

# Timor-Leste

The Asia Foundation is working with local, district, and national level government, as well as civil society partners and communities to strengthen governance and policy, eliminate violence against women, enhance economic opportunities for women, and promote peace and justice in Timor-Leste.



## SUPPORTING GOOD PUBLIC POLICY

The Asia Foundation is supporting the development of capacities and mechanisms for good public policy generation and implementation that result in policies that more accurately reflect public needs. By engaging in initiatives that guide effective public policy through evidence-based research while working with a broad range of civil society partners, the Foundation is strengthening policy advocacy in Timor-Leste and promoting meaningful engagement between civil society and government actors. This includes establishing training and mentoring programs for both municipal and national NGOs, which provide an opportunity for organizations to build capacity in policy advocacy, while also developing strategies to target specific policy issues. The Foundation is actively seeking the participation of women NGO partners and will support policy reforms on issues that impact women, particularly at the municipal level.

The Foundation is also helping to build a network of influential policy reformers in order to leverage the importance of key individuals in shaping public policy. Through regular meetings, workshops, and conferences, group members will share experiences and knowledge, and use their collective power to address key policy issues in Timor-Leste. These initiatives are providing for meaningful

change and a reform-minded agenda, which will have a positive impact on development outcomes for Timorese citizens.

## FOSTERING LASTING PEACE AND SECURITY

Since 2009, The Asia Foundation partnered with the Policia Nacional de Timor-Leste (PNTL) to help put principles of community policing into practice. The PNTL has shown its commitment to these principles by including community policing as a central part of its most recent five-year strategic plan and developing a specialized model of community policing for Timor-Leste.

The Foundation is helping the PNTL develop Community Police Councils (CPCs) to implement the principles of community policing by providing training to council members on setting safety and security agendas. The Foundation's activities reduce resentment, apathy, and opposition to police in target communities and discourage the public from taking the law into their own hands. At the same time, these activities help bring the PNTL closer to communities and help identify and resolve community problems in a proactive rather than reactive manner.



### TIMOR-LESTE

The Asia Foundation has been programming in Timor-Leste since 1992 and established an office in Dili in 2000.

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The Asia Foundation supports the active participation of women in all aspects of Timor-Leste's development.

## STRENGTHENING LOCAL GOVERNANCE

The Asia Foundation works with *suku* (village) councils to strengthen the capacity of local leadership to work with their communities and to coordinate with other levels of government in order to better respond to community needs. The Foundation has also been providing support to *suku* associations – organizations that bring villages together and allow communities to have a greater voice when communicating with district and national government. The Foundation has also engaged in research that provides a critical window into the perceptions of communities, village leaders, and the government as to the role and place of traditional village councils in Timor's administrative structure and in service provision at the local level.

Although each *suku* council has mandated female representation, only two percent of Timor-Leste's *xefe suku* (village chiefs) are women. To strengthen female leadership at the local level, the Foundation is working with women's representatives of *suku* councils to build skills and capacity, which can in turn be used to promote the concerns of women as priorities for all levels of government.

## WORKING TO END VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

The *Nabilan: Ending Violence Against Women* program is an eight-year intervention aimed at reducing the proportion of women in focus areas who have experienced violence in the previous 12 months and improving well-being for an increased number of women and children who have been affected by violence.

The *Nabilan* program is grounded in the fundamental principles of women's and children's rights, and the equality of women and men. The program's strategic approach works toward long

term institutional and behavioral change, while employing a holistic approach to ending violence against women, working on prevention, services, and access to justice. This aligns with the national government's own holistic framework – the National Action Plan on Gender-based Violence. The program is informed by research conducted on the underlying causes and opportunities for ending violence against women and children in Timor-Leste, and seeks to ensure that program interventions are informed by research. *Nabilan* cooperates with government, and civil society organizations, and is now developing its work at the community level which will link prevention and access to support.

## PROMOTING WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

Recognizing economic empowerment for women as an important area of focus, The Asia Foundation, in collaboration with two local partners is supporting women *Tais* (a traditional woven cloth) weavers throughout the country to enhance their livelihood opportunities. Activities include assessing access points to national and international markets, capacity building on product quality and diversification, enhancing finance and business skills and providing scholarships to adolescent girls. The goal of these efforts is to empower women and girls to avoid abusive relationships, stay in school, become economically sufficient, contribute to the evolving economy of Timor-Leste, and promote cultural traditions of Timor-Leste through the modernization of marketing strategies, and development of collectives for traditional tapestries.

*The Asia Foundation is a nonprofit international development organization committed to improving lives across a dynamic and developing Asia. Headquartered in San Francisco, The Asia Foundation works through a network of offices in 18 Asian countries and in Washington, DC. Working with public and private partners, the Foundation receives funding from a diverse group of bilateral and multilateral development agencies, foundations, corporations, and individuals.*



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