



Many Australians visit Alola

Many people dropped into Alola in June, as part of their visit to Timor-Leste for the Friendship Cities Conference last month.

Joana Belo, Alola's receptionist, was responsible for a stall at the *Friendship Conference* with Timor Leste and Australia and sold local products at the event.

Alola also created a conference display of information about all its programs and also held an open day at Alola on the last afternoon of the conference.

Pat Faulkner, a student from Curtin University in Australia, said she enjoyed visiting Alola because she was able to find out how Alola is working with the Friendship Cities to assist Timor-Leste.

Many Timorese also visit Alola for information and assistance and to meet together and work together to advocate for women and support their efforts to bring change to their communities.

In addition, a group of journalists from Australia visited Alola recently to learn more about programs and issues in Timor-Leste.



Meredith Budge explains Alola's programs to Journalists who visited Alola in July

Alola Staff attract scholarships to Australia

A number of Alola staff have gained Australian scholarships to further develop their English skills.

In July and August three staff members will be attending English classes in Melbourne, Zulmira da Fonseca from Maternal and Child Health, Maria Gureti Ut and Nuni Maria Nobre from Education. Zulmira and Maria Gureti Ut will participate in an Intensive course through the Walter Mangol Trust Scholarship for 30 weeks. Nuni will attend the RMIT Global language course in Melbourne.

All three are very proud and happy to gain this opportunity to improve their skills and contribute to their programs when they return. In addition, Rui Carvalho has just returned from a one year scholarship in Indonesia studying design.



Mira, Beti and Nuni receive scholarships to Australia



Alola Staff receive the new sewing machines from the Commodore William and staff from USNS Mercy

USNS Mercy donates 5 sewing machines to Alola

The USNS MERCY visited Timor-Leste for two weeks to provide medical services and surgery for Timorese people, carrying 1000 staff, they saw thousands of patients on land and on the ship. For example, Operation Smile performed 75 cleft lip repairs. The Alola Foundation was also presented with five sewing machines from USNS MERCY. The sewing machines were handed over by the USNS Mercy Commodore A. Williams to Kirsty Sword Gusmao at the Alola office. Commodore Williams said that the donation would support Alola's economic development programs.

Kirsty Gusmao expressed her gratitude to the USNS Mercy for its support and for the wonderful new relationship forged between USNS Mercy, the Pacific Partnership and Alola. She said that the Alola Foundation and USNS Mercy shared the same vision for improvements in health, education, and economic development in Timor-Leste.

Alola now has a production centre in Taibesi, so the five sewing machines will be used to make products there. The Commodore later visited Taibesi centre and said that he could not think of a better place to donate the machines.

Message from the Chairwoman

Welcome to the July edition of the Fundasaun Alola newsletter. In this edition you can learn more about our general activities. You can read about Alola's important role in facilitating the first district convened Women's Congress meetings and about the re-aunch of Alola's film "Feto Hamutuk Sei Halo Diferensa". Women working together can make a difference.

You can also read about some of our staff who have received scholarships to Australia and more about three of our programs: the District Support Worker program; the Education team's teacher training with education trainers from Friends of Maubisse.

This month, Fundasaun Alola welcomed many visitors from Australia, including USNS Mercy" Ship who donated sewing machines for our economic development program.

Kirsty



Sra Idelta Rodrigues launches the film with Kirsty Sowrd and Eline Tan, UNIFEM

Alola Launches 'Feto Hamutuk Sei Halo Diferensia'

In order to share knowledge about how women can participate in development, politics and leadership, Alola relaunched the film it made with Rede Feto and UNIFEM. We also launched the report of the program "Women's Participation in Politics and the 2007 Elections" in Tetun and English.

"We have made copies of this film with the report to distribute to groups so that every community in Timor-Leste can encourage women's participation in leadership." said Alola's Chairwoman, Kristy Sword Gusmao during the launch of the film in Alola's training room on Tuesday 24 June 2008.

Many women in rural areas are yet to see the film and benefit from increased involvement in politics and leadership.

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Women talk about the need for Justice in Same

Alola facilitates first women's district congress in Same

In 2004, the Women's Platform of Action (POA) was developed for 2004 to 2008 at the second National Women's Congress. The platform identified needs and problems facing women, especially mothers, in the districts. The 2008 congress is a chance to review progress. For the first time, the district congresses are being held in every district, culminating in a National Congress in September in Dili. Alola facilitated the congress in Same, Manufahi District from the 9 – 11 June.

Congresses are held every four years, 2002, 2004, and now 2008. The District Congress provides a great chance to learn from women across Timor-Leste about their vision for the development of the nation. Cecilia da Fonseca, who coordinated the Same District Congress, said the first district congress attracted many women to come together for the very first time from suku (villages) all over the district.

The First Women's Congress in Same was embraced with much enthusiasm from the women in the area. Over 140 women came from sub districts of Same, Alas Turiskai and Fatuberliu.

Isabel Cefe da Costa the official human resources administrator for the district of Manufahi said she felt happy and very proud both because this was the first congress like this and because so many women actively participated in the three day event.

