feel comfortable to take on a leadership role, to lead the group in movement through the space. This can be a really fun and playful experience and is a great activity to do when the group has lots of energy

Materials needed: A large open space with different music can support trying different rhythms of moving

How to do it: It can be done with or without music.

First the leader talks about how fish swim in a 'school', where one fish is the leader and the others follow. When the leading fish changes direction, the whole school of fish follow and change direction too.

One person takes the role of leading fish and the rest of the group follows. For example the leading 'fish' may be moving forward making circle shapes with their body, followed by the whole group mirroring this movement. It is up to the leader to make up their own movements using their imagination. The leader may choose to move sideways like a crab, taking steps sideways or creep along the ground like a crocodile. After the group has mirrored their leader's movement, a new leader can lead the group into a new direction and a new way of moving. The group facilitator can choose people to be leaders, or the leader could choose the next person to lead.



Photo: Women's wellbeing workshop, Baucau, November 2014

Timor-Leste Cultural Dances

Goal: To support the group to feel comfortable, safe and familiar with each other and have fun and enjoy moving together.

Materials needed: A large cleared space, Timorese or Portuguese music that is special and possibly familiar to the group

How to do it: Guide the group to try out traditional partnered style dancing and other cultural dances that have a happy and celebratory energy.



Photo: Women's wellbeing workshop, Baucau, November 2014

Mindfulness activity

Focus with fresh flowers

Goal: To be fully present in the moment, or to fully experience the 'here and now', by focusing on experiences of the senses. This can support relaxation and increase participants' capacity for self-awareness.

Materials needed: Fresh flowers in a vase - one for each person, chairs to sit down or cushions or mats to sit on the floor

How to do it: This activity is a simple introduction to a relaxing mindfulness experience for beginners using fresh flowers that each person holds in their hands and focuses upon. By holding a flower, each person is guided to strengthen their noticing of their senses: sight, smell, touch and hearing.

Invite each person to really look at their flower as if they are seeing a flower for the very first time. Guide the group to focus on each sense – one at a time.
Here are some things you could say to guide people:

For sight: Say *"Look at the colours, the patterns, the darker parts and the lighter parts, the shape and size of the flower."*

For touch: Say *"Feel the sensation of the flower in your hand, notice the smoothness, coldness. Notice the weight of the flower."*

For smell: Say *"Raise the flower to your nose and smell it, take a deep and gentle breath as if you are breathing in the essence of the flower"*

For hearing: Say *"Although the flower may seem silent, raise the flower to your ear and listen to the silence of the flower"*



Then say: *"Now just sit and be with the flower, looking at it, noticing any thoughts or feelings that arise when you are sitting there with it."*

You may like to invite the group to silently thank their flower for this experience.

Reflection: You might invite participants to write down any thoughts or draw something from their experience of 'being with' the flower. When people have finished their writing or drawing, you could invite them to reflect together on what it was like to 'be with' the flower and to share their experiences with each other through a group discussion or in pairs.

Let them know they can have their choice as to whether they will share their thoughts or not.

Invite the group to return their flowers to the vase and then offer them to take one home at the end of the workshop.

Art making activities

Body mapping

Goal: To increase participants' awareness of their body experiences by bringing attention to the sensations inside our bodies, for example: hot, cold, warm, nervous, tingling, pain, or tightness and to connect to feelings in different parts of the body (for example, we may feel worry in our stomach). This awareness can help people to know and understand themselves more, which may enable them to manage issues or problems better.

This activity will help participants identify how they are feeling and if any change has occurred through the program. This activity could be offered at each workshop at the beginning and again at the end, to create potential for going more deeply into people's experiences and stories. If it is also offered at the end of a workshop it can be used as a comparison with the body map created at the beginning, as a way to open up discussion about what activities were helpful or not helpful for the participants in the workshops.

Materials needed: Templates of a body outline (front and back) – one for each person (see Appendix 1), coloured pencils, crayons or textas.

