



# OT 24 Hour Virtual Exchange

October 29/30/31

[Depending on where you are]

## Exploring Balance



**Jane Shamrock's** journey as an occupational therapist has taken many turns. Early days included working in mental health facilities, a children's hospital and community health in a small rural community as a community occupational therapist. More recently Jane was involved in establishing two community rehabilitation services on the Gold Coast in Queensland. Jane has also had a private practice for many years where she enjoyed community rehabilitation and making use of her skills as a Feldenkrais practitioner. Jane has recently been involved in the new Occupational Therapy program at the University of the Sunshine Coast and is now a full-time higher degree student. In 2000 Jane went to East Timor as a volunteer immediately after the destruction which followed the

referendum for independence held in 1999. She has worked in a convalescence facility and as a planner and trainer in the Community Based Rehabilitation (CBR) training program. Most recently she has just visited a remote area of East Timor to carry out a pilot project for her PhD to study the "Lived experience of disability in East Timor"

### **CULTURAL BALANCE: THE EXPERIENCE OF RESEARCHING IN EAST TIMOR**

The first stage of the fieldwork for my research was a trip to East Timor to meet with people with disabilities to find out how they spend their time. I used a photography method called Photovoice to find out how people with disabilities in remote communities live, how they spend their time, what is important to them and are they consulted when a proposed aid programme appears on their horizon.

My research revealed fascinating details in the lives of the 4 people with disabilities who acted as photographers. They recorded ADLs including eating and bathing, income earning activities, family activities, community activities and above all they revealed the difficulties that people with disabilities experience in a poor country.

The pilot study also revealed the dilemmas which arise when a Eurocentric researcher enters the world of remote villagers in East Timor. East Timor can be considered a post-occupation, post-conflict environment where the present major influence from another culture is in the form of aid programs. These influences, past and present can still be seen and felt. Therefore one of the questions for the occupational therapist researcher is about how to take a balanced view of all that is to be found when researching in East Timor.