

**WithOnePlanet**

- > Module 2:  
Culture
- > Level:  
Years F to 4
- > Unit: Life in a  
Timorese village
- > Book 1:  
My community
- > Teacher notes



# Culture book 1

Teacher notes

My community

Life in a Timorese village

Years F to 4



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# My community

## Life in a Timorese village

### Book 1: Teacher notes

This document provides the teacher with the details of the lesson.

#### Background information

Timor Leste and Australia are geographically very close, but in other respects worlds away from each other. Many people in Timor Leste live in small villages, some of which are quite remote. Many villages in Timor Leste are not accessible by road, and some villages are cut off during the wet season because the roads are impacted by rivers.

When houses are built in Timor Leste, the norm is for people to build them themselves. Generally, many people will come together to build the house, and the people who are having the house built will cook up big meals to feed everyone, as a thank you for all of their hard work. Houses are made from local materials like leaves, wood and grasses. Some houses have tin rooves. Sometimes, if people have the money, they will build a house out of bricks. These houses are a sign that the family have the money to build with more expensive materials, and those that have uma mutin (white houses) are very proud of them.

Kitchens are generally the domain of the women in Timor Leste, and it is very rare for a married man to be involved in any cooking or dish washing activities. Kitchens are generally built as a separate building to the main part of the house, as the main form of cooking is to use wood, which makes the kitchen a very smoky place to be. Many women and children in Timor Leste have respiratory issues from years of breathing wood smoke.

Most families in Timor are subsistence farming families. It is generally the role of the father to be the provider of food for the family, which for most people means tending fields and growing crops.

The weather in Timor Leste often makes it difficult to grow crops, because there is too little rain, too much rain, different onset times of the wet season, etc. In bad years, many people in Timor Leste go hungry because the crops do not grow properly, and people don't have enough food.

Water is a big issue in Timor Leste for many people. In the dry season, some people have to walk long distances to get to a water source. For this reason, most people will take clothes to the water to wash there, and only carry home water for cooking and drinking. There are many illnesses that people can get from drinking the water in Timor Leste, and for this reason most people boil their water before they drink it.

Buffalo and other animals are an important commodity for many Timorese families. Buffalo can be sold to pay for school expenses, ceremonies such as weddings or funerals, among other things. There are no fences to keep animals enclosed in Timor Leste, so the animals need constant attention.

Animism is very common in Timor Leste, and most people believe that their ancestors still have a role to play in everyday life. Ceremonies are held to involve ancestors in things such as naming ceremonies, weddings, and to ensure that the ancestors are happy. People believe that if the ancestors are not happy, bad things can happen such as people getting sick and dying. There are a few people in the village, generally older men, who hold the traditional knowledge about ceremonies, ancestors, poems, songs, and other things. This knowledge is not written down anywhere, but it is passed on from generation to generation.

Many women in Timor Leste do traditional weavings called tais. These can take many weeks to make, and some women even dye their own cotton using traditional methods. Once the tais are finished, they are used for many different types of traditional ceremonies.

In some of the bigger towns and cities in Timor Leste fruit, vegetables and other food are sold every day, but in some places, markets are only held once a week.

## Suggested topics for discussion

- > What houses are made of in Australia, who makes them, and a comparison with Timor Leste.
- > Cooking in Australia, and what people use to cook with. Are kitchens the same or different to Timor Leste? What is different?
- > Where we get our food. Do we ever go hungry here? Why/why not? Are we dependent on our own food growing?
- > How can changes in weather affect us? How does it affect people in Timor Leste?
- > Where does our water come from?
- > How much energy do we need to use on everyday tasks (cooking, cleaning, getting water etc) compared to people in Timor Leste?
- > What are Buffalo used for in Timor Leste? Whose job is it to look after animals in Timor Leste, and whose job is it in Australia?
- > Weaving in Timor Leste, and craft in Australia. Do you like doing craft/making things? What do you like to make?

## Activities

### Year: Foundation

- > Cloze activity with five sentences from the story. The last word of each sentence is missing. Students cut out missing words from the bottom of the sheet and match it with the right sentence.
- > Word finder with six simple words from the story. All of the words to find are written horizontally and run from left to right.
- > Ordering and matching activity, where students match the sentence beginnings with the sentence ends.

### Year: 1 to 2

- > Cloze activity with seven sentences from the story. Each sentence has one or two words missing. The missing words are in boxes. Students cut out the missing words and place in the correct spots in the sentences.
- > Word finder. Students find ten words from the story. Words run horizontally (left to right) and vertically (up to down).
- > Ordering and matching activity. Students cut out the parts of the sentence, and put the correct sentence beginning, middle and end together.

### Year: 3 to 4

- > Cloze activity. Students write in the correct words from the book in the gaps in seven sentences.
- > Crossword - Students fill in 11 words in a crossword, with clues and answers based on the 'my community' book.
- > Students write seven words from the book, using the jumbled letters in the worksheet.