



Volume fourteen May 2014

alola

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

In recent weeks Timor-Leste celebrated twelve years of independence – and Alola thirteen years since establishing as an organization to advocate for and support the women and children of Timor-Leste. Anniversaries and annual general meetings are a great time to reflect, acknowledge the achievements, recognise the lessons learned along the way, identify what matters most to us, turn them into goals and make plans for a future in which these goals are realised.

In this edition we share with you stories that reflect Alola's past present and future, and in doing so say thank you to all Alola supporters for your ongoing commitment to making it possible. We hope that you enjoy this edition.

Improving the quality and access to education in Timor-Leste

Alola's Teacher Training Project

Pre-school teacher Inês from Muki Manatuto



My name is Inês Soares, I am 45 years old, a teacher in Pre-School Muki Manatuto Town and I live in Ailili village. My husband Jose Jerónimo Soares, and I

have four children, one of them passed away and three are still living.

I studied Teacher Training Education at Indonesian Sekola Pendidikan Guru. After finishing my studies, I taught at Manatuto Primary school as a volunteer teacher and later I became a permanent teacher at Pre-School Muki which is where I have been since 2003 - over 10 years.

The training offered by Fundasaun Alola is the best. I was interested in the different units of study, activities and materials which can support learning. After completing the training, I have implemented the new strategies and methodologies with the children in my school. I always prepare my lesson plans based on a theme and I do various activities with the children in the classroom. In the future I want to teach my students to hold a pencil in the proper way when they first come to school and I would also like to improve their literacy and numeracy based on the activities that I have learnt from the Alola training.

There are some difficulties that we face in our school as we have limited materials. In particular the security at my school is not good but my dream is to develop my classroom in the future when the conditions and security of the school are recovered. However, in the meantime we always share our existing teaching materials with each other. If there is further training for preschool teachers; I hope Fundasaun Alola invite us to participate because this training can guide us to learn new methods and increase our abilities.

I am thankful for the opportunity given to me to attend this beneficial training.

Primary school teacher Ivone from Bebonuk Primary school – Dili

My name is Ivone Ximenes Amaral and I am a teacher at Bebonuk Primary school. I was born in Ainaro district in 1971 and now I am living in Metin a sub-village of Comoro village in the Dili district. My husband Elio Aleixo Corterial who is now deceased and I have seven children.

I studied teacher training at Sekola Pendidikan Guru (Teacher Education School) in Indonesian time and was awarded a Bachelor Degree after independence. Before I became a teacher, I was a civil servant in the Aileu education district. Later I returned to Dili and became a pre-school teacher at Paulo XI School. After I married my husband, I went with him to Baucau where I was employed as director of a Primary School in New Town Vila Nova. After Independence, I returned to Dili and taught in Pre-School of Maria Auxiliadora for two years. I transferred to Filial Primary School in Bebonuk in 2004 which is where I have now been for 10 years.



As a primary teacher, I participated in the training offered by Fundasaun Alola. Based on my opinion, the model of the training that Fundasaun Alola provides to primary teachers is the best because it increases my capacity and ability to implement the new methods in my school. Through classroom observation, Fundasaun Alola staff were able to offer suggestions that I could immediately implement. This was important to me because I can learn ways to improve learning activities and be a better teacher.

Before I attended in Fundasaun Alola's training, I used simple methods based on my own knowledge but now I am able to apply various teaching methods in my school. I feel that I have made good progress but there are some activities I have not been able to

implement because the number of students is high. I conduct activities inside as well as outside the classroom. In the classroom, I use an easel board and outside, we sit on mats under a tree while I conduct activities such as reading history books to students.

The training that I received from the Alola Foundation has enabled me to motivate the children in reading and writing and most importantly to engage the students in the activities and learning process. In the future, these children will be interested in continuing their studies.

I hope Alola invites my colleagues to participate in future training, so that we can collaborate with each other to improve teaching and learning process with the children in our school. Our difficulty however is a lack of resources and one of the things that I would like to have access to are tapes to use in our school when we conduct activities such as music or singing songs with the children.

