

UNESCO

Timor-Leste Newsletter



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

Promoting Mother Languages in support of National Development

I am pleased to share with you the second edition of the Newsletter of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in Timor-Leste. 2011 has already been a very exciting year for us, highlighted by an increasing diversity and relevance in our work.

One particular important mandate of UNESCO is the promotion of cultural and linguistic diversity under the umbrella of the Rapprochement of Cultures. On February 21, we celebrated International Mother Language Day, which has particular relevance to Timor-Leste's growth and development as a newly sovereign nation. As the country is blessed with a rich cultural and linguistic diversity, it is important and relevant to recognize and celebrate cultural and linguistic diversity as a means to achieving national unity, peace and equitable development.

Entrusted with the mandate to contribute to building "peace in the minds of men", UNESCO activities demonstrate that exchange and dialogue among cultures and peoples, based on mutual understanding and respect, is the essential prerequisite for constructing social cohesion, reconciliation and peace.

Kirsty Sword Gusmão, Chair, National Commission for UNESCO, Timor-Leste



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Moving forward together in Timor-Leste: UNESCO Highlights in 2010

The increase in UNESCO programmes initiated in Timor-Leste in 2010, highlight the diversity and relevance of UNESCO's work in the country. In the field of Education, we worked to improve non-formal education through enhancing capacity in planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation; we assisted in developing the capacities of the Ministry of Education in Education Statistical Information System (ESIS). In the Science Sector, we provided strong support to Timor-Leste in Science Education, including through the School of Internet Asia (SOI) Project and the development of the first multimedia Encyclopedia for Science and Mathematics in Tetum. In the field of Culture, we assisted the government in protecting its tangible and intangible cultural heritage, through a number of training and capacity building activities. In the sector of Communication and Information, we provided capacity building, technical advice and equipment to media stakeholders. In 2011, UNESCO is committed to further strengthen its presence in Timor-Leste and assist the country in its field of expertise to achieve an inclusive, equitable, fair, peaceful, green and sustainable development path.



Celebrating International Mother Language Day in Oecussi

Nearly 7000 languages are spoken across the world today. However, a large number of these languages are spoken by people belonging to ethnic minorities and often these ethnic minorities are educationally and economically disadvantaged because their language is not accommodated in mainstream culture. With limited fluency in the language of mainstream cultures, they have difficulty accessing public services, participating in mainstream economies and often find themselves marginalized.

To draw attention to this situation and to celebrate International Mother Language Day, UNESCO organized a seminar in Oecussi on the 18th of February 2011 to explore and discuss the values of a Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education system as a step towards bridging language gaps, increasing access of ethnic minorities to public services and supporting the fulfillment of the Millennium Development Goals and Education for All objectives.

Timor-Leste is bestowed with rich cultural and linguistic diversity. With over sixteen languages, the issue of language-use in formal education remains highly sensitive and challenging. According to the Constitution, Portuguese and Tetum are identified as official languages. While both languages are currently used as languages of instruction in most of the education sector, a majority of students across the country have only limited fluency in either language.

The limited fluency of students in the official languages of instruction has the potential to lead to future socio-economic exclusion and marginalization. Students fluent in neither Portuguese nor Tetum currently face additional challenges in their learning.

A key step to addressing this situation is the 2011 policy on Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education, developed by the National Education Commission of Timor-Leste. The national policy aims to facilitate access for children from all ethno-linguistic backgrounds to the benefits of literacy and education. The policy will also help the Government of Timor-Leste to meet the educational objectives defined in the National Education Strategic Plan and MDGs. Furthermore, it will support policy makers in recognizing and celebrating cultural and linguistic diversity as a means to achieving national unity, peace and equitable development.



Kirsty Sword Gusmão, the Chair of Timor-Leste's National Commission for UNESCO delivering her key-note speech

The key-note speech of the seminar was delivered by Ms. Kirsty Sword Gusmão, the Chair of Timor-Leste's National Commission for UNESCO. In her address, Ms. Gusmão underlined the importance of a Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education system as an internationally recognized educational method for improving access to education and facilitating the learning of the national languages. The Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education, while supporting equal access to education for children of all ethnic groups, will help students to improve their fluency in Portuguese and Tetum, thereby helping to fight illiteracy and poverty in Timor-Leste.

