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**To:** [kim.dunphy@manyhands.org.au](mailto:kim.dunphy@manyhands.org.au)

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# Many Hands International

culture based community development

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## Wrapping up 2013

Dear members and supporters of Many Hands International,

As 2013 draws to a close, we write to share news of our success and challenges throughout the year promoting culture and development in Timor-Leste.

This month, we acknowledge the loss of cultural elder and performing arts expert, Sr. Abilio dos Santos Tilman, who shared our goals of promoting development through culture and collaborated with us on much of our work in Lospalos. Sr Abilio died suddenly in November, and the loss of his cultural skills and expertise will be sorely missed. MHI Director Kim Dunphy enjoyed a crazy moment with Sr. Abilio at the Lautem Cultural Festival in April when the power went off for quite some time and the two cooked up an improvised music and dance jam, with Kim leading a group of dancers and Sr Abilio accompanying them on the drums. Vale Senior Abilio.

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## AGM and End of Year Celebration, Melbourne, Thursday December 19

We invite you to join us to share our news of this year's work and to receive the audited Annual Report for 2012-2013 year.

**6:00 – 7:30 pm, Meeting Room, East Melbourne Library, 122 George St, East Melbourne,** for drinks, nibbles and interesting discussion. The meeting will be followed by a casual dinner at a Vietnamese restaurant in nearby Victoria St, Richmond. All members and other interested people welcome!

### Guest speakers:

*Lucia Pichler*, Australian Volunteer for International Development will speak on her life and work for Many Hands in Lospalos.

*Lina Andonovska*, talented musician and community artist, will share her experiences leading workshops and performing in the mountain villages of Ainaro district in January this year.

**Please RSVP to [kim.dunphy@manyhands.org.au](mailto:kim.dunphy@manyhands.org.au) by 18 December.**

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## Staff news

MHI has recently welcomed a new member of staff to our Timor-Leste office. Amy Stevenson has joined us in Lospalos for 12 months as a Australian Youth Ambassador for



has joined us in Lospalos for 12 months as a Australian Youth Ambassador for Development, working as a Youth Arts Mentor at the Centre for Traditional and Contemporary Art and Culture. Merging her professional background in international development and visual arts, Amy has developed creative programs for young asylum seekers in detention and indigenous youth from remote Australian communities. She has also spent several years engaged with Timor–Leste through research, field study and her role as co–manager of the Matadalan Ba Malu Scholarship Program at RMIT. Since arriving in Lospalos in late October, Amy has met with a number of young people in the district who she describes as being “incredibly enthusiastic and eager to engage in creative arts, as well as naturally talented and interested in both customary and contemporary creative practices.” She is looking forward to working with the Many Hands team and creating new opportunities for young people in the Lautem district to positively engage with creative arts and cultural development within their home community.



MHI also congratulates AVID volunteer Lucia Pichler for her good cheer and fortitude and her marvellous contribution since March 2013. Lucia lived as the only Australian and one of very few foreigners in the remote town of Lospalos until she was joined by Amy in October.

Photo: Australian volunteers Marian Reid, Lucia Pichler and Amy Steveson, with Timorese staff Nelinha Periera and Thomas Lopes.

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## Position vacant: Youth Arts Development Officer, Lospalos, Timor–Leste

**Wanted:** enthusiastic, creative young person to work in Lospalos, coordinating a program of creative and cultural activities for young people in the Centre for Traditional and Contemporary Arts and Culture, and other venues in and around Lospalos.

This position is supported by supported by Youth Arts Mentor Amy Stevenson and contributes to MHI's culture–based development projects and activities in Timor–Leste. A 12–month contract is available for a suitable national staff member with good skills in English, Tetun and Fataluku. More information available from <http://www.manyhands.org.au>

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## Smart Schoolies week in Timor–Leste

As we have heard in the news recently, every year more than 500 young Australians are hospitalized from alcohol related incidents in the unhappy Australian ritual of alcohol–fueled post–school celebration. In an innovative project trialled this month, MHI is working to promote a “Smart Schoolies” cultural alternative. Students from Rosebud Secondary College, in the Mornington Peninsula Shire in Victoria (Australia), visited their municipality's 'friendship town' Lospalos (Timor–Leste) to pioneer an alternative version of Schoolies Week. While in Lospalos, the students celebrated the final realisation of their right to secondary school education while having a meaningful volunteering experience.

More about the Schoolies

here: [http://manyhands.org.au/about\\_us/news/mhi\\_welcomes\\_smart\\_schoolies\\_to\\_timor\\_lest](http://manyhands.org.au/about_us/news/mhi_welcomes_smart_schoolies_to_timor_lest)



Photo: Project volunteer Jim Lawson, students Laura Smith and Josh Finlay, teacher Anthea Mackenzie, MHI staff Amy Stevenson and Celes Belo and the community of Kakavei who participated in arts workshops with the students.

