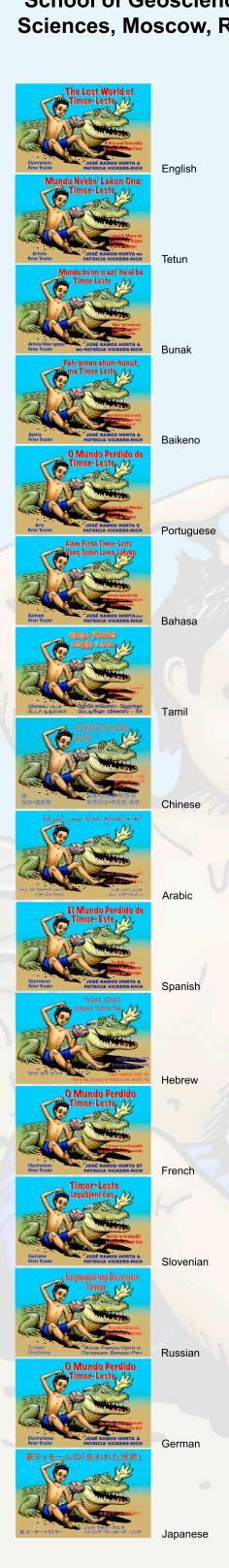
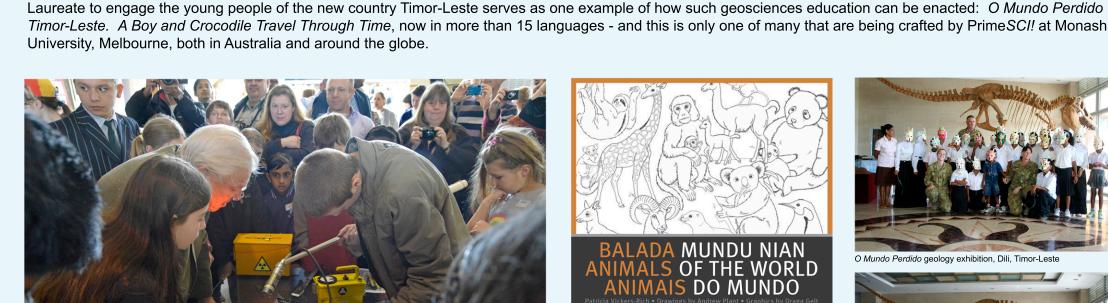
THE IMPORTANCE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD GEOSCIENCE EDUCATION

Patricia VICKERS-RICH^{1,2} and José RAMOS-HORTA³

¹School of Geosciences, Monash University, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia and ²Paleontological Institute, Russian Academy of Sciences, Moscow, Russia, Email pat.rich@monash.edu; ³Past President and Nobel Peace Prize Recipient, Dili, Timor-Leste.

> Geosciences education, and Science education in general, is urgently needed for the growing young population of planet Earth. In times of significant increase of a population that demands more and more natural resources, especially those that are energy productive, the youth of today need to be informed concerning the cost to the planet (especially the climate) and the predicted availability of these resources in the future. Thus, from an early age, an education in the basics of science (of great importance in geosciences) and beginnings of understanding of the impact imposed by the use of natural resources, can serve as a training ground for a population that in the future will be making strategic decisions about how humanity uses the bounty of the planet. A recent project spearheaded by an academic and a Nobel









Geosciences education of youth by PrimeSCI! (and its parent organization the Monash Science Centre) began in the neighbourhoods of many research scientists employed at Monash University – and in their local primary and secondary schools. Young kids are fascinated with science, and these research scientists wanted to bring the latest discoveries to these passionate human of Melbourne, of Australia, and communities of the world. These enthusiastic and committed researchers at Monash, and their community companions, managed to raise funds to construct the first Sustainable building for Monash University, Building 74, itself is a lesson in how to use of