How to do it:

- a) Go through the 'Guided body self-awareness activity' – as described on page 14.
- b) Explain to the group that this activity will help them become more aware of themselves through their bodies. It will assist them to identify sensations in their bodies and feelings and thoughts connected to those sensations. Discuss how it could help them to notice the difference in how they are feeling in their bodies at the start of the program and if any changes have occurred for them through participating in the activities.
- c) Give each participant a body outline (see below).
- d) Invite them to use the coloured markers to draw on the outline how they are feeling in their bodies at the moment. Invite them to use different colours, shapes and patterns as they represent what is happening inside their bodies.
- e) Start by inviting them to focus on their bodies and their body sensations – such as warmth, heat, cold, tingling, aches and pains, tightness, tension
- f) Then ask them to focus at the deeper level of feelings, either connected to these body sensations: for example, an unsettled stomach may be connected to a feeling of worry or anxiety. Other feelings may include frustration, anger, fear, sadness, grief, nervous, shy, love, joy, excitement, kindness, love, hope and calm
- g) Depending on how the group feels, there may be benefit in exploring thoughts and feelings at a deeper level. If it seems appropriate, invite the group to focus at the deeper levels of thoughts, connected to those feelings and experiences. For example the worry feeling may be connected to being worried about a family member who is unwell. Allow space for people to ask any questions about the body mapping process and guide them slowly through the activity.

The leader can encourage discussion amongst the group after the activity by asking questions and inviting group members to show their body maps and share what they feel comfortable to share. Prompts include:

- What was it like for you to do this activity?
- Was there any difference between the body map you made at the start of the activity and the one you made at the end?
- How do you feel seeing the difference between the before and after body maps?
- What have you learnt about yourself by doing this activity?

This activity can open up a lot of painful experiences from the past including people's experiences of trauma. It is important for the facilitator to acknowledge the individual and shared sensations of pain and discomfort, as well as the shared feelings of suffering in different ways. Allow plenty of time for the group to feel safe to share their thoughts and feelings with each other, to express emotions as they arise. It is advised to follow on with a nurturing activity after this one such as a mindfulness activity, giving and receiving massage, or the Mirroring movement activity (see Program Summary on p. 8 to locate these activities).

Because this activity can bring up issues for people, the leader should encourage people to seek support after the workshop if they need to. They may need help from a trained counsellor. See comments on pages 7-8.



Image: Body map from a participant at the Women's wellbeing workshop, Baucau, November 2014

Body mapping resources

Body mapping has been developed and adapted by various professionals working therapeutically with children and adults across diverse cultures. Dance movement therapist Amber Gray uses this process in her work with people who have experienced torture and trauma in areas of political conflict across the world (2012, 2008, 2002, 2001). Gray's body mapping processes were also used in dance movement therapy workshops in Timor-Leste in 2012 (Dunphy, Elton & Jordan, 2014). Others such as psychotherapist Bart Santen (2007) have adapted life-sized body mapping processes with children who have been traumatised. Psychiatrist Allison Crawford (2010) has written in detail about her work using body maps with people who have experienced psychological trauma. She explains the historical development of body mapping and gives case studies of how she has used life sized body mapping processes. Art therapist Lucy Lu and human science professor Felice Yuen (2012) have adapted the process, to use life sized body maps to explore healing approaches for Indigenous women in Canada. Movement psychotherapist Annette Schwalbe uses body mapping for women's wellbeing promotion (Schwalbe, 2014).



Image: Body map from a participant at the Women's wellbeing workshop, Baucau, November 2014

Wellbeing art making

Goal: To increase participant's wellbeing by focusing thoughts on aspects of their lives that provide support to them

Linking activity: This activity links to the following:

- Group mandala/circle art (page 11)
- Personal wellbeing circle art/mandalas (page 23)

Materials needed: images cut from magazines, old books or photographs
Large pieces of paper, pencils, textas or crayons, scissors and glue sticks

How to do it: Each person is invited to create their own wellbeing art piece using pre-cut images from magazines. Participants are invited to make an art piece by gluing down the images and drawing on paper to create a picture of aspects of their lives that support their wellbeing.

Afterwards, invite participants to lay out their artworks in a circle in the centre of the room and to slowly walk around and look at each art work made. Then invite the group to sit in a circle and to share a description of their artwork and any feelings about it with the rest of the group. Invite the group to respond to the person sharing their artwork by saying how they feel when they look at the person's artwork. They may also have some questions for the person sharing their artwork. Allow plenty of time to people to share and respond and talk with each other.

