



## Metinaro refugees return home by handicraft project remains

The handicraft project that the Alola Foundation established for Metinaro refugee women in 2007 will continue even though the Timorese government plan is for refugees to return home in December.

Adalsiza Ferreira, project coordinator said that the project for Metinaro refugee women involves several activities such as weaving, tais products, sewing and other activities supported by Plan International will continue next year.

The Metinaro women's group has not only learnt handicraft skills like weaving, sewing and making tais product but has also participated in training about human trafficking, conflict resolution, gender based violence and others skills training.

Adalsiza said that Alola will look for ways to continue to support the refugee women when they return to their homes but they will need to establish their own groups back home that Alola can support.

Rosalina Dos Reis, a Metinaro refugee group member said that she was happy and grateful for the Alola project in Metinaro because it gave them activities to do in the refugee camp.

She said under the government plan they will soon return to their homes but having been involved in the refugee women's group, she asked Alola to continue to support them when they return home.

Rosalina said, "When we return home, we will establish a group so that Alola continues to support us because with support from Alola through sewing, making tais products and weaving we can improve our lives."



The womens group in Metinaro refugee camp sewing clothing

## Alola receive money from the Australian Defence Force

The Australian Defence Force (ADF) delivered US\$1406.85 to the Alola Education Team from their fundraising activities in October 2008.

Education Program Manager, Rosanne Simpkin said that the money from the Australian Defence Forces will be used for the nanny training that will start in the Alola childcare centre and that Alola plans to implement in districts across Timor Leste.

The objective of this training is to increase the capacity of mothers and nannies to care for children from 0-3 years old. In this training they will learn how to read stories to children show them pictures, sing, play and do other activities with them to support the child's educational development even though the children can not yet talk but can understand what is said to them.

Jaquelina de Fatima, the trainer explained that with these training nannies can learn how to care for babies and children with love and satisfy the parents of the child. It is importance for the children or baby that the nanny talks to them when they are taking a bath, being fed, playing and when they are crying or angry because through talking they will develop their thought processes and language skills. She said that the nanny must choose appropriate games for the age of the children. For example babies can't be given small things because they will swallow them or sharp things that they may hurt themselves or others with.

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The Alola Education Team receive money from the Australian Defence Force

**Who is Fundasaun Alola?** Alola was founded in 2002 dedicated to empowering women through improved health, education, leadership and employment opportunities. Established as a national NGO, Alola is governed by a board of management. Chair: Kirsty Sword Gusmao. Leadership Team: CEO: Anne Finch. Program Managers: MCH - Macu Guterres; Advocacy - Alita Verdial; Education: Rosanne Simpkin; Economic Development: Cecilia Fonseca; Office Manager—Monica Guterres.

## Australian Parliamentarians visit Alola

An Australian parliamentary delegation came to visit Alola in November to see and hear about the programs that Alola is implementing in Timor Leste.

In the delegation were Louise Markus MP, Senator Michaelia Cash, Kelvin Thomson MP and Brett Raguse MP accompanied by Robyn Scott Charlton and Shelley Robinson from the Australian Embassy.

Alex Gusmao from Timor Aid, Sonia Boavida acting director of Rede Feto, Lucia Marcal from

Pradet and Macelina from Clinic Bairo Pite came to Alola to talk with the parliamentarians about the programs that their organisations run.

Alita Verdial, Program Manager of the Alola Advocacy team said that the parliamentarians were interested in hearing about how Alola engaged the community in their activities. She said that they were particularly interested to hear about women's empowerment and the women's movement generally in Timor Leste.

She said that they also wanted to hear about the role that Alola played in linking civil society with policy and decision makers. They wanted to know whether the politicians in Timor Leste listen to Alola.

The Australian parliamentarians were impressed by the Alola Maternal and Child Health programs when they were explained to them by Macu Guterres, Alola Breastfeeding Program Coordinator.

They also enjoyed visiting the Alola shop at the conclusion of their tour and visit of Alola.



Louise Markus MP and Senator Michaelia Cash hear about women's empowerment in Timor Leste from Advocacy Manager Alita Verdial



## Museum and Art Gallery North Territory sells Alola tais products

The Museum and Art Gallery Northern Territory in Darwin Australia recently ordered Alola products to feature and sell in their gift shop during the first international exhibition of traditional and contemporary art and crafts of Timor-Leste, Husi Bei Ala Timor Sira Nia Liman – From the Hands of our Ancestors which is currently showing at the Museum and Art Gallery Northern Territory.

Joanna Barrkman, Curator of Southeast Asia Art and Material Culture from the Museum and Art Gallery Northern Territory said "the exhibition features more than 130 pieces including textiles, ceramics, wooden carvings, ceremonial house doors and body adornment of Timor-Leste and will give insights into the distinctive living cultures of this young nation."

The Alola products have proved to be very popular in the gift shop in the Museum and Art Gallery Northern Territory in Darwin. The gift shop is the first shop in Australia to feature and stock Alola products.

This business partnership came about because of the ongoing relationship between Alola and the Museum and Art Gallery Northern Territory and their recognition of the work that Alola is doing on the cultural preservation of tais in Timor Leste.

Joanna Barrkman from the Museum and Art Gallery Northern Territory visited Alola earlier this year and met with the women who weave tais products for sale in the Alola shop. People from the Museum and Art Gallery Northern Territory are planning to return to Alola next year to train Timorese in curating skills which will be useful for curating the Alola Tais Collection.



