



*Support women like Maria to lead the people of Timor-Leste to a brighter future.*

Dear Alola Supporters,

As the backbone of their families and communities, the women of Timor-Leste are natural leaders, decision-makers and agents of change. True and meaningful national development can only occur when the talents, instincts, priorities and leadership of the wonderful "feto Timor" (women of Timor) are harnessed and promoted. I am immensely proud that Alola is at the forefront of this challenge.

Take Maria for example. Maria is one of the female heads of village elected last year to lead Bibileo village in Viqueque municipality. Having been involved in several local organizations including the Women's Co-operative Group and the Catholic Church Council, Maria's potential was spotted by Alola in 2012. With encouragement, Maria has since been motivated and actively involved in Alola activities, participating in leadership training, gender-based violence awareness training and learning about the legal frameworks that guarantee the rights of women.

To further support Maria's advocacy skills, Alola held a citizen forum in her village, where the community identified several issues including: insufficient medicine, malnutrition, lack of health facilities and inadequate ambulance services. As a result of advocacy led by Maria and the Alola Field Officer in Viqueque, the Ministry of Health has now distributed medicines to the health post and reactivated regular meetings at the district level to improve the performance of health workers. Many other recommendations have since been prioritised by the local government within their action plan.

*The experience I had gained from Alola makes me more confident to lead the community and to work on the prevention of domestic violence, land issues, maternal and child health and other problems that occur within my village."*

*- Maria Odete dos Anjos Amaral*

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Maria's story is just one example of the powerful change that can result when women are encouraged and supported to lead. With Alola's support, 11 women have been elected as a head of village and their voices are being heard – loud and clear – with around 50 percent of their submissions on issues affecting the village receiving favourable response from local government.

Yet despite this, women's participation in leadership in Timor-Leste remains low and the 30% quota for affirmative action in political and public sectors has not been achieved. And while women's leadership at village level has increased from 2.4 percent to 4.7 percent in 2016, there is still such a long way to go.

**Alola is committed to strengthening women's leadership in rural areas across all districts of Timor-Leste – and we need your help.**

Alola is very grateful for your generous support in the past and today I am writing to ask if you will continue your support by donating to this very important program.

Your gift to strengthen women's leadership is a demonstration of your faith in the women of Timor-Leste to take control of their own future, for the good of the nation. Think of your donation as a hand up; an enabler that will result in better conditions for all women and children in Timor-Leste.

Thank you again for your support, friendship and solidarity.



**Dr Kirsty Sword Gusmão AO**  
**Chair, Fundasaun Alola**

**PS - All donations above \$2 are tax deductible.**

**HOW TO DONATE**

- A. Online via PayPal, through our website: [alola.org.au](http://alola.org.au), or
- B. Send a cheque made out to:  
Alola Australia Limited, PO Box 382, Abbotsford, VIC 3067, or
- C. By direct deposit into our bank account as follows:

Alola Australia

ANZ Bank Collins Place, Melbourne

BSB: 013 030 Account Number: 3047-82427

So that we can acknowledge your donation and send you a Tax Receipt, please send an email with your name, donation details and amount to [friends@alola.org.au](mailto:friends@alola.org.au)

Note: If transferring funds from overseas the Swift Code is: ANZBAU3M

