



DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF TIMOR-LESTE
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EQUALITY



**TIMOR-LESTE'S BEIJING DECLARATION
AND PLATFORM FOR ACTION (BPfA)
NATIONAL REVIEW AND EVALUATION
REPORT (2019-2024)**

PREPARED BY
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ACRONYMS

AIDS	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
AEMTL	Associação Empresarial das Mulheres de Timor-Leste
ALFeLa	Asisténsia Legál ba Feto no Labarik
AJTL	Association Journalist Timor-Leste
BNCTL	Banco Nacional Comércio Timor-Leste
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CCLN	Conselho do Combatentes das Libertação Nacional
CFP	Comissão da Função Pública
CNC	Centro Nacional Chega, Instituto Público
CRC	Convention on Child Rights
DHS	Demographic Health Survey
FDCH	Fundo Desenvolvimento Capital Humano
F-FDTL	Falintil-Forças da Defesa de Timor-Leste
GRB	Gender Responsive Budgeting
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
IADE	Instituto de Apoio ao Desenvolvimento Empresarial
ICT	Information, Communication and Technology
INETL.IP	Instituto Nacional de Estatística de Timor-Leste, Instituto Público
INDDICA.IP	Instituto Nacional Defesa Direitu ba Labarik, Instituto Público
INCSIDA.IP	Instituto Nacional de Combate ao HIV-SIDA, Instituto Público
JSMP	Judicial System Monitoring Programme

KSTL	Konfederasaun Sindikatu Timor-Leste
LJTC	Legal and Judiciary Training Center
MAE	Ministério da Administração Estatal
MACLN	Ministério Para os Assuntos Combatentes das Libertação Nacional
MAPCOMS	Ministério Assunto Parlamentar e Comunicação Social
ME/MEJD	Ministério da Educação/Ministério da Educação, Juventude e Disporto
MESCC	Ministério do Ensino Superior Ciência e Cultura
MCI	Ministério Comércio e Industria
MH	Ministry of Health
MI	Ministério do Interior
MJ	Ministério da Justiça
MTC	Ministério Telecomunicação
MPCM	Ministério
MSSI	Ministério Social Solidariedade e Inclusão
NAP-GBV	National Action Plan on Gender-Based Violence
NAP-1325 WPS	National Action Plan 1325 on Women, Peace and Security
NGOs	Non-Government Organisations
PDHJ	Provedoria dos Direitos Humanos e Justiça
PCIC	Policia Científica Investigação Criminal
PNTL	Policia Nacional Timor-Leste
RDTL	República Democrática de Timor-Leste
SEI	Secretaria de Estado da Igualdade
SEFOPE	Secretaria de Estado da Formação Profissional e Emprego
STEM	Science, Tecnology, Education and Math

SECOMS	Secretari de Estado para a Comunicação Social
RAEOA	Região Administrativa Especial Oe-cusse Ambeno
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations International Childrend's Emergency Fund
UNTL	Universidade Nacional Timor Lorosa'e
USAID	United States Agency for Developlment
VPU	Vulnerable Person Unit

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Foreword

Gender equality, women's empowerment and inclusion have become Timor-Leste's development priority since its independence. Timor-Leste has made invaluable progress in all sectors, since our last National Review and Appraisal reporting period in 2019. We are continuously making concerted efforts to achieve gender equality, women's empowerment and inclusive development. The 2024 report shared the main advancements achieve in response to our common pledge to accelerate the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

The Secretariat of State for Equality (SEI), as the coordinating body within the Government of Timor-Leste, that primarily focuses on policies and strategies on improving gender equality, specially creating equal opportunities for women and men in all social sectors in Timor-Leste. SEI has worked closely with all Line Ministries, Secretary of States, State Institutions and Autonomy Agencies to ensure that their policies are promoting the empowerment of women and girls.

The results of this comprehensive national review report on Timor-Leste highlight the importance of prioritizing gender equality in all social sectors including the development of policies, laws, programs and budgeting that reflect the concerns of women and girls in Timor-Leste. This provides positive evidence of the progresses that have been made and the areas that need to be focused on more. Additionally, this provides a way for SEI to redouble its efforts in monitoring the implementation of the 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

I am pleased with the fact that this evaluation report was conducted under the leadership of SEI. On this occasion I also congratulate SEI staff and thank all partners who have been actively involved in providing information and data so that this report can be completed.



Elvina Sousa Carvalho

Secretary of State for Equality

SECTION ONE: HIGHLIGHTS

Timor-Leste shall provide updated information on the status of implementation of the 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action on gender equality, empowerment of women and girls in Timor-Leste every five years, based on previous reports carried out by the Government of Timor-Leste. This report provides an updated review of Timor-Leste's implementation of the 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action over the past five years (2019-2024). It highlights core achievements, challenges, and promising practices under the leadership of the Secretary of State for Equality (SEI). In addition, this report was produced under the leadership of SEI, a national women's machinery for the promotion of gender equality in Timor-Leste through participatory and a comprehensive review process with relevant partners.

In 2024, Timor-Leste submitted a comprehensive National Review and Evaluation Report on the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action for the period 2019-2024, covering the progress and achievements made since then. Significant achievements include the increased representation of women in political positions, the enactment of the National Action Plan against Gender-Based Violence in 2022, the reaffirmed of the Maubisse Declaration for Women's Economic Empowerment and approval of the second generation of National Action Plan for United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNCSR)1325 on Women, Peace and Security in 2024. Based on Decree Law 74/2023, the State Secretariat for Equality (SEI) is the main coordinating body in government that works with all Ministries and State Institutions to ensure policies, laws, programs, annual action plans and budgets are gender responsive and inclusive to promote the empowerment of women, girls and other vulnerable groups such as people with disabilities and LGBTQI communities.

2025 marks the thirtieth year since the Fourth World Conference on Women where countries agreed and signed the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the ten-year Sustainable Development Goals. Based on the 2022 Population and Housing Census, the population of Timor-Leste is 1,340,434 (678.3 is female and 662.6 is male) with women constituting 49.2%. Approximately 78% of the population resides in rural areas, primarily engaged in subsistence agriculture.

Timor-Leste relies heavily on petroleum revenues to finance annual government spending. Therefore, the sustainability of these funds depends not only on infrastructure development but also social and human resource development including the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls as the realization of SDG 5 and implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

Over the last five years, the Government Programmes have emphasized the implementation of key public policies adopted to strengthen and optimize the

government sector to implement the National Strategic Development Plan 2011-2030 and to ensure the realization of the 2030 vision to leave no one behind. Meanwhile, in the past five years, Timor-Leste, like many other countries, has faced various shocks, including political deadlock or political impasses, the global COVID-19 pandemic, and natural disasters in April 2021. All of these have hindered our progress in implementing the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and other international commitments.

For the third time, Timor-Leste presents progress, achievements, challenges and setbacks regarding the Beijing Platform for Action since the second report in 2019. In the second report, Timor-Leste demonstrated progress towards equal participation between men and women. This report outlines Timor-Leste's continued work and dedication in achieving gender equality in the implementation of its policies and programs from 2019 to 2024. The review process involved consultations with government agencies, civil society organizations, and international partners to gather comprehensive data on progress and challenges. Over the past five years (2019-2024), Timor-Leste has continued to make progress to ensure women's rights are advanced, protected and fulfilled.

The implementation of a number of National Action Plans and political commitments that specifically addressing gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls have been concluded with great results such as the National Action Plan on UNSCR 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (2016-2020), National Action Plan against Gender Based Violence (2017-2022) and Maubisse Declaration for women's economic empowerment in (2017-2022). As such the the government of Timor-Leste under the leadership of the Secretary of State for Equality has developed a third National Action Plan on Gender-Based Violence for the period of 2022-2032; a third Maubisse Declaration for women's economic empowerment for 2023-2028; and second generation of National Action Plan on UN Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security for 2024-2028. In 2021, the government of Timor-Leste also adopted Strategic Framework for Women in Politics (2021-2025) which engage line ministries, national parliament, civil society organization, political parties and development partners to promote women in politics and leadership position.

Moreover, the government of Timor-Leste also adopted National Action Plan to Fight Stunting and Improve Nutrition, ratified the Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities including its National Action Plan.

In July 2023, when the 9th Constitutional Government took office, the Government was formulated a five year programme of the 9th Constitutional Government to guide the government over the next five years. The five years plans includes some emerging priorities that need to be achieve to accelarate gender equality for the next five years and beyond.

SECTION TWO: PRIORITIES, ACHIEVEMENTS, CHALLENGES AND SETBACKS

Priorities

Timor-Leste's commitments and priorities to promote gender equality, women's empowerment and inclusion is stipulated in its Constitution since its independence. The National Strategic Development Plan 2011-2030 places emphasis on maximizing the potential of human and social capital and the adjustment of the plan also place people as the central to the development to ensure that everyone can benefit, live in a healthy and dignity environment with a sustainable income. Gender equality between women and men in all areas of development are continuously recognized by the government as key to national development. In order to achieve its commitments the Government of Timor-Leste has outlined the following areas of priorities:

- Continue to strengthen gender mainstreaming and gender responsive budgeting across all government institutions to ensure the implementation of national and international policies on gender equality, empowerment of women and inclusion;
- Continue to support women's economic empowerment through providing initial financial support to stimulate the creation of self-sustainable economic activities for women heads of households, women victims of domestic violence and gender-based violence, people with disabilities and member of LGBTQI communities to ensure their economic independence;
- Continue to strengthen advocacy, coordination and support mechanism to prevent and response to all types of violence against women and girls through the implementation of National Action Plan on Gender Based Violence;
- Increase and empower women's representation and participation in political life at local and national levels;
- Strengthening social security and social solidarity assistance to the poorest and most vulnerable citizens of Timorese society including combatants, women and children and poor and deprived families, the elderly and other vulnerable citizens such as people with disabilities;
- Improve the Support Programme for Social Solidarity Institutions with priority given to those with the most significant impact on helping children and young people, the elderly, women and citizens with disabilities, and in social integration, humanitarian development and support in emergencies, such as in the event of natural disasters, prevention and repair of cases of need and dependence;
- Continue to strengthen health system to reduce maternal and infant mortality rates;
- Promote the creation of jobs for young people, adults and women, always ensuring the principle of equal opportunities, regardless of gender;

- Continue to strengthen national institutional mechanisms for the promotion of gender equality (the national women's 'machinery').

Achievements and progress

From 2019-2024, despite challenges, Timor-Leste continuously making progress and achievement in various areas to promote gender equality and women's empowerment including other vulnerable groups. As we all know, in 2020, Timor-Leste has also shocked by the global Covid-19 pandemic. In addition, over the last five years, political instability which also significantly contributed to slowed down progress in all sectors particularly efforts in reducing poverty and improving living conditions have the main challenges.

Furthermore, Timor-Leste continues working in partnership with development partners, civil society organizations, women's movements, , people with disability organizations, LGBTI community, media, academia and private sector to make collective efforts to mainstream gender and gender responsive policies, planning and budgeting in all relevant sectors to reduce inequality in the areas outlined by Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action 1995.

1. Women in Poverty

- In 2020, the government adopted economic recovery plan which combines 71 short and medium-term measures implemented by the 8th Government by 2023 with a focus on agriculture, tourism, housing, education, health, social protection to recover economic activity affected by Covid-19 global pandemic.
- Government continue to make efforts to increase access to Water and Sanitation to most of the population including in the rural areas which can benefit women and children.
- SEI continues supported women through public funds transfers to beneficiaries of women's group and other vulnerable group in the community across Timor-Leste. SEI also facilitated women's group to have register their business activities on SERVE to formalize their economic activities.
- In 2019 – 2023, SEI in collaboration with other microfinance agency to have access to credit for to strengthening their economic activities.

2. Education and Training of Women

- Awareness raising violence prevention in school setting continued to be conducted with students and teachers in order to provide them with measures and improve their skills to problem solving in without using violence as part of the implementation of the 'Zero Tolerance for Violence' policy. This way can also support teachers to prevent using corporal punishment and reduce sexual harassment and violence in the education

- sectors. This aims to create a free of violence environment and friendship relationship between students and teachers with students.
- National Action Plans on Gender-Based Violence also socialized in all schools in the entire country to make teachers and students aware on the prevention of gender-based violence in and around school and promote a conducive and respectful place for learning and teaching processes.
 - In 2019, the Ministry of Education (ME) in collaboration UN Women also implemented a programme called “Connect with Respect (CWR)” has reached 45 schools in 7 municipalities as part of measure of implementing National Policy on Inclusive Education, which was approved in 2017 besides developing integrated training rooms, and training for teachers on gender and inclusive pedagogy. The CWR is in the discussion with MoE on integration into circle 3 of education curriculum
 - The Secretary of State for Equality to continuously coordinating and advocating with the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MEJD) now Ministry of Education to adopt a re-entry policy as a result, MEDJ issued a ministerial dispatch to all schools to allow girls to return to school after giving birth. SEI and ME continue to socialize and advocate for schools, teachers, parents and local authorities to allow pregnant girls and young mothers to return to school after giving birth.¹
 - In 2023, the Government through Ministry of Youth, Sports, Arts and Culture (MYSAC) with the support of UN WOMEN under Together for Equality (T4E) programme implemented GBV prevention through sport tournaments of basketball and the adoption of Code of Conduct for preventing and responding to GBV for Timor-Leste Basketball Federation. It is ongoing discussion with MYSAC for possibility to expand it to other sport federations in Timor-Leste.
 - Public awareness raising education not only focuses on students but also parents and the public to transform and challenge negative attitudes, social norms and stereotypes about sending girls back to school.
 - SEI and FOKUPERS, who is responsible for *UMA Mahon* or shelter, also continue to coordinate and advocate with the ME to accelerate and identify schools that can accept children of victims of gender-based violence to study in those schools.
 - SEI in collaboration with national and international partners conducted socialization and awareness raising to students and teachers in all schools in Timor-Leste.
 - Ministry of Education in collaboration with Ministry of State Administration (MAE) continue to implement school feeding programme to support and retain students in the schools and improve students nutrition.
 - The Basic Education Law No. 14/2008 highlights that education should provide equal opportunity for all boys and girls and ensure gender balance.

¹ Information collected from Focus Group Discussion with the representative of the Ministry of Education (ME)

3. Women and Health

- The 2016, Demographic Health Survey (DHS) data shows that significant progress has been made in improving maternal and child health, bringing down maternal mortality rates by an impressive 80 per cent since 1990.
- This dramatic reduction in under-five mortality rates, from 41 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2016 to 39.6 in 2021
- Infant mortality rates reduced from 45 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2009 to 30 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2016 and decreased to 31 per 1,000 live births in 2021. This data shows, there is a slight setback in 2021 which is 31 for children under 1 year old.
- The statistic shows that Timor-Leste's maternal and under-5 mortality rates remain the highest in South East Asia.
- The government continued strengthening the implementation of the family health program through domiciliary home visits particularly in rural and/or remote areas for early detection of disease and immediate referral. The integrated community health service *Servicos Integradu Saude Comunitaria*, continued delivering services in areas where health facilities were not available.
- Access to immunizations improved with the expansion of the vaccine cold chain and availability of trained health staff in health posts. Enhanced routine childhood immunization coverages led to the elimination of Measles and control Rubella in 2018, before the expected regional target in 2023. Still, around 10-20% of the population, living in very remote locations, have poor access to immunizations.

4. Violence Against Women

- The Government has concluded the implementation of National Action Plan on Gender-Based Violence (2017 – 2021) and on 28th September 2022, the Council of Ministers approved the third NAP-GBV for the period of 2022 – 2032, which was launched on the opening of the 16 Days Campaign of Activism on Violence Against Women and Girls on 25th November 2022.
- The National Action Plan (NAP) for UNSCR 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (2016-2020) was also concluded. In 2024, Timor-Leste approved a second generation of NAP for UNSCR-1325 on Women, Peace and Security (2024-2029) under the leadership of Ministry of Interior. The NAP-1325 on Women, Peace and Security as a transformative gender policy that has provided support for women to participate in peace-building, state-building, conflict resolution as well as in the general national development process.
- The Council of Ministers has approved a Decree-Law No. 9/2021 of 30 June to establish a Commission to Combat Human Trafficking, which covers four important pillars: prevention, protection, prosecution and justice. The commission consists of relevant institutions such as *Policia Cientifica Investigaçao Criminal* (PCIC), Timor-Leste National Police (PNTL), Ministry of

Social Solidarity and Inclusion (MSSI), Office of Provedoria for Human Rights and Justice (PDHJ), Ministry of Interior (MI), Ministry of Health (MH), the Secretary of State for Equality (SEI), Judicial System Monitoring Programme (JSMP), ALFeLA, and Alola Foundation.

- The Government also conduct awareness raising activities about trafficking in persons for the public in general and has reached out to 790 (476 female and 314 male) participants from law enforcement personnel such as PNTL, PNTL-VPU, *Polícia Científica Investigação Criminal* (PCIC), the Office of *Provedoria dos Direitos Humanos e Justiça* (PDHJ), Ministry of Social Solidarity and Inclusion (MSSI) and SEI.

5. Women and Armed Conflict

- The first NAP-1325 (2016-2020) has successfully implemented with over 70% of the activities including:
 - a) Dissemination of information on opportunities for women in recruitment to take part as members of the defense force;
 - b) Socialization and training concluded with 48 secondary schools in 8 municipalities in 2019 with the participation of 629 women out of 974 students (65% women participation);
 - c) Adoption of the Timor-Leste National Police first Gender Strategy, which creates a guide to respond to the barriers faced by women officers in the PNTL and actions for the institution to be able to respond to gender inequality in PNTL and in the community;
 - d) Training for civil servants in transformative leadership for gender equality (TLGE) with 88% already demonstrating changes of character for the promotion of gender equality;
 - e) Training of community mediators with 49% representation from women using gender-sensitive mediation guidelines to community conflict (civil cases), which have become a Ministerial Diploma No. 096/2020 as a guide for mediators from all institutions as part of WPS agenda (NAP -1325 Participation and Prevention Pillar) regarding the women's leading the peace processes
 - f) Recognizing and compensating and recognizing women suffering during past conflicts as well as recognizing and valuing the contribution made by women during the struggle for independence.
- Involvement of women in UN Missions. During the 2020-2022 period, 2 (out of 4) female members of PNTL have been involved in the UN Peace Mission to Africa as UNMISS and 1 female (out of 4) to Guinea Bissau in the same years. Since 2023, PNTL has begun preparations to send PNTL members including 3 female members as a UN's peacekeeping mission other countries.
- PNTL and F-FDTL have also developed training materials which includes gender perspective and established Gender Unit in F-FDTL and PNTL.

6. Women and the Economy

- The Timor-Leste Government has renewed its commitment to improve women's participation in the economy development through the approval of a third generation of Maubisse Declaration (2023-2028) to promote the socio-economic empowerment of women for the next five years.
- Gender gap in labor force and formal economy remain significantly narrowed. The results of LFS 2021 survey shows that the overall labour force participation rate in Timor-Leste was 30.5 per cent, with men at 36.9 per cent and women at 24.2 per cent.
- The LFS 2021 data also shows that male living in the rural areas more employed than female or 80.2 for male and 52.9 for female.
- To improve women's employment and participation in economic activities, the government has already taken a series of measures to address these issues including through the approval of gender sensitive and inclusive policies and programs and also providing financial support through Public Funds Transfers and access to micro-credit.
- SEI has a Women's Economic Empowerment program, which provides financial support through Public Funds Transfers and also capacity-building in the areas of business management, accounting, and market systems through collaboration with IADE, Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MCI)/SERVE and Trade Invest.
- The Government of Timor-Leste through SEFOPE in coordination with the SEI has developed a draft regime for domestic workers. The draft legal regime for domestic workers was prepared by SEFOPE since the Sixth Constitutional Government but it was never approved. Recently, SEI and SEFOPE together with relevant partners worked collaboratively to review and resubmit the draft of legal regime on domestic workers to the Council of Ministers for appreciation and approval.
- In 2021, Timor-Leste gaining UNESCO recognition on the cultural importance of Tais to Timor-Leste and recognized the valuable contribution of the women who create this beautiful textile as part of women's work to support family livelihoods and safeguard cultural heritage.

