



**FAIR FUTURES FOR
WOMEN & GIRLS IN TIMOR-LESTE**

**PROJECT PROSPECTUS
APRIL 2013**



**YEAR ONE FOCUS
FO-BA-MALU PHASE TWO**
Design & Business collaborations for sustainability

“Our local knowledge and international assistance helps us support our families and gives us hope for a brighter future. We’re happier too because young women will carry our traditions to the future’.
 - Ilda da Cruz, Women’s Group Leader

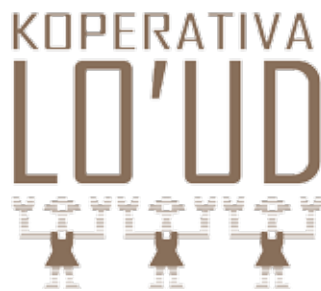


Photo: Sarah Grace | 2012



Project Partners

Fo-Ba-Malu is a collaborative project between:
 LO’UD Cooperative Timor-Leste and ETWA Australia



Project supported by:



Introduction ETWA is a small Australian not-for-profit with a big heart for rural women in Timor-Leste. Our people-to-people approach to development has fostered enduring relationships and cultivated life-changing opportunities for members of the LO'UD Cooperative.

LO'UD women hail from some of the most isolated, mountainous and disadvantaged areas in the south-east of Timor-Leste. ETWA is geared to support these women. They identify their needs and we respond by seeking resources. This is how the Fair Futures for Women and Girls Project developed. Its broad objectives and 5 year business plans will provide sustainable opportunities so that women have the freedom to choose good health and education for their children. This is the best way to ensure that women and girls have Fair Futures in Timor-Leste.



Summary The LO'UD Cooperative is ETWA's local partner. Members have prioritised income generation, education and cultural maintenance as their most pressing needs. This project responds by providing long-term solutions to product, business and market development. It builds on lessons learned from previous projects and flows out of key research to ensure our work meets the needs and aspirations of our local partners. It will continue to empower rural women to protect their weaving traditions and their environment, and support younger women as the next generation of cultural guardians and change-makers in their local communities. On a national level, the project will strengthen dialogue on work-related issues and enhance policies in favour of social protection and sector sustainability.

Project context Timor-Leste is the poorest nation in south-east Asia and the transition out of poverty will take time. While malnutrition, disease and poverty are very high, literacy and access to basic education and infrastructure are extremely low. The majority of LO'UD Cooperative members live in Iliomar, an isolated, mountainous area in south-east of the island. This region is home to some of the most disadvantaged communities in Timor-Leste. National statistics show that only 3% of girls over the age of 15 attend high school and more than 50% of families have no cash income. As women bear a greater share of the poverty burden, investing in them now is the greatest catalyst for ensuring lasting change.

Counter-acting poverty ETWA and LO'UD are small organisations with complimentary capacities that when combined are a powerful counter-action to poverty. The Fair Futures for Women and Girls Project funds resources, business training and programs in three communities for three generations of women and girls. Programs include sustainable supply-chain establishment and recurring design workshops to improve product quality, and international fair trade market development to increase sales. A Weaving Business School will provide the foundations for young female entrepreneurs, and continued research and demonstration impact will influence ethical policy frameworks towards providing national sector support.



Photo: Kat Ashworth | 2012

The essence

Fo-Ba-Malu means giving to each-other in Tetum, Timor-Leste's national language. Fo-Ba-Malu is a brand and a range of naturally dyed textiles and products that embody social, cultural, economic and environmental sustainability. Fo-Ba-Malu was one of many outcomes of the Ready for Market by Design Project which took place in Timor-Leste in 2012 with support from AusAid, ETWA and CWA.

Fo-Ba-Malu emerged out of cross-cultural collaborations between members of the LO'UD Cooperative, ETWA volunteers including Deb Salvagno and Australian fashion designer Kat Ashworth, owner of Ethical Fashion Label *Citizens of Elysium*. These collaborations resulted in a collection of beautiful, naturally dyed textiles and a range of unique products which were launched in Timor-Leste in 2012. The broad appeal of the collections, the importance of the design collaboration concept and the positive capacity building outcomes for the LO'UD Cooperative inspired action to establish Fo-Ba-Malu as a social enterprise initiative. Phase two is outlined here and is the focus of year one activities for the broader Fair Futures for Women and Girls Project.

Fo-Ba-Malu has three phases which will be delivered over a six year period. Phase one occurred in 2012, and phase two commenced in April 2013 and will run for 2 years. Fo-Ba-Malu focuses on naturally dyed, hand-woven textiles produced under fair trade frameworks by the LO'UD Cooperative.