Her speech highlighted the importance of Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education as a key first step in supporting the participation and inclusion of all ethnic groups in the nation's development. Ms. Gusmão's words echoed the message of Irina Bokova, Director-General of UNESCO, who on the occasion of International Mother Language Day 2011 stated that: "Building on the mother language, the learning of multiple languages must be a pillar of 21st century education".



More than 150 participants attended the seminar

The seminar, attended by more than 150 participants, was preceded by an award ceremony for participants in the National Languages Writing Competition ("Hau'u Nia Lian, Ha'u Nia Rai"/My Language, My Country). Following the Seminar 16 members of the newly created Council for the Promotion of Mother Tongue were sworn in. The Council will work to document and promote the Baikenu language of the enclave of Oecussi.



Koen Meyers, Chief of the UNESCO Timor-Leste Antenna Office giving his speech on UNESCO's role in promoting mother languages

Achieving “Education for All” Goals

In November 2010, UNESCO launched the Programme “Capacity Development for Education for All, Timor-Leste” (CapEFA TL) aimed at improving the capacity of the Ministry of Education, through its National Directorate for Recurrent Education (NDRE), to meet its EFA goals, particularly to increase adult literacy and to promote learning and life skills for the youths and adults. CapEFA TL is designed to (1) Enhance the capacity of the NDRE towards improving its managerial competence and organizational efficiency and effectiveness; (2) Build up its capacity for increasing equitable access and completion in equivalency education; and (3) Enhance its capacity for improving quality recurrent education programmes through teacher training on teaching methods for adult learning.

The following interventions were already implemented in jump starting the process of strengthening the NDRE:

Inception Report Meeting on January 17-18, 2011, aimed at mobilizing development partners, civil societies, and the Ministry of Education in identifying appropriate strategies and action plans to facilitate strengthening the capacity of NDRE;

Focus Group Discussion on the Situational Capacity on Recurrent Education in Timor-Leste, on February 22-24, 2011, intended to measure the level of institutional and organizational capacity of the NDRE in managing recurrent education programmes, including assessing the capacity of the organization’s staff and to develop action plans that UNESCO will fund in 2012 – 2015.

Policy Debriefing on the Results of the FGD on March 10, 2011, where policy decision makers at the Ministry of Education were debriefed on the results of the FGD.

Capacity Development Workshop for Trainers on Income Generating Activities for CLC Managers and Selected Members of the Community, on March 28-30, 2011, aimed at training trainers for the CLCs in managing livelihood projects.



Participants at the policy debriefing meeting

Study Visit Orientation on Equivalency Education and Community Learning Centres, March 31, 2011, intended to prepare the participants in the study visit to 5 countries for a more productive observation and study tour on equivalency education and CLCs.

UNESCO further plans to strengthen the capacity of the three-initiated CLCs located in the sucos of Kraras, Viqueque; Fatumasi, Bazartete; and Ililapa, Los Palos for these institutions to become rallying points for development in the rural communities. UNESCO’s interventions in EFA are expected to further intensify in 2012, and contribute to the overall achievement of the EFA goals in Timor-Leste.



The CLC located in Ililapa, Los Palos

UNESCO’s Participation Programme

The UNESCO Participation Programme (PP) provides direct assistance to initiatives undertaken by Member States in the Organization’s fields of competence, in line with the priorities that they themselves determine. Assistance under the PP is provided to Member States or Associate Member States upon requests submitted through the National Commissions. International NGOs may also benefit from assistance under the PP. The PP serves as a means employed by UNESCO to strengthen the partnership between the Organization and its Member States as well as between the Organization and International Non-Governmental Organizations. Thus the PP enhances the inclusive and generous spirit of UNESCO’s noble mission. Under the umbrella of the PP, UNESCO is currently funding six projects in Timor-Leste in the field of Education, Science and Culture .

Supporting Timorese Media

A delegation representing a diverse number of media stakeholders from Timor-Leste visited Jakarta, Indonesia, from 21 February to 24 February 2011. The visit, which was organized by the Secretariat of State of the Council of Ministers, Timor-Leste, aimed at better understanding the roles and responsibilities of a Press Council, including ethical standards and self-regulations, in a changing media landscape. As part of the visit, the Timor-Leste delegation visited the Indonesian Press Council and the Indonesian Journalists' Association (PWI) as well as participated in a UNESCO organized seminar on the subject.

