



# NEWSLETTER UNMIT LIA-NAROMAN

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## Women entrepreneurs of Maubara sell handicrafts

Women power, indeed – Timorese women power, no less. A visit to Maubara demonstrated that Timorese women are as business savvy and as ready to cut a deal, as anybody else – even more so, given the hardships and cultural and financial barriers they face on a day to day basis.

For most women, the business makes a huge difference in their lives. It helps them pay for family expenses and for sending their children to school.

“Moris Hakmatek”, a women’s group, has a few display huts near Maubara fort from where women sell handicrafts such as bags, jewelry and scarves. They make the items from a local fibre called “Akadiru”, or Lontar palm leaf. It takes them three to four days to complete one item.

“Each of us contributes one-and-a-half dollars weekly for the purchase of raw materials like colour dyes, thread and akadkiru.” said Isabella Dos Santos, Moris Hakmatek manager. “Sometimes we earn up to a hundred dollars over the weekends.”

In 2001, Maria Kabral from Baucau started this group. With more women joining, the group has expanded into three, “Moris Dame” and “Moris Hamutuk” being the other two. There are 15 women working for each.

The women sell the handicrafts to the Timorese and international tourists visiting

Maubara, and also at festivals in Dili. Festivals in Dili provide a great opportunity to meet the important buyers that otherwise they don’t have access to.

They plan to extend the sale of handicrafts to other regions of Timor-Leste in future.



Isabella dos Santos, Moris Hakmatek manager, making a bag in Maubara. » UNMIT Photo/Martine Perret

## Professional cleaning service, ‘PAX’, cleans Dili

Timor-Leste is a young country with great potential to become an attractive tourist destination. For this to happen, the urban areas should be kept clean and beautiful. The company “PAX”, a Latin word for “Peace” is doing just that.

The company is also helping their employees to generate revenue. “Our work helps us to send our children to school, meet our daily needs and contribute to the nation’s prosperity,” said Maria da Silva, a PAX employee.

PAX cuts grass, waters plants, collects garbage and sweeps gardens around Dili such as the 5 de Maio garden, and others in Fatuhada, Aitarak Laran, Kampung Alor, Pantai Kelapa and Bebonuk areas.

“We focused on people who wanted to work,” said Joao Paulo Rangel, the managing director of PAX. “In Fatuhada, for example, we involved the local Fatuhada communities, the older women, and the men who are unemployed, so they can benefit from this project to look after their family, especially so their children can go to school.”

PAX was established in September 2010. It has 30 employees of which 15 are women. Staff works every alternate day. They start at 8 a.m. in the morning and end at 5 p.m. in the evening Monday through Saturday.

“Let us keep clean all the gardens because it will benefit us and the tourists who might visit the place so that our city looks beautiful all the time,” said Paulo Rangel.

The Ministry of Tourism, Commerce and Industry (MTCI) funds the company’s work. PAX plans to extend its work to other districts.



» UNMIT Photo/Bernardino Soares



## Media training held for Timorese Defense and Security Forces

Press conference planning, press release drafting, and delivering a statement on camera are just a few of the skills that 14 public relations officers of the PNTL, F-FDTL, Secretary of State for Defence and Secretary of State for Security developed in a recent media training.

Top level representatives of various media outlets and organizations, including Televizaun Timor-Leste, the Timor-Leste Press Club, and the Journalists' Association of Timor-Leste, explained in their presentations how to work effectively with the media. The training took place in the Secretary of State

for Defence Training Centre during the week of April 11-15.

Participants also visited the offices of Radio Timor-Leste and the Suara Timor Lorosae newspaper to observe the technical aspects of news production.

Star of the United Nations weekly television programme 'Ba Paz', Onia Sarmento, held a practical video session in which participants learned correct body language, eye contact, and dictation for speaking on camera.

The Secretary of State for Defence with support from UNMIT Communication and



» UNMIT Photo/Sandra Black

Public Information Office (CPIO) organised the training.

## Bobonaro starts preparations for general elections in 2012

More than 80 people gathered in a sub-district of Bobonaro to discuss and prepare for the general elections in 2012. This is one of the series of forum meetings being held all over the country to improve the democratic culture in Timor-Leste.

Officials from the local government and political parties, in addition to, representatives from NGOs, private sector organizations and youth groups from sucos



» UNMIT Photo/Cristovao Guterres

and aldeias participated in the forum discussions.

"The forum is very useful. It explains how to prepare for elections scheduled for next year," said Adelino Brito, Bobonaro administrator.

Forums have already been held in Balibo and Atabae sub-districts of Bobonaro district. Meetings are planned for Cailaco and Lolotoe sub-districts in future.

## Volunteering begins at home

Josefa Esperance Guterres, a 24-year-old Timorese woman, recently joined the United Nations Volunteers programme in Timor-Leste. She has been appointed as a coordinator and promotes volunteer work among the local communities, builds relationships with the Government, NGOs and civil society organizations, and also facilitates information flow.

"The UNV programme is one of the best things I have participated in," said Guterres. "The wonderful thing about working in such a set-up is that you already have some idea on how things work in terms of geographical setting and people's way of life. It is great to share one's experiences with the Timorese youth."

During her one-year assignment, she will train and coordinate the work of eight other UNVs to be recruited by next month. Together they will support the United Nations Electoral Support Team by providing civic education to the communities for the upcoming elections.

Excited about the future, Guterres plans to improve her communication skills and apply for a regular UN position after completing her stint with the UNV programme.

In addition to a full-time volunteer job, she is also studying for a diploma in Finance Management from the Dili Institute of Technology.



Josefa Esperance Guterres, a United Nations Volunteer in Dili. » UNMIT Photo/Bernardino Soares

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