

*For Timorese kids the foreigner is always from Portugal and if not, which is hardly to believe, eventually could be from Australia. When working with kids in school and ask them if they know the CPLP countries will answer with the most charming smile: Portugal, Angola, Brazil, Mozambique, Cape Verde, São Tomé and Príncipe, Guinea-Bissau and Guinea Equatorial...*

*The Timorese Identity is still quiet uncertain and blurred. During the 25 years of Indonesian occupation, TETUM and PORTUGUESE languages were forbidden and the only used was BAHASA. Even though being the youngest democratic country, Timorese families in their daily life are maintaining unofficially the language of the aggressor. In school are studying Portuguese or English, but due to the very strong Indonesian TV and Radio presence (Timorese Media is very fragile and new), the majority of the Timorese population are more familiar and fluent in Bahasa, instead of Tetum or Portuguese (even though the strong presence of the Portuguese cooperation and development in the country )*

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# *The Kids of East Timor on the Road for a Better Future*

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*East Timor similar to Cambodia has one of the youngest generations in the world. Most of the parents of that fragile nation suffered the Indonesian Occupation in 1975, internationally known as the Operation Lotus. It could be compared to the Pol Pot massacres that happened in Cambodia or Srebrenica. The International community was alert about the atrocities in the country hardly after the Massacres that happened in the Santa Cruz cemetery in the capital DILI. Thanks to the British Journalist MAX STAHL on the 12 November 1991, who through his video opened the eyes of the International community and denounced the existing hypocrisy. Nowadays Max has created a youth centre where kids are playing and learning through videos their history and at the same time are encouraged to be creative, to perform and to have a participative role in the civil society. A difficult task ahead to make the kids and their parents come back to school and The Timorese Identity is still quiet uncertain and blurred.*

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*In East Timor people has one of the lowest life expectancies in the world, around 48 year, many women are dying in pregnancy or childbirth. On the territory there are several smaller organisations that are targeting and focusing solely on women's rights, such as the Australian Alola Foundation, Women's Network Rede Feto, comprising 25 women's groups and seems Australia is one of the biggest donors.*

*When the Portuguese left in 1975, almost no children attended school and most of the people could not read or write. Today about 70% to 80% of the children attend school. Many adult women still cannot read but through State programs and Portuguese Cooperation, many of them are attending an evening school program.*

*25 years of Timorese struggle, fight against severe human rights violations and massacres. Indonesians troops killed randomly many people in the East Timorese villages, looted houses, and raped women and girls. Due to that repression and famine 200,000 people are thought to have died.*

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*In East Timor 75 % of the infrastructure was destroyed by Indonesian troops in 1999.*

*Human development index = 162nd.*

*East Timor is one of the 10 poorest countries in the world.*

*Many households do not have access to clean water to drink or electricity, even though that fact, kids are always thankful and smiling, saying loudly MALAE (people coming from the region of Malacca, Malaysia from where actually the Timorese are), a word through which the foreigner is identified, that's your "name" for them.*

*BOM DIA!!! GOOD MORNING, repeated hundred times, and you heart stars smiling and feeling a sincere gratitude.*

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*East Timor sits in the Indian Ocean. Oil deposits underneath the ocean floor could make East Timor a wealthier country, even though that fact, the country is absolutely dependent on the import of stocks mainly from Indonesia. A local product is the great Velavista Rai Husar coffee recollected by kids similar to the cachou recollected by kids in Guinea Bissau. The best COFFEE is from Ermera and Aileu region, where is the highest mountain, the MONTE RAMEALAU 2963, which during the Portuguese presence was the highest one from the Portuguese colonies and now is part of the National Anthem. The population is using really bio products, due to lack of facilities to improve the soil. Main products are: coffee, rice, corn, cassava, sweet potatoes, soybeans, cabbage, mangoes, bananas, vanilla, etc.*

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*East Timor was ruled by the Portuguese from the 1600s until 1975, that's the reason why 90% are Roman Catholics, Muslim 4%, Protestant 3%, Hindu 0.5%, Buddhist, Animist.*

