

Timor-Leste Kindergarten Project

Trip to Timor

In May a group of four Richmond Rotarians and friends visited Timor for 2 weeks. We had arranged to meet the 12 Early Learning Centre Directors who form the core of our project on the day after our arrival. It was an exciting day with many Directors meeting for the first time. There was a real buzz as they exchanged ideas and explained their needs to us.



Our 12 Directors

The Directors are mainly non-Timorese and are not trained Kindy Teachers. However, they do the regular training of their Timorese teachers and asked us for help in that role. We will now include materials to support the Directors, including detailed teaching notes on how to use the resources we send over.



Our kindies



We visited several of our kindies and were delighted to see Kindy Box A resources in use wherever we went.



We also distributed many donated items we had sent across.



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Donated pencil grips



Dominoes

Attribute set

Children's Books in Tetum

We have also started a small project to build up each kindy's library by buying suitable books and translating them into Tetum (the teaching language).



Donated building blocks



Rex the dinosaur

Labarik Matenek / Clever Children



Number lotto

The woodwork shop we set up at the Salesian College (Don Bosco), in Dili had a number of wooden educational resources ready for us to distribute. We were their first customers!

The last of these were distributed to the teachers this week (Kindy Box B).



Busy babies

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Creativity

Additionally we have collected items to encourage 'creativity' – donated dress-ups, fairy wings and hero capes as well as knitted finger puppets.



A skirt doubles as a veil! Made by a creative group of women in Melbourne

Kindy Box C

Kindy Box C (fine motor coordination) is due to arrive in Dili in 2 weeks: stencils, cotton reels for threading, lacing cards, jigsaws, nuts and bolts for twisting, tweezers, large lego blocks, and many resources hand-made by us which they can then copy for class use. It is important that we demonstrate the use of recycled materials and that not all resources cost money.

Generous donors

We are now in contact with all the Directors and try to respond to their requests – one such was for plastic ice cream containers to get their resources in order. Local weaved boxes don't 'stack'! They are now on their way, donated by an Australian manufacturer.

Also they were in desperate need of adhesive plastic to cover the paper resources they make to ensure their durability – another generous manufacturer is donating this on an on-going basis.

Labarik Matenek/Clever Children

One of the visiting team, Andrew, spent his 2 weeks in the workshop showing our 2 Timorese men how to make some new wooden resources: flippers, art easels and weaving frames. They had a great time!

Anyone recognise this scarf?



Whose shirt & tie were these?



Su tells the story 'Mother Duck' using finger puppets knitted in Melbourne



Andrew with the men at Labarik Matenek

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We are supporting them in this endeavor and Barbara Woodberry has been made an Honorary Member representing the Australian sponsors who are such an important part of the network's ongoing development.



Currently we are helping develop a brochure to raise money towards a scholarship fund. They plan to have 25 of their teachers formally trained in a 'Certificate of Teaching and Learning' granted by the Australian Catholic University.



Many thanks

The Directors & teachers send their thanks to all who support the project:

*'Once again thank you for the dedicated work of the team that is organizing these very appreciated items to improve pre-school teaching practice here in Timor Leste'
[TaLiHa meeting July 3rd, Minutes]*

TaLiHa

At our initial meeting the Directors decided they wanted to set up 'a professional network' so another meeting date was set for the day before we departed.

It was a very moving day; they came together with the intention of sharing & supporting each other & speaking with one voice. They named the network **TaLiHa**, short for Tau Liman Hamutuk (*Putting Hands Together*).

TaLiHa Vision

'Timorese teachers providing quality early childhood education which develops our children into strong Timorese citizens'