Taking the opportunity of the delegation's presence in Jakarta, UNESCO in collaboration with the Indonesian Alliance of Independent Journalists (AJI) organized a half a day seminar with as topic "development of media self-regulation instruments and mechanisms". The seminar included presentation and discussion sessions on best practices of media accountability and self-regulations, effective applications on media self-regulation instruments, and ways to accelerate the adherence to internationally-recognized self-regulation principles.

In his written speech, the Director of UNESCO Office Jakarta, Prof. Hubert Gijzen stated that he hoped that the

seminar would encourage the further development of media self-regulation in Timor-Leste, enhance the quality of journalism, and, hence, help to improve the overall quality of information exchange and of media freedom as a tool to support democratic development.



Victor Maia, General-Director of Secretariat of State of the Council of Ministers giving a Tais to Nezar Patria, president of AJI Indonesia

The Indonesian Alliance of Independent Journalists (AJI) presented three case-studies on media self-regulation in Indonesia. The first case study presented by Mr. Margiyono, the advocacy coordinator of AJI, focused on self-regulations in the field of new media, such as Internet. The second presentation by Ms. Ezki Suyanto, a board member of AJI, highlighted the role of the Indonesian Broadcasting Commission (KPI) in safeguarding freedom of expression, and strengthening responsibility and professionalism of broadcasting media. The third case study discussed Indonesia's shift and transition from a statutory to a self-regulatory media framework.

In his presentation, Mr. Jajang Jamaludin, the Secretary General of AJI, underlined the challenges of self-regulatory systems. To overcome these challenges and ensure compliance with the code of ethics, it is crucial that journalism organizations establish training and reward-punishment mechanisms.

After the presentations, the representatives from Timor-Leste discussed the challenges in regard to the current absence of a common agreement between all media organizations on a self-regulatory system, including a code of ethics, and possible solutions to overcome the current situation.

The UNESCO event helped to build stronger conscience and awareness amongst the media stakeholders in Timor-Leste in regard to the importance of establishing a self-regulatory system as an important step to protect Timor-Leste's media freedom as well as democratic principles.



Participants of seminar on Media Self-regulations in Jakarta

Media Development in Timor-Leste

With as goal to assess the state of Media Development in Timor-Leste, UNESCO conducted a Media Development Indicator Survey in February 2011. The survey is based on indicators of media development in line with the priority areas of the International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC), including promotion of freedom of expression and media pluralism; development of community media; and human resource development (capacity building of media professionals and institutional capacity building). The five major categories of indicators used to analyze the media development of a country are 1) A system of regulation conducive to freedom of expression, pluralism and diversity of the media; 2) Plurality and diversity of media, a level economic playing field and transparency of ownership; 3) Media as a platform for democratic discourse; 4) Professional capacity building and supporting institutions that underpins freedom of expression, pluralism and diversity and; 5) Infrastructural capacity is sufficient to support independent and pluralistic media). Each category is broken down into a number of component issues which in turn contain a series of broad indicators. These indicators are an analytic tool designed to assess the state of the media and measure the impact of media development programmes. They are diagnostic tools, not commandments – conceptualized with the purpose of assisting media development programmes, not imposing conditionality. The report of the Media Development Indicator Survey is expected to be released in May 2011.

Contributing to the implementation of the HFA 2005-2010

The Hyogo Declaration and Framework for Action (HFA) include many of UNESCO's concerns in the field of disaster reduction, including capacity-building; research on natural hazards; interdisciplinary approaches; integration of disaster reduction into developmental concerns. UNESCO focuses most of its effort on the third priority area under HFA, 'Use knowledge, innovation and education to build a culture of safety and resilience at all levels

In line with the HFA and to address the limited awareness on earthquake and tsunami hazards in the Southeast Asia, UNESCO launched a regional project in four countries (Indonesia, Thailand, Timor-Leste, and the Philippines) focusing on the development of 'depositories' of earthquake and tsunami awareness and education materials (i.e., education tools, public awareness material, best practice information and other relevant information).

In order to optimize the use of currently available materials and publications on the topic for improving public awareness and education, UNESCO worked with the National Directorate for Disaster Management (NDMD) under the Ministry of Solidarity to select, adapt, and develop awareness and education materials to fill in the gaps and needs of Timor-Leste.

Since the start of the project, several activities have been implemented, among others: 1) Selection of awareness and education materials available in the region to fill in the need in Timor-Leste; 2) Translation of the selected materials and adaptation to meet the local context of Timor-Leste; 3) Printing and development of the selected materials; and 4) Training on the management of the Tsunami Information Website.

