

## WithOnePlanet

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Culture
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# Culture book 2

Teacher notes

Cooking corn

Life in a Timorese village

Years

F<sub>to</sub>4

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# Cooking corn (Life in a Timorese village)

## Book 2: Teacher notes

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

### Background information

Corn and rice are the two main staple foods eaten in Timor Leste. While some corn is eaten boiled 'fresh' as we would eat it in Australia, the vast majority in Timor Leste is dried and then boiled. The end result is similar to rice in that it fills the belly really well. In Timor Leste, people don't feel like they have eaten a real meal unless they have had rice or corn. Many Timorese visitors to Australia struggle with food, and feel 'hungry' even after eating big meals of pizza, spaghetti or other food. If you have Timorese visitors, make sure you have rice around every day for them! In the story, Natalino's parents are up at the crack of dawn to start cooking breakfast. It is the norm to get up very early in Timor Leste, partially because everyday tasks take a long time to complete, i.e building up the fire, cleaning the rice or corn before it can be cooked, carrying water long distances etc. The other reason for the early start is that the middle of the day is very hot, and much of the hard physical work gets done in the early morning, when it is much cooler.

In the story, Natalino and his family eat three meals a day. The majority of the population in Timor Leste are subsistence farmers, who rely on the food they grow themselves to be able to eat 3 meals a day. Timor Leste has what is referred to as the 'hungry season', which is the time after one lot of crops has finished being harvested and before a new lot of crops can be harvested. Some years the hungry season is relatively mild, and other years it is severe. Many families have one meal or less per day in the hungry season. Climate change is having a real effect on people in Timor Leste, as severe weather events (not enough rain, too much rain, different onset times of the wet season etc) can mean that farmers lose crops, which results in their families going hungry.

Gender roles in Timor Leste are much more clearly defined than in Australia. The kitchen, cleaning and looking after children role is still perceived to be very much the domain of the woman, and the heavy lifting, farming and, in many cases the bread winning role is still considered to be the man's job. This distinction between men and women's roles is still very much a normal part of life in Timor Leste, and has a lot to do with the physical nature of a lot of the day to day tasks that need to be done.

Many adults in Timor Leste are unable to read and write. During the Portuguese colonial times, only the elite Timorese families had access to schooling and up until the 1970's there was only one high school in the entire country. The Indonesians brought in wide scale education and built many schools across the country. The Indonesian education system, however, is very much based on teacher centered learning, talk and chalk and rote learning. This is still an issue in Timor Leste to this day. The Timor Leste ministry of education is trying to shift education to a student centered model, but it is an uphill battle and it may take a long time for a shift in teaching practices to occur.



## Suggested topics for discussion

- > What children in Australia eat every day and a comparison with other classmates and with children in Timor Leste
- > How we get to school in Australia, and a comparison with kids in Timor Leste.
- > What kids' mums and dads do during the day, and a comparison with Timor Leste
- > What time kids get up in the morning, and a comparison with Timor Leste
- > How we cook our food and what our kitchens look like, and a comparison with Timor Leste
- > What do we use for fuel to cook (in Timor Leste it is common to cook using wood. Some people have kerosene stoves, and a few families in the main cities have started cooking on stoves that run from gas bottles. There are no gas pipes that carry gas to houses like there are in Australia).

## 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 eight simple words from the story. All of the words to find are written horizontally and run from left to right.
- > Color by number activity.
- > Suggested art activity – Students make a plate of 'breakfast corn' with yellow play dough or bits of yellow paper rolled up into little balls, on a paper plate.

### Year: 1 to 2

- > Cloze activity with eight sentences from the story. Each sentence has one or two words missing. The missing words are in the box at the bottom of the worksheet. Students cut out the missing words and place in the correct spots in the sentences.
- > Ordering and matching activity. Students cut out the parts of the sentences from the book, and match the sentence beginnings with the correct sentence ends.
- > Word finder. Students find fifteen words from the story. Words run horizontally (left to right) and vertically (up to down).
- > Suggested art activity – Students make a replica of a Timorese kitchen.

### Year: 3 to 4

- > Cloze activity. Students write in the correct words from the book in the gaps in eight sentences.
- > Complete the sentences activity. Students finish ten sentences from the story.
- > Crossword - Students fill in 12 words in a crossword, with clues and answers based on the cooking corn book.
- > Suggested art activity – In Timor-Leste, many people weave their own baskets out of leaves. In the story, the mum used a hand made basket to sort the corn. Students weave their own basket out of a material such as newspaper. There are some great tutorials online, for example <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=scbtEaxT5DY>