7. Women in Power and Decision Making

- Timor-Leste's women's representation in the National Parliament over the last five years in the 5th Legislative Body (2018-2023) was 40% and in the current legislative period (2023-2028) is now 38%. Even though the figures show a slight decline, the current status of women's representation in parliament still makes Timor-Leste the highest in the Asia Pacific region.
- In the 6th legislature (2023-2028) Timor-Leste has a woman as President of the National Parliament for the first time.
- Women's representation at the executive level of government has only increased by 17% compared to 13% (6 female and 46 male) which means Timor-Leste is still a long way from reaching at least 30%. The highest

representation of women in the executive body is 23%, which was in the 3rd Constitutional Government.

- Moreover, there are 822 (23%) women in comparison to 2,742, men (78.5%) in decision-making positions. While the number of civil servants in 2024 has reached 39,380, consisting of 14,115 (36%) women and 25,265 (64%) men.
- Timor-Leste has had 10 Ambassador and 7 councilors for the last five years.
- The number of women represented at the municipal level is still less, but in the last 5 years, there have been 3 women who have served as president of municipal governments in Timor-Leste.
- SEI provides funding support to the Municipal Women's Association to provide capacity building and encourage increased of women's leadership in municipal administration.

8. Institutional Mechanisms for the Advancement of Women

- SEI operating under the office of the Prime Minister (PM) and now under the Minister of Presidency of Council Ministers (MPCM) advocates, coordinates, and evaluates gender mainstreaming strategies within government institutions.
- Based on the Government Decree No 35/2017 dated 21 June, Interministerial and Municipal Gender Working Group was established to support the work of gender mainstreaming and gender responsive budgeting in sectoral ministries and municipal administration levels.
- Based on Government Decree No 35/2017 dated 21 June, an Inter-Ministerial and Municipal Gender Working Group (GWG) was established to support gender mainstreaming and gender responsive budgeting at the sectoral ministry and municipal levels. Over the past five years, SEI and its partners have continued to support strengthening the role of GWG in coordinating and advocating for gender responsive planning, budgeting and implementation in all sectors.
- The Annual Budget for SEI has been increased significantly in the last five years and strengthening the role of SEI to coordinate, advocate and promote gender equality, eliminating discrimination and violence against women and girls, and to support women's participation in economic and political life.
- SEI provides public transfer funds to women's groups and other vulnerable groups to improve their livelihoods and to encourage women to be actively involved in economic activities.

9. Human Rights of Women

- The Ministry of Health continue to implement reproductive health targeting women as women's rights to health
- Improving women's and girl's access to justice on gender-based violence in order to promote women's human rights.
- The establishment of a Vulnerable Police Unit (VPU) in the Timor-Leste National Police (PNTL) aims to investigate cases related to gender-based

violence and domestic violence offenses is the second-most prosecuted crime in the criminal justice system in all four jurisdictions.

- The government, through SEI, in collaboration with civil society organizations, has initiated discussions and proposed a review of the Domestic Violence Law to include incest cases.
- The Provedoria for Human Rights and Justice (PDHJ) and the UN Human Rights Adviser's Unit provided human rights including women's rights training to both the local authorities, PNTL and the military.
- The independent Office of the Provedoria for Human Rights and Justice is responsible for the promotion of human rights and good governance.

10. Women and the Media

- The Secretary of State for Social Communication (SECOMS) continues to make efforts to promote gender equality in the media.
- Timor-Leste Press Council (KITL) recognized the critical role of media in information dissemination and raising awareness on the elimination of violence against women and girls.
- In 2021 and 2023, SEI, SECOMS, Timor-Leste Press Council (KITL), Judicial System Monitoring Programme (JSMP) and NABILAN Program has conducted training to 41 (female 17 and male 24) journalists and editors of printing media and community radio on gender sensitive reporting.
- In 2022, Timor-Leste has had 205 of women journalists out of 417 journalists.
- The Timor-Leste Press Council has launched two handbooks for journalists on Gender Based Violence in 2023 and Inclusive Journalism in 2024.
- UN Women together with Forum Media Development Centre (FMDC) has also launched a handbook for journalists on gender sensitive reporting in 2024.

11. Women and the Environment

- Government has committed to gender equality and inclusion as a transversal element in disaster risk management.
- Timor-Leste's National Adaptation Plan included a section on demography, gender, and social inclusion considerations which recommended measures that will incorporate the differential impacts of climate change on men, women, children, elderly people, and other potentially vulnerable groups.
- In collaboration with national and international partners, the government provided essential necessities, including renting a house for those affected by the flood and planning to build a new village for those who lost their homes and land. For those who have land, the government provided construction materials to rebuild their own house. Women and other vulnerable groups are equally benefiting from the programmes.

12. The Girl-Child

- The National Institute for Defending Children's Rights, I.P (INDDICA, IP) is a government institution that defends children's rights, currently in the process

of developing a new National Action Plan (NAP) for children in Timor-Leste as a policy roadmap for government to create an environment that protects the rights of boys and girls, especially for children living in low socio-economic situations.

- INDDICA, IP is conducting training and socialization on child protection laws, the Convention on Child Rights and human trafficking to public including schools, local authorities, F-FDTL and community in general.
- INDDICA, IP carries out training and socialization on child protection laws, the Convention on the Rights of the Child and human trafficking to the community including schools, local governments, F-FDTL and society in general

National Institutions and Processes

- Gender mainstreaming and gender responsive budgeting are integrated into policies, laws, programs and sectoral budgeting. Timor-Leste has also adopted specific national policies such as the National Action on Gender-Based Violence, the National Action Plan UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security, the Maubisse Declaration to promote women's economic empowerment and the CEDAW Conclusion Observations. All of these are a five-year plan that we continually review and update every five years.
- Timor-Leste has integrated Gender Marker into Public Financial Management Systems in 2018, to track and earmark planning and budget allocation by line Ministries for the the implementation of national commitments on gender equality.
- In 2022, Government also piloting child marker, people with disabilities, climate change and value chain markers.

National Data and Statistics

- Timor-Leste approved Decree-Law No. 4/2023 of 15 February to create the National Institute of Statistics of Timor-Leste I.P to strengthening data collection, analysis and production including improving gender statistics.
- Gender data been improved throughout data collection, analysis and report presentation in Census and Timor-Leste Standard Living Survey. The gender theme in statistics for Timor-Leste's education, poverty, immunization, nutrition and employment indicators which disaggregated by gender and geographic areas. These statistics are available in at national level.²
- SEI is working with the General-Directorate of Statistics to produce joint research and to provide advice on sample design for data production.
- The National Statistics and Data System has prioritised the production and utilisation of gender statistics.
- Government efforts related to data collection and the strengthening of administrative systems are aimed at supporting the development of baseline data and to help monitor targets and indicators related to gender issues.

² Retrieved from www.inetl-ip.gov.tl

Major Challenges

Timor-Leste continue to face challenges and barriers to achieving substantive gender equality and women's empowerment. Major challenges include but are not limited to:

- The Covid-19 pandemic, political instability and natural crises have contributed significantly to the slow progress in all sectors.
- Women's political representation at all levels is still volatile and especially at the municipal level is still very low.
- Gender-based violence is still high and sometimes disputes are resolved based on traditionally held beliefs, rather than in the formal justice system
- Women's participation in the labour force is still low, and predominantly resides in the informal sectors, such as hospitality and agriculture, meaning employment is less secure and more unstable
- Budget allocation for gender policy implementation increased but the implementation is not ensured to address all gender concerns in rural areas during the period of 2019-2023.
- Budget allocations for implementing gender policies have increased but implementation is not guaranteed or ensured to address gender concerns in all sectors both at national and rural areas during the period of 2019-2023

Setbacks

Despite progress, much remains to be done to achieve gender equality to ensure women's full participation in political decision-making and promote gender equality and women's human rights to increase equal participation between women and men and other segments of society as well as ensure institutions that accountable and gender-responsive. The biggest setback in these important areas is the declining participation of women as Suco Heads and a culture of distrust of women as leaders at the village level. Moreover, at the Municipality level there has been no resolution to ensure that gender equality and women's empowerment are considered in Municipal development.

SECTION THREE: PROGRESSES ACROSS THE 12 CRITICAL AREAS OF CONCERNS

Cluster 1: Inclusive Development, Shared Prosperity and Decent Work

Critical areas of concern:

- A. Women and poverty
- F. Women and the economy
- I. Human rights of women
- L. The girl child

Women and Poverty and the Economy

The Government of Timor-Leste committed to make concentrated effort to eradicate poverty and improve women's economy to achieve inclusive development, share prosperity and decent work for women and men. The goal to eradicate extreme poverty, reduce poverty by at least half through improving and implementing social protection systems, ensure equal rights to resources, build resilience to environmental, economic and social disasters, and fund the successful implementation of poverty eradication policies. This aimed is also to contributing to achieve SDG 1 includes seven targets. However, evidence shows that, as of 2024, Timor-Leste needs to accelerate progress to achieve its target.

Moreover, the Government is continuously trying to create enabling environment to eradicate extreme poverty which can help people out from poverty specially women and men including other vulnerable groups of people from low income and those who living in the rural areas. As the extreme poverty between women and men and between urban and rural area remain due many challenges in the areas of unemployment, economic diversification and social protection policies and implementation.

The Labour Force Survey in 2021 estimated that in Timor-Leste, the total population amounted 1.3 million with 668.3 thousand men and 618.4 thousand women. People of working- age amounted to 809.3 thousand, representing for 62.9 per cent of total population. There were slightly more women (405.8 thousand) compared to men (403.6 thousand) of working-age. Young persons aged 15-24 years and elderly persons aged 65 years and above accounted respectively for 271.2 thousand (33.5 per cent) and 65.1 thousand (8 per cent) of the total working-age population.

Table 1: Key indicators by sex, Timor-Leste, 2021

	Male	Female	Total
By age			
15-24	7.4	12.4	9.6
25-64	4.5	5.2	4.7
65+1.4	3.5	2.3	
By disability status			
Without any disability	4.5	6.0	5.1
With disability	27.8	3.1	19.6
Composite rate of labour underutilization (%)	25.8	33.3	28.9
Informal employment rate (%)	75.3	80.4	77.3
Average monthly wage (US\$)	252	236	248

Source: Timor-Leste Labour Force Survey 2021.

Gender gap in labor force remain significantly narrowed. The results of LFS suvey shows that the overall labour force participation rate in Timor-Leste was 30.5 per cent, with men at 36.9 per cent and women at 24.2 per cent. The LFS 2021, data also shows that women living in the rural areas more employed than female or 80.2 for male and 52.9 for female. To improve women’s employment and participation in economic activities, the government has already taken a series of measures to address these issues including through the approval of gender sensitive and inclusive policies and programs and also providing financial support through Public Funds Transfers and access to micro-credit. For example; SEI has a Women’s Economic Empowerment program, which provides financial support through Public Funds Transfers and also capacity-building in the areas of business management, accounting, and market systems through collaboration with IADE, Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MCI)/SERVE and Trade Invest.

Over the past five years SEI’s women’s economic empowerment programme has provided financial support to women and other vulnerable grupus such as people with disabilities and member of LGBTQI community to develop economic activities in their villages. From 2019 – 2023, SEI has allocated \$776,486.00 to support 434 groups consisting of; 1) support to women and vulnerable groups as initial capital to carry out economic activities such as animal husbandries, handicrafts, food production and processing as well as kiosk/small shops. This fund uses a revolving mechanism where the group will return it’s capital so that SEI continues to support to other groups. In addition to supporting revolving funds to the groups, SEI also provided total amount of \$140.340.00 to support wome’s group and other vulnerable

groups to prevent and combat gender-based violence and promote the participation women, girls and other vulnerable groups participation in politics and decision-making positions. In total, the programme has benefited 2,743 (2,190 female and 452 male) beneficiaries over the past five years.

SEI's intervention is focused on the groups of women including women victim of gender-based violence, people with disabilities and members of the LGBTQI communities living in rural communities who experience difficulties in accessing financial resources. SEI has also assisted 5 women's groups from the Municipality of Dili to access credit from the BNCTL to run their businesses including supporting women's groups to register their businesses so that they can expand their businesses and have more access to financial resources such as microfinance credit. The SEI economic empowerment program is a strategy to support women in improving their livelihoods because when women are economically empowered, they have the capacity to advance the economy and have the power to make economic decisions to respond to market demand.

The Government of Timor-Leste aimed to support women's economic empowerment is to build women's self-confidence and to generate their own income, manage their own money and make decisions, defend their rights, and say no to violence, discrimination and traditional practices that have a negative impact on women. Women's economic empowerment will lead to a reduction of poverty and inequality, and will improve children's nutrition, their health, and enable their active participation in education.

The Government of Timor-Leste continue to make efforts to address the main challenges that beneficiaries continue to experience including placement of their products in markets, transportation and bad road conditions, market channels and supply chains. As such, the Government of Timor-Leste continues to make efforts to improve business environments for women and men both nationally and internationally.

Women are still disproportionately represented in the informal labour sector. Paid and unpaid care work, household or domestic work is mostly undertaken by women throughout the country. Women are given the responsibility of caring for children and elderly relatives, gathering food and preparing meals for the family, as well as doing household chores such as cleaning and washing. These kind of works are not well paid and is often paid less than the government's minimum wage and is therefore not considered formal work. The COVID-19 pandemic has amplified and accelerated these challenges and deepened socio-economic and geographic disparities across the country. This also means that many women do not have equal opportunities to participate in the formal labor economy.

According to LFS 2023, women were less hired 16.5 per cent compared men to 8.7 per cent, whereas women's employment in agriculture was relatively higher than male agricultural employment (31 per cent compared to 24.2 per cent, respectively).

The shares of working men and women in the service sector were similar, both around 59 per cent.³ Moreover, women compared to men were more likely to be self-employed and less likely to be in wage employment, indicating stark gender inequalities to the detriment of women in accessing more secure and stable employment as wage earners. Informal employment accounted for 77.3 per cent of all employment. The informal employment rate was distinctly higher for working women (80.4 per cent) compared to working men (75.3 per cent). Likewise, the share of informal employment in three of the five regions exceeded the national average: Region 1 (78.5 per cent), Region 2 (78.3 per cent) and Region 4 (84.9 per cent).

A gender pay gap is prevalent, with women (US\$240) earning on average around 6.6 per cent less than men (US\$257) overall. Average wages of salaried employees in Timor-Leste in 2021 was US\$252 per month.

The Government of Timor-Leste through SEFOPE in coordination with the SEI has developed a draft regime for domestic workers. The draft legal regime for domestic workers was prepared by SEFOPE since the Sixth Constitutional Government but it was never approved. Recently, SEI and SEFOPE together with relevant partners worked collaboratively to review and resubmit the draft of legal regime on domestic workers to the Council of Ministers for appreciation and approval. The legal regime is aimed to improve working condition to women and men as domestic workers. Because domestic worker is not regulated by law Timor-Leste's current labour code No. 4/2012 of 21 February. Thus, the minimum wage is also not applied to domestic workers, no paid leave, sick leave, and day-off during national holidays as well as other benefits. In addition, as stated in the Labor Code Labor article 2 point 3 and 4 that domestic workers are exempted from labour relations that involves family members working in small, family-run properties, agriculture or industrial, whose output is destined to support family subsistence.

The Ninth Constitutional Government Programme stipulated the importance of ensuring better working conditions for women particularly by reviewing labour legislation therefore SEI have made it as an important issue that prioritized it in its one hundred working days after taking a post.

To reduce inequality, over the past five years, the Government of Timor-Leste together with Timor-Leste labour Union (KSTL) have worked collaboratively to socialize the importance of domestic worker contribution in economic development and progress. The socialization includes raising awareness to domestic workers to know their rights and to employer to improve working condition including providing salary to domestic workers based on the government minimum salary of \$115/month.

³ Timor-Leste Standard Living Survey 2023

Through the SEI, the government between 2019 and 2023 has continue strenthening the mechanism to provide financial support to beneficiary groups, success groups, vulnerable groups, and NGOs in economic sectors aiming to:

- Empower women and other vulnerable groups capacity to undertake economic activities and generate income for the family so that they can actively participate in social, political and cultural life;
- Improve women ability and skills in management, finance, organization, leadership and decision-making
- Promote gender equality and equality of opportunity for work and strengthen women's subsistence economies through self-employment and self-confidence;
- Encourage women to organize and to work in groups or teams;
- Contribute to the poverty reduction by encouraging women to participate in the process of national economic development; and
- Provide opportunities to women to gain trust from micro-finance institutions for women to access credit.

Budget support from Public Funds Transfers have provided funds equally distributed to the 12 municipalities and the RAEOA and a range of different economic activities to achieve gender equality in economic life and reduce women's economic dependency on men. For the period 2019 to 2023, a total of 776,486.00 have allocated to 433 beneficiary groups in all municipalities and RAEOA. SEI also allocated 434.598.00 to NGOs that work on women's economic empowerment, inclusion and implement National Action Plan agains Gender Based Violence as such as; 1) Women's Economic Empowerment (Acbiit, HASATIL, Sentru Esperança ba Feto, Assosiasaun Empoderamentu Ekonomia; 2) Prevention of Pilar of NAP-GBV (FOKUPERS, ALFELA, REDE FETO, Alola Foundation, SSPS Nuns, Peace House in Viqueque and Luzeiro in Lospalos); 3) Women's participation in politics (CAUCUS, MOFFE, PATRIA and Women's Assosiation); 4) Inclusion is provided to the organization of people with disabilities (RHTO, Beata Laura Vicuna Orphanage).

In 2029-2023, SEI introduce financial support to women's group with revolving mechanism. This mechanism aimed to provide encourage and build women's groups capacity to utilize the fund for economic activities that is responsible to other groups. Meaning the group will return the capital in two years so that the fund will allocate to other groups and reach more group in all rural areas across the country. Through SEI's women's economic empowerment programme SEI also coordinate with SERVE to support women to register their bussinesses to make it as formal bussiness. The tables bellows shows that 24.02% women have registered their bussiness activities.

Table 2: Number of Business activities registered on the SERVER system in Timor 2019-2023

Sex	Number	Percentage
Female	189	24.02%
Male	598	75.98%
Total	787	

Moreover, the system also registered types of business that women and men are focusing on across Timor-Leste the past five years.

Table 3: Types of Businesses registered on SERVER in 2012-2023

No	Types of business activities	Feto	Mane	Feto %	Mane %
1	EP	3	17	0.38%	2.16%
2	Lda	66	219	8.39%	27.83%
3	R.P	17	50	2.16%	2.16%
4	S.A	30	171	3.81%	21.73%
5	Unipessoal.Lda	73	141	9.28%	17.92%

The programme has helped increase family income and enabled women to participate in other strategic activities and programs in their communities. It is also aimed at preventing economy dependency and reducing violence against women and children particularly girls.

