



Volume thirteen March 2014

Welcome to the first edition of the Alola Australia newsletter for 2014.

As we continue our feature stories from Alola, the people who work there and more recently the women who have been supported by Alola, we are reminded of the power of stories, their capacity to build understanding, to inform, to engage support and to empower the people whose experiences are being shared and voices being heard¹.

We think you will enjoy Cipriana Amaral's own story about the benefits of economic independence for women in Timor-Leste and our special Mother's Day stories. There is also plenty of news about upcoming events - Alias Ruby Blade, MILK, Mother's Day and more. Thanks for your support.

¹ If you want to read more about storytelling in advocacy take a look at the excellent publication *When I tell my story, I'm in charge* by Rachel Ball Human Rights Law Centre. Victorian Law Foundation. (Rachel is a member of the Alola Australia Board)

Improving women's economic independence in Timor-Leste

One woman's story¹ about Alola's economic empowerment work and its benefits

My name is Cipriana Amaral and I am 54 years old. I am the Coordinator for the 'Feto Forte' or the 'Strong Women' group in the Quelicai-Baucau region in Timor-Leste. I live in the Quelicai-Baucau district close to Matebian Mountain with my husband and nine children.

My husband is a teacher in a primary school in Quelicai. I also volunteer part time as an arts and culture teacher at my husband's school. For me it is very important to share my experience with students so that we can retain our arts and cultural heritage for our future generations.

Some of my children now go to university because of the extra income made through my artwork and Tais

¹Cipriana's story was translated to English from her mother tongue language by staff at Alola

weaving. Before this and with my husband's income alone we could not afford their college tuition.



Alola's economic empowerment program

Before participating in Alola's economic empowerment program my only income was from selling bread and I could not afford a university education for my children. Then, in 2003, I participated in Alola's breastfeeding program and during the program, Alola set up a weaving group in my village. Alola appointed me as the group coordinator.

My artwork has become a huge part of my life and has brought about a significant positive change for me - in my livelihood and family life. I am able to afford to send my children to university and maintain my family's health.

The Feto Forte (Strong Women) group

I manage twenty women artists, and while I myself am not an artist, I have learned a great deal working with them, as I was keen to learn. Working with my group, I developed skills in weaving art. I also manage a cooperative group which runs savings and loans activities. We provide loans from the group savings to respond to our families needs, for example school fees, food and health treatment.

The benefits of having more economic independence

Through Alola, I have not only learnt about art but I am becoming good at it, and I am earning an income through national and international markets and events. Through these efforts, my work has achieved recognition in the wider community and has helped me economically support my household and family.

My hopes for the future

I would like to promote our local products and have greater access to national and international markets in order to generate a sustainable income for women in our communities.

Mother's Day

Alola celebrates Mother's Day with these wonderful stories about the mothers who inspired, encouraged and supported some of the women of Alola.



A reflection on my mother, Rosalie Sword

by Kirsty Sword Gusmão

(Kirsty is the founder and chair of Fundasaun Alola)

They say that the way you bring up your children is a reflection of the way in which you yourself were raised as a little one. I consider myself to be a fairly good

Mum, and there is no doubt that I had a shining example of capable, caring motherhood in my mother, Rosalie. Being a teacher, she had an intuitive understanding of the mental and social development of children. More than her professional training and skills, however, I believe it was her tolerance, her deeply generous nature and commitment to social justice – all of which shone through in small and big ways every day of the years I spent under the same roof – which left their mark on me and set me off on the course my life has taken. Today she is a wonderful and loving grandmother to my three sons.

Her support to me in the private and the public domains of my life over the past twenty years or so has enabled me to achieve some significant wins for the Mums of my adopted homeland, Timor-Leste. She has shared with me the many trials and triumphs that come with nurturing a family against the backdrop of the needs of a fragile new nation. I wish her and all the incredible, tireless and inspiring mothers in Australia and Timor-Leste a very Happy Mother's Day!



This picture was taken at Yarck Cemetery where Mum's Grandmother, Jane Ann Smith, is buried.

My Mum by Christine Perkins

(Christine has been a part of Alola Australia since its formation, previously as a board member, currently as the administration manager and always an active supporter).

My mother, born in rural Victoria during the Depression, was one of eight children and left school early to become a tailor. She worked in a men's wear store in Ballarat sewing suits in the days before zips and fancy overlockers.

Once married, she cared for myself and my four siblings and was very involved in organising local community events at our schools and in the parish. At one stage the five of us were all at different schools. She was constantly busy, supplementing the family finances by taking in sewing at home, knitting for us and for friends. By example she taught me about justice and determination. Not having had the opportunity to learn to swim when she was young she did this in her forties at the local YMCA pool, not long after she obtained her driving license. I can remember examples of when she thought an injustice had been perpetrated, she would immediately approach those involved and discuss the issue. I have learnt so much

from my mother that I hope I am passing to my children and grandchildren.



There is a parallel between my mother's experience and the women in Timor-Leste who are making their way toward economic independence through sewing, weaving and advocating for their communities and social justice.