Image: Art work by a woman at the workshop. The person who created this art work said to the group “*when I am feeling stressed and hot: I sit under the trees and look at the mountains.*”



Image: Women's wellbeing workshop, Baucau, November 2014

Personal wellbeing circle art/mandalas

Goal: For participants to inspire each other and promote wellbeing by making circle/ mandala pictures reflecting on what women need for wellbeing in their lives.

Materials needed: Large circle shaped pieces of paper, textas, coloured paper, scissors and glue

How to do it: Each person receives circle-shaped pieces of paper is invited to draw or write in the middle of the circle, working outwards, making marks, patterns, words about what they need for wellbeing.

Sharing: On completion of personal circle/mandala, participants can sit with one other person to share their experience of making the circle art; what they made, the colours they chose etc. Then, they are invited to give their artwork a title and write their names and date on the back.

Invite the group members to place their finished works in a circle around the group circle art/mandala. Then they can walk around the completed circle art/mandala together to look at all the art made and to have some time to reflect.

Closing circle: Movement and word: Invite all participants to stand in a circle around the completed art, and share with the group a word and a movement to represent how they are feeling after this activity.



Photo: Women's wellbeing workshop, Baucau, February 2015

Tree of Life process

Tree of Life

The *Tree of Life* methodology is a strength-based approach to working with children, young people and adults who have experienced hardship, drawing on narrative (or story) therapy approaches. It is a creative drawing and writing process used by therapists and group leaders around the world as a narrative therapy. The Dulwich Centre in Australia (2014) uses it to provide professional development to therapists and counsellors and to share and develop the process, through providing resources and support. The *Tree of Life* process was used in writing workshops in Timor-Leste to enable young people to express their life stories through creative writing approaches (Lush, 2014). The Tree of Life process is explained:

It involves people drawing their own 'tree of life' in which they get to speak of their 'roots' (where they come from), their skills and knowledge, their hopes and dreams, as well as the special people in their lives. The participants then join their trees into a 'forest of life' and, in groups, discuss some of the 'storms' that affect their lives and ways that they respond to these storms, protect themselves, and each other. The Tree of Life enables people to speak about their lives in ways that are not re-traumatising, but instead strengthens their relationships with their own history, their culture, and significant people in their lives (Ncube & Denborough, 2014 p. 1)

Goal: This process supports people to carefully reflect on their lives, through sharing in a group experience to make an individual piece of art that represents each person's life - like it is a tree. This invites people to talk about their lives in ways that makes them stronger, by focussing on their strengths and the significant others that have supported them to become who they are.

Time planning: This workshop can be done over three hours, a whole day or weekend, or it can be broken up into a shorter workshop of two hours per week over a number of weeks (6-8).

Materials needed: Tables and chairs set up with: A3 or large pieces of paper, coloured pencils, textas or crayons

How to do it: This process will be described in a series of steps

1. A guided visualisation:

Invite everyone to stand in a circle and imagine that they are a tree in a forest. If they are comfortable to do so, they can close their eyes. Invite participants to focus on their bodies and to use their imagination, visualising that they have roots extending down through the ground into the earth below, and then focussing on their legs and upper body as the trunk of the tree.

Invite them to imagine that their arms, neck and head are branches of the tree and that they can gently move them if they want to. Invite the group to imagine what kind of tree they are. Using all their senses, (hearing, sight, touch, smell, taste) invite them to breathe in and out slowly and experience the shared forest space of other trees: the other people in the circle. Ask participants to open their eyes, and gently shake out their arms and legs to finish the guided visualisation. Invite participants to find a quiet place to sit alone and commence the artistic 'Tree of Life' process.

2. Give each person a piece of paper and access to drawing materials

3. Drawing a tree

Invite participants to draw a tree that symbolises an aspect of their lives (see the image on page 26 for an overview of this). Then invite them to slowly add descriptions to this self-drawn tree (Step 4 describes this process). During the process, allow for discussions and storytelling and time to reflect and share amongst the group. This activity can bring up a lot of strong emotions for people as they reflect on the past and also on their lives in the present and their future hopes. Support the group to take time to feel these feelings and express them safely in the group if they want to. Offer them

further support after the group session if they need it.