It is also aimed to provide an opportunity women and other vulnerable group to have access to financial services so that they opportunity to control their own wealth and have bargaining power in family decision making. When women have access to financial and banking services will contribute to economic development of the country.

Women in Overseas Seasonal Workers Program

The Secretary of State for Professional Training and Employment (SEFOPE) is the State entity responsible for matters relating to vocational training, employment and labour. The government, through SEFOPE, has established non-discriminatory legal frameworks for men's and women's skills development and improving productivity to ensure the promotion of gender equality in national development. SEFOPE has established legal provisions to ensure women's labour rights including annual leave, maternity leave, and breastfeeding leave for those with young babies.

SEFOPE has also established agreements for at least 50% participation by women in recruitment for trainings and for employment. SEFOPE has had an attaché to assist in its work regarding labour in Australia and Korea. The attaché's role involves overseeing women working overseas, assisting them in receiving fair and equal treatment. In the period from 2019 to 2024, SEFOPE has assisted many East Timorese youth in obtaining work overseas. It is reported that in 2023, overseas seasonal

workers sent by SEFOPE to Australia has reached 4,239, the number has rised compared to 3,565 in 2022. Of these 4,239 seasonal workers 1,328 or 31% were women. These 4,329 comprised of 2221 renewal contracts and 2,361 new contract for the past five years. The data shows that the percentage of women in the workforce has not yet reached the 50% as stipulated in the recruitment agreement, but that women beneficiaries have reached increased to 34% compared to the last reporting period. The workforce sent to Australia mainly work in the area of hospitality and hurticulture. Overall women consisted 30% of seasonal workers in Australia over the last five years.

Table 4: Timorese Seasonal Workers in Australia

Year	Sex		Total	%	
	Male	Female		Male	Female
2019	1266	456	1722	74%	26%
2020	425	117	542	78%	22%
2021	18	1	19	95%	5%
2022	2517	1048	3565	71%	29%
2023	3138	1444	4239	74%	34%
Total	7364	3066	10087	73%	30%

Even though the 50% participation rate agreed has not been achieved, SEFOPE considers women’s participation in the seasonal workers program to be a significant contribution to the promotion of gender equality as it achieved at least 30%.

Table 5: Timore workers in Korea

YEAR	Area of works							Total
	Fisheries		Factories		%	Agriculture		
	Male	Female	Male	Female		Male	Female	
2019	386	0	125	4	3%	0	0	515
2020	11	0	14	0	0	0	0	25
2021	156	0	76	0	0	0	0	232
2022	824	0	352	11	3%	0	0	1187
2023	565	1	200	14	7%	0	0	780
Total	1942	1	767	29	4%	0	0	2739

The participation of Timorese women workforce in South Korea continue to 4% is very low in comparison to their participation in the seasonal workers program in Australia where employment offered by the majority of companies is in hospitality and horitculture, leading to greater participation (29%) the last reporting period and now has progressed to 34% from women in 2023.

Women in Business

Female entrepreneurs make up 43% of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises owners in Timor-Leste and are identified as engines of growth in the national economy. It is estimated that the number has slightly rose to 43% in 2024 from 40% the last reporting period. Although women have a lower representation in the formal sectors, their participation is very high in agricultural businesses, where many sell their products in markets, and also manage kiosks. However, women face greater challenges starting and scaling their businesses than men. Key barriers to women's ability to participate in and benefit from economic activities includes entrenched gender norms and expectations, time poverty, limited access to productive resources and finance, and gender-based violence. Access to productive resources is heavily influenced by patriarchal social norms which dictated that land should be owned by husbands, limiting women's ability to access credit and other financial services for business. moreover, these challenges and barriers for wome in bussiness also due to lower educational participation in a competitive bussines cultural environment which is dominated by men.

Despite challenges faced by women in bussiness there are several enabling framework as an opportunities for women to undertake economic activities in various areas. These includes the establishment of Timor-Leste Women's Business Association (AEMTL) as an umbrella organization for women who lead medium-sized bussinesses. The Timor-Leste Women's Business Association (AEMTL) is a Business Association with the mission of promoting and advising entrepreneurial business women and preparing them to compete and succeed in Timor-Leste's emerging private sector. AEMTL is determined to introduce new trends into the current dynamics of the Private Sector. Given the critical role that women play, AEMTL will directly contribute to poverty reduction and effectively contribute to sustainable economic growth of the nation. AEMTL aimed to support women peers to become economically independent and have the financial freedom to follow their dreams for their families and for the Country.

Timor-Leste has established Gender-Responsive Legal and Policy Frameworks as a foundation to promote gender equality and women's empowerment in all sectors including in economic sectors. The Constitution of Timor- Leste stipulated clearly that "women and men shall have the same rights and duties in all areas of family, political, economic, social and cultural life," and proclaims that promoting ". Moreover, the Strategic Development Plan (SDP) 2011-2030 also explicitly commits to developing policies and frameworks that "empower women socially and economically through various livelihood support measures" as a strategy to achieve the vision of a "gender-fair society where human dignity and women's rights are valued, protected and promoted" by Timor-Leste's laws and culture.

To ahieve its commitments Government also make micro and grant available to women's groups to undertake economic actitivities. Women's groups receive micro-grants from the government and non-profit organizations to start a variety of small

businesses, and training from government ministries and institutions such as Ministry of Commerce and Industry, IADE and also in collaboration with the bank. SEI also works with the Ministry of Tourism, Commerce and Industry (MTCI) providing technical and financial support for the development of business activities for women in micro and small enterprises in the capital Dili, in the municipalities and rural areas. MTCI's programs include but are not limited to granting of financial support, equipment and short-term technical/vocational education and training (TVET) courses for women entrepreneurs, supporting cooperatives, building basic infrastructure to facilitate economic activities including markets, training/incubator centers, industrial parks and tourist areas, and promoting and facilitating producers especially women's groups in accessing domestic and international markets.

According data, from 2019-2024, SEI has provided training to their public transfers fund to women's economic empowerment programme with the beneficiaries total budget allocated USD\$1,428,000.00 for all municipalities and RAEOA. The training is focusing on financial literacy, management, accounting, business plan and linkig with marker and leadership. The tables bellow showing the amount funds have been allocated women's economic empowerment in the last five years in all municipalities.

Table 6: Public Transfer Fund Allocated to Beneficiaries from 2019-2023

NO.	Year	Amount Approved	Expenditures	Ammount Allocated to WEE
1.	2019	\$250,000.00	\$248,000.00	\$143,383.00
2.	2020	\$48,000.00	\$48,000.00	\$44,000.00
3.	2021	\$630,000.00	\$584,636.20	\$273,516.00
4.	2022	\$300,000.00	\$300,000.00	\$247,577.00
5.	2023	\$200,000.00	\$200,000.00	\$68,000.00
Grand Total		\$1,428,000.00	\$380,636.20	\$776,486.00

Table 7: Allocation of Public Tranfers Fund to Municipalities

No.	Municipal ities	Allocation of Public Transfer Fund in USD\$					
		2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Total
1.	Aileu	12,000.00	6,000.00	29,227.00	22,000.00	9,000.00	78,227.00
2.	Ainaro	14,000.00	2,000.00	5,500.00	14,000.00	7,500.00	43,000.00
3.	Baucau	13,190.00	4,000.00	13,227.00	34,500.00	7,500.00	72,417.00
4.	Bobonaro	10,890.00	-	18,000.00	27,000.00	-	55,890.00
5.	Covalima	12,000.00	10,000.00	39,227.00	23,000.00	12,000.00	91,227.00
6.	Dili	10,000.00	-	13,227.00	23,000.00	9,000.00	55,227.00
7.	Ermera	11,000.00	10,000.00	55,227.00	32,500.00	6,000.00	114,727.00
8.	Lautem	8,313.00	4,000.00	16,000.00	19,727.00	2,000.00	50,040.00
9.	Liquisa	10,000.00	2,000.00	20,227.00	15,000.00	7,000.00	54,227.00
10.	Manatuto	10,000.00	2,000.00	13,227.00	19,000.00	-	44,227.00

11.	Manufahi	14,000.00	2,000.00	29,200.00	9,000.00	4,000.00	58,200.00
12.	Viqueque	10,000.00	4,000.00	21,227.00	13,850.00	4,000.00	53,077.00
13.	RAEOA	8,000.00	-	-	-	-	8,000.00
Total		143,393.00	44,000.00	273,516.00	247,577.00	68,000.00	776,486.00

Figure 1: Public Transfer Fund Allocation

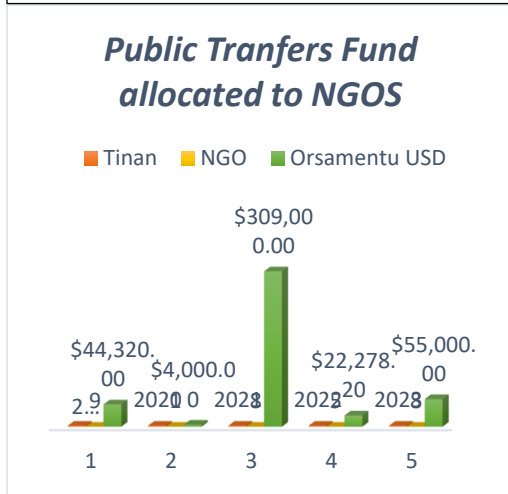


Table 8: Public Fund Allocated to NGOs

Year	Number of NGOs	Amount allocated
2019	9	\$44,320.00
2020	1	\$4,000.00
2021	8	\$309,000.00
2022	5	\$22,278.20
2023	8	\$55,000.00
Total		\$434,598.00

Table 8 above shows that 41 NGOs have also benefiting from public transfers fund to conduct activities related to women’s empowerment in economic and political participation.

Women in Vocational Training Programs

According to the data from SEFOPE, women make up 60% of the trainees in municipalities and 38% in Dili. The courses in the districts with predominantly women include drying fish, hotel and restaurant management, sewing, local product, livelihood and IT/office skills. SEFOPE has established vocational training centres providing education for women to enhance their careers in the private and public sectors. in 2021, 229 registered training centers in Timor-Leste, 14 were eligible to received USD\$423,050.35 from SEFOPE to provide capacity building and training to young women and men Timor-Leste in order to attain market demand skills.

Table 9: SEFOPE Allocated Funds to 14 Youth Centers in 2021

No.	Youth Centers	Amount US\$ Allocated
1.	Comoro Youth Vocational Training Center (STVJ-Comoro)	53,491.00
2.	Camea Youth Vocational Training Centers (STVJ-Camea)	35,063.50
3.	Bairo-Pite Youth Vocational Training Center	15,850.50
4.	Youth Vision Training Center (STVF-Dili)	21,327.00

5.	Balide Computer training center (CFSC)	15,773
6.	Hamutuk Ita Ajuda Malu (HIAM-Health)	23,390.00
7.	Baucau Community Development Center (CDC-Baucau)	74,028.50
8.	Integral Development Training Center (CTID-Baucau)	31,888.50
9.	Claret-Salele Suai	41,589.00
10.	Canossa Vocational Training Center (CVTC-Suai)	23,408.45
11.	Gleno Youth Vocational Training Center (STVJ-Gleno)	38,794.00
12.	Integrated Institute of Matadalan (IMI-Gleno)	9,532.40
13.	Dressmaker Training Center (CFIC-Fuiluro)	25,820.00
14	Youth and Children Integral Training Center (CFIJC-Manatuto)	15,092.50
	Total	423, 050.35

Source: Retrieved from Tatoli new on 06 August 2021

Digital inclusion for women

In 2022, SEI and the Secretary of State for Social Communication (SECOMS) initiated a joint campaign on digital literacy to raise awareness among young people and society at large about the importance of information digitalization for news publication. This aimed to reach more population in the rural areas including women. The Ministry of Telecommunication (MTC) also provided training and capacity building to women enterprises and students in two Municipalities, Lautem and Covalima to increase their knowledge on how to use ICT to promote their local products to the market. The training also focusing on students particularly on how to use ICT to collect data in the research. It is also aimed to enhance the capacity of women and girls in rural areas about ICT to ensure investment sustainability and increasing productivity.

Women in the rural areas increasingly using android mobile phones to communicate, therefore it is important that the training was provided to rural women as a way to improve rural women's access to ICT and enhance their capacity and ability through ICT development to support their access to agriculture facilities and online market. The government also launched a *Balcão Uniku*/one shop center to improve services to the people specially for Republic Democratic Timor-Leste (RDTE) certificate, business registration and consultation.

The training on the use of ICT for communication has also been prioritizing girls education on how to use ICT safely including protecting boys and girls from cyber bullying and cyber-based violence against girls. It is therefore, the Institute for Child Rights Defender, I.P (INDDICA, IP) has worked with different stakeholder in socialising children rights including protecting children from child labour and cyber based-violence against children and especially girls. INDDICA, IP organized a meeting as an open forum to listen to children's voice. The meeting discussed about improving school condition, improving access to water and sanitation, child labour and ICT and among other issues that can contribute to poverty eradication and promote better working condition and learning opportunities for children.

Moreover, it recognized women underrepresented in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) fields, at both education and professional levels, is the key factor promoting the digital gender gap. Women generally not encourage to take up science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) therefore the Government has started socializing and providing opportunities to young women and girls to take STEM as their field of studies.

As oil highly dependent country, Timor-Leste made substantial efforts to diversify its economy with focus on the development of agriculture, tourism, manufacturing and petrochemical industries. These sectors are seen as potential sectors to reduce poverty and contribute towards inclusive and sustainable development through the creation of employment and livelihoods for all population particularly Timorese young women and men. Creating a conducive macroeconomic and business environment and prudent fiscal policy must underpin the economic diversification process and private sector development in order to attain vibrant and inclusive growth, which are paramount for the implementation of Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and achieving global aspiration on leaving no one behind as 2030 Agenda.

The Government through Baucau Municipal Authorities in collaboration with UN WOMEN and TOMAK implemented Safe Market in Baucau Market. The project aims to improve market conditions in order to support women, children, people with disabilities and other vulnerable groups' economic activities.

In addition, in 2022, OXFAM Australia together with jointly conducted by BIFANO, AFFOS, MANEO, RHTO and OXFAM Australia in Timor-Leste facilitated by Bridging Peoples conducted an evaluation to the market in Oecusse. Market is important place for economic activities for men, women and girls, people with disabilities and all other vulnerable groups. Data estimated that 75-90% are women vendors in the market.⁴ The vendors are consisting of permanent and non-permanent vendors. Women are mostly consisting of non-permanent vendors as they come and go based on the market time. The findings of the evaluation indicates that markets are not gender sensitive and accessible to people with disabilities. Thus, it needs to be improved with gender and inclusive planning and construction of the markets to contribute to women's economic empowerment.

In December 2021, Timor-Leste celebrated women's contributions to an important historical milestone as UNESCO recognized TAIS as cultural heritage. Following that, Timor-Leste approved the National Plan for Safeguarding TAIS and established the National Committee for the Cultural Heritage of Timor-Leste consisting of representatives of SEI, the Secretary of State for Arts and Culture (SEAC) and the Ministry of Tourism, Commerce and Industry (MTCI) in collaboration with UN Women,

⁴ Avaliasaun ba Merkadu Jéneru, Oecusse 2022 jointly conducted by BIFANO, AFFOS, MANEO, RHTO and OXFAM Australi in Timor-Leste facilitated by Bridging Peoples

Timor Aid and the Alola Foundation. In addition, Women Weavers were also registered as economic collective efforts called “*Rede Soru Na'in.*” This initiative creates an important link between preventing Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and Women's Economic Empowerment (WEE) to more than 600 rural women. Moreover, in 2023, the first retail space owned and managed by female weavers was established in Dili, inaugurated by the President of the Republic of Timor-Leste, Dr. Jose Ramos Horta. This was done through a collaborative work between SEI, UN Women, Timor Aid and the Alola Foundation. It aims to provide opportunities for rural women to increase their access to markets and increase their income.

The Government recognizes the paramount of a gender and inclusive planning and budgets ensures that the needs and interest of individuals with diverse identities considering, gender, age, abilities, geographic location, income etc are addressed adequately in government budgets and revenue policies. Thus, Timor-Leste has formally introduced gender responsive budgeting through National Parliament resolution No.12/2010 as a strategic approach to integrate gender perspective into planning and budgeting processes. This commitment has strengthened through the integration of Gender Markers into the Public Financial Management System (PFMS) as an instrument for tracking and earmarking line ministries' budget allocation on the implementation of gender equality and social inclusion commitments that both made internationally and nationally such as Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, CEDAW Concluding Observation, SDGs, National Action Plans on UN Resolution 1325, Women, Peace and Security, National Action Plans against Gender-Based Violence, Maubissie Declaration, National Action Plan on the Rights of People with Disabilities etc.

Cluster 2: Poverty Eradication, Social Protection and Social Services

Critical Areas of Concern:

- A. Women and Poverty
- B. Education and Training of Women
- C. Women and Health
 - I. Human Rights of Women
 - L. The Girl Child

Women in Poverty

Women's and Girls' Rights and Poverty Eradication in Relation to the Pandemic Covid-19 Recovery

In 2020, the world was shocked by the global spread of the COVID-19 pandemic. Timor-Leste registered its first case on 21st March 2020, and responded by closing its border and introduced a State of Emergency measures to address the situation, including closing down all in-person school activities and replacing it with online school programme, suspending masses at churches and implementing a lockdown policy except for essential activities and services. ⁵

The State of Emergency measures that were introduced had socio-economic impacts on the livelihood of the population, and to address the situation, the government approved the Economic Recovery Plan to reduce the socio-economic impact of Covid-19 to the population. The National Parliament approved a total budget of \$219.5 million from the Petroleum Fund for an autonomous COVID-19 Fund to finance the Covid-19 measures where its planning and allocation are coordinated by the Integrated Crisis Management Centre of Pandemic Covid-19 (CIGC).⁶

Out of the \$219.5 million, the government utilized \$91,716, 636.00 to implement 19 diverse economic responses, such as the food basket “*Cesta Basica*” programme, which provides food basket worth \$25/per person in the family.⁷ *Cesta Basica* is aimed as a strategy to support the people of Timor-Leste while stimulating the dynamic of the local economy through circulating financial resources to improve local production to minimize the effect of the covid-19 pandemic on the country’s economy. Additionally, the Government also introduced the following measures: (a) fund to subsidize transport and connectivity of weekly flights between Dili-Darwin, and maritime transport of two trips/month between Dili to Oe-cusse and Atauro, to ensure sufficient rice supplies, (b) 24-hour support for cargo transportation from Port to warehouse, (c) acquirement of agricultural and fishery inputs (fertilizer, seeds, etc.) to ensure agricultural and fisheries production,) (d) Purchase of SMS bundles to support electricity credits, cash transfers, and other communications, (e) provision of subsidized internet connectivity for 67,500 higher education students and professors and 165,000 secondary students, (f) waiver of 3 months tuition fee for tertiary students, (g) implementation of an alert system to track known COVID-19 cases, (h) provision of \$15 per month of free electricity to an estimated 160,555 metered households, (i) provision of free water to all households, (j) provision a \$200 cash payment to each household (MSSI), (k) wage subsidy payments to an estimated 30,000 wage earners covering 60% of their salaries, (l) assistance to approximately 2,488 Timorese students overseas with living expenses, (m) training at training centers to support the youth to set up a business and (n) transportation subsidy to public transport drivers.⁸ The Council of Ministers also decided to develop and implement a shifting system for Government officials’ to continue working during the lockdown in order to prevent and reduce the spread covid-19 and, at the same time

⁵ General State budget book 1: an Overview. Integrated Crisis Management Center (CIGC) is established to manage Covid-19 fund to finance expenses related to prevention and fight against Covid-19 based on Decree Law No.12/2020.