Now these same scientists work in Building 28 as a new entity, PrimeSCI!, but Building 74 stands as an example of how a committed group of researchers can showcase practical sustainability - and the building indeed now houses the Sustainability Institute.

resources with least impact on environment. So

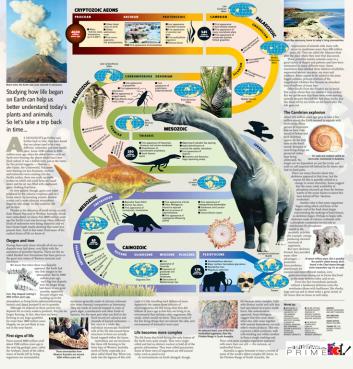
every time someone visits this structure there is a





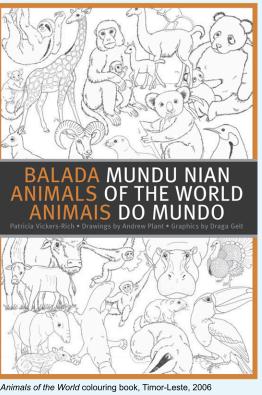






Many Ways of Educating

There are many ways to educate young people. Several projects of PrimeSCI! involve working with the media, such as The Age Poster on the history of life [left], and with UNESCO [above], or with Australia Post [right]. These projects normally reach in excess of 100,000 to 1 million or more children around Australia or around the world. These projects is that they were funded by the groups who produced them, content written by the researchers. So, the children who interacted, who read, who played with this material, got the latest research news, just like other scientists, but in a language they can understand. Moving knowledge from the brain of the scientist to those of the kids is a powerful way to educate and empower youth - to welcome them in to the world of science -absolutely interesting, exciting and following a methodology that empowers the owner in so many other aspects of life.



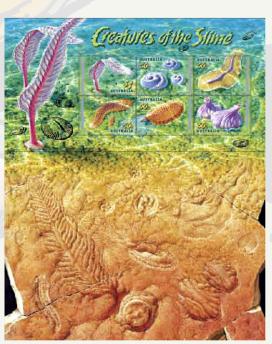


Of Colouring Books and Exhibitions

Children today in many places have a fascination with computers and other electronic devices. They are intriguing and their skills with these "machines" will certainly be part of their future. But so too is an appreciation of the natural world and in the geosciences an understanding of the sustainable use of

To connect kids (as well as their parents) with this background, getting them up close to some of what is in their own backyard is important, and even though this can be viewed on the tv screen and on their ipad, there is significant value in seeing the real thing and not just an image.their experiencing the real thing.

Exhibitions in Timor-Leste of the rocks and fossils from this beautiful island and little books that illustrate these treasures have attracted over the years since 2006 thousands of children, who through their activities with local teachers who later often take their students to see the rocks and fossils in the field, bring home the principles of science on a local level. These books and exhibitions give a chance for kids in this island nation to have a better understanding of where a major part of their national budget comes from - oil - and these small books and several exhibitions on show around Timor-Leste (O Mundo Perdido Timor Leste) have provided children of many ages with much local understanding. Government, Austra lian Friends groups (in Aileu and Baucau), the Catholic Church (the Selesian Brothers, Baucau and Vinelali), NGO's (CARE), the Australian Australian Defence Force and industry (in particular ConocoPhillips and PDLToll) have all assisted in making these projects possible.





O Mundo Perdido geology exhibition, Dili, Timor-Leste





There is More to a Stamp Than Meets the Eye!

Stamps are a very good way to teach science - and even now when many people use the internet rather out there, and in the past this has been (and still remains) an even better way to pass on knowledge to both kids and adults.

Three sets of Australian stamps over the last two decades have provided the art and the lessons that have been used in Australian schools (and also in schools in Nambia and SE Asia). The issue illustrated here is that of Creatures of the Slime, which explored the life and times of the Earth's first animals of any size (the Ediacarans/Vendians) which lived more than 540 million years ago. Australia Post underwrote this project, and the art produced for it was directed by



MONASH University