Teacher training project background - Ema de Sousa Freitas

The goal of Alola's Education and Literacy program is to improve the quality and access to education in Timor-Leste. Quality teacher training has the capacity to improve the skills of existing teachers across Timor-Leste. In 2013 and 2014, teacher training expanded to look more generally at training units and early literacy and numeracy, integrating multi-language instruction within the broader training.

Teacher training for pre- and primary school teachers models good practice strategies for engaging children in early literacy and numeracy. It aims to improve early educational outcomes by increasing the confidence and capacity of teachers. Most teachers have limited access to resources, struggle with large class sizes and have only received a limited education themselves. There is a shortage of trained and dedicated teachers, and many of them are implementing traditional ways of teaching in the classroom. Just as children learn through doing, Alola's Teacher Training Project works with teachers so they can learn through doing.

In 2013 we continued to work in collaboration with the Preschool Department at the Ministry of Education (MoE) who recommended 17 new permanent teachers from thirteen districts as 33 previous participants to attend the training to complete their training units. The trainings focused on six units such as: literacy for young children, classroom management, games to develop gross motor skills, activity centre, art and professional standards. Teachers were actively engaged in each unit.

In addition, we also conducted training to 107 primary school teachers from 13 districts. This training was

focused on how teachers teach literacy and numeracy for young children. Traditional habits of teaching are still practiced in most school as teachers have limited access to trainings to learn new strategies and methods to support their teaching and student's learning. Lack of resources is one of the difficulties faced by students wanting to improve their literacy through early learning. Therefore, through this training we demonstrate methods in reading story books to children and encourage them to use resources at their school as well as use local resources for every day teaching.

In February 2014 we continued to deliver training to preschool teachers that were recommended by MoE. The training for this year focused on practical music and songs for preschool children, numeracy through games and activities, understanding child development, 'You the teacher – professionalism'.

The teachers have actively participated and shown their interest during the training and are keen to implement some new methods and strategies in their school through collaboration with other teachers in their school.

Alola's Advocacy program manager appointed as Timor-Leste's new National Commissioner for Child Rights

Congratulations to Maria Gorumali Barreto, former manager of Alola's Advocacy program, on her recent appointment as Timor-Leste's National Commissioner for Child Rights.

The Timor-Leste National Commission on Child Rights was formed in 2009 with the Commissioner mandated to promote, defend and monitor children's enjoyment of their rights in Timor-Leste.



Maria Baretto new Commissioner for Child Rights and Alzira Reis CEO Fundasaun Alola

'The Heart of Alola' - Alola Australia Cocktail Party

Every year Alola Australia organizes an event to raise awareness of and money for Fundasaun Alola. Sometimes we have a lunch, other times a dinner; this year we held a cocktail party.

On 13 May 2014, 120 guests gathered at The Boulevard in Kew to meet very special guests and friends, hear beautiful Timorese music from Alberto Piedade and Ezequiel Ribeiro and, bid for generously donated mementos and handcrafts from Timor-Leste as well as weekends away and a sailing experience.

This year we were indeed honoured to have three special guests.

Alzira Reis, CEO of Fundasaun Alola spoke about how important Alola Australia's support is for the women and children in Timor-Leste. Alzira told us that our support in 2013 enabled Alola's Advocacy Program to support women on issues of human rights, gender equality, human trafficking and reproductive health. The support also meant that Alola was able to conduct a preliminary study to identify the needs of women workers in the private sector and to work on implementing the CEDAW (Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women) compliance framework in Timor-Leste.

Alzira told us about some of the key achievements of Alola during 2013:

- Exclusive breastfeeding of babies under 6 months has increased leading to good nutritional results.
- Alola trained 270 teachers, offered 262 scholarships, and conducted mobile library and resource development activities
- Alola's Economic Empowerment Program continued to provide training in community tourism, micro-credit and women's cooperatives.