*In the early morning at 06.30h, before going to school or work, kids and parents are attending a Church Mass. 3 times per week the Priest conducts the mass in TETUM language and 3 times per week in PORTUGUSE, on Sunday is the biggest Mass of the week, when the whole family is gathered and attends together the almost 2 hours morning ceremony. All are dressed up in bright and promising colours. Beautiful voices are enchanting the ambience.*

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## *Timorese culture of cockfighting*

*If Cockfighting in ancient pastimes was very popular, if in our society that cultural activity has largely fallen out, in East Timor kids grow with that, and still the most popular cultural event in the country In East Timor at the market, on the streets, people are selling roosters, chickens, pigs and goats, baffle, etc., but seems one of the most precious is the rooster. The variety of roosters is incredible; the fighting cocks come in different colours and are the proud of the family. The stronger it is the animal better. East Timorese are saying: “gambling is in our blood after centuries of cock-fighting under Portuguese colonial times”...*

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*East Timor has 15,007 square km and has the form of LAFAEC (crocodile), which is a a sacred animal, very well respected as the caws in India, mainly possible to be spotted in the south part of the country. There are many and even though the serene attractiveness of the Timorese coast, most of the people are afraid to enter into the blue waters. It's forbidden to mention or say loudly the word Lafaec as it brings bad luck.*

*Many kids in East Timor have to walk very long distances before reaching the school, even though that fact, wherever you spot them at the market, on the street, in the school, kids are impeccably dressed and shining, always thankful and ready to receive the new day with gratitude.*

*Kids are wearing TAIS, are local handcrafts produced only in East Timor. Tais are a traditional woven cloth made by the women in East Timor. Many small cooperatives were created after the devastating years of Indonesian occupation in a way to integrate Timorese women after losing their partner or husband and becoming a widow. Ties are used in traditional ceremonies like marriage ceremonies, funerals and dowry ceremonies, where they are worn as clothing/costume or used as units of exchange. They are elaborated designed and often contain traditional images, and symbolic patterns and colours.*

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East Timor's road to independence was achieved on 20 May 2002.

The people of the first new nation of the century suffered some of the worst atrocities of modern times.

In East Timor 75% of the infrastructure was completely destroyed by Indonesian troops in 1999.

An independent report has said at least 100,000 Timorese died as a result of Indonesia's 25-year occupation, which ended in 1999.

East Timor still one of the 10 poorest countries in the world.

Many households do not have access to clean water to drink or electricity, even though that fact, kids are always thankful and smiling saying loudly and with MALAE (people coming from the region of Malacca, Malaysia from where actually the Timorese are) BOM DIA!!! GOOD MORNING, repeated hundreds of times, and you heart stars smiling and feeling with sincere gratitude.

Nowadays there's a real hope, the hope in the curious eyes of the always smiling and modest kids, who are not afraid to come to you and to observe you as an alien, and at the same time to start playing and singing, whispering in your ears, not begging, not complaining, but thankful that you are with them, that you work with them and support them, even though lost in the many words in TETUM; BAHASA; PORTUGUESE... there's a sacred friendship, which remains in the eyes, through the voice and the big sincere smile.

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*In 1996 East Timor was suddenly brought to world attention when the Nobel Peace Prize was awarded to Bishop Carlos Filipe Ximenes Belo and Jose Ramos-Horta "for their work towards a just and peaceful solution to the conflict in East Timor" In 1999, the East Timorese voted overwhelmingly for independence.*

*That same year, the United Nations (UN) began administering East Timor and helping the country to prepare for full independence.*

*Now is in hands of the very young generation.*

*In 2017 East Timor had Presidential and Parliamentary elections and for the very first time without the United Nations supervision.*

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*East Timor has 15,007 square km and has the form of East Timor was a Portuguese colony in 1600's and the island was serving mainly as source of sandalwood. On the 28th of December 1975 FRETELIN declared the independence for East Timor.*

*Indonesia responded with Balibo Declaration for unity of Indonesia and East Timor. Indonesians annexed the territory as its 27th province, a move not recognized by the UN. Followed by Indonesian's invasion and under the Suharto regime and terror like the military dictatorship of Burma (Myanmar)*

*25 years of Timorese struggle, fight against severe human rights violations and massacres. Indonesians troops killed East Timorese people randomly in villages, looted houses, and raped women and girls. Due to that repression and famine 200,000 people are thought to have died. Timor's women still suffering the aftermath of the brutal occupation, gender violence remains a reality nowadays.*