Image: *Tree of Life* process: Women's wellbeing workshop, Baucau, February 2015

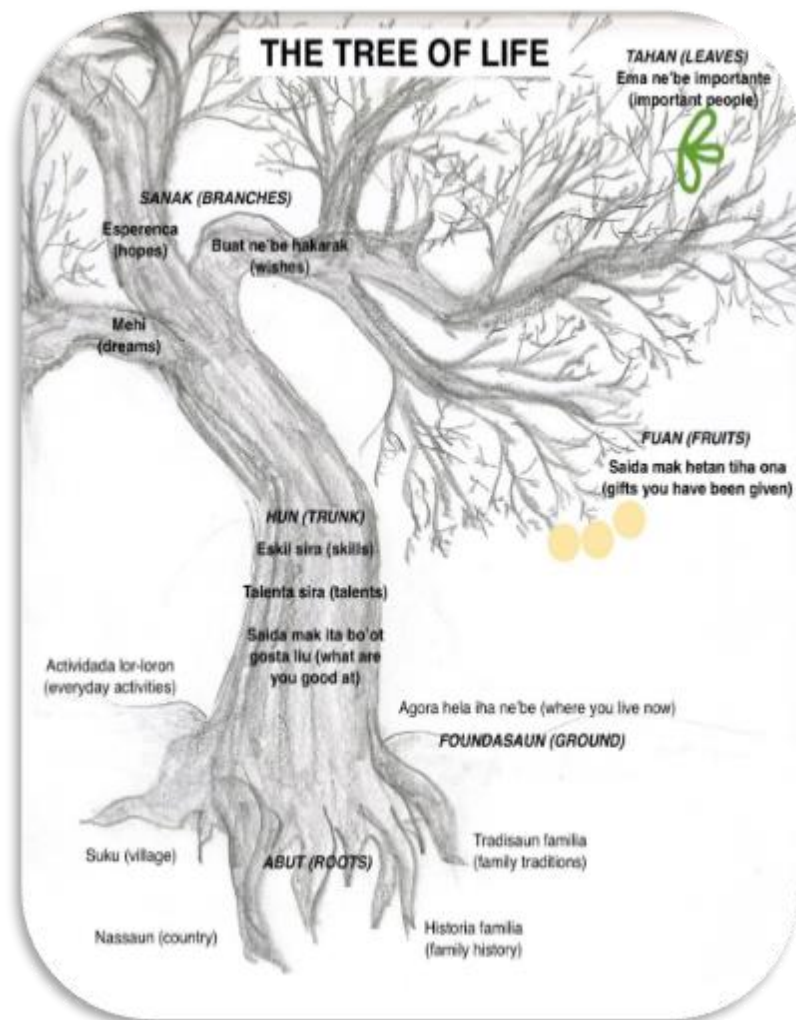


Image source: Emily Lush, Ha'u-nia Iatoria: This is My Story, Creative Writing Project Report:
http://manyhands.org.au/uploads/files/Creative_writing_project_report.pdf

4. Creating a *Tree of Life*: The process

Invite the group to draw the outline of a whole tree, include the roots below the ground, the ground, trunk, branches, leaves and fruit of the tree. An outline without too much detail is good to start with, as the tree will be added to through this activity. Each part of the tree will be symbolic for a part of participant's life.

Guide the group slowly through the process by directing them to add to their tree one part at a time:

The roots: On your tree, write your place of origin (village, family) significant others and imagine: How might these people see you now?

The Ground: Write down where you live now. Write what sustains your life? (This means what are your life activities). This can be viewed as a safe place to stand

The trunk: Write down your skills and strengths. Think about how other people who are important to you might think about you

The branches: Write down your goals and dreams – your individual values may be expressed – your values are the qualities in life that are important to you such as trust, honesty, forgiveness

The leaves: Write down the significant people in your life: those who are alive and also those who have died. Think about people who have contributed to your sense of self and write their names down next to the fruit

The fruit: Write down the lessons or experiences that have improved your life.

Forest of life: Invite the group to place their trees together to show

how the participants can stand together as a community of support.

When the storms come: Talk about how when a storm comes through the forest, how the trees respond to the challenge. Focus on participants identifying and discussing difficulties they may be experiencing and how they may be responding to those difficulties.

Closing Circle: Offer a closing circle where each person is acknowledged and thanked for participating in and sharing this process. Finish the process by inviting the group to share and show their trees if they feel comfortable to do so. They may have a movement or a word to say about their tree or about the trees that others can share.