⁶ Decree Law No. 48/2020 of 7 October, as amended by Decree Law No. 1/2021 of 7 January.

⁷ Decree Law No. 48/2020 of 7 October, as amended by Decree Law No. 1/2021 of 7 January.

⁸ General State Budget Book 1: an Overview.

guaranteeing the delivery of public services and the functioning of Government offices.

The economic recovery programme was designed to be implemented in a universal manner for the benefit of all populations, including women, men, people with disabilities and members of the LGBTQI community. The Government through Ministry of Social Solidarity also paid \$200 subsidy perhousehold across the country. At the same time, the Government recognizes that there are still some challenges in the implementation of a \$200 cash payment to the family. These challenges are (1) the cultural practices that usually consider men as the head of the family, and the definition of the family consists of husband, wife and children. Therefore, men and/or husbands are the head of the family, they should be the person who entitles to represent the family to receive the cash. There are cases where women were not given the opportunity to receive the money if their husbands were not present; (2) Widow or single mothers were asked to register under their brothers' family; (3) LGBTQI couples are not considered as family, therefore, they didn't have right to cash payment; (4) Men and women who are single but responsible for family members who are living with them were also having difficulties to have access to cash payment; and (5) lack of information and distance on the process of how to get family card were also the most significant factor for women, people with disability and elderly who lives alone to get a family card and access the support.⁹ Therefore, the Secretary of State for Equality (SEI) is working closely with women's organizations to actively advocate and coordinate with relevant Ministries and institutions to improve the process and to provide more information to local authorities to give attention to vulnerable groups properly. Recognizing that the programme is relatively new, the Government welcomes inputs to improve the process and services in the future.

Moreover, the government also established a hotline service to receive information about Covid-19 during lockdown or state of emergency, the Secretary of State for Equality (SEII) now the Secretarty of State for Equality (SEI) and Rede Referral System also distributed information to isolation centers, homes and to the public, in general, to call to if they experience any gender-based violence. The Office of the Provedoria for Direitos Humanos e Justiça (PDHJ) also launched a hotline to receive human rights violation complains from all citizens.¹⁰

Tropical Cyclone Seroja was followed by heavy rains across Timor-Leste from 29 March 2021 to 4 April 2021, resulting in flash floods and landslides affecting all 13 municipalities in Timor-Leste to varying degrees, with the capital Dili and the surrounding low-lying areas the worst -affected. To support population who were damage severely by the flood and lost their house and home, the Government through Ministry of Social Solidary (MSSI) support construction materials to the population to renovate their houses.

⁹ Gender analysis on the impact of Covid-19 on women's economic empowerment.

¹⁰ The PDHJ Facebook page.

Social Security for Women

Timor-Leste's social security scheme was established in 2016 which includes a general scheme that is mandatory and contributory for all formal employed workers (employers and employees) from private and public sector. It also includes a voluntary scheme for all other workers. The new system provides an old age pension, disability pension, survivor pension and benefits, and parental (maternity and paternity) benefits. Currently, the effective coverage is still very low, particularly in a country where informal work dominates. Although the current non-contributory social protection programs aim to target all different groups of vulnerable people including women, people with disabilities, the effective coverage is similarly very low and benefits amounts are inadequate for an effective impact on national poverty reduction.

In 2022, Timor-Leste approved its National Social Protection Strategy 2021-2030 as important milestone aimed to contribute poverty eradication, improving and expanding social security for workers. The social protection is a right enshrined in the constitution of Timor-Leste, and this commitment is reflected in the broad range of existing policies and programs.

Law No. 12/2016 of 14 November, which entered into force in 2017, represents a major step forward in the progressive organization of a social security system in Timor-Leste. The scheme includes pensions for old age, invalidity and survivors,, allowances for maternity/paternity/adoption and work accidents. Protection is provided to approximately 113,496 workers (2022).¹¹ Following are non-contributory social protection schemes:

1. Bolsa da Mãe and Bolsa da Mãe-Jerasaun Foun

Bolsa da Mae/mother's pocket was introduced in 2008 to support poor and vulnerable households women with children. However, most registered beneficiaries are over the age of seven, missing early childhood, the most critical period of development that shapes children's long-term health, nutrition and education outcomes. Recognising these issues, in 2021, the Government of Timor-Leste committed to improve *Bolsa da Mae*'s coverage and investment levels. Thus, based on Law No. 22/2021, in June 2022, the Government of Timor-Leste launched and piloted the implementation of *Bolsa da Mãe-Jerasaun Foun* (*Bolsa da Mãe-New Generation*) programme in three Municipalities namely Ainaro, Bobonaro and RAEOA which aims to be expanded to all municipalities in stages. *Bolsa da Mae - Jerasaun Foun* (new generation) to reach pregnant women (for the first time) and children. Under *Jerasaun Foun*, pregnant women receive USD15 per month, and caregivers receive USD20 per month for children. An additional USD10 per month is provided if

¹¹ Timor-Leste Social Security, retrieved from: <https://www.social-protection.org/gimi/ShowCountryProfile.action?iso=TL#:~:text=Non%2Dcontributory%20system%20in%20Timor,their%20families%2C%20and%20a%20near%20>

a child has a disability. People register at health clinics, encouraging them to seek maternal and child health care. The program is also expanding women's access to financial services.

At the end of 2023, the programme was implemented in 7 (seven) municipalities including, Covalima, Liquisa, Manatuto, and Viqueque with the total amount of funds USD\$10,263,914 for 66,060 beneficiaries of women and children. Funding for Bolsa da Mãe-Jerasaun Foun was provided through Australia's Pacific COVID-19 Response Package as budget support through is supporting the Ministry of Social Solidarity and Inclusion to implement the first phase of Bolsa da Mãe - *Jerasaun Foun*. The Australia-Timor-Leste Partnership for Human Development (PDH) is providing ongoing technical support, including partnering with Catalpa to build an electronic registration system to replace inefficient paper-based systems and improve program monitoring and reporting.¹²

In addition, it is important to highlight that both *Bolsa da Mãe* and *Bolsa da Mãe-Jerasaun Foun* aimed to contribute to achieving the vision made in the National Strategy for Social Protection 2021-2030 which states that that "by 2030, Timor-Leste aims to achieve the end of poverty, promote peace, ensure access to health care, education and other essential services, ensure adequate care for children, the elderly and the disabled, and protect the population from social and economic risks."

In 2024, the 9th Constitutional Government decided to postpone the subsidy for Bolsa da Mãe Jerasaun-Foun but continue with the payment of *Bolsa da Mãe* which was implemented before Bolsa da Mãe Jerasaun-Foun. The value of Bolsa da Mãe has increased from USD\$30 to USD\$50.

2. Subsidy to people with disabilities and old-age social pension

Universal social pension for elderly of 60 years old and above is a kind of pension that provides to old-age people in order to leave in dignity. As of 2024, social pension has benefited 97,639 person which composed of subsidy for 88,915 for elderly and 8,724 for people with disabilities. The Government decided the amount for elderly based on age which is \$60 for 60-70 years old, \$80 for 71-80 years old and \$100 for 81 and above years old/month. While subsidy for people with disabilities is \$50/month.

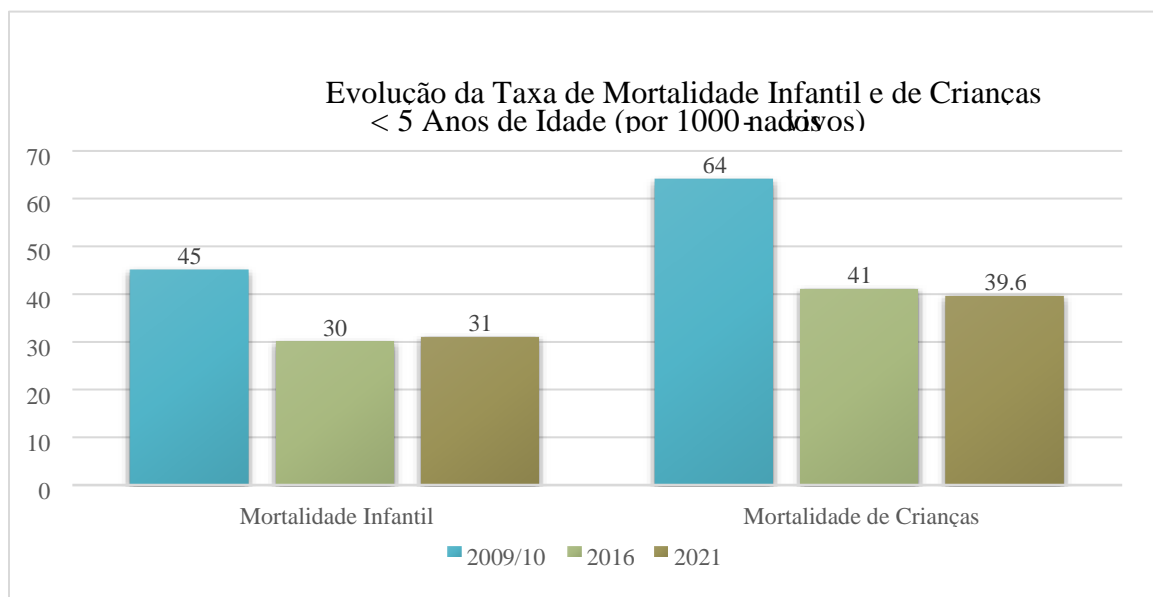
The Government believed that this programme will contribute to the elimination of extreme poverty and to achieve the goal of providing assistance to vulnerable women and children in Timor-Leste as well as improving nutrition for women and children and children with disabilities.

¹² Investing in Timor-Leste's children through the *Bolsa da Mae - Jerasaun Foun* cash transfer program

Women's Health

The 2016, Demographic Health Survey (DHS) data shows that made significant progress in improving maternal and child health, bringing down maternal mortality rates by an impressive 80 per cent since 1990. This dramatic reduction in under-five mortality rates, from 41 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2016 to 39.6 in 2023. Infant mortality rates reduced from 45 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2009 to 30 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2016. However, there is a slight setback in 2021 which is 31 for children under 1 year old. The statistic shows that Timor-Leste's maternal and under-5 mortality rates remain the highest in South East Asia.

Figure 2: Child Mortality Rate



The Government recognizes that improving mother and child mortality programme contributes to achieving Sustainable Development Goals 3 – good health and well-being of the population by ensuring healthy lives and promoting well-being is important to building prosperous societies with strong and healthy human capital for the country's present and future development.

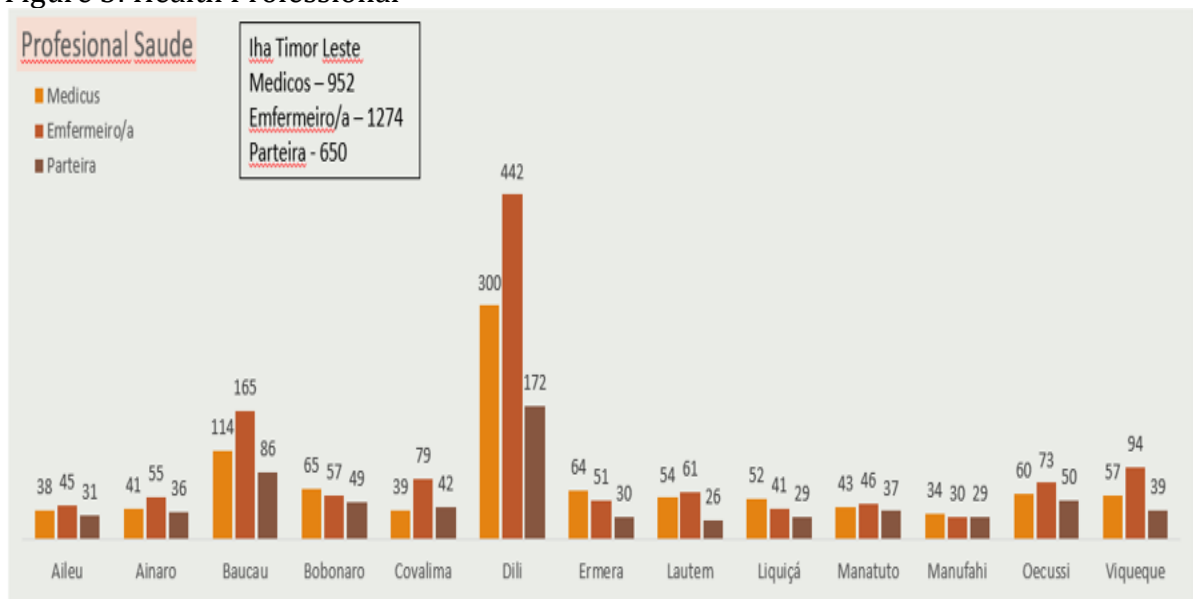
It is therefore, the Government continuously prioritising maternal and infant health, by increasing ante-natal and post-natal visits for pregnant women.¹³ The data from Ministry of Health shows that pregnant women in January – December 2023 is 36,952 which visit ante natal care (KI) is 107%, this number is declined to 55% when the visits done at the

¹³ The first Ante-natal visit (ANC I) and the fourth Ante-natal visit (ANC IV) have increased from 74.6% and 41.6% in 2014 to 78% and 46% in 2018, respectively. Births attended by skilled health personnel have also increased from 57.7% in 2014 to 65% in 2018 and births at health facilities have also increased from 42.2% in 2014 to 45% in 2018. The first post-natal visit (PNC I) and the second post-natal visit (PNC II) have increased from 43% and 42.4% in 2014 to 50% and 46% in 2018, respectively.

four times. While pregnant women who undertaken post natal care (PNC) in the first 7 days after deliver at health facilities is 60%. The proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel is increased from 30% in 2010 to 56.7% in 2016 (DHS). The investments on a newborn health is remain a priority to ensure a healthier generation that performs better in school and later becomes part of a productive workforce, ultimately boosting economic growth for all.

The graph bellow shows that in general health personal in Timor-Leste has 952 medical docter, nurses 1,274 and 650 midwife. The highest number is in Dili which is nurses is 442, Medical docter is 300 and midwife is 172 and the lowest is Manufahi which is Medical docter is 35, nurse is 30 and midwife is 29.

Figure 3: Health Professional



Source: Ministry of Health

In order to improve the capacity of health professional in providing services related to reproductive health Ministry of Health also working in collaboration with development partners like USAID to deliver 720 health promotion sessions to 11,317 people of which 8,908 (79 percent) were women. These sessions promote the importance of antenatal care visits, danger signs during pregnancy and delivery, family planning, nutrition education, sanitation and hygiene education.

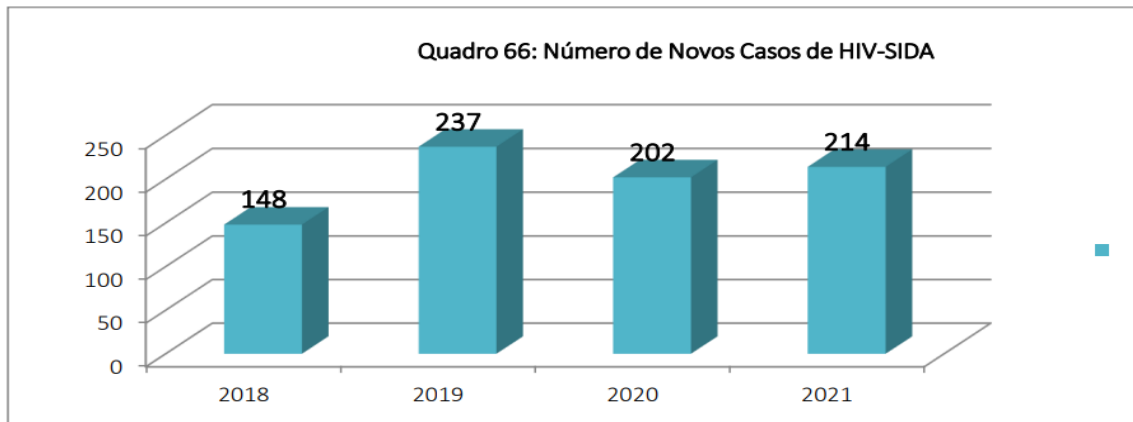
The government continued strengthening the implementation of the family health program through domiciliary home visits particularly in rural and/or remote areas for early detection of disease and immediate referral. The integrated community health service *Servicos Integradu Saude Comunitaria*, continued delivering services in areas where health facilities were not available. Moreover, the government continued establishing new health facilities in areas with low service coverage in order to cover all areas in across the country.

Access to immunizations improved with the expansion of the vaccine cold chain and availability of trained health staff in health posts. Enhanced routine childhood immunization coverages led to the elimination of Measles and control Rubella in 2018, before the expected regional target in 2023. Still, around 10-20% of the population, living in very remote locations, have poor access to immunizations.¹⁴

Despite the low prevalence rate of HIV (around 0.2%)⁵⁰, this rate is rapidly increasing and most likely under-reported. Although national legislation protects the rights of people living with HIV,⁵¹ they experience significant stigma and discrimination even within their families, communities and the health care sector.¹⁵

Graph below shows about the numbers of new HIV/AIDS affected from 2018-2022 which shows that the highest numbers cases was in 2019 which is 237 cases. The total number up to 2021 is 1,526.

Figure 4: Number of HIV/AIDS cases from 2018-2021



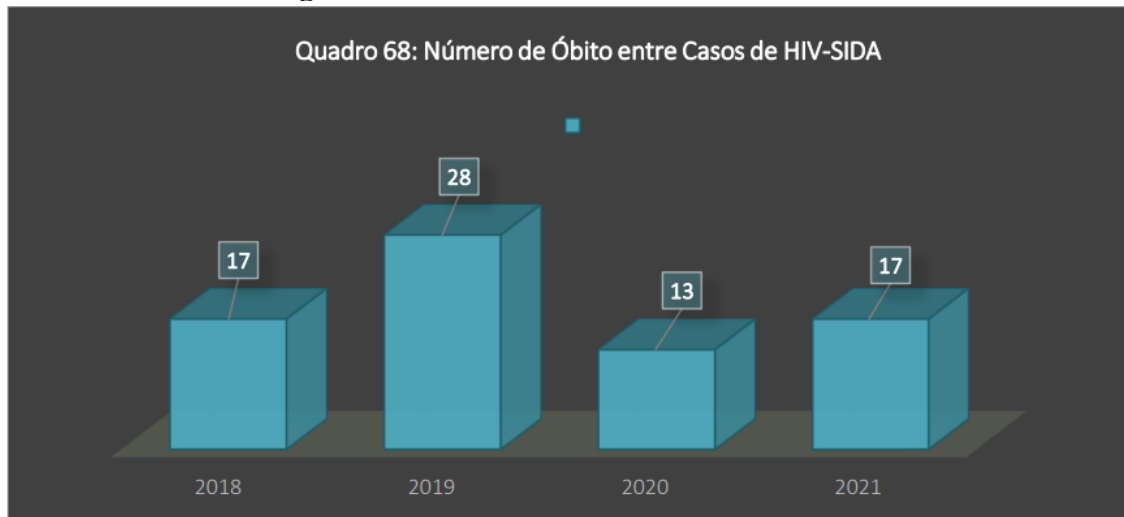
Graph from Ministry of Health

While the bellow graph shows that the death case among HIV/AIDS affected persons was in 2019 which is 28 death.

¹⁴ UNCT UPR report

¹⁵ HIV Stigma Index Report. Dili, Timor-Leste (2017), Estrela+.