Some of the materials already developed under the project include the Tsunami Teacher interactive DVD, the Tsunami Glossary, a Tsunami awareness sticker. In collaboration with Save the Children, the project also produced a number of multi-hazard and earthquake materials targeting children and deaf/hard of hearing people.

In addition to the development of these materials, two staff members of NDMD have been trained to manage, update, and develop tsunami information in Tetum for the Jakarta Tsunami Information Website.

Tsunami Information Web training in Jakarta, Indonesia, opened by Hubert Gijzen, the Director of the UNESCO Jakarta



Over the next months, several follow-up activities will be conducted under this project among others training of trainers (TOT) on the use of the awareness and preparedness materials, piloting materials in schools and communities, and organizing a media workshop to disseminate materials.

The Japanese earthquake and tsunami disaster provide a strong reminder of the importance of disaster preparedness. Even Japan, which is internationally recognized as one of the best earthquake and tsunami prepared nations in the world, still suffered a tremendous impact of the tsunami.

UNESCO continues to be a strong supporter of the commitments embodied in the Hyogo Framework for Action and hopes that through this project both Timor-Leste and other countries in the region will be one step closer to achieving the priorities laid out under the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015: *Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters*.



Examples of the earthquake and tsunami preparedness materials developed for Timor-Leste

Timor-Leste participates for first time in UNESCO's Southeast Asia Biosphere Reserve Network (SeaBRnet) Meeting.

Timor-Leste was invited to participate in the 6th Southeast Asia Biosphere Reserve Network (SeaBRnet) meeting, entitled: "Are climate change and other emerging challenges being met through successful achievement of Biosphere Reserve functions?". This meeting took place in Cibodas Biosphere Reserve, West Java, Indonesia between 23 and 25 February 2011 and was attended by over 50 participants from 10 Asian countries, including representatives from park authorities, the MAB Programme, academic institutions and the private sector. The aim of the meeting was to strengthen the network of biosphere reserves through the discussion of challenges, lessons learnt and new ideas to tackle biosphere reserve management. Mr Pedro Pinto, the invited speaker from Timor-Leste and head of Nino Konis Santana National Park (NKSNP) spoke eloquently about the potential of this site to represent the first ever biosphere reserve to be nominated in Timor-Leste. The exceptional natural beauty and biodiversity of this site was highlighted, as well as its important cultural values and potential to foster a balanced relationship between conservation and sustainable development.



The head of NKSNP, Pedro Pinto (on the left), participating in a tree planting ceremony in Cibodas Biosphere Reserve

UNESCO Félix Houphouët-Boigny Peace Prize

In March 2011, the Jury of the Félix Houphouët-Boigny Peace Prize, at a meeting in Paris chaired by former President of Portugal Mario Soares, has awarded the 2010 Prize to the Grandmothers of the Plaza de Mayo in Argentina, for their "tireless battle for human rights and peace by standing up to oppression, injustice and impunity". The Grandmothers of the Plaza de Mayo is an NGO that has been working in Argentina for over 30 years to locate the families of children kidnapped and "disappeared" during the military dictatorship. The Félix Houphouët-Boigny Prize, which is named after the late president of Côte d'Ivoire, a tireless advocate of peace and dialogue, was established in 1989 by a resolution supported by 120 countries and adopted by the General Conference of UNESCO at its 25th session. It is in line with the philosophy of UNESCO's founders who, in the preamble to the Organization's Constitution, solemnly declare that: "Since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed." The prize honours living individuals and active public or private bodies or institutions that have made a significant contribution to promoting, seeking, safeguarding or maintaining peace in conformity with the Charter of the United Nations and the Constitution of UNESCO. In 2002 this prestigious prize was awarded to Kay Rala Xanana Gusmão in recognition of the struggle he carried out, in the name of his people, to promote human rights, freedom and justice. Other past winners include Nelson Mandela and Frederik W. De Klerk (1991), Yitzhak Rabin, Shimon Peres and Yasser Arafat (1993), and Jimmy Carter (1994), all of whom received the Nobel Peace Prize after having been awarded the UNESCO Houphouët-Boigny Peace Prize.

Timor-Leste is one of UNESCO's youngest Member States, having joined the organization in 2003. UNESCO's cooperation with Timor-Leste, which started before the country joined the organization, is undertaken by the UNESCO Office in Jakarta through its Antenna Office in Dili and in collaboration with the National Commission of Timor-Leste for UNESCO.

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