## Alola Scholarships from primary school to university

In 2008 Alola has given scholarships to students from primary school to university in Timor Leste and overseas.

The scholarship program coordinator, Nuni Maria Nobre said that Alola now gives scholarships to students studying in schools in all districts and sub-districts throughout Timor Leste and we now support Timorese students studying Medicine in Indonesia.

Nuni explained that Alola now gives scholarships to around 1000 students.

For primary and secondary school scholarships, Alola works with school principals and teachers to identify students who will then receive scholarships. For university scholarships, Alola and the university identify students to receive scholarships.

Alola gets support for these scholarships from overseas donors. Previously some of the criteria for the granting of scholarships was set by the donors but Alola CEO Anne Finch has indicated that from 2009 donors will no longer be able to set criteria for the granting of scholarships.

Nuni explained that identifying scholarship recipients they prioritise orphans and children whose parents are not able to support their children to study. The expectation is that the students will benefit significantly from their study opportunity. Primary and secondary scholarship students receive 3 payments a year.

She said that students can get scholarships to study at the National University of Timor Leste (UNTL), the Dili Institute of Technology (DIT), and the National Peace University (UNPAZ), the Catholic Teachers College in Baucau and Indonesian universities.



Nuni signs Alola scholarship agreements with secondary school students and principal

## Alola provides life skills training to young people in the districts

The Alola Advocacy team provided life skills training for young people in Baucau, Lospalos and Viqueque.

Apolina Maria de Costa, life skills trainer, said that the objective of the training was to teach people to know themselves, know their bodies, choose how to live their lives, make decisions for themselves, communicate well with their family and community and how to avoid sexually transmitted diseases.

She said that this training has also been provided in Ermera, Liquica and Manatutu. Alola's District Support Workers worked with UNICEF life skills trainers and local leaders to identify young people to participate in this training.

Life skills training was also provided in Suai, Aileu, Maliana and Oecussi to young people who received scholarships from Alola.

Twenty five young people attended each of the life skills training sessions given by Alola in the districts of Timor Leste. 15 young women and 10 young men participated in each training session.

The participants really enjoyed this training because they could improve their skills and share their experiences with others. This training was supported by UNICEF Timor Leste.

Alola has also provided 6 life skills training sessions to young people who use the Alola Women's Resource Centre in Dili.



Participants do a body image activity at life skills training in Liquica



Life skills training in Viqueque

## Alola has established Mother Support Groups in 9 districts

Alola has established Mother Support Groups in 9 districts (Baucau, Manatutu, Dili, Ermera, Liquica, Aileu, Viqueque, Oecusse and Ainaro).



Health workers are taught about proper attachment for breastfeeding

Mother Support Groups were established several years ago and after establishing one in each district we were finally able to start one in Ainaro district. We received support from the international NGO, ENI, from Australia. In June we started collecting data on how to increase the number of mothers' breastfeeding and giving nutritious meals to their children.

Macu Guterres, Alola Breastfeeding Program Coordinator said, "we chose Soro village in Ainaro district for a pilot program in Ainaro district."

In September we gave 7 days training to health workers to explain about infant and child feeding, including breastfeeding, complementary feeding and infant feeding when a mother is HIV positive. Fourteen health workers attended the training.

Macu said that Alola also conducted 6 days training for representatives of health workers from each facility who were training as district trainers. After having received this training, these new district trainers will then lead 3 days of training for mothers support groups in Soro village.

She said that in the future the Mother Support Group will assist the district health centre and hospital to promote exclusive breastfeeding. When they find mothers with serious illnesses they will refer them to the health services. They will assist with vaccinations for children and pregnant women as part of assisting the Ministry of Health's mobile health clinics (SISCA) in the area.

Macu said that people in Ainaro were happy and enjoyed the program from Alola because it helps them with exclusive breastfeeding for infants from 0 - 6 months before feeding them other foods.

## Tais weaving workshop at Alola to prepare for Christmas Fair



Each producer group demonstrated how they make their tais products

Alola invite producer groups from 13 districts to participate in a weaver's workshop for three days in the lead up to the Alola Christmas Fair on December 6.

Alola Foundation CEO, Anne Finch, said that during the three days there was training about tais quality, marketing, management and information about child rights in Timor Leste. Participants showed each other their tais products and shared their experiences and ideas.

Three visitors from the Network for Norwegian and Timorese women (NET) who fund the Alola District Support Worker program were present at the time of the workshop and one of them was a weaver who demonstrated her local weaving production methods so that the Timorese weavers could understand more about weaving methods in other countries.

Thirty five people from across Timor Leste came to participate in the workshop. Each group demonstrated how they make their products. Many of the products were similar because they were tais products but some of them were new tais products.

In this workshop, Alola organized for optometrists to provide eye examinations for elderly women weavers with eye problems. After examinations some women with eye problems received spectacles that will improve their vision when they are making tais products.

Palmira Bianca, one of the participants from Feto Hadomi Inan Group, Ainaro said that she felt very happy for this opportunity from Alola to participate in this workshop. As a new group just starting to get involved in the Alola network, this workshop is helping us learn more about tais products and meet women from other districts. Marta Soares from Feto Bobometa Group, Dili said she was happy because through this program Alola provides employment opportunities in rural areas that all women can be involved in.



Optometrists did consultation for women weavers at the workshop