Figure 5: Number of HIV/AIDS death cases



Source: Graph from Ministry of Health

The Ministry of Health through HIV/AIDS programme continuously conducting education to raise awareness of the people about to prevent and protect themselves from HIV/AIDS. The activities include:

- Established VCT in 72 SSK across Timor-Leste
- Awareness raising about prevention and combating HIV/AIDS
- Distribute Condom in public spaces
- Celebrate international days on HIV/AIDS on 1 December
- Integrate HIV/AIDS programme with other programme in order to facilitate pregnant women to do PMCT test (prevention, transmission from mother to child)
- Attend patient affected by TB with with any types also need to be tested for HIV/AIDS
- Treatment of ARV (Ante Retroviral) for HIV/AIDS affected available in all health facilities.

Moreover, the Ministry of Health through the National Commission for Combatting HIV-AIDS has been working in collaboration with local NGOs to disseminate HIV-AIDS information and other relevant information on prevention and the impact of HIV-AIDS, particularly for women and young girls. The Commission also continuously working with local organisations Estrela Plus Group and Esperansa to provide support to Timorese people affected by HIV-AIDS. The Commission also invited a gathering of women sex work providers to listen to their concerns and to help find solutions to their problems, and also to share information to increase this group's knowledge of prevention, availability of health services and the impact of HIV-AIDS.

In collaboration with international partners like UNFPA and other relevant partners Ministry of Health launched National HIV/AIDS Strategy Plan to support INCSIDA's services to intensify efforts to prevent and combat behaviors that carry risks of transmitting HIV/AIDS as well as raise awareness campaigns to combat HIV/AIDS. This needs

collection efforts and action to respond to the concerns about the increase of in the number of HIV/AIDS from unsafe sex and prevent increase among pregnant women.

In collaboration with international partners such as UNFPA and other relevant partners, the Ministry of Health launched the National HIV/AIDS Strategy Plan to support the services of the Timor-Leste National HIV/AIDS Institute (INCSIDA) to intensify efforts to prevent and combat behaviors that risk transmitting the disease. Awareness raising campaigns to combat HIV/AIDS requires collection efforts and action to respond to concerns about the increasing number of HIV/AIDS due to unsafe sex and prevent the increase in the number of HIV/AIDS among pregnant women. Over the last five years HIV/AIDS cases have increased drastically. In 2023, INCSIDA reported more than 2,000 HIV/AIDS cases in the country, of which 1,065 HIV positive people were undergoing treatment, 577 people neglected treatment, 200 people died and around 160 people were lost to follow-up.¹⁶ It was reported that these cases occurred in all cities with the highest numbers being in Dili (1,507), Bobonaro (113), Covalima (95), Oecusse (62), Baucau (53), Ermera (35), Ainaro (33) and other cities recorded more than 10 cases.¹⁷

The Ministry of Health in collaboration with the Global Fund and the Timor-Leste Red Cross implemented an awareness-raising campaign in eight districts, reaching almost 73,000 people. By involving group discussions and role plays, this campaign seeks to facilitate debate and reduce stigma related to HIV/AIDS, as well as the distribution of printed materials and condoms to increase awareness about preventing HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases. (IMS). This outreach service provides referral support for Voluntary Confidential Counseling and Testing (VCCT) at sexual health clinics to more than 11,000 at-risk individuals and encourages community groups to self-refer to these clinics. Outreach staff and volunteers are trained in technical aspects of STIs and communication techniques to ensure beneficiary groups are provided with accurate information and can feel comfortable discussing sexual and risk-taking behavior.¹⁸

The Ministry of Health has established and continuously providing a comprehensive package of primary healthcare services, particularly the "*Family Health Program: Bringing health services closer to the household*". This program performs an important role in strengthening access to health care in rural areas. The Family Health Program has been adopted from the primary healthcare system in Cuba, which aimed to bring key health services to its people in their own homes, and the program has been designed to ensure that "no one is left behind". Through 'family/household visits', health professionals assess, register and ask questions about the health conditions of all family members living within the household. By bringing healthcare to households and to communities, people in the household needing assistance are

¹⁶ Retrieved from Totoli news on 31 October 2023

¹⁷ Idem

¹⁸ Retrieved from Cruz Vermela Timor-Leste website

identified. This program has contributed greatly to the reduction of maternal and infant mortality rates.

The *Liga-Inan*¹⁹ mobile health program (*Connecting Mothers*) being implemented by the Ministry of Health with development partners is also contributing to the reduction of maternal and infant mortality rates. The *Liga-Inan* program began in Timor-Leste as a pilot project in Manufahi Municipality in 2013. Through the *Liga-Inan program*, following delivery mothers continue to receive postnatal and neonatal care messages and support including nutrition, breastfeeding and family planning messages until their baby is six months old.

In 2022, fertility rate for Timor-Leste was 3 births per woman. Fertility rate of Timor-Leste fell gradually from 5.4 births per woman in 1973 to 3 births per woman in 2022. The data shows that Over the past 15 years Timor-Leste has achieved a rapid reduction in its fertility rates. Ministry of Health continue to conduct education and facilitation of access and availability of family planning using modern methods of contraception across the country.

Education and Training of Women

Education is a key priority for Timor-Leste post-independence. The President of Republic of Timor-Leste, Dr. José Ramos Horta stated that “education stands at the forefront of our efforts. Hence, Timor-Leste firmly believe that investing in the education of our children is investing in the future of our nation. We have taken significant steps to improve access to quality education, enhance school infrastructure, train teachers, and develop curricula that equip our children with the skills and knowledge needed to succeed in a rapidly changing world. However, challenges remain, and we must continue to prioritize education, ensuring that no child is left behind.”²⁰

Timor-Leste has a development plan that provides a clear mandate for investment in primary and secondary education, vocational training and higher education to support education for all without discrimination. The Ministry of Education (MoE) is responsible for developing and implementing educational policies as well as providing the infrastructure for public schools and curricula for primary and sencodanry levels. While the Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Culture (MESCC) is reponsible for developing curricula, policies and facilities for higher education. Since 2008, Timor-Leste has had a formal education system consisting of a four levels (preschool, basic education covering primary and secondary edcuation and higher education), where basic education is universal, compulsory and free of

¹⁹ Liga Inan is an innovative program, funded by the Australian Government through the Partnership for Human Development (PHD), that uses mobile phones to connect pregnant women with health providers in Timor-Leste, with the aim of increasing the number of women who give birth in a health facility. In 2019, the implementing partners Health Alliance International and Catalpa International have begun the process of national handover of the program to the Ministry of Health.

²⁰ A statement made by the President of Republic in Timor-Leste’s 2023 Voluntary National Report

charge. Secondary education consists of general secondary and vocational/technical education. Higher education is classified into two areas; university and technical higher education. University education includes undergraduate and postgraduate degrees and also specialized post-graduate diplomas. Higher technical education is provided by a number of institutes that offer short courses (1-2 years) in specialized areas and technology. There are 13 higher education institutes in the country.

Education from pre-school to secondary school is free for public schools. Generally private school fees range from \$5-\$10 per month. However, there are other costs incurred associated with things like school uniforms and books. Rural or urban households spend around 30% of their household budgets on education costs. The languages of instruction are Tetun and Portuguese. There are many children who cannot communicate in either of these two languages, as they are most familiar with their local language (mother tongue) and this can significantly impact some children's ability to achieve important learning outcomes. The Ministry of Education has implemented a policy to allow the use of mother tongue languages in the initial stages of primary school and has obtained support from donors to translate educational materials as a bridging communication tool to ensure equal opportunities for educational success irrespective of the language knowledge at the start of the school life.

Non-formal education mainly includes the national literacy campaign, (focused more on Tetun and Portuguese languages) and adult education targeting people over the age of 14 years. Since the demand for adult education has fallen, vocational education has also become important providing the specific knowledge for adults in response to the demands of economic growth. The technical and vocational education and training sectors have undertaken reforms and made efforts to address gender disparities in employment and occupations through providing vocational training opportunities for women. In 2023, the 9th Constitutional Government has dedicated Secretary of State for Vocational Education and in coordination with the Secretary of State for Vocational Training and Employment (SEFOPE) to promote an integrated effort between education and employment opportunities.

The policy process for achieving quality education is linked to Sustainable Development Goal Number 4. The Ministry of Education its focused on the process of promoting quality education including a) strengthening learning (improving curriculum quality and improving the skills of teachers), b) strengthening the quality of schools as institutions (including school management and the school feeding program) and c) improving school infrastructure.

Early Education for Women

The Government recognizes the importance of early education childhood development and lifelong learning. However, in Timor-Leste only 20% of preschool-aged children attend school, nearly 37% of rural youth (aged 15-25) are illiterate, compared to 6% in urban areas and 70% of grade one students do not meet basic

learning goals.²¹ High quality early childhood education and care gives children the best start in life. It provides important opportunities to learn and develop. Early childhood education and care can help children, develop independence and learn new routines and build a strong learning intuition to support their lifelong learning in the future. Early childhood education interventions also important for fostering children's cognitive and socioemotional development in their early years which profound impact on their ability to realize their potential later in life.

In the past five years, the Ministry of Education continue to make an effort to improve early childhood education. MoE organized series of workshops about improving basic education in Timor-Leste including early childhood education for boys and girls. MoE has developed teaching materials that includes using a gender sensitive learning materials that is useable for children at their early childhood. ME has developed Multisectoral National Policy for Early Education that includes a priority for pre-school education and investing in the construction, rehabilitation and accreditation of pre-schools. in collaboration with New Zealand Aid the Government adopted HANDS (Halimar, Aprende, no Deskobre Susesu) programme to support early child development with focus on language and pre-reading skills.

The Government also plans to start a pilot project for the implementation of daycare centers in the Municipality of Dili, to accommodate children aged 0 to 3, whose parents work and need this support.

Moreover, ME also strengthened educational curricula to increase gender-responsiveness, eliminate bias at all levels of education. The MoE also conducted a meeting with parents to socialize about the importance sending their child to early school because the enrollment rates in early childhood are still low, particularly in remote regions.

Access to Social Protection in Education for Women and Girls

As many other country Timor-Leste continue to make effort to build back from Covid-19 pandemic and continue to advance education for all children of our country. Several measures taken to retain and support children and all students both women and men as well as girls from all levels of education.

1. The Bolsa Hakbiit scholarship programme

The Bolsa Hakbiit Scholarship Programme was implemented to provide educational opportunities for children from vulnerable backgrounds leveraging the Government's Human Capital Development Fund (FDCH). In 2021, the Technical Secretariat of the Human Capital sign agreement with the National University of Timor Lorosa'e to provide scholarship for 480 selected students of women and men as beneficiaries of the programme. The programme aimed to also

²¹ Data from United Nations report on Early Childhood Development and Lifelong Learning

expand cooperation with other universities in Timor-Leste. The programme implemented by the Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Culture (MESSC) to support students from family who has financial difficulties to send their children to the school. To apply to this scholarship the students must get recommendation letter from Chief of Village and the Ministry of Social Solidarity and Inclusion.

2. School Goes Home

During Covid-19 outbreak in 2020, Timor-Leste also implemented restriction of movement and state of emergency to prevent Covid-19 spread. School closures was disrupted students learning for 400,000 students. Therefore in Timor-Leste implemented School Goes Home to provide opportunity to students especially those from vulnerable families to continue studying from home. The School Goes Home was implemented in collaboration between the Government of Timor-Leste and GPE to support students to continue learning during this difficult time while preparing schools for safe reopening.

The GPE through UNICEF as selected grant partners implementation together with Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport now Ministry of Education allocated a US\$3.5 million grant to support these efforts. The activities funded by the grant are based on the country's COVID-19 response plan, which outlines the actions required to respond effectively to the education challenges posed by coronavirus and was developed through a participatory process involving core education stakeholders – particularly members of the local education group.²²

Apart from that, several schools, especially private schools in Dili, also implemented online schools for primary, secondary and university levels. However, it should be noted that online schools were challenging because of internet connections and facilities, especially for the majority of students from low-income families. Girls and female students find it difficult because of the additional core household tasks that they have to do at home to support their mothers as in Timorese society the core household tasks are mostly carried out by women and girls.

3. Subsidy of Phone Simcard, Pulsa/phone credit to higher education/university students

The Government Timor-Leste through Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Culture (MESSC) allocated 5,4 million to subsidized one-gigabyte free internet and \$10 credit card to 65,000 universities students to facilitate online studying during Covid-19. Although the policy was applied equally to all students but there were still challenges for many students to participate in only online studying because not many students have access to android cellphones and/or computers to carry

²² GPE transforming education "In Timor-Leste School goes home"

out learning at home. Moreover, the majority of students do not have learning facilities to support online studying at home. In addition, during covid-19 lockdown, most students from municipalities returned home to be with their family because most of them were not able afford to food and room rental in Dili. This situation makes even access to internet even more difficult because internet connections in rural areas are even very poor.

4. Tuition Fee Subsidies for Domestic and Abroad Students

During the lockdown due to Covid-19, the Timor-Leste Government also provided subsidies for students' tuition fees for one semester in higher education. This policy is applied equally to both female and male students. This policy allows students to continue their studies during Covid-19 because of their parents may lose income due to the impact of Covid-19. This applies to both students studying at domestic and foreign universities.

5. Scholarships for children of martyrs and national liberation fighters

The Government of Timor-Leste through the Ministry of the National Liberation and Combatants (MCLAN) in collaboration with the National Liberation and Combatants Council (CCLN) has provided scholarship to children of veterans throughout the country in 2022. The scholarship is implemented based on the Decree Law No. 8/2009, January 15, concerning the provision of scholarship to children of martyrs and national liberation fighters. This law will enable the children of martyrs and national liberation combatants to have access to secondary and university education without discrimination. To access the scholarship, children must be the children to martyrs and natinal liberation combatant level 8-14. The table bellow shows the scholarship has been provided since 2018 – 2024.

Table 10: Scholarships for children of martyrs and national liberation

Scholarship					
		Female	%	Male	%
	3,606	2,004	55,6%	1,602	44,4%
2018	386	207	53,6%	179	46,4%
2019	393	214	54,5%	179	45,5%
2020	0	0	0%	0	0
2021	0	0	0%	0	0
2022	839	451	53,8%	388	46,2%
2023	1,988	1,132	56,9%	856	43,1%
2024	0	0	0%		0

The data shows that female children of martyrs and national liberation fighters are the highest beneficiaries of the scholarship fund since 2018 till 2023.

6. Pfizer Vaccination for All Children

In October 2021, Timor-Leste Government through the Ministry of Health launched a vaccination campaign for children in accordance with deployment plan that all children 12 to under 18 years are eligible to receive the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine. Therefore, vaccination started in the city of Dili and Liquiça municipalities. Vaccination was given at designated vaccination posts, including schools announced by the Ministry of Health. The Government was taken all necessary measures to reduce the impact of Covid-19 and protecting children and their families as well as reopen schools.

Inclusive Education

The Ministry of Education conducted national conference on inclusive education, held in Dili, that defined inclusive education as ‘the education that is available to all in Timor-Leste, without any kind of discrimination.’ This definition is in line with the definition provided in the 2009–15 Framework for the Development of Education in the Pacific, which considers inclusive education. Essential measures have been taken to implement the National Policy on Inclusive Education, which was approved in 2017, including developing integrated training rooms, and training for teachers on gender and inclusive pedagogy. ME also continues to socialize and advocate for schools, teachers, parents and local authorities to allow pregnant girls and young mothers to rerun to school after giving birth.²³ Public awareness raising education not only focuses on students but also parents and the public to transform and challenge negative attitudes, social norms and stereotypes about sending girls back to school. SEI also continues to coordinate and advocate with the ME about the importance of adopting re-entry school policies

The MoE continuously implementing policies to ensure that no-one is left behind, particularly women and girls, to support their participation in education. These enable the understanding that inclusive education means good quality education for all. In addition to actively promoting diversity in schools as outlined in the Inclusive Education Policy, ME adopts a zero-tolerance policy on discrimination against students with a disability.

In close collaboration with UNICEF, ME strengthen its capacity to develop plan, execute and monitor results-based and gender and disability sensitive plans and budgets. The planning includes developing gender and disability inclusion training for school leaders, teachers and mentors. ME also adopted National Disability policy which enshrines children with disabilities’ rights to education. ME also has established Inclusive Education Unit to ensure the implementation of inclusive education at all levels.

²³ Information collected from Focus Group Discussion with the representative of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport.

MoE also continuously developing good pedagogy that supports male students which must also be good for female students. Good pedagogy that support students with special needs is also a focus of the curriculum, to ensure equality of education for all children. The Basic Education Law No. 14/2008 highlights this focus, stating clearly that education should provide equal opportunities for all boys and girls, and that education must ensure gender balance.

In higher education, the Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Culture (MESSC) is also committed to advancing and developing quality education and human resources in all higher education. This includes comments to promote gender equality in educational institutions, educational materials and within MESSC. It aims to ensure that education policies promote gender equality, non-discrimination on any grounds and are inclusive. MESSC has therefore undertaken the following activities to promote gender equality and inclusion:

- Promote and encourage girls to pursue higher education and provide quotas to ensure girls' access to higher education;
- Encourage women's participation in decision-making positions in MESSC;
- In 2020, MESSC held a Seminar on “Gender Equality – Concept and Implementation with the aim of socializing the concept and importance of gender equality in higher education; policies and laws that promote, protect and fulfill women's human rights. This workshop targets students, lecturers and educational policy makers and practitioners. The speakers were from the Secretary of State for Equality and Inclusion now SEI, Provedoria for Human Rights and Justice (PDHJ), Alola Foundation and UN WOMEN;
- In 2023, hold a seminar with private universities on the “path to equality” through student photo exhibition. This activity aims to provide opportunities for women to explore their potential and abilities in the field of art and encourage gender equality between women and men. This activity reached 89 participants and 6 winners, the results of their work were exhibited at cultural centers and the Portuguese Embassy.

Cluster 3: Freedom from Violence, Stigma and Stereotypes

Critical areas of concern:

- D. Violence against women
- I. Human rights of women
- J. Women and the media
- L. The girl child

Violence against Women

Timor-Leste is still in the process of preparing to conduct a new Demographic Health Survey, thus we are still using the previous DHS data for this report. The 2016 DHS

findings on spousal violence within the 12 months preceding the survey indicate a rising trend in spousal violence compared to the 2009/2010 DHS (from 31 per cent in 2009/10 to 33 per cent in 2016). A similar trend is observed in terms of spousal sexual violence (from 2 per cent in 2009/10 to 5 per cent in 2016).²⁴ The findings of the 2015 NABILAN baseline study (solely focused on VAW and conducted across all municipalities) seem to corroborate the rate of physical spousal violence (although slightly higher – 36 per cent), while the findings related to sexual spousal violence are significantly higher (31 per cent).²⁵

On the positive side, the 2016 DHS findings indicate that the acceptance of wife beating²⁶ is decreasing for both men and women (from 86 per cent in 2009/10 to 74 per cent in 2016 for women and from 80.7 per cent in 2009/10 to 51.6 per cent in 2016 for men).²⁷ However, the findings of the 2015 Nabilan study show higher rate of acceptance (80 per cent for women and between 70 and 79 per cent for men).²⁸

Statistical data from the Vulnerable Police Unit (VPU) of Timor-Leste National Police (PNTL) shows that gender-based violence has increased significantly to 1,335 (Domestic violence 1,120 and Sexual Violence 15) in 2021 compared to 1,319 (Domestic Violence 1,082 and Sexual Violence 237) in 2020.²⁹ In 2022, Gender-Based Violence slightly decreased to 1,176 (Domestic Violence 980, Sexual Violence 179, Psychological violence 6 and Economic Violence is 11) however, in 2023 the case increased again to 1,335 (Domestic violence is 1,076 and Sexual Violence is 259). It was recorded that there was a significant increased in cases of sexual violence cases in 2022, which is 259 cases including incest, among other gender-based violence reported to Vulnerable Police Unit. Education, socialization and awareness raising on marital rape and rape in the facto unions continue to be carried out to encourage victims to report or file complaints related to marital rape and rape in the facto union. Incest cases among one the highest gender-based violence in Timor-Leste. The prosecution and sentencing of incest cases continue to be seriously undertaken by the courts, and essential services such as shelter, medical assistance and legal

²⁴ 2016 Timor-Leste Demographic and Health Survey, General Directorate of Statistics (GDS) – Ministry of Finance / ICF, 2018, pp. 302-303; 2009-10 Timor-Leste Demographic and Health Survey, National Statistics Directorate (NSD) - Ministry of Finance / ICF Macro, 2010, pp. 236– 239.