My Mum by Alita Verdial

(Alita is the former CEO of Fundasaun Alola and was the first Timorese CEO to be appointed to the role)

My mother is an amazing woman. She managed on her own as a single mother since I was ten years old. She is a true fighter and has been through so many struggles in her life, but there is always a smile on her face. She taught me how to be an independent person and inspired me to study and work hard. I thank her

for showing me the value of a strong work ethic. She believes an education can change people's lives and so allowed me to go overseas to Indonesia for study when I was young. She has maintained her beliefs in education, so today I am in Australia. She is the strongest woman I have known in my life!



This Mother's Day - 11 May - you can say thank you to the special women kinfolk in your life and support the women of Timor-Leste with an Alola gift certificate. It's guaranteed that someone if not everyone will be happy. You can order one by going to Alola Australia's website now or when we send you a reminder.

Upcoming events



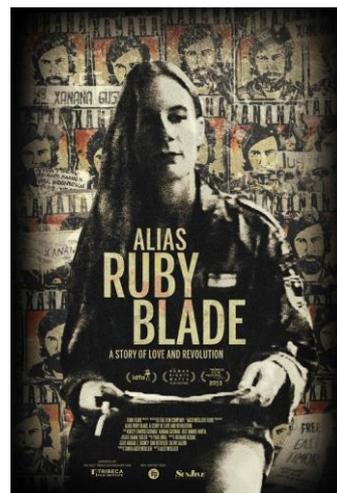
The annual MILK Campaign encourages Australians from all walks of life to hold morning teas around World Breastfeeding Week (1-7 August), to raise funds for Fundasaun Alola's

maternal and child health programs. The board of Alola Australia has appointed Director Kate Ashmor as the Convenor of the 2014 MILK Campaign. Planning is underway for MILK's activities this year, including a targeted publicity campaign and the possibility of a flagship event.

We'll keep you posted on developments as they occur, but you can stay up-to-date by liking the [MILK facebook page](#) and following the [MILK Twitter feed](#). If you are interested in organising a morning tea, please let us know via email: milk@alola.org.au or contact Kate on PH: 0403 334 245.

Alias Ruby Blade

Keep a look out for a fundraiser screening of *Alias Ruby Blade* coming to a place near you. Screenings are currently being planned in Western Australia, Northern Territory, Queensland, New South Wales, Tasmania, South Australia and Switzerland.



If you are interested in holding a fundraiser for Alola by screening *Alias Ruby Blade* in your community please contact us on friends@aola.org.au

Alola cocktail evening

Keep the evening of Tuesday 13 May free in your diary for a new twist on the annual Alola fundraising dinner in Melbourne. Kirsty Sword Gusmão and Alzira Reis will be among our special guests. More information including booking details coming soon.

Facebook friends



Thank you to our now over 600 Facebook friends and congratulations to our 600th friend Jenny from Sydney – a small gift from Alola Esperansa is on its way to you. As a way of thanking our

readers and supporters we are looking forward to hosting more giveaways on our Facebook page and making the page more interactive. More information will be made available on our Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/AlolaAustralia>

Keep in touch

Visit our website www.alola.org.au for regular updates and further information.



To keep in regular touch 'like' [Alola Australia](https://www.facebook.com/alolaaustralia) on Facebook

Contributors

Alola Australia newsletter production team

Wendy Mayne, Christine Perkins and Sue Lee

News from Fundasaun Alola

- Alzira Reis CEO
- Cipriana Amaral – feature story

Contributors

- Kirsty Sword Gusmão, Alita Verdial and Christine Perkins – mother stories
- Kate Ashmor – MILK
- Vanisha Mishra-Vakaoti - Facebook

Support Alola with a donation

To make a one off or regular donation you can:

Make a direct deposit to Alola Australia.

Our bank details are:

Alola Australia, ANZ Bank
Collins Place, Melbourne Victoria
BSB: 013 030
Account number: 482 087 363
Swift code: ANZBAU3M
Reference: donation [your surname]

So that we can acknowledge your donation please send an email to friends@alolafoundation.org with your details and amount of deposit.

Send a Cheque: Cheques should be made out to Alola Australia Ltd and mailed to PO Box 382 Abbotsford 3067 VIC. Australia

Donate Online via Paypal: visit our website (www.alola.org.au) and click the 'Donate Now' button.

Donate by Credit Card:

Complete the following form and mail to our PO Box.

Credit Card: Visa or MasterCard

Card Number _____

Expiry: __/__/__

Name on Card:

Signature:

Amount \$

Email Address:

Address:

.....P/Code:.....

Important Privacy Notice: Alola Australia complies with the provisions of privacy legislation and does not pass on personal information to any third party except if required to by law. Alola will retain the information provided on this form, where appropriate, and use it only for the purpose for which it has been given. If you do not wish to receive updates from Alola please tick here

'Strong Women, Strong Nation' 'Feto Forte, Nasaun Forte'