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*The Legend of the TIMORESE LAFAEC \* the Crocodile*  
Many years ago a small crocodile lived in a swamp in a faraway place. He dreamed of becoming a big crocodile but, as food was scarce, he became weak and grew sadder and sadder. He left for the open sea, to find food and realise his dream, but the day became increasingly hot and he was still far from the seashore. The little crocodile – rapidly drying out and now in desperation – lay down to die. A small boy took pity on the stranded crocodile and carried him to the sea. The crocodile, instantly revived, was grateful. “Little boy”, he said, “you have saved my life. If I can ever help you in any way, please call me. I will be at your command...” A few years later, the boy called the crocodile, who was now big and strong. “Brother Crocodile”, he said, “I too have a dream. I want to see the world”. “Climb on my back,” said the crocodile, “and tell me, which way do you want to go?” “Follow the sun”, said the boy. The crocodile set off for the east, and they travelled the oceans for years, until one day the crocodile said to the boy, “Brother, we have travelled for a long time. But now the time has come for me to die. In memory of your kindness, I will turn myself into a beautiful island, where you and your children can live until the sun sinks in the sea.” As the crocodile died, he grew and grew, and his rigid back became the mountains and his scales the hills of Timor.  
Now when the people of East Timor swim in the ocean, they enter the water saying “Don’t eat me crocodile, I am your relative”.

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*East Timor as a democracy is an excellent example to realize how fragile a concept and reality actually it is... East Timor's road to independence was achieved on 20 May 2002*

*East Timor was ruled by the Portuguese from the 1600s until 1975.*

*After that the neighbouring country, Indonesia soon invaded the small island. During that period the International Community was silent and alien to what was happening in this part of the world, was a real taboo*

*Indonesian soldiers in towns, particularly Dili, were reported to have indiscriminately killed civilians, including the rape and killing of women and children.*

*The number of deaths during the occupation from famine and violence are between 90,800 and 202,600, out of a population of 823,386 (1999).*

*Food and medical supplies that were sent for the famine were being taken by the Indonesian troops.*

*The 2005 report of the UN's Commission for Reception, Truth and Reconciliation in East Timor (CAVR) reports a figure of at least 102,800: 17,600 unlawful executions and 73,200 starvation deaths. CAVR did not estimate an upper limit though it speculated that this could have been as high as 183,000.*

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*For Timorese kids the foreigner is always from Portugal and if not, which is hardly to believe, eventually could be from Australia. When working with kids in school and ask them if they know the CPLP countries will answer with the most charming smile: Portugal, Angola, Brazil, Mozambique, Cape Verde, São Tomé and Príncipe, Guinea-Bissau and Equatorial Guinea ...*

*The Timorese Identity is still quiet uncertain and blurred. During the 25 years of Indonesian occupation, TETUM and PORTUGUESE languages were forbidden and the only used was BAHASA. Even though being the youngest democratic country, Timorese families in their daily life are maintaining unofficially the language of the aggressor. In school are studying Portuguese or English, but due to the very strong Indonesian TV and Radio presence (Timorese Media is very fragile and new), the majority of the Timorese population are more familiar and fluent in Bahasa, instead of Tetum or Portuguese (even though the strong presence of the Portuguese cooperation and development in the country )*

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*The Legend of the TIMORESE LAFaec \* the Crocodile*  
Many years ago a small crocodile lived in a swamp in a faraway place. He dreamed of becoming a big crocodile but, as food was scarce, he became weak and grew sadder and sadder. He left for the open sea, to find food and realise his dream, but the day became increasingly hot and he was still far from the seashore. The little crocodile – rapidly drying out and now in desperation – lay down to die. A small boy took pity on the stranded crocodile and carried him to the sea. The crocodile, instantly revived, was grateful. “Little boy”, he said, “you have saved my life. If I can ever help you in any way, please call me. I will be at your command...” A few years later, the boy called the crocodile, who was now big and strong. “Brother Crocodile”, he said, “I too have a dream. I want to see the world”. “Climb on my back,” said the crocodile, “and tell me, which way do you want to go?” “Follow the sun”, said the boy. The crocodile set off for the east, and they travelled the oceans for years, until one day the crocodile said to the boy, “Brother, we have travelled for a long time. But now the time has come for me to die. In memory of your kindness, I will turn myself into a beautiful island, where you and your children can live until the sun sinks in the sea.” As the crocodile died, he grew and grew, and his rigid back became the mountains and his scales the hills of Timor.  
Now when the people of East Timor swim in the ocean, they enter the water saying “Don’t eat me crocodile, I am your relative”.