²⁵ Understanding Violence against Women and Children in Timor-Leste: Findings from the *Nabilan* Baseline Study – Main Report. The Asia Foundation, Timor-Leste, 2016, pp. 48–61.

²⁶ Out of the 5 following reasons: if she burns the food, argues with him, goes out without telling him, neglects the children, or refuses to have sex with him.

²⁷ 2009/2010 DHS, pp. 214–215 and 2016 DHS, pp. 291–292

²⁸ 2015 *Nabilan* Baseline Study, p.86.

²⁹ This data is from Vulnerable Police Unit of Timor-Leste National Police from 2020-2021

assistance to ensure access to justice are provided to the victims through Gender Based-Violence Referral Network.³⁰

Asisténsia Legál ba Feto no Labarik (ALFeLa) supports women and children in Timor-Leste to access a fair and formal justice system without discrimination through legal aid, legal education and advocacy. ALFeLa is the only organization in Timor-Leste that focuses on providing legal assistance to women and children and organization that also providing legal assistance regarding civil legal issues including cases related to the Labor Code. Therefore, ALFeLa also receives complaints, registers and provides legal assistance to women and girls, including male victims, to gain access to justice. Bellow is data on cases attended by ALFeLa since 2019 until 2023.

Table 11: Data on Gender-Based Violence attended by ALFELA from 2019-2023

Year/Sex	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Grand Total
Female	450	503	659	654	516	2,782
Male	13	6	21	21	9	70
Transwomen	0	0	0	2	0	2
Grand Total	463	509	680	677	525	2,854

Source: Data provided by ALFeLa

Table 12: Types of Gender-Based Violence Cases

Types of Cases	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Grand Total
Domestic Violence	221	276	398	409	353	1,657
Sexual Violence	103	130	155	156	110	654
Human Trafficking	1	0	2	6	1	10
Other crimes	76	67	97	72	25	337
Civil cases	62	36	28	34	36	193
Grand Total	463	509	680	677	525	2,854

Source: Data provided by ALFELA

Based on the data presented above, women experience violence continuously maintain. This, are the data that reported to the organization. There are still many cases that under reported. The table also presented types of violence that have been

³⁰ NAP-GBV 2017 – 2022 define Referral Network is a network of service providers who provide support and referral to victims/survivors of GBV. Through this network, practitioners who advocate against GBV in all its forms, monitor the protection status of women, girls and groups at risk and ensure access to appropriate supports and care services (legal, health, social and psycho/social) for victims of violence. Rede Referral is made up of two working groups; 1) Service Providers Coordination Meeting led by the Ministry of Social Solidarity, which is responsible for ensuring coordinated responses and services to cases of gender-based violence; and 2) Meeting on Strategy and Advocacy, led by SEII which advocates for changes in policy and laws, based on recommendations from monitoring and evaluation.

attended by ALFeLa on the same period of time. The tables shows that domestic violence cases occupied the highest and followed by sexual violence.

Table 13: Status of the cases

Estatus Kazu to'o	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Grand Total
ALFeLa	7	10	5	2		24
Police	7	25	32	8	6	78
Public Prosecutors	11	49	58	71	261	450
District Tribunal	34	116	179	252	173	754
Tribunal Rekursu	1	3				4
Filled	403	306	406	344	85	1,544
Grand Total	463	509	680	677	525	2854

Source: Data provided by ALFeLa

The table above shows many cases were filled and highest cases were filled in 2021 and 754 out of 2,854 or only 26% were processed in District Court/Tribunal.

The perpetrators in the cases of incest have been charged with Article 173 of the Penal Code on aggravated crimes in family relations. However, incest cases between adult women and men with family relations are considered unimputable. SEI and relevant stakeholders as well as women's movement have been advocating with judicial actors to conduct a deep gender analysis with regard to the power imbalance between women and men that may lead to sexual violence. Moreover, SEI and relevant partners have established a working group to review and propose the amendment of some articles in the Penal Code and the Law Against Domestic Violence (LADV) to include incest cases with fair and /just sentences.

National Action Plan against Gender-Based Violence

The government of Timor-Leste is strongly committed to the prevention and elimination of all types of gender-based violence through the approval and implementation of gender policies at the national and international levels. The Government has approved and implemented the NAP-GBV with the the objectives to prevent all forms of gender-based violence, to address the needs of victims and to provide multi-sectoral services to victims, including access to justice, access to health and also establishment of coordination mechanisms including monitoring and evaluation to guarantee the plan's effective implementation.

The second National Action Plan Against Gender-Based Violence (NAP-GBV) 2017 – 2021 has been concluded, and on 28th September 2022, the Council of Ministers approved the third NAP-GBV for the period of 2022 – 2032, which was launched on

the opening of the 16 Days Campaign of Activism on Violence Against Women and Girls on 25th November 2022.³¹

Results across all four pillars have been achieved during the five-year implementation of the NAP-GBV 2017 – 2021. Based on the implementation of NAP-GBV, it is reported that in 2019 and 2020, 13,255 women and men (5,901 Female and 7,354 male), including community leaders, teachers, and students both at the national and local levels have increased their understanding and knowledge of gender equality and gender-based violence. They also acquire knowledge on how to report and refer cases related to gender-based violence to competent institutions through training, socialization, awareness raising and campaigns on gender-based violence prevention, the law against domestic violence, women’s economic empowerment, sexual reproductive health, CEDAW, NAP-GBV and NAP-1325 on Women, Peace and Security.³²

The third NAP GBV is for a period of 10 years (2022-2032) which aims to ensure long-term commitment and action in preventing gender-based violence as a whole. Long term will also allow the government and its partners to monitor changes made and make adjustments where necessary. NAP-GBV (2022-2032) establishes three strategic pillars, namely; 1) Prevention of violence against women and girls; 2) Provision of essential services for victims of gender-based violence; and 3) Legal assistance and access to justice. Coordination, Monitoring and Evaluation are applied cross-sectorally to these three pillars. SEI will be responsible for coordinating through the Inter-Ministerial Commission formed based on this NAP-GBV.

The third NAP-GBV (2022-2032) is now included services for violence against women with disabilities and LGBTQI members. As prevention measure to reduce and combat violence against LGBTQI communities, every year LGBTQI organizations, civil society organizations and Government conducted “Pride March” to raise public awareness about the right of LGBTQI. It is noted that every year the tolerance and participation of the public in pride march has been increased.

Awareness Raising for the Prevention of Gender-Based Violence

SEI and all the partners are conducting training and socialization on the prevention of gender-based violence, and continue to encourage women and men to prevent and report cases related to intimate partners violence. The increase in the cases of gender-based violence recorded to the Vulnerable Police Unit might also be due to women increased knowledge about the process and where to seek help when they experience violence. Timor-Leste National Police has also established a Gender Unit to implement the National Gender Strategy.

³¹ SEI with national and international partners conduct 16 days of activism against gender-based violence annually in all municipalities in country with high participation from students, national, municipal and local authorities and partners to advocate the elimination and prevention of gender-based violence.

³² 2019 and 2020 Annual Report on the implementation of NAP-GBV 2017-2022 report.

SEI has conducted numerous campaigns, workshops, community dialogues, talkshows and other activities as mechanisms for advocacy to increase the knowledge of the community and community leaders about gender-based violence prevention. The 16-Days Campaign Against Violence Against Women has also become a major activity for the government and civil society to advocate for the prevention of GBV. Primary and Secondary schools continuously using teaching materials on gender and human rights that have been developed by the Ministry of Education in order to educate new generations to respect each other and particularly respect for the dignity of women and prevent any forms of gender-based violence and discrimination. The National University of Timor-Lorosa'e (*Universidade Nasionál Timor-Lorosa'e*) has also integrated a gender curriculum within their teaching materials. Under Together for Equality (T4E) funded by KOICA, UNTL is also in collaboration with UN WOMEN has implemented "*Campus Seguru*" to prevent sexual harassment and educate students and provide safe space for female students within the university.

During the implementation, the country benefited from coordinated inter-agency, multi-sectoral efforts to prevent and respond to VAWG through the delivery of activities promoting gender-equitable norms across the individual, interpersonal, institutional and societal levels. In total, 216,362 direct beneficiaries were reached in 2021 and 38 % of the total population of Timor-Leste was reached during the 2-year Spotlight Initiative.³³

For civil servants, SEI also conducted a training on gender and gender-based violence to newly recruited civil servant at the National Institute of Public Administration (*INAP*). Gender and human rights have been included in the topics in the induction and training modules for civil servants. The Provedoria for Human Rights and Justice also regularly invited by INAP to provide training on human rights including women's rights to civil servants.

SEI, Ministry of State Administration and The Provedoria for Human Rights and Justice (PDHJ), Alola Foundation, Mane ho Vizaun Foun/Men with New Vision (MHVF), FOKUPERS, ALFELA and PRADET were also conducting training and socialization to government officials, local authorities, teachers and students about human rights, role of local authorities in prevention and response to gender-based violence and how to connect with respect and build healthy relationship between women and men and boys and girls.

Awareness raising also conducted with Timor-Leste Press Council for 44 (female 17 and Male 27) online, written and audio media journalists and personnels in order to support the campaign on how to educate public to prevent and combat gender-based violence including gender sensitive coverage of cases related gender-based violence. This has resulted in the increased of reporting on gender-based violence cases in the last two years by media. Following that, training for media personnel on gender-sensitive reporting and publication was conducted by SEI in collaboration with

³³ Spotlight Initiaves implementation report in 2021

Ministry of Parliament Affairs and Social Communications (MAPCOMS), Secretariat for Social Media Communication (SECOMS), Timor-Leste Journalist Association (AJTL) and Timor-Leste Press Council. Guideline for gender-sensitive reporting and publication and inclusive reporting were also launched in 2024.

In addition, in order to prepare reintegration of convicted perpetrators to the community, SEI also carried out anger management training in Dili, Ermera and Suai prisons to support their reintegration. Over the past five years, anger management training reached to 210 (16 female and 194 male) convicted perpetrators in Becora, Ermera and Covalima prison.

As part of raising awareness of public about children rights, INDDICA,IP in collaboration with other relevant institution to campaign about the right of children, boys and girls reaching out to seven municipalities which focuses on two target groups:

- 850 (female 300 and male 350) of adult women and men, including villages councils and teachers;
- 1400 (girls 800 and boys 600) of Children both boys and girls

The training materials are consisting; the role of INDDICA, IP, the Convention on Child Rights (CRC), Human Trafficking Law and Laws that prohibit violence against children and complain mechanism.

INDDICA, IP and the Provedoria for Human Rights and Justice (PDHJ) also in collaboration to socialize about international conventions that are related to the rights of women and girls.

Provision of Essential Services for Victims and/Survivors of GBV

The government continued work together with civil society group such as PRADET to maintain the operation of *Safe Spaces* that have been established in four referral health centers in Ainaro, Viqueque, Lospalos, secure and protected places for victims and survivors. In Dili the safe house is no longer annex to the National Hospital but it is now under the administration of PRADET office. The purpose of this service is to provide support to victims and survivors, provide temporary accommodation for one or two nights and to provide specialized services to victims and survivors of sexual violence, domestic violence, child abuse, abandonment or trafficking. According to data from PRADET that 725 (women 669 and men 56) received services from PRADET in 2020 and 359 (Women 335 and Men 24) in 2021 which shows significant decreased.

Since 2003, the Government established *Fatin Hakmatek* or a safe house in four hospitals, Dili, Maliana, Suai and Oecusse. In 2021, Fatin Hakmatek was expanded in

Baucau and Ermera to attend to and provide safety, care and treatment for victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, child abuse, abandonment and human trafficking.³⁴

In addition to the Safe Spaces, there are also Shelters (*Uma Mahon*) available to victims. Shelters are secured and protected, designed to provide support to victims and longer term accommodation (for two nights or longer). Until 2024, the Government together with civil society organizations has already established eleven (11) *Uma Mahon*/Shelters. Under the Spotlight Initiative the Ministry of Health (MH) and UNFPA established three (3) Safe Spaces in Bobonaro, Ermera and Viqueque and with Together for Equality (T4E) programme, MH and UNFPA also built Safe Spaces in Baucau, Covalima and Dili. In addition, UNFPA and Jonta International have also jointly supporting MH built Safe Spaces in Lautem and Liquisa to provide integrated assistance to women and girls who are victims of GBV. Moreover, through the Spotlight Initiative, UNDP and PNTL-Vulnerable Person Unit also built a Safe Space at the VPU office to support VPU in providing better support to victims of gender-based violence.

When victims and survivors are living in the Shelter, psychosocial assistance is provided in addition to 'Life Skills' training. When victims and survivors decided that they are ready to return home to their family and wider community, the Shelters will also provide assistance and support to help them re-integrate into their community. The Shelters are providing essential services to women and girls that are victims and survivors of gender-based violence based on the Standard Operational Procedures (SOP). In 2020, 402 women and girls of victims and survivors had access to the Shelters established in Timor-Leste.³⁵ furthermore, FOKUPERS will continue to monitor the situation of the survivors after they return home and to provide necessary support.

The Ministry of Health also provided training to 48 (female 37 and male 11) health professional and Non-Government Organizations on guidelines on gender-based violence and how to provide services and assistance to gender-based violence victims when they come to ask for support at health centers and hospitals. The training improve knowledge and skills of health professional in providing essential services to gender-based violence victim/survivors.

The Timor-Leste government through the Civil Service Commission (CFP) approved the "No Sexual Harassment in Public Services" as a preventive and education measures. Furthermore, "Rosa Chatbot" was developed as an online mechanism to receive complaints and cases related to sexual harassment that occurred in the public administration environment. However, this online mechanism does not function effectively probably due to lack of socialization and lack of awareness about how to

Jont³⁴ Pradet: <http://www.pradet.org/programs/safe-room-fatim-hakmatek>.

³⁵ Only data that is received by the Secretary of State from partners which has been included in 2020 NAP-GBV implementation report submitted and approved by Council of Ministers.

use these platforms. SEI has initiated discussions with CFP to evaluate the system and how to improve the usability of the platform.

The Government in collaboration with UN WOMEN and TOMAK launched Safe Markets Initiative in Baucau Market which runs until 2024. It is part of UN Women's Together for Equality project which supported by KOICA. Project is implemented directly with the Baucau Municipal Authority to ensure that funds are properly allocated to make the central market and other public places in Baucau Municipality safer for women and girls. The intervention is also focusing on inclusive development and making city safe, prevent and reduce gender-based violence and enhance women's economic empowerment.

MSSI provided small funding support to women victim and survivors of violence to start economic activities when they reintegrate to the families and society. Alola Foundation and FOKPUERS also conducted life skill training and provided small fund to women and girls victim and survivors of gender-based violence who are staying at Safe Space/Fatin Hakamatek and Uma Mahon/Shelter to identify economic activities that they can do to generate income when they return or reintegrate to the families. This includes supporting them to access to other available financial support from either government and/or micro-finance institutions. In addition, SEI also provided public transfer to ACBIT as an organization to providing assistance to women survivors of violence including past human rights crimes.

MSSI provides small financial grant to women victims and survivors of violence to start economic activities when they reintegrate to their families and communities. Alola Foundation and FOKUPERS also conducted life skills training and provide small funds to women and girls victims and survivors of gender-based violence living in *Fatin Hakmatek/Safe Space* and *Uma Mahon/Shelter* to identify potential economic activities they can undertake to generate income when they return or reintegrate into the family. This includes supporting them to access other financial support available from either government and/or microfinance institutions. Apart from that, SEI also provided a public transfer to ACBIT as an organization that provides assistance to women survivors of violence including past human rights crimes.

SEFOPE is now also in coordination with UMA Mahon/Shelters and Vulnerable Police Unit to identify women survivors of gender-based violence to participate in vocational training so that they can have access to self-employment grant by SEFOPE.

Access to Justice

Timor-Leste continuously making progress to ensure access to justice for all citizens. However, access to formal justice system remains a challenge for the majority of the population. Pervasive challenges continues to be faced by victims and survivors of gender-based violence. Until today, there are still four courts in four jurisdictions which are Dili, Baucau, Covalima and Oecusse. All the population including women and girls of gender-based violence still facing long journey from their community to

the nearest court. This makes it hard to them to report GBV cases and have access to justice.

The Government also made efforts to continue strengthening judicial institutions including increasing the number and capacity of magistrates and other judicial personnel increased through training at the Government's Legal Training Centre (LTC) however, greater efforts are needed to improve gender parity in the sector, as well as to increase the capacity and number of national trainers. The approval of Law No. 1/2017, of 18 January, the transitional regime for the recruitment of non-Timorese Magistrates and Public Defenders and Second Amendment to Law No. 9/2011, of 17 August, which approves the Organic Law of the Chamber of Auditors of the Superior Administrative, Fiscal and Audit Court has made progress on providing capacity building to judicial actors. They consist of 34 (14 Female and 20 Male) judges, 36 (6 Female and 30 Male) prosecutors, 34 (5 female and 29 male) public defenders and about 100 (35 Female and 65 Male) trained lawyers. However, during Covid-19 crises, the Legal and Judiciary Training Center (LJTC) did not conduct recruitment and training for new judicial actors but has just started again the training in 2022. Consequently, there are still issues about delays and pending in the court, including gender-based violence and other violations of women's rights.

In the past five years, the Government through the Ministry of Justice (MJ) and other relevant judicial actors that is part of the implementation of NAP-GBV continued to take initiatives to strengthen law enforcement and policies based on gender equality perspective by socializing about the relevant laws that are enacted in Timor-Leste to 3,282 (male 2,422 and female 680) of all segments of community in all municipalities and RAEOA. Since 2020, SEI has conducted series of round table discussions and meetings with judicial actors including Ministry of Justice about the possibility to amend Penal Code and the law Against Domestic Violence to integrate gender-based violence cases specially incest case and witness protection. SEI has developed legal draft proposal for the amendment of the law and discussed with Ministry of Justice. However, the Minister has passed away therefore the discussion has to be initiated again.

In 2024, the General Prosecutor's Office in collaboration with the Asean Development Bank (ADB) published the Gender-Based Violence Investigation manual as a guide for prosecutors and other judicial actors to provide better and more sensitive support to victims of gender-based violence.

Furthermore, the co-existence of a customary justice system and a formal justice system continued to be a strong barrier for victims trying to access justice. For most Timorese the customary justice system is an integral part of everyday life and plays a central role in resolving disputes between individuals and communities, such as land disputes, conflict between communities, domestic violence and conflicts over natural resources management. These traditional systems focus on maintaining community, family and environmental harmony, in contrast to the formal justice system, which is perpetrator focused.