Anne Keogh, Alzira Reis, Abel Guterres, Marita Egan and Maria Bohan catching up at the cocktail function

Alzira told guests that there is still much to be done to ensure that all women enjoy their rights and the support of Alola Australia is crucial to enabling Alola's work to continue. ([Alzira's speech is available on our website.](#))

Kirsty Sword Gusmão, Chair of the Board of Fundasaun Alola, spoke about the significance of supporting, educating and advocating for women in Timor-Leste and how proud she is of the work that Fundasaun Alola is doing. Kirsty also spoke about recent work in Timor-Leste on women's health and women's cancers in particular. Most women do not have access to medical services to support cancer diagnosis and treatment. Kirsty's speech framed under the title of 'inspiring change in women's health, wellbeing and education in Timor-Leste' provided the opportunity to share the lessons learned along the way – in particular the importance of embracing risk, letting passion guide you, preaching what you practice, making yourself redundant and giving the job to a woman. ([Kirsty's speech is available on our website.](#))

We were also honoured to have with us at this event **Mr Abel Guterres, the Timor-Leste Ambassador to Australia**. Abel mingled with guests, greeting old friends and meeting supporters of Alola.

We are pleased to announce that the evening raised over \$8,000 for the work of Alola in Timor-Leste.



Kirsty speaking at the cocktail function

Alola Australia holds its AGM



Alzira Reis is pictured with Board Directors and Alola Administration Manager, Christine Perkins.

Alzira Reis the CEO of Fundasaun Alola was the guest speaker at this year's Alola Australia AGM held on Monday 12 May 2014. Alzira spoke about Fundasaun Alola's current priorities.

Maria Bohan, the Chair of the Board presented a report of Alola Australia's 2013 activities, acknowledging the significant contributions of supporters, volunteers, corporate supporters, community partners, Avos and Board Directors.

Alice Forsyth, the Treasurer, presented the 2013 financial report audited by PKF Lawler.

Alola Australia's Annual Report is available from our [website](#).

MILK morning tea for Alola



The final stages of planning are underway for this year's MILK Campaign, when Alola 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 2014 MILK Campaign brochure is now available to download from [Alola's website](#). Hard copies are currently being printed. If you would like a bundle of printed brochures sent to you, please contact MILK Campaign Convenor Kate Ashmor via [email](#) or phone: 0403 334 245.

If you'd like us to promote your own or others' MILK morning teas, please let us know via the [MILK facebook page](#) and the [MILK Twitter feed](#).

We'd love to see a photo and hear about your MILK morning tea event and with your permission it could appear in the next Alola Australia newsletter . Send to friends@alola.org.au

We'll keep you posted about any upcoming flagship MILK fundraising event.



Kirsty Sword Gusmão recognised for her significant contribution to education



In recognition of her outstanding service to the community through her dedication to promoting the importance of education in improving the lives of the

women and children in Timor-Leste, in championing the introduction of educational initiatives in Timor-Leste, and her tireless efforts to generate support for women's rights, Victoria University honoured Kirsty Sword Gusmão at a graduation ceremony on 14 May 2014.

In presenting the degree of Doctor of the University, *honoris causa*, to Kirsty, Professor Peter Dawkins, Vice-Chancellor and President, acknowledged Kirsty's outstanding community service in Timor-Leste. He also spoke about Kirsty's important contribution in fostering relationships between the Dili Institute of Technology and Victoria University with a view to improving educational outcomes for all the people of Timor-Leste.

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



Contributors

Alola Australia newsletter production team

Wendy Mayne, Christine Perkins and Sue Lee

News from Fundasaun Alola

- Alzira Reis CEO
- Ema de Sousa Freitas Education and Literacy Program Manager, Ivone Ximenes Amaral and Inês Soares teachers – feature profile article

Contributors

Maria Bohan Chair Alola Australia – Alola Australia Cocktail fundraiser, Alola Australia AGM and Kirsty Sword Gusmão honorary doctorate presentation

Kate Ashmor – MILK

Melanie Atkins – Alias Ruby Blade

Keep in touch



To keep in regular touch 'like' [Alola Australia](#) on Facebook

Visit our website . www.alola.org.au

Recent news additions include:

- Alola Australia annual report
- Alola Australia cocktail fundraiser speeches by Kirsty Sword Gusmão and Alzira Reis

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