

Timor Joins Global Peace Movement

Timor-Leste Amidst burnt down buildings and internally displaced person's camps, Timorese locals and representatives of the international community came together on 8 September, 2007 to engage in [Yoga for Peace](#), an event promoted by a local Non Governmental Organization (NGO) *Ba Futuru* (meaning For the Future) to raise awareness of the importance of healing after civil conflict so that peaceful social change can take place.

According to the communication Redasaun Jornal Nacional received from the local NGO Ba Futuru, Dili joined cities around the world in holding simultaneous [Yoga for Peace](#) events, calling for a shift in consciousness, highlighting the importance of non-violence in the rebuilding of their nation: while youth and adults do yoga, children will be engaged in art activities about envisioning a peaceful future.

With the support of [Balispirit](#), Ba Futuru , held the East Timorese [Yoga for Peace](#) celebration at the Seroja Youth Center, an institution run by [Edge-ucate.org](#), [Ba Futuru](#) and the local community. This center provides Timorese children and youth a safe and supported environment to work through their experiences of conflict using sports, art and dance, and also holds regular courses on conflict resolution, human rights, children protection and English. This center is part of [Edge-ucate.org](#) and [Ba Futuru](#)'s Youth Integration and Development Initiative that has been supported with funding from UNMIT, UNICEF, The World Bank, ConocoPhillips, CRS and individuals in the United States, and has been made possible by the hard work of community and international volunteers, including the Australian stabilization forces, who teach English at the center three times a week.

East Timor or Timor Lorosa'e – 'Timor of the rising sun' – lies 500km north of Australia at the south-eastern edge of the Indonesian archipelago. Its debut on 20 May, 2002 as a sovereign member of the international community was the culmination of a long struggle for independence: four centuries of Portuguese colonization, Japanese occupation during World War II and 24 years of Indonesian annexation resulted in sustained and systematic devastation. Five years after independence, East Timor remains the poorest country in Asia. Since April 2006, East Timor has been experiencing severe civil and political unrest, forcing 150,000 people from their homes and exacerbating the fragile psychosocial situation.

"Ba Futuru promotes opportunities for conflict affected children and youth to reach their fullest potential and regain a sense of confidence in the future", says Joana dos Santos Camoes, the NGO director. *"This event will help the East Timorese feel part of a greater international movement that deals with conflict to move on"* according to what it said in their communication.

Ba Futuru's vision is to build a culture of peace and non-violence in East Timor by developing the values, skills, knowledge and wellbeing of vulnerable and at-risk young people, and those who care for them. Ba Futuru does this through the promotion of opportunities for conflict affected, vulnerable and at-risk children and youth to reach their fullest potential and regain a sense of confidence in the future, as well as providing those who care for children and community leaders with the knowledge and capacity to support the children in their communities.

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