"The national women's network, Rede Feto, worked together with Alola to hold the congress and Alola's District Support Worker provided wonderful support to involve so many women in the event," she said. President of the board of Rede Feto Timor-Leste, Maria Dias praised Cecilia's coordination and talked about what it would mean to develop the nation. She said all Timorese need to come together, share their thoughts and assume responsibility together, for the future of the nation. "We must have the will to learn with discipline and not waste any more time. We need people of goodwill and patience who will sweat and toil for this country, we cannot just sit back and wait for handouts."

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District Programs increase women's voice



A scene from the film - Women together can make a difference

From Page 1: District Congress in Same "Every single Timorese person must feel in their hearts that each one, whether female or male, has an important role to play as a member of the community and as a citizen of Timor-Leste. Every single person has the right and the obligation to contribute to the future direction of the nation. Do not just ask what the nation can do for you but what you can do for this nation!" said the President of the board of Rede Feto, Timor-Leste.

"Rede feto Timor-Leste is an umbrella organization for women in Timor-Leste, and we invite all women here to reflect together over the next three days and dig deeply to find ways to improve the life of all communities across the nation.

"Important issues that were raised in the second congress four years ago including development in agriculture, health, the economy, education, culture, justice and many other things. It is time to reflect on what has been achieved so far and what is yet to be done.

"I want you to think about how your participation in the congress can help to make it a success. What do we need to create unity, to understand each other and listen to each other. To receive each other and, rather than criticise each other, look for ways to help each other understand each other, and if we do not fully understand, seek explanations to help us understand each other better. Especially so we do not just think alone but share our thoughts so we can develop this country together and improve the life of this whole nation." she said.

Alita Verdial, Program Manager from Alola, said the results of the congress will contribute to the depth of discussions at the final National Congress in Dili in September so we develop a good new platform of action. This congress will increase the status of women and strengthen our negotiations with government and institutions, so women can contribute at all levels to develop the nation. We can use this platform to set the priorities for future action.

From Page 1: Alola Launches film:

"The "Women's Participation in the Elections" program drew upon the resources of Rede Feto and UNIFEM," she said.

"From the film we hope to provoke much discussion about the issues which affect women's participation in politics and society in general in order to strengthen the status of women and to increase opportunities for women to enter politics.

Program Manager of UNIFEM, Eline Tan, said the materials are of a high quality and are effective tools to advocate for women to participate in politics and decision making.

"This program has the full support of the Secretary of State for the Promotion of Equality," said Sra Idelta Rodrigues. "This program is very important for women all over Timor-Leste, to show women that they have an important role to play in the development of the nation, especially in the area of politics," said Idelta.

She went on to say that women's participation in the process of development, especially in politics, is not easy because the nation is still very new.



Women and men discuss the many issues and challenges they face in Same



District Support Workers making a difference

Alola's District Support Worker (DSW) program works with women's groups in the Districts are starting to see results. We are supporting women to improve their family's nutrition and create small businesses from growing vegetables, palm weaving and Tais production and among other things. The Coordinator of Community Development, Cecilia da Fonseca said the District Support Worker program works with the referral system, linking women's groups with NGOs to assist with local training opportunities and start up resources for businesses.

Alola now has DSWs in all 13 districts and the networks are developing well. In the east, the DSW in Baucau is working with NGOs GTZ, MSS, CRC, Belun, Oasis, BBH, Caritas, Dioses Baucau, DA, Community Radio, Madre Cannosiana and the VPU. In Lospalos the DSW works with NGO Luzeiro, Esperansa, DDA, Plan Internacional, Concern and the Ministry for Industry and Commerce and in Viqueque the DSW has linked in with NGOs Belun, Gelong, DA, GTZ and Community Radio. In the East,



Police participate in training with JSMP and women from Lospalos

Ainaro links have been made with NGO GTZ, Manufahi ho NGO Futuro; in Aileu with NGOs World Vision, Timor Aid and VPU; Suai with NGOs Oxfam Australia, Fokupers, Timor Aid; Liquica with NGO FMF radio, MSG, DA, Fokupers, Rede Feto, Caucus and Community Radio; Ermera with NGOs DAA, Community Radio, MSG, MSS and Oxfam; Maliana with NGOs Gender Vocal Point, Fokupers and on Atauro, with Community Radio, DA, Roman Luan no Siao.

She said the objective of working together like this is to support women to create their own opportunities to improve their income and to develop skills in management, group development, leadership, gender awareness, justice system, permaculture, family planning, health and other areas as identified by the group. This great program is funded through the support of NET, Fokus and Norad in Norway. For the latest report on the DSW program visit our website: www.alolafoundation.org/DSW%20program.php



Justice Training in Viqueque with a little fun as well

Education Team provides teacher training with Friends of Maubisse

On the last day of June, Alola's team helped plan for a training program with an education team from the Loddon Mallee Education Department, Bendigo, Victoria to prepare for training to teachers in Ainaro. Aimed at promoting literacy (how children learn to read and write), a creative short curriculum was developed for training in Maubisse. The next day, the Alola and Bendigo team travelled to Maubisse to provide training for 72 teachers. The sessions focused on reading simple books and writing stories with children. The team from Bendigo also explained about using techniques like reading aloud, reading together and independent reading.

Even though it was very cold and wet in Maubisse, some participants travelled a very long way to attend. Teachers in the region face many difficulties because of limited access to resources like books, arts and sports equipment. These challenges are compounded by large numbers of students with limited facilities.



Each of the 72 teachers received a certificate at the end of the training