It is therefore, although Timor-Leste has enacted the Law against Domestic Violence since 2010 to protect victims and survivors of domestic violence and other gender-based violence, there remain challenges in the implementation of the Law, arising from the traditional justice process. For example, the law prescribes that domestic violence is a public crime, and therefore it has to go through a formal investigation. However, in practice, there are still many domestic violence cases that are mediated through the traditional justice system as Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR). The traditional justice system is not limiting women's access to the formal justice system. However, due to various factors, including family reasons, cost and distance, women still prefer the traditional justice process to deal with domestic violence and other gender-based violence cases. In some societies or villages, when victims and families of domestic violence agree to resolve the case through the traditional justice system, local authorities would facilitate and record the results, which were then formalized in the court. The Government, through the Secretary of State for Equality and Inclusion and its partners, continues conducting awareness raising, socialization and campaign to introduce the Law Against Domestic Violence and the Referral system to women, local authorities, community leaders, and judicial actors aiming to enhance the reporting and effectively addressing gender-based violence cases, as well prosecution of domestic violence and other gender-based violence cases.

Based the National Action Plan against Gender-Based Violence 2020, that during that period 3,006 (46%) victim and survivors of GBV received free legal assistance provided by Public Defenders and ALFeLa.

Furthermore, the Ministry of Justice is continuously working with the SEI to achieve the objectives set out in the NAP-GBV, particularly in regards to improving access to justice for victims of gender-based violence and also in regards to the provision of further training for judicial actors including prosecutors, public defenders and lawyers.

SEFOPE has also received complaints regarding labor disputes and labor rights violations and issues and facilitated mediation in 409 cases (108 women and 301 men). Of these cases, 108 complaints related to women have been successfully facilitated by SEFOPE to reach mutually beneficial solutions with employers.

Coordination, Monitoring and Evaluation

In the past five years, SEI continues to coordinate the implementation of Government Resolution No. 34/2017 on the establishment of an Inter-Ministerial Committee for Coordination of Implementation and Monitoring and Evaluation of the NAP-GBV. The Resolution provides guidelines for monitoring and supervising the implementation of the NAP-GBV from 2017 until 2021. There was an official dispatch from Prime Minister on the approval of focal points at the ministerial level for the Inter-Ministerial Committee to monitor the implementation of the NAP-GBV. The Inter-Ministerial Committee will hold meetings three times every year. SEI is coordinating

the interministerial commission's meeting. With the approval of 2022-2032 NAP-GBV, the resolution on the commission automatically expired thus SEI is now has developed the new resolution which will be presented to the Council of Minister soon.

The GBV Referral Network is also continues function to coordinate the provision of essential services to victims and survivors of GBV. The Referral has two ways of working mechanism; 1) Coordination of the provision of essential services lead by the Ministry of Social Solidarity and Inclusion (MSSI) and 2) Coordination on advocacy strategy by SEI. In the past five years Referral Networks conducted meeting four times a year.

The government also established coordination mechanisms with development partners, civil society actors, national and international NGOs and the wider community regarding provision of services to vulnerable people who have suffered or are experiencing domestic violence, sexual violence, child abuse, abandonment and human trafficking,³⁶ and also to women in prison. In the past five years, the government continued to work with development partners, NGOs, civil society actors, and the private sector to continue prevention efforts, provision of assistance to victims and ongoing improvements to mechanisms for monitoring cases of gender-based violence.

Challenges towards effective implementation of NAP-GBV includes social acceptance of GBV, victims' fear of re-victimization, stigma, lack of adequate human and financial resources for its implementation (especially for service providers), low accessibility to formal justice, as well as the judicial process still has to be addressed with adequate human and financial allocation.

Cluster 4: Participation, Accountability and Gender-Responsive Institutions

Critical areas of concern:

- G. Women in power and decision-making
- H. Institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women
- I. Human rights of women
- J. Women and the media

- L. The girl child

Women in Power and Decision-Making

The representation of Timor-Leste's women in the National Parliament for the last five years in the 5th Legislative Body (2018-2023) was 40% and in the current legislative period for the period (2023-2028) is 37%. Even though the figures show a

³⁶ In 2022, there were 7 cases of trafficking in person reported that involved Timorese women and one female foreign national.

slight declined, the current status of women's representation in parliament still makes Timor-Leste the highest in the region. This is due to the the establishment of a quota as a special measure to increase women’s participation in political life. This quota provides at least 30% of seats in the National Parliament are held by women. In 2024, Timor-Leste for the first time has had woman as the President of National Parliament. The following table for trends of women representation in National Parliament since the first legislature until the sixth legislature in Timor-Leste

Table 14: Women Representation in National Parliament from I – VI Legislatures

No	Legislature	Total Seats	Male	Female	% Female
1.	I (2002-2007)	88	66	22	25%
2.	II (2007 – 2012)	65	45	20	30,7%
3.	III (2012 – 2017)	65	40	25	38%
4.	IV (2017 – 2018)	65	40	25	38%
5.	V (2018 – 2023)	65	39	26	40%
6.	VI (2023 –2028)	65	41	24	37%

Source: Data from SEI

This can be further increased if political parties also continuously make efforts to invest and provide capacity building to women and young women to actively engaged in political parties governing bodies and activities. In this respect, the Government encourages political parties to continue seriously implementing Law No. 7/2011, of 22 June, concerning the Second Amendment to Law No. 07/2006, of December 28 on the Election Law for the National Parliament, specifically article 12 which calls for the list of permanent and alternate candidates must include at least one woman for each set of three candidates, under the sanction of rejection. This means women can be included in lists number one, two or three, and not in every three candidates as was done so far.

Women's representation at the executive level of government has only increased by 17% compared to 13% (6 female and 46 male) which means Timor-Leste is still a long way from reaching at least 30%. The highest representation of women in the executive body is 23%, which was in the 3rd Constitutional Government. Increased representation of women at the local level as occurred in the 2016 elections where the Suco Chief from 2% in 2009 to 5% in 2016, and the participation of women as Chief of Aldeia increased from 2% in 2009 to 4% in 2016. However, the number of Suco Chief decreased from 5% (21/452 sucos) in 2016 to 4% (18/452 sucos) in the 2023 election and Aldeia Chiefs remained at 4% in the 2023 election. Meanwhile at the Municipal level, Timor-Leste has 1 woman as President of the Municipal Authority from 13 Municipalities and 1 autonomous region and 3 women as sub-district administrators from 67 sub-districts. In 2024, the number increased slightly from 1 woman to 2 women as Presidents Municipal Authority and 4 women as sub-district heads.

Although, Suco Election Law no. 9/2016 aims to encourage women to become candidates and run for office in Suco elections, but society is still dominated by a

patriarchal system that does not support women to become leaders at the village and aldeia levels. Moreover, most of the people still strongly believe in the traditional leaders who summoned the liurai to appoint the Chiefs of Suco and Aldeia.

The “*100 Hau Pronto Lidera*” programme continues to be implemented throughout all municipalities and RAEOA. SEI and other organizations provided training to 208 women (207 women and 1 man) aspiring political party leaders in Liquisa, Ermera, Manufahi, Baucau and Manatuto. The Government of Timor-Leste, recognizes that concerted efforts are needed to increase women's participation at the national, municipal and suco levels to achieve its goal of promoting gender equality in politics and governance. The municipal legal framework for the appointment and/election of municipal authorities also needs to be reviewed to ensure equal participation of women in municipal governance positions.

The training is also provided to 42 (women 12 and Men 30) “*Hau Pronto Lidera*” Working Group on decentralization policies which coordinate with Ministry of State Administration (MAE) to increase knowledge and capacity to support women candidates to candidate themselves in 2023 suco election. CAUCUS also lead a training focusing on women candidates from political parties including 120 women from political parties that have seats in the parliament. MOFFE, Alola Foundation and PATRIA Foundation also provided capacity building to young women and men in the areas of leadership and management to prepare young leadership in exploring their leadership potential. In addition, MAE also conducted training to 900 MAE staffs including people with disabilities.

Association of Women Municipal Leaders has established in all Municipalities in Timor-Leste. In 2023, SEI provided funding support to the Association of Women Municipal Leaders to promote women's profile through media such as Radio and Television. SEI also facilitated TV talk show to promote women's profile and their leadership visions and missions. In 2022, SEI also supported women candidates who run for Presidential election.

SEI, Grupo Mulher Parlamentar Timor-Leste, CAUCUS, PATRIA and MOFFE with other development partners both national and international jointly signed Strategic Framework to support women and girl's participation in politics. The Strategic Framework is coordinated the Feto Pronto Lidera Working Group to ensure the framework is implemented and monitored.

Table 15: % participation of women at the executive level (government members):

No.	Executive body	Total government members	Male	%	Female	%
1	I	25	21	84%	4	16%
2	II	35	30	85%	5	15%
3	III	31	24	77%	7	23%
4	IV	39	34	87%	5	13%
5	V	53	43	81%	10	19%
6	VI	38	30	79%	8	21%
7	VII	37	31	84%	6	16%
8	VIII (1)	22	22	78%	6	21%
9	VIII (2)	47	40	85%	7	15%
9	IX	47	39	83%	8	17%

Meanwhile, according to data from the State Civil Service Commission (CFP), the number of civil servants in 2024 has reached 39,380, consisting of 14,115 (36%) women and 25,265 (64%) men. This number consists of 29,128 (10,805 women (37%) and 18,323 men (63%) as permanent staff and 372 (144 women (39%) and 228 men (61%) men as provisional appointment. Moreover, there are 822 (23%) women compared to 2,742 (77%) men who holds decision-making positions.

The number of women in decision making in the civil service sector is much lower than men, but the government continues to strive to increase the number of women occupying managerial positions in the civil service.

The government also recognises that achieving equal representation is an ongoing challenge, particularly in regards to women’s participation in civil service, which is currently at 36%. In order to address this issue, the government approved the Decree-Law on the Regime for Recruitment, Selection, Promotion, Distinctions and Awards in the Public Service. This provides preference to women in instances where there are several candidates with the same skill and experience levels. This shows that the government is considering gender-sensitive legislation to increase women’s participation.

The government also continues to provide capacity building by providing scholarships to female and male civil servants to increase their technical, management and leadership capacity in order to take decision-making positions. SEI continues to coordinate and advocate for all ministries to seriously consider gender equality in public administration as women's right. The Provedoria for Human Rights and Justice also providing training to civil servants in public administration to respect and promote women's rights in all sectors through socializing all main UN Human Rights Conventions that have been ratified by Timor-Leste.

Although progress has been made in women's participation in politics, women continue to face internal and external barriers in political life and decision-making positions, including lack of political skills, lack of self-confidence and courage, lack of self-motivation, lack of support from family and lack of financial resources to support their campaign. External barriers include social and cultural norms that create obstacles for women in gaining access to political opportunities, and contribute to ongoing discrimination in public and domestic life. Another important obstacle is the lack of opportunities for women to gain leadership experience in their communities.

It is therefore, the Government through SEI in collaboration with SECOMS and Journalist Association to use media as an important platform in increasing the women's leadership profile to improve their participation in political life. One of the programmes that SEI is working on is "Promoting Women's Participation in Political Life" is to help empowering women participation in all leadership positions at suco, municipal and national levels.

National Machinery for the Advancement of Women

Secretary of State for Equality (SEI), as the National Women's machinery to promote gender equality and the advancement of women and girls in all sectors. SEI, as the coordinating body within the Timor-Leste government, focuses primarily on policies and strategies to increase and promote equality, in particular creating equal opportunities for men and women in all sectors of development in Timor-Leste. SEI has worked closely with all ministries to ensure that their policies, laws, plans and budgets are gender responsive and inclusive to promote the empowerment of women and girls in Timorese society. Over the past five years, SEI continues to focus on improving the quality of public services that must be ensured by the government through optimization the rational use of the resources to achieve the aspiration of effective equality between women and men.

The Annual Budget for SEI has been increased significantly from USD\$950,910 in 2020 to over 2 million US dollar for the year of 2021, 2022, 2023 and 2024. Increased in the budget allocation is aims to strengthening the role of SEI to coordinate, advocate and promote gender equality, eliminating discrimination and violence against women and girls, and to support women's participation in economic and political life. The table bellow presenting budget allocation for SEI since 2020-2024.

Table 16: Annual Budget Allocation to SEI

2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
950,910	2,553,850	2,027,440	2,152,264	2,147,053.00

Source: Government Budget Book 2 from 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023 and 2024

Based on the government programme and SEI strategic plan, SEI has four main focus areas of work namely; 1) Gender Mainstreaming; 2) Prevention of Gender-Based Violence; 3) Women's Economic Empowerment and; 4) Promoting Women's Participation in Politics and Decision-Making Position. These programmes are aimed supporting SEI to implement its responsibilities as the following:

- a) Ensure the implementation integrated policy approach to gender and inclusion in public policies, strategic and operational plans, government programs and the General State Budget;
- b) Ensure the training of members of gender working groups, at national or municipal level, for the progressive integration of gender issues into public policies, strategic and operational plans, government programs and the General State Budget;
- c) Implement campaigns to combat domestic violence;
- d) Promote measures that increase the participation of women in national economic life, namely through the granting of financial support to women's economic organizations and the carrying out of professional training actions that favor their insertion into active life, in areas likely to create small and medium-sized companies and cooperatives, in order to promote increased productivity of female labor and female leadership;
- e) Encourage women's participation in political life and public decision-making processes;
- f) Ensure the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the National Action Plan for the implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325, on Women, Peace and Security (PAN-1325) and the Beijing Declaration on women's rights;
- g) Ensure the coordination, implementation, execution and evaluation of public policies related to gender equality, the National Action Plans on Gender-Based Violence, on Women, Peace and Security and the Maubisse Declaration;
- h) Ensure the integration of the gender perspective in the normative acts that form the national legal system;
- i) Ensure public information and awareness on issues related to gender equality, women's rights, and their social and economic inclusion, and gender-based violence;
- j) Ensure the establishment of partnerships to promote gender equality and support civil society organizations that intervene in this field;

- k) Support women's organizations and associations that defend women's rights and interests;
- l) Ensure the existence of consultation mechanisms for civil society organizations, public administration bodies and services and international organizations and agencies in matters of promoting gender equality and eradicating gender-based violence;

Gender Mainstreaming and Gender Responsive Budgeting

Timor-Leste, has committed to implementing gender mainstreaming as a strategy to improve the quality of public policies, programs, projects and plans to ensure more efficient allocation of resources and budgets to improve the well-being of both women and men, boys and girls as well as other vulnerable groups to achieve a socially just and sustainable society. Timor-Leste SDP stipulated clearly that gender mainstreaming and gender responsive budgeting will be promoted across government in policies, laws, programs, processes and budgets at national and local levels.

For over decades the Government of Timor-Leste has been understood that GRB refers to the process of conceiving, planning, allocating resources, executing, and monitoring, analyzing and auditing budgets in a gender-sensitive way. It involves analysis of actual Government expenditure and revenue on women and girls as compared to that on men and boys. GRB is not about dividing 50-50 budget on women or solely increasing spending programme that target women issues but it is an instrument or tool aiming to integrate gender perspective into planning and budgeting process to ensure the states national and international commitments on gender equality is translated to the implementation. A gender responsive budget ensures that the needs and interests of individuals from different social groups (sex, age, race, ethnicity, and location) are addressed in the Government expenditure and revenue policies.

It is therefore through a consolidated process led by SEI, civil society organization and in collaboration with Ministry of Finance has integrated Gender Marker in Public Financial Management System (PFMS) as an instrument for tracking and earmarking line ministries' budget allocation on gender equality and social inclusion has made progress. As a result, in 2022, the Government has also established a dedicated Programme on Gender Equality and Social Inclusion as well as activities on gender mainstreaming on the government budget structure. Therefore, in 2023 General State Budget shows that there are 57 institutions, including 13 municipalities and Special Administrative Region Oecusse-Ambeno (RAEOA) or 53% out of 108 institutions, that allocated budget for the implementation of programmes and activities on gender equality and social inclusion and gender mainstreaming activities.

The government, through SEI, continues to provide capacity building to planning and programming officials of Line Ministries, State Secretariat, State Institutions and autonomous institutions, including members of gender working groups regarding

gender mainstreaming and gender responsive budgeting. This training provides tools and guidance on how to integrate gender and inclusion perspectives into government annual plans and budgets. Through Spotlight Initiatives, similar training is also provided to members of gender working groups in municipalities.

Every year SEI is invited by the Ministry of Finance to be part of the Budget Review Committee to examine the plans and budgets of ministries and all agencies to provide input and perspective on improving their plans and budgets to ensure the State Budget is gender responsive. In addition, when the Government submitted the budget to the National Parliament, Grupo Mulher Parlamentar Timor-Leste (GMPTL) also invited SEI together with civil society and women's organizations working in the field of gender equality and women's rights to provide input and policy papers on the State Budget. This aims to provide feedback to the Government to improve the budget from a gender and inclusion perspective.

Futhermore, Gender Working group was established based on Government Resolution No.35/2017 of 21 June, as gender mainstreaming and gender responsive institutional mechanisms in all ministries and State secretariats, both at national and district level. Gender Working Group's meet twice a year in April and October to ensure that gender is mainstreamed across all sectors. Gender Working Group has a competence to:

- Identify opportunities and challenges in implementing the integration of a gender perspective within Government activities;
- Share and develop strategies and tools for implementing and monitoring the integrated gender approach in each ministry and/or secretariat of State;
- Ensure that the Annual Action Plans and Budgets of Municipal Administrations and Municipal Authorities ensure gender equality;

However, constant changes in the government structure affect the function of the Gender Working Group. SEI continues to coordinate and advocate with other newly established institutions also to establish a Gender Working Group in their institutions. SEI provides \$1000 to Gender Focal Point in all 13 Municipalities to implement activities to promote gender equality, social inclusion, violence prevention, women's economic empowerment and promotion of women's participation in politics and decision-making positions.

Timor-Leste submitted the 4th Periodic Treaty-Specific CEDAW Report for consideration by the CEDAW Committee through the Permanent Mission of Timor-Leste to the United Nations and other international organizations in Geneva in 2021. The report was prepared and presented to CEDAW Committee in May 2023. CEDAW Concluding Observation from CEDAW Committee was received two months later after the presentation in GENEVA. Based on article 18 of the Convention the State Parties will present its periodic report every four years which Timor-Leste on track of that. In 2023 CEDAW Concluding Observation that the Committee provided some

recommendation to immediately follow up and implemented. Those recommendations are to:

- 1) Accelerate the adoption of National Action Plan against Gender-Based Violence and National Action Plans on UN Security Council Resolution on 1325; Women Peace and Security by 2025. These two recommendations have been implemented by Timor-Leste Government as the two NAPs have been adopted. NAP-GBV was adopted by Council of Ministers in September 2022 and NAP-1325 was adopted February 2024.
- 2) Develop and implement a comprehensive strategy, including for the online domain, targeting community and religious leaders, teachers, girls and boys, and women and men to eliminate discriminatory stereotypes regarding the roles and responsibilities of women and men in the family and in society, and develop and introduce a set of targets and indicators to systematically measure the impact of the strategic interventions undertaken;
- 3) Provide relevant public officials and the media, as well as private sector representatives, with capacity building to enable them to address discriminatory gender stereotypes, including through gender-responsive language, and promote positive portrayals of women as active drivers of development in the media;
- 4) Take targeted measures, including awareness raising, paid paternity leave or shared parental leave, to promote equal sharing of domestic and childcare responsibilities, as well as responsible fatherhood.
- 5) Accelerate the adoption on National Action Plan on Human Trafficking

The government continues to strive to implement the 2-5 recommendations above. The rest recommendation will be updated based on the article 18 of the conventions.