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*East Timor similar to Cambodia has one of the youngest generations in the world. Most of the parents of that fragile nation suffered the Indonesian Occupation in 1975, internationally known as the Operation Lotus. It could be compared to the Pol Pot massacres that happened in Cambodia or Srebrenica. The International community was alert about the atrocities in the country hardly after the Massacres that happened in the Santa Cruz cemetery in the capital DILI. Thanks to the British Journalist MAX STAHL on the 12 November 1991, who through his video opened the eyes of the International community and denounced the existing hypocrisy. Nowadays Max has created a youth centre where kids are playing and learning through videos their history and at the same time are encouraged to be creative, to perform and to have a participative role in the civil society. A difficult task ahead to make the kids and their parents come back to school and The Timorese Identity is still quiet uncertain and blurred.*

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*In East Timor people has one of the lowest life expectancies in the world, around 48 year, many women are dying in pregnancy or childbirth. On the territory there are several smaller organisations that are targeting and focusing solely on women's rights, such as the Australian Alola Foundation, Women's Network Rede Feto comprising 25 women's groups and seems Australia is one of the biggest donors.*

*When the Portuguese left in 1975, almost no children attended school and most of the people could not read or write. Today about 70% to 80% of the children attend school. Many adult women still cannot read but through State programs and Portuguese Cooperation, many of them are attending an evening school program.*

*25 years of Timorese struggle, fight against severe human rights violations and massacres. Indonesians troops killed randomly many people in the East Timorese villages, looted houses, and raped women and girls. Due to that repression and famine 200,000 people are thought to have died.*

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*East Timor's road to independence was achieved on 20 May 2002.*

*The people of the first new nation of the century suffered some of the worst atrocities of modern times.*

*In East Timor 75% of the infrastructure was completely destroyed by Indonesian troops in 1999.*

*An independent report has said at least 100,000 Timorese died as a result of Indonesia's 25-year occupation, which ended in 1999.*

*East Timor still one of the 10 poorest countries in the world.*

*Many households do not have access to clean water to drink or electricity, even though that fact, kids are always thankful and smiling saying loudly MALAE (people coming from the region of Malacca, Malaysia from where actually the Timorese are) BOM DIA!!! GOOD MORNING, repeated hundreds of times, and you heart stars smiling and feeling with sincere gratitude.*

*Nowadays there's a real hope, the hope in the curious eyes of the always smiling and modest kids, who are not afraid to come to you and to observe you as an alien, and at the same time to start playing and singing, whispering in your ears, not begging, not complaining, but thankful that you are with them, that you work with them and support them, even though lost in the many words in TETUM; BAHASA; PORTUGUESE... there's a sacred friendship, which remains in the eyes, through the voice and the big sincere smile.*

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*The East Timor sits in the Indian Ocean. Oil deposits underneath the ocean floor could make East Timor a wealthier country, even though that fact, the country is absolutely dependent on the import of stocks mainly from Indonesia. A local product is the great Velavista Rai Husar coffee recollected by kids similar to the cachou recollected by kids in Guinea Bissau. The best COFFEE is from Ermera and Aileu region, where is the highest mountain, the MONTE RAMEALAU 2963, which during the Portuguese presence was the highest one from the Portuguese colonies and now is part of the National Anthem. The population is using real bio products, due to lack of facilities to improve the soil. Main products are: coffee, rice, corn, cassava, sweet potatoes, soybeans, cabbage, mangoes, bananas, vanilla, etc.*

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*East Timor still one of the 10 poorest countries in the world.*

*Many kids have to help the household and at many cases are working after or before going to school.*

*Hardly are finishing primary schools, even though the strong international cooperation unfortunately East Timor still one of the unknown countries struggling and trying hardly to recover.*

*ASEAN still considering East Timor is not yet developed enough to join Association...*

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