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## Progress report on Lautem Cultural Centre, Stage One.

The building works on our major project, the Centre for Traditional and Contemporary Arts and Culture in Lospalos, move closer and closer to completion. After a slow final leg, the last tasks in the building of Stage One are expected to be complete on December 24th; a nice Christmas treat for us after five years of working towards this goal!

The site of the new cultural centre is a former Portuguese market place that had been partly renovated and then abandoned. Located in the centre of Lospalos, it is perfectly positioned as a community cultural hub. After much negotiation and collaboration with all levels of government in Timor–Leste, as well as with significant volunteer input from generous Australians, \$250,000 from the Government of Timor–Leste and hard yakka from the team at Community Housing Limited, a beautiful new community facility is just about ready.

We are looking forward to the official opening in early 2014.

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## Staff contribute to UNESCO Workshop for the Implementation of Intangible Cultural Heritage

During November, MHI staff Justino Valentim and Nelinha Pereira participated in a UNESCO Workshop for the Implementation of Intangible Cultural Heritage, in Jakarta, Indonesia. The two other participants from Timor–Leste were staff from the Secretariat of State for Art and Culture, Government of Timor Leste. Justino and Nelinha gave a presentation on the activities of MHI and in particular on our Fataluku Endangered Cultural Heritage Project. They learnt about implementation of the UNESCO Convention 2003 and methods for recording, identifying threats and risks, and safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage. Through projects like the audio visual recordings, undertaken as part of the Fataluku Project, MHI contributes to the strengthening of endangered intangible cultural heritage



practices, as identified in the Convention.

MHI staff were supported to attend the workshop by the office of UNESCO, Jakarta.

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## Photo-voice project and training, November 2013

Stories and photos are an important way to create dialogue and explore different perceptions on the places we live. In November 2013, University of Queensland student, Marian Reid, spent three weeks with MHI in Lospalos for her Masters in Communication for Social Change practicum. Her first project was to deliver a workshop for MHI staff in story gathering and photovoice. Marian then spent time collecting stories for MHI on the importance of cultural practice in development. Read more about the project



here: [http://manyhands.org.au/our\\_activities/past\\_projects/photo\\_voice\\_project\\_november\\_2013/](http://manyhands.org.au/our_activities/past_projects/photo_voice_project_november_2013/)

Photo: *Marian working with MHI staff member Maria dos Santos*

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## Workshop: Stress Management, Dili, November 2103.

This month MHI partnered with Professor John Toumbourou of Deakin University and Drs. Ruth and John Rudge of Southern Cross Clinical Psychology Services, Darwin, to present a workshop on stress management for health professionals in Dili. This topic had been suggested at a prior meeting of health professionals in Timor-Leste who experience significant pressures in managing their stressful working lives as well as demands at home. Many of the participants discussed their very challenging work dealing with clients experiencing the impact of previous and current traumas, compounded by their underdeveloped skills and inadequate workplace support. More about the workshop here:

[http://manyhands.org.au/our\\_activities/past\\_events/stress\\_management\\_workshop\\_techniques\\_for\\_managing\\_stress\\_in\\_the\\_workplace](http://manyhands.org.au/our_activities/past_events/stress_management_workshop_techniques_for_managing_stress_in_the_workplace)

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## Community kinder receives a lovely Christmas treat

After fundraising efforts involving an Open Garden Day, a garage sale, a cash donation from Kiwani's of Bayside and donations of musical instruments from other supporters, we were pleased to be able to make a lovely gift to teachers at a kindergarten on the outskirts of Lospalos township. At a previous visit, the teachers had requested assistance in getting equipped to offer music activities to their young students. We were able to realise this wish recently, with the gift of an electronic organ and a great collection of musical instruments. The teachers were speechless upon presentation of the instruments and overjoyed at now being able to provide a range of music and movement activities for their students. Thanks to all who contributed.

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## Seasons Greetings to all

And finally we thank all our friends and supporters for all that you have done to help us promote culture and development in Timor-Leste in 2013. We hope to have your ongoing support throughout 2014, as our work grows. We welcome offers of volunteer assistance and donations at any time, with many easy options listed here [http://manyhands.org.au/get\\_involved/](http://manyhands.org.au/get_involved/).

This image is the front cover of a beautiful childrens' book created by MHI volunteer Tash Trenear and community members in the Fataluku language of the people of Lautem district where we work. It features *Prezepiu*, the nativity scenes that are a feature of Timorese front yards during the festive season.

More about Tash's books

here: [http://manyhands.org.au/our\\_activities/past\\_projects/community\\_publishing\\_project\\_first\\_language\\_first\\_2011\\_2012](http://manyhands.org.au/our_activities/past_projects/community_publishing_project_first_language_first_2011_2012)

We hope you enjoy a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year and good times with those you love.

Best wishes

MHI Directors, Holly Schauble, Lisa Mori and Kim Dunphy.

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