

WORLD VISION TIMOR-LESTE: LIVELIHOOD AGRICULTURE

Background

Agriculture is a key driver of the Timor-Leste economy, with 80 percent of the population relying on rain-fed agriculture as the primary source of livelihoods and/or food security. However, agricultural productivity remains low, and farmers generally focus on the production of staple crops (rice, and maize) rather than diversified, nutritious foods.

In 2022, Timor-Leste was ranked 110 on a list of 121 countries surveyed for the Global Hunger Index (GHI), with the sixth highest prevalence of childhood stunting: 47.1% in 2020. There are multiple causes behind such statistics, including household income and food insecurity, limited availability of nutritious and diverse foods, lack of knowledge about health and nutrition and poor child feeding practices.



Land degradation and deforestation are also key issues caused by unsustainable agricultural practices, such as slash and burn agriculture. In addition, gender dynamics influenced by cultural norms and values result in the inadequate and inequitable allocation of food (both in terms of quantity and quality) for women.

At the national level, the National Council for Food Security, Sovereignty and Nutrition of Timor-Leste (KONSSANTIL) is the a-led body that is responsible for coordinating multi-sectoral responses to food insecurity and malnutrition challenges in Timor-Leste. Internationally, Timor-Leste has made an intentional effort to be part of the global nutrition agenda by joining the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) movement, with the Prime Minister's Office hosting the in-country SUN movement Secretariat.

Technical Approach

WVTL targets the most vulnerable households in all of its livelihood, agriculture, nutrition programs. WVTL intentionally integrates livelihood and agriculture activities into nutrition-sensitive and Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) programs. WVTL has piloted a nature-based solution, known as **Farmer Managed Natural Regeneration (FMNR)**, for farmers and communities to conserve water and protect land from soil degradation, improve soil fertility and regenerate degraded land.

WVTL promotes smallholder market development approaches, these are designed to bring innovation to the smallholder level, assist smallholder producers to scale-up production of nutritious products, and to create win-win relationships that add value across value chain actors.

¹ https://www.statistics.gov.tl/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Field_Instructions_Manual_TLAC_2019_20181030.pdf

² <https://www.globalhungerindex.org/pdf/en/2022/Timor-Leste.pdf>

³ The Global Hunger Index (GHI) is a tool for comprehensively measuring and tracking hunger at global, regional, and national levels. GHI scores are based on the values of four component indicators: undernourishment, child wasting, child stunting and child mortality.

⁴ https://www.unicef.org/timorleste/media/4606/file/Digital_Eng_TL%20Food%20Nutrition%20Survey%202020_FINAL_20%204%20

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WVTL implements a contextualized Inclusive Markets System Development (IMSD) approach with support from WV Australia. This intervention is designed to ensure women, people with disabilities, and those who are socially excluded, are able to participate in the diversified livelihood opportunities and have better access to markets for income-generation. WVTL also establishes and builds the capacity of saving and loan groups, particularly amongst women, to improve their financial literacy and help them negotiate with market actors.

Technical Models

1. **Farmer Managed Natural Regeneration (FMNR)** is a rapid, low cost, easily replicated approach to restoring and improving agricultural, forested and pasture lands through reforestation and agroforestry.
2. **Local Value Chain Development (LVCD)** is a model to help producers increase their incomes by working together in groups to better understand and connect to markets, thereby increasing their profitability.
3. **Inclusive Market Systems Development (IMSD)** is a facilitative approach that looks to identify the systemic constraints in a market hindering inclusive growth. It is part of WV's hybrid approach to raising the household incomes of small producers and other vulnerable community members.
4. **Savings for Transformation (S4T)** is a simple, transparent method to accumulate and convert small amounts of cash into savings that can be lent as credit to the members of a saving group that is member-owned and composed of a small number of people who save together in a safe, convenient, and flexible way.
5. **Citizen Voice and Action** is a social accountability and local advocacy model that facilitates dialogue between communities and government to advocate for stronger laws and effective enforcement against violence against women and children.

Technical Expertise and Capacity

At the national level, WVTL has two full-time Technical Specialists, specialising in Economic Development and Agriculture, who have profound expertise in designing technical curriculums, facilitating training for staff and partners, and contextualizing global technical guidelines into the Timor-Leste context. At the field level, WVTL currently operates in seven municipalities across Timor-Leste (Aileu, Bobonaro, Covalima, Baucau, Manatuto, Ermera, and Oecussi), through a network of 55 project development coordinators and facilitators who carry out multiple projects that have livelihood and agriculture interventions with \$14,000,000 in total budget:

- Building Resilience to Climate Change + Environment – ANCP (\$1.6M)
- Better Food Better Health (BFBH) – ANCP (\$8.5M)
- Better Child Nutrition Project in Bobonaro (BENU) – KOICA (\$1.4M)
- Climate Resilience for All – ANCP (\$3.5M)

In 2022, WVTL trained over 1000 farming households on improved agricultural practices, 1,003 FMNR group members on pruning and terracing, and supported 198 savings and loan groups who have a combined capital of US\$1.3 million. A recent evaluation of WVTL's livelihood and agricultural work found 59% of children now meet the minimum dietary diversity requirements compared with the baseline of 13%; US\$151,669 of income was generated annually from sales of agricultural products, and the consumption of superfoods (high in protein and iron) had risen from 14% to 59%.

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Partnerships

WVTL partners closely with key government ministries including the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, private sector such as Loz Agri Agriculture and input supplier and Agricultural and research organization such as, Agrucultural Innovations for Communities in TL (AI-COM) to improve the technical quality of trainings for livestock incentive packages as well as other promising low-labor water-efficient climate-smart agricultural practices. WVTL also partners with national and local actors to ensure women's and youth's participation and inclusion, such as Ra'es Hadomi Timor Oan (RHOT) and PRADET.

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