Image: *Tree of Life* process: Women's wellbeing workshop, Baucau, February 2015

Self-care activity

Giving and receiving massage

Goal: To experience being cared for in a gentle and calming way and to care for others by learning simple massage techniques

Materials needed: Calming or classical music, or silence is good too

How to do it: Encourage everyone not to talk during this, or if they need to, to just whisper quietly. Work in pairs, one giving and one receiving the massage. The receiver sits in a chair and the giver stands behind it.

Here are instructions for the giver:

Use your hands to gently rub in small circles and press into the neck and shoulder area of the person seated. Use gentle pinching and squeezing over the muscles, checking in with the person receiving the massage that it is OK, and not too hard. Continue this down each arm all the way to the fingertips.

Then sit down next to or opposite the person you are massaging and focus on one hand at a time. Using both of your hands hold the person's hand with their palm facing upwards. The gently press into their palm using a circle motion with both of your thumbs while your fingers are pressing the back of their hands. Do this all over their palm, then focus on one finger at a time with the same technique. So it is like you are gently squeezing their hand between your hands.

Slowly massage back up the wrist and arm and return to the neck, giving some gentle pressing motions. Then do the same on the

other arm.

Then move gently up over the head, kneading their head with your fingertips, paying special attention to the muscles at the side of the head.

Another approach is for two women to sit opposite each other and massage their partner's arms and hands then swap over.

Photo: Hand massage at women's wellbeing workshop, Baucau,



November 2014

Here are instructions for the receiver: *Breathe slowly; relax your body and mind*

Take your time to receive and let the person who is massaging you know if their touch is too hard or too soft, or just right.

Closure Activities

Evaluation

Goal: To give workshop participants an opportunity to reflect on what they have enjoyed or benefitted from and what they believe could be improved about the workshop and to share this information with the workshop leaders.

To help workshop leaders to determine the effectiveness of the activities offered in promoting wellbeing. To understand how the workshop impacted participant's sense of wellbeing, the questionnaire can be used at the start of the workshop and then at the end of the workshop, using an adapted version of the 'WHO-5 Well-being Index'.

Materials needed: Evaluation questionnaires for after the workshop has finished (see Appendix 4 & 5) and the WHO-5 Well-being Index (see Appendix 2 & 3) that has been adapted for a workshop setting, pens and pencils/textas.

How to do it: Request that the group reflect on their experiences of the workshop and fill out the evaluation questionnaire by answering the questions or ticking the relevant boxes.

People who are not comfortable to read or write may prefer to draw a picture on the back of the questionnaire page to show how they feel, or reflect in words how they felt before they came and how they feel after the workshop:

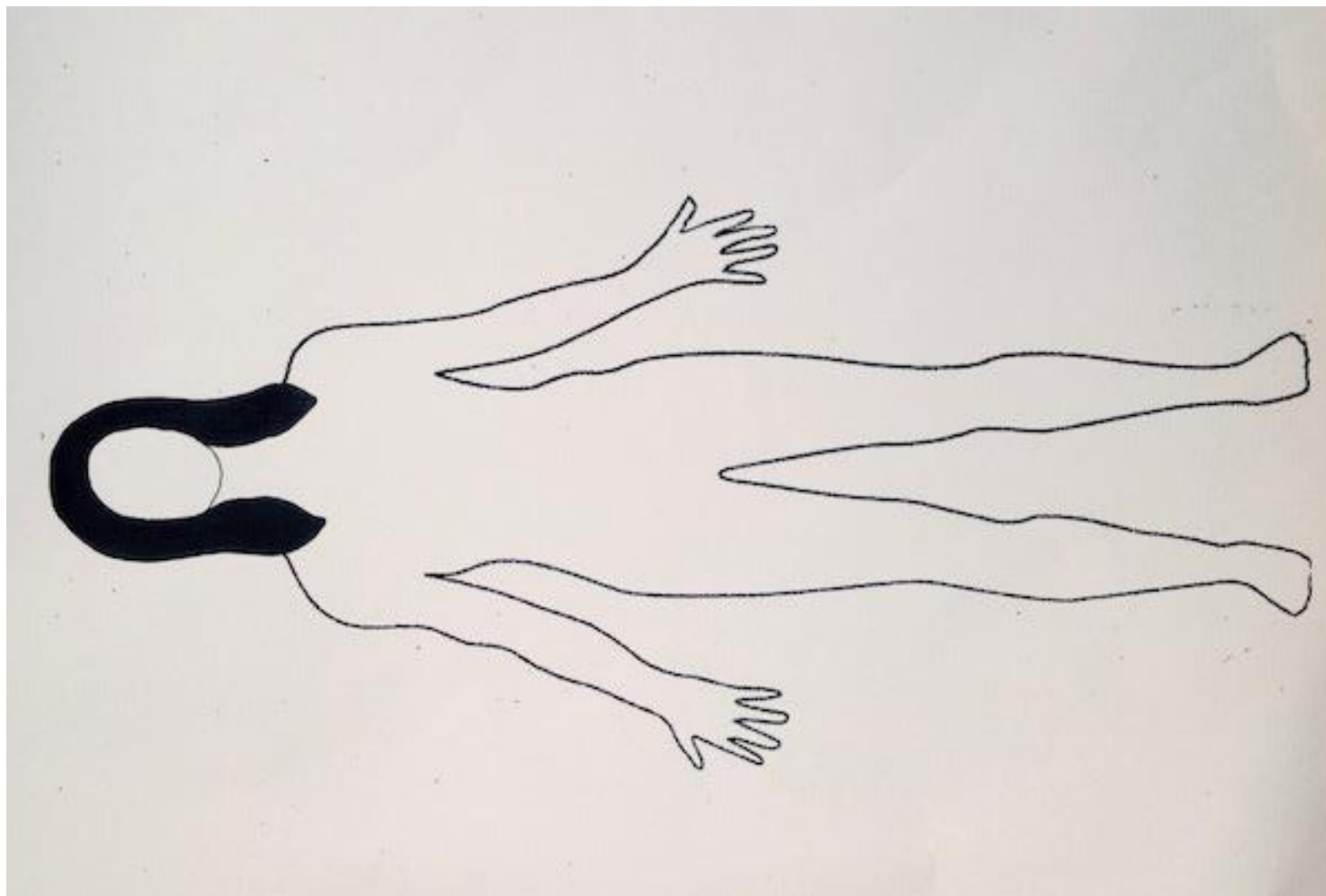
Conclusion

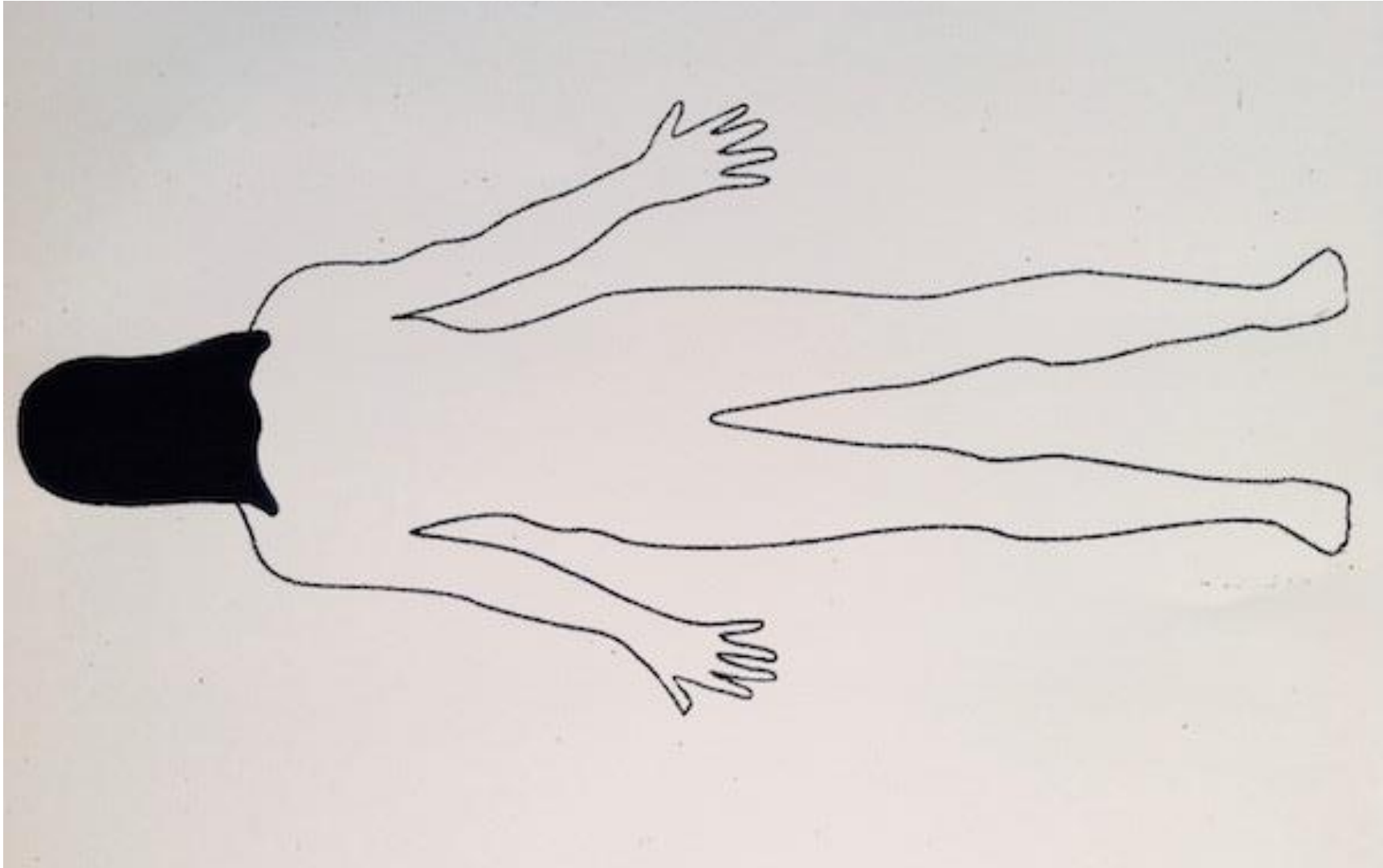
This resource has been written to support trained leaders, therapists and counsellors working to support the wellbeing of people in Timor-Leste. As these activities have been trialled with different groups of women with positive outcomes, it is hoped that they will be used to support more people to experience similar benefits. It is intended that these activities can be flexibly adapted to different settings and programs and continue to be evaluated for their effectiveness in enhancing health and wellbeing.