In a nutshell

Phase Two objectives

Phase two is a period of focused incubation, enabling all stakeholders and staff to successfully manage Fo-Ba-Malu as a sustainable, culturally significant and financially viable business supporting female artisans in Timor-Leste.

In action, project partners work together to:

- **Improve** the capacity of LO'UD members to manage administration, quality and production responses through face-to-face training & via Skype
- **Deliver** training in the use of key business documents (including online databases, communications and reporting)
- **Improve** traditional textile and product quality through design collaborations
- **Research**, analyse and collate a range of data to understand traditional production processes and forecast eco-production cycles of naturally dyed cotton and textiles
- **Expand** markets and increase sales and brand recognition locally and internationally
- **Expand** LO'UD's membership to benefit other women in the region
- **Promote** fair-trade practices in Timor-Leste



Photo: Meg Rodaughan | 2011

Definitive goal

Ultimately Fo-Ba-Malu will institute traditional hand-weaving as a viable occupation, establish sustainable supply chains, secure access to diverse niche markets and help the LO'UD Cooperative to manage these processes independently in the long-term. As a business model, Fo-Ba-Malu embodies and integrates particular cultural concepts into business processes, helping communities maintain intangible culture as well as tangible textiles traditions for future generations. The business model and resources developed for Fo-Ba-Malu can be replicated and adopted by other small enterprises around Timor-Leste. Conceptually this five year process can be considered as the *University of Fo-Ba-Malu*.



Photo: Kat Ashworth | 2012



Photo: Sarah Grace | 2012



Photo: Sarah Grace | 2012

“LO’UD Cooperative members are now paid on average 73% more for their textiles than other weavers in Timor-Leste.”

ETWA fair trade research 2012

Roots of success

The success of Fo-Ba-Malu has many sources; the familiarity and commitment of the partners, the cultural origins of both the cloth and LO’UD Cooperative’s business processes. The comparative research undertaken by ETWA members between 2011 and 2012 is also a source of sustainability, resulting in the first fair trade pricing frameworks for textiles- LO’UD Cooperative members are now paid on average 73% more for their textiles than other weavers in Timor-Leste. This significant outcome has positive implications for women all over the island.

Phase Two key strategies and activities

Cross-cultural design collaborations are setting benchmarks in global poverty reduction and community empowerment, particularly for women. Design collaborations gleaned positive results for LO'UD Cooperative members in 2012 and is a key strategy of Fo-Ba-Malu phase two. Commencing in July 2013 Australian eco-fashion designer Kat Ashworth will again work with LO'UD weavers to refine the Fo-Ba-Malu range and workshop new design tools. Networks of local and international professionals from varying industries will be created to establish the foundations for ongoing business growth. This team will construct the necessary systems to gradually hand management of the business over to key staff in both Timor-Leste and Australia.

Other strategies and activities include:

- **Developing** key business documents and templates to improve business management processes and efficiency
- **Develop** six key product ranges (1. Textiles, 2. Fashion (key ambassador each year), 3. Casual, 4. Kids, 5. Travel & 6 Home-wares) to diversify collections and markets
- **Frameworks** and partnerships for annual cross-cultural design and product development cycles for 2014 - 2016
- **Launch** of the Fo-Ba-Malu range through an integrated textile, product, photo and video exhibition in Australia in October 2013 precluded by an intense marketing campaign to capitalize on Christmas sales
- **Weaving** competition with prizes awarded for the highest quality textiles produced by LO'UD Cooperative members in 2013 in a range of categories
- **Design** Bank for designers to contribute ideas and product design concepts. This strategy will build a store of potential products and increase networks with designers and professionals
- **Design** Bank competition with the winning product(s) included in the 2014 collection
- **Well known**, professional designers invited to judge various competitions
- **Placement** of a long-term volunteer through Australian Volunteers International to work with LO'UD and other producer groups in 2013 – 2014



Photo: Sarah Grace | 2012

Appendices

the business

the product

projects & partners

appendices explain specific elements of the project in more detail and are available on request

Potential long term impact

As well as poverty reduction for more than 250 rural women, the project inspires development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the future. It will institute fair trade standards in an industry critical to the livelihoods of thousands of hand-weavers in Timor-Leste. Sustainable supply-chains and eco-friendly cotton and plant-dye cultivation promotes sustainable economic growth and recycling; combats the use of toxic dyes and elevates the status of local skills and knowledge.

Budget | Total project budget for year one of phase two is \$55,000



Photo: Deb Salvagno | 2012



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