National Human Rights Institution

The Office of the Provedor for Human Rights and Justice, or Provedoria dos Direitos Humanos e Justiça (PDHJ), is the National Human Rights Institution of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste.³⁷ It was established under Section 27 of the Constitution of Timor-Leste in May 2002 and first opened its doors in 2006. The PDHJ has a dual mandate covering human rights and good governance. The main activities of the PDHJ include cooperation with national and international entities for the advancement of a human rights framework in Timor-Leste which focus on good governance and human rights monitoring. Conducting activities for the promotion of human rights and good governance principles, reporting to the United Nations treaty bodies and the Human Rights Council.

The PDHJ's **vision** is to protect human rights, strengthen integrity and promote good governance in Timor-Leste.

The PDHJ's **mission** is to:

³⁷ PDHJ Complementary report on the implementation of CEDAW

- Create a public awareness through the promotion of a culture that respects the principles of human rights, rule of law and good governance.
- To provide motivation and assistance to entities and public agencies to develop policies, procedures, internal training and complaint mechanisms that promote human rights and good governance.
- To effectively address the issue of human rights violations and mal-administration using mechanisms which deal with complaints effectively and through mediation and conciliation process.
- To provide recommendations on the means and ways to protect human rights and good governance, based on the results of investigation, inquiry and monitoring (directly or in partnership with its partners in civil society) that guarantee the constitutionality of legislative decisions, the protection of human rights, the strengthening of integrity and the promotion of good governance in Timor-Leste.

Cluster 5: Peaceful and Inclusive Societies

Critical Areas of Concerns

E. Women and armed conflict

I. Human rights of women

L. The girl child

Prevention of Women and Armed Conflict

After long history of conflict and violence, as Timorese we are proud that we have restored our independence as well as have rebuild the country from the scracts. Timorese people experienced the consequences of both civilian and arm conflicts. The Timorese history have shown that women and girls in particular who lived through these conflicts were victims of many different forms of violence such as people were subjected to horrific experiences including death, disappearances, torture, rape, sexual slavery and imprisonment, all of which are gross human rights violations. It is therefore, the Government together with its people stand firm and committed to end any form of violence and build a society where there are stability and peacefull environment for all citizens women and men, boys and girls to live in dignity. Moreover, as post conflict country, the Government recognizes that Timor-Leste also continues to face obstacles in building the nation but we strive to overcome the challenges that still exist and the challegens will come. The people of Timore-Leste have made a shared commitment to peace in a spirit of national solidarity and moving together to develop the nation and secure the future of the country.

Since Timor-Leste indepedence, several advancements have made to promote and advance the rights of women and girls in situations of armed conflict the adoption of UN Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (NAP 1325 on WPS) – 2016-2020

and the approval of the second generation of National Action Plan 1325 on WPS (2024-2028) was adopted and launched in February 2024 to implement UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security. The resolution aims to institutionalize measures to ensure the protection of civilians and conflict communities with special consideration for the special needs of women and girls as well as the right to participate and contribute actively and equally to peace-building and development of the country. This includes recognising women's contribution and suffering in the struggle for Timor-Leste's independence. The Government also adopted National Action Plan (NAP) on Gender-based Violence (GBV) to prevent violence against women and enhance women's participation in decision-making and peace-building.

Timor-Leste ratified the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 2003 and number of other international treaties and conventions such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women have also been ratified by the government of Timor-Leste. In 2022, Timor-Leste National Parliament also ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) as an international human rights treaty, which exists to promote, protect and ensure the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all disabled persons.

The Government of Timor-Leste implemented 70% of the activities under the first NAP-1325 (2016-2020) on Women, Peace and Security including: (a) dissemination of information on opportunities for women in recruitment to take part as members of the defense force, (b) socialization and training concluded with 48 secondary schools in 8 municipalities in 2019 with the participation of 629 women out of 974 students (65% women participation), (c) adoption of the Timor-Leste National Police first Gender Strategy, which creates a guide to respond to the barriers faced by women officers in the PNTL and actions for the institution to be able to respond to gender inequality in PNTL and in the community, (d) training for civil servants in transformative leadership for gender equality (TLGE) with 88% already demonstrating changes of character for the promotion of gender equality, (e) training of community mediators with 49% representation from women using gender-sensitive mediation guidelines to community conflict (civil cases), which have become a Ministerial Diploma No. 096/2020 as a guide for mediators from all institutions as part of WPS agenda (NAP -1325 Participation and Prevention Pillar) regarding the women's leading the peace processes, and (f) integration of Gender Marker into programme budgeting structure in Public Financial Management System (PFM) – *Dalan ba Futuru* has made budget allocation by line ministries for the implementation of NAP-1325 increased from USD 391,311 in 2019 to USD 1,364,757 in 2020.

Table 17: Allocation on the Implementation of First NAP-1325 on WPS

2021	2022	2023	2024
545,752.00	7,266,399	105,191,659	109,654,542

Source: SEI State Budget analysis from gender perspective

Another historical milestone that Timor-Leste has achieved to demonstrate its commitment to advancing women in the peacebuilding and security sector is the empowerment and involvement of women in UN Missions. During the 2020-2022 period, 2 (out of 4) female members of PNTL have been involved in the UN Peacekeeping Mission to Africa as UNMISS and 1 female (out of 4) to Guinea Bissau in the same years. Since 2023, PNTL has begun preparations to send PNTL members including 3 female members as a UN's peacekeeping mission other countries.

Meanwhile, despite very low numbers, the Timor-Leste Defense Force (F-FDTL) has also made efforts to increase women's participation in defense. In 2024, F-FDTL data shows that women will account for 12.83% of the 2,743 F-FDTL members. This includes 15 female junior officers, 1 (one) female Captain, 85 female Sergeants and 169 female Praças/Square. Women do not yet occupy public positions and senior officials.

PNTL and F-FDTL have also developed training materials which includes gender perspective and established Gender Unit in F-FDTL and PNTL. The Gender Unit is undertaking activities to promote gender equality, reproductive health, environment and how to support their spouse to perform their tasks, prevent gender-base violence including domestic violence and promote a healthy and respectful relationship in the institutions and public.

PNTL organic law defines one of PNTL's missions is to defend democracy and the supremacy of law, guarantee the security and well-being of citizens and protect citizens' rights in accordance with the provisions stipulated in the Constitution and Law. Based on these principles, community policing defined as a strategy to encourage partnerships between the police and the community to work proactively in preventing and response to crimes and conflicts that occur in the community. Therefore, Community Police Councils (KPK) were also established at the Suco/village level throughout the country which aims to provide human security that focuses on livelihoods, freedom, security and community's rights and involving the community in security activities. KPK, is also aimed to strengthening the role of Suco Council to ensure public security and promote social cohesion based on the Suco Law No. 9/2016 which provides competence to Suco Concils to support PNTL.

Women represent 15%³⁸ of PNTL personnel in 2020 compared to 16.4% in 2016. The Data shows that there has been a decreased in female PNTL officer in the last five

³⁸ PNTL HR Department, 2016/2017

years. There is plan to hire new member of PNTL in 2024. Women are also still disproportionately represented in the highest ranks of the PNTL, only 9% of all officers are women³⁹. Gender Strategy of the PNTL 2018- 2022 included at 18% quota as special measure to promote women’s meaningful participation and leadership of the PNTL through access to capacity development opportunities. The Ministry of Interior will consider measures to increase women’s participation in recruitment process in order to close the gap.

Centro Nacional Chega! I.P, (CNC) Chega means ENOUGH established in 2016 with mission to implement the recommendation from the Commission of Reception, Truth and Recconciliation (CVAR) to institutionalize memory and promote human right through education, training and solidarity with the most vulnerable survivor of past human right violations.⁴⁰ CNC has also developed education materials and trained teachers and students about past human rights violations including women’s rights that occurred in the past. CNC also provided scholarships for children of victims and survivors of human right violations. Moreover, CNC as part of the implementation of NAP-1325 on Women, Peace and Security, CNC also provided health treatment support to 79 women survivors past crimes and have built houses for 5 women. Chega! engages with the community, both the public and survivors, through commemorating historical events, mapping historical sites, organizing educational tours that allow students to visit historical sites and to hear the testimonials of survivors, and creating the spaces for intergenerational transmission of memories.

Women in Diplomacy

Timor-Leste Government recognizes that female delegates and diplomat’s role in peace and security agreement is pivotal to ensure longer-lasting peace and security agreement and improve human security and equal representation. it is therefore, Timor-Leste has had significant female representation in diplomacy as ambassadors and council representing the countries in foreign countries. Timor-Leste has had 10 Ambassador and 7 councilors for the last five years.

Cluster 6: Environmental Conservation, Protection and Rehabilitation

Critical areas of concern:

I. Human rights of women

K. Women and the environment

L. The girl child

³⁹ HR Department, PNTL, 2017.

⁴⁰ CNC profile

Women and the Environment

Climate change has become a reality that we have experience today as one of the most serious and pervasive developmental and environmental challenges such as unseasonal heavy rain caused land slides, floods, crop damage and cyclone Seroja. As a small island nation, Timor-Leste is at high risk on rising sea levels which also threaten coastal areas including the capital, Dili, which is only several meters above sea level. However, given this real situation, Timor-Leste does not yet have a climate adaptation strategy to mitigate risks and response to climate change. Meanwhile the government continue to work with development partners to strengthen community resilience to climate change and natural disasters.

In the past five years, Timor-Leste has experienced severe impact from environmental degradation and climate change. In April 2021, Timor-Leste was hit by Cyclone Seroja which affected many population specially women, children and other vulnerable groups. The Government recognizes that gender equality and inclusion have to be considered as transversal element in disaster risk management and environmental adaptation policies. Timor-Leste's National Adaptation Plan included a section on demography, gender, and social inclusion considerations which recommended measures that will incorporate the differential impacts of climate change on men, women, children, elderly people, and other potentially vulnerable groups.⁴¹ It provides more clarity about the impact of climate change on women and men differently, thus, it is important to consider the development of gender mainstreaming guidelines for women and men in climate adaptation response. The Secretary of State for Environment has a specific department, which is headed by a woman as a director who actively campaigns, socializes and promotes green gardens as a measure to fight climate change and reduce gas emissions. Secretary of State for Civil Protection is organizing socialization on managing disaster and climate change involving women and men.

Under the Spotlight Initiatives programme, the Government its partners have trained 69 volunteers (29 females; 40 males - both CSOs and government) to be facilitators of Child friendly spaces in the communities most affected by the floods and COVID - 19 in Dili. By October 2021, 15 communities were involved with 1609 children (856 boys and 753 girls) participating. In addition, 60 members of the LGBTI community who were affected stayed at partner offices and were provided training and opportunity for discussion on LGBTQI rights during this period.⁴² Although these activities were interrupted and delayed due to COVID restrictions but it was started again after the restriction was uplifted. These activities, enabled children and caregivers on structured play, recreation and leisure to support children's mental health during times of crisis, and as such can have impacts beyond Spotlight, particularly in the context of increased risk of displacement due to climate change. The current Government is continuously working with partners to also development

⁴¹ Timor-Leste's National Adaptation Plan: Addressing climate risks and building climate change.

⁴² Spotlight Initiatives report 2021

of guidelines which integrate gender and inclusion perspective into disaster risk management.

In addition, Timor-Leste is also making synergistic efforts to invest in interconnected areas such as education, nutrition, health and social protection which can play a transformational role in improving Timor-Leste's strides in preparedness, resilience and response to disasters and upcoming pandemic. The Secretary of State for Environment has employed special environmental staff who provide education and outreach to the community, including women and girls. The government is also taking green economic policy steps in response to this critical situation.

SECTION FOUR: NATIONAL INSTITUTIONS AND PROCESSES

Country's National Strategy or Action Plan on Gender Equality

Timor-Leste has not adopted a National Strategy or Action Plan for Gender Equality to encourage gender mainstreaming and gender responsive planning and budgeting across all programs and their implementation holistically. This is because gender mainstreaming is integrated in sectoral policies, laws, programs and budgeting. Timor-Leste also has adopted specific national policies such National Action against Gender Based Violence, National Action Plan on UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security, Maubisse Declaration to promote women's economic empowerment and CEDAW Concluding Observation. All of these are a five year plans we continuously to be reviewed and renewed every five years.

Country's system for tracking the proportion of the national budget that is invested in the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women (gender-responsive budgeting).

Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB) was introduced since 2010 through National Parliament Resolution on GRB in 2010. GRB is applied as an instrument to integrate gender perspective into planning and budgeting processes. GRB analysis can ensure government national and international commitments are translated into planning and budgeting for concrete actions and implementation. However, it does not mean splitting the budget 50% on women or solely by increasing spending on programme that targeting women's issues.⁴³ Although in some areas budget allocation for specific needs of women are needed to address gender gap such gender-based violence, increasing women's participation politics and decision making.

There are strong legislative foundation for gender responsive budgeting including:

⁴³ Timeline of key gender responsive budgeting milestone in Timor-Leste

- Inclusion of gender equality in the Constitution of Timor-Leste (art. 16 and 17).
- Parliamentary Resolution adopted in 2010.
- Resolution on Gender Working Groups (GWGs) that requires Chair at the director level for stronger decision-making.⁴⁴
- Gender mainstreamed in Programme Budgeting Roadmap and GRB Policy Note adopted to guide the implementation.

In 2018, the Government integrated Gender Marker into Public Financial Management System to track and earmark planning and budget allocation by line Ministries for the the implementation of national commitments on gender equality such as National Action Plans on Gender-Based Violence, NAP-1325 on Women, Peace and Security, Maubisse Declaration and CEDAW concluding observation. In 2022, Government also integrated child marker, people with disabilities, climate change and value chain markers. These aim to also earmark and monitor allocation for NAP on Child Rights, People with Disabilities, Climate and Value Chain.

The State Secretariat for Equality conducted GRB analysis on the State Budget since 2020 of the State Budget for 2021, 2022, 2023 and 2024 which shows the Ministry's ongoing planning and allocation towards the implementation of national and international commitments regarding gender equality, especially in relation to the Beijing Platform for Action four critical areas of concerns such as Women and the Economy, Women and Gender-Based Violence, Women and Peace and Security, and Women in political participation and decision making.

Mechanisms for stakeholders to participate in the implementation and monitoring of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development?

There is no formal mechanism in place for participatory process including to monitor their impact on the implementation of the BPfA and the 2030 Agenda. But the Secretary of State for Equality is establishing gender coordination meeting with development partners both national and international to meet regularly to share what they are doing to contribute to ensure the implementation of all gender equality agenda including BPfA and 2030 Agenda.

The preparation of present BPfA national report

The Secretary of State for Equality (SEI) held national consultative workshop on 11 April 2024 to launch National Comprehensive Review process with all stakeholders

⁴⁴ Gender-Responsive Budget in Timor-Leste: Documentation & Assessment of Capacity in SEPI, Lime Ministries & Non-Governmental Organization, 2012, UN Women, in Timeline for Key Gender Responsive Budgeting Milestone in Timor-Leste

both national and international including private sectors and academia. Guidelines and questions were translated into national language in order to facilitate the process of receiving data and information from line ministries and all relevant institutions. A team of SEI was also established to collect secondary data and to conduct interviews with key stakeholders. A focus group discussion was also applied during the launching to gather data and information from all participants in the workshop.

Although report preparation time is limited, stakeholders are also consulted in the report writing and analysis process. The draft report was distributed to invited partners at the consultation workshop and to relevant institutions to provide inputs.

Country's action plan and timeline for implementation of the recommendations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and Universal Periodic Review or other United Nations human rights mechanisms that address gender inequality/discrimination against women.

Timor-Leste finalized its fourth periodic review in 2021 covering the years of 2015-2020 while UPR report was submitted in 2022 covering 2016-2021. There is no specific timeline developed to ensure the implementation of these two international commitments. However, the Government is aligning it annually with its Annual Action Plans and Budgets and SEI is in coordination with relevant sectoral Ministries, Secretary of States and all State Institutions to ensure the implementation.

SECTION FIVE: DATA AND STATISTICS

Progress on gender statistics at the national level

Based on the Decree-Law No. 4/2023 of 15 February Creates the National Institute of Statistics of Timor-Leste I.P and approved the respective statutes defining statistics as fundamental element for understanding and measuring the country's reality and enable it to plan its economic development. Therefore, the National Statistics Institute of Timor-Leste, I.P (INETL), I.P was established to strengthening data collection, analysis and production including improving gender statistics. As a result, gender data has been improved throughout data collection, analysis and report presentation in Census and Timor-Leste Standard Living Survey. The gender theme in statistics for Timor-Leste's education, poverty, immunization, nutrition and employment indicators which disaggregated by gender and geographic areas. These statistics are available at national level.⁴⁵

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⁴⁵ Retrieved from www.inetl-ip.gov.tl

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NETL.IP has also strengthened its coordination with other agencies including UNFPA and UN WOMEN and involved SEI in efforts to provide support and input in the Timor-Leste Living Standards Survey process. Support from UN agencies includes capacity building to strengthen gender statistics and the use of gender data for policy formulation and program design.

INETL.IP continues working in close collaboration with all partners to ensure the implementation and monitoring of SDGs achievements. However, data collection has been major challenges in Timor-Leste particularly data from sectoral ministries. Often the data are not disaggregated by gender and other classification.

It is therefore, over the next five years. the Government of Timor-Leste through INETL.IP will continue to make efforts to strengthening national gender statistics through designing statistical programme and strategy to promote the development of gender statistics and establish data center with specialized categories on gender, geographic areas, gender-based violence, asset ownership, education, poverty and disabilities.

SECTION SIX: CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

The government of Timor-Leste in collaboration with development partners both international and national have made progress in reducing gender inequalities and inclusion in all critical areas of concerns. Progress and achievements that have advanced towards accelerating gender equality and women's empowerment as discussed throughout this report. Timor-Leste Government has had important policies, laws and programmes to improve women's access and situation in all the key areas such as education, health employment, access to justice and political representation. Timor-Leste is proud to have one of the highest rates of women's representation in its national parliament, and is committed to empowering women throughout the whole of the country to become community leaders and to further contribute to the development of Timor-Leste.

Despite significant progress made, there are still challenges and concerns for women in Timor-Leste. Domestic violence rates continue to be high, with victims facing barriers in accessing justice and support. Gender-based violence is a pervasive issue

for women across the country, especially those in rural areas. Participation of women in the labour force continues to be disproportionately low compare to men.

There is increased in budget allocation to implement gender policies but actual implementation remained unmeasured in terms of how the allocation have been implemented. This is because there is no report on on the implementation from sectoral ministries which highlighted advancement in their respective sectors.

The Government of Timor-Leste continuously reaffirms it's commitment to improving gender equality and inclusion in all sectors of development in order to ensure women and men,boys and girls as well as other vulnerable groups are enjoying their equal rights in all sectors. It recognises the challenges that women in Timor-Leste continue to face, and is committed to working in close partnership with civil society groups, NGOs and international agencies to enable a better future for women, where women are empowered to fully and actively participate in political, business and public life, free from fear of violence or discrimination. The government believes that with strong women comes a strong nation. It is proud of the efforts Timor-Leste has made in reducing gender inequalities, and is committed to continuing it's work in further dismantling barriers affecting women across the country.