Photo: Women's wellbeing workshop, Baucau, November 2014



Appendix 1: Body outlines front and back





Appendix 2: Pre-workshop assessment

Before the workshop: How are you feeling?

WHO (five) Well-Being Index (1998 version) (Adapted)

Over the last 2 weeks Semana 2 ikus liu ba	Daily Loron-Loron	Often Dala barak	Sometimes Dalaruma	Occasionally Lat'o loron ida/ loron sorin deit	Never Laiha tempu
1. I feel cheerful & in good spirits					
2. I feel calm & relaxed					
3. I feel active & vigorous					
4. I woke up feeling fresh & rested					
5. My daily life has been filled with things that interest me					

Appendix 3: Post-workshop assessment

After the workshop: How are you feeling?

WHO (five) Well-Being Index (1998 version) – (Adapted)

	Very much Barak liu	Sufficiently Nato'on	A little Oituan	Not at all Laiha liu
1. I feel cheerful & in good spirits				
2. I feel calm & relaxed				
3. I feel active & vigorous				
4. This workshop was filled with things that interest me				
5. I woke up this morning feeling fresh and rested				

Appendix 4: Workshop: Metodu Kreativu Moris Ksolok

FORMULARIU EVALUASUAN



In this workshop, did you:

Have opportunities to express yourself?

Many	A few	Some	None
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Have opportunities to explore your creativity?

Many	A few	Some	None
-------------	--------------	-------------	-------------

Learn any skills to improve communication and relationships?

Many	A few	Some	None
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Feel that you experienced healing or recovery?

Many	A few	Some	None
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Obtain ideas for your wellbeing in the future?

Many	A few	Some	None
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What was the best part of this workshop for you?

What could we improve about this workshop?

Appendix 5: Workshop: Metodu Kreativu Moris Ksolok

FORMULARIU EVALUASUAN

Participants can use this page to draw a picture to represent their experiences in the workshop.



Pinta ka hakerek buat ruma nebe representa ita bo'ot nia esperensia iha workshop ida ne'e

A large, empty rectangular box with a decorative border, intended for drawing. The border is composed of a repeating pattern of small, colorful squares. The text "Pinta ka hakerek buat ruma nebe representa ita bo'ot nia esperensia iha workshop ida ne'e" is written in a dark, sans-serif font at the top of the box.

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