

WORLD VISION TIMOR-LESTE: GENDER EQUALITY AND CHILD PROTECTION

Background

In Timor-Leste, women and girls experience high rates of gender-based violence (GBV), and violence against children is also pervasive. The 2019 'Unseen, Unsafe' report estimated that 87% of Timorese children or more than 612,000 boys and girls—experience physical or emotional violence at home.

Strong social norms dictate gender roles and cultural practices that often result in gender inequality, which is a key driver of GBV. Women and girls in Timor-Leste experience high rates of GBV, particularly intimate partner violence (IPV) and family violence. A recent evaluation study of a WVTL, reported that over 70% of adolescents and youth think a husband is justified in hitting or beating his wife under certain circumstances.

Fifty nine percent of women aged 15-49 who have ever been in a relationship have experienced physical and/or sexual violence by their partner. Neglect is also a serious issue in Timor-Leste, especially for children with disabilities: 72% of persons with disabilities have never attended school.



Technical Approach

WVTL promotes gender empowerment and children's well-being through addressing the gender inequalities that affect individual, family lives and impact communities. WVTL works with existing community structures and leaders (churches, teachers, community leaders, service providers, referral networks) to improve understanding, promote active dialogue, and highlight community champions to address gender-based violence and child protection issues.

World Vision takes an integrated approach to prevent gender-based violence and violence against children in Timor-Leste, targeting three main components:

- Raising community awareness and action on violence and gender equality, and prevention by promoting positive family relationships. Engaging communities to identify harmful gender and parenting norms and to find local solutions to promote equitable behavior and practices can help address the root caused violence against women and children as an integral part.
- Strengthening prevention and service delivery by local civil society and government agencies.
- Strengthening agreements and rights to pass tougher laws against gender-based violence, pass child protection laws, and improve service delivery.

1. Save the Children, Child Fund, World Vision and Plan (2019): [Unseen, Unsafe: The Underinvestment in Ending Violence Against Children in the Pacific and Timor-Leste](#).
2. World Vision Timor-Leste (2022): Towards a Future Free from Violence End-of-Project Evaluation (*baseline value in 2019)
3. The Asia Foundation (2016), *Understanding Violence against Women and Children in Timor-Leste: Findings from the Nabilan Baseline Study - Main Report*. The Asia Foundation: Dili.
4. World Vision (2018), Evaluation Report of PTL Reducing Gender-Based Violence Project.
5. Government of Timor-Leste, Timor-Leste Population and Housing Census, 2015, Social and Economic Characteristics - Volume 3 (Disability). Percent of children over three years old with a disability who have not attended school. [Disaggregation for sex not yet available].

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Technical Models

1. **Impact+** is a year-long holistic life skills curriculum to youth engagement that addresses, gender equality, CP, and GBV facing adolescents in a holistic way. This model aims to help young people transition into adulthood as active citizens with the skills, values, confidence and social connections.
2. **Caring for my family** is a men's engagement approach developed by WV and contextualized for Timor-Leste that focuses on driving change in inequitable social norms by engaging men and women through systematic group education activities as a means to promote gender equality in households.
3. **Channels of Hope for Gender and Child Protection** is a faith-based approach that mobilizes faith and traditional leaders to advocate for gender equality and child protection. This approach helps communities analyze gender, child protection and legal issues through their messages of faith. Communities plan and implement activities to promote good relationships with families and communities.
4. **Strengthening Community Responses and Referrals** is to assist community and faith leaders, referral network organizations to strengthen formal and informal community-based response and referral mechanisms to deliver survival-centered services for GBV and CP.
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.
6. **Traveling together** is a set of training on disability inclusion to address beliefs among staff and partners that unintentionally impose barriers to the full participation of children with disabilities in programming and that prevent these children from enjoying fullness of life.
7. **The Parents Club curriculum** includes positive discipline methods that provide parents with positive alternatives to physical and mental punishment to enable their children to thrive, promote peace, and contribute to their communities. Involve parents in issues such as child development, child protection and disability.
8. **Celebrating Families** is a faith-based model that enables families to create safe, loving environments in which children can grow.

Technical Expertise and Capacity

At the national level, WVTL has two full-time Gender and Child Protection Technical Specialists 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 Oe-cussi), through a network of 55 project development coordinators and facilitators who carry out multiple projects of nearly \$6,000,000 in total budget to reduce violence against women and children:

- Towards a Future Free from Violence – DFAT (\$3.2M)
- Healthy Relationships for a Violence Free Future – USAID (\$1.2M)
- Light for Adolescents – MFAT (\$1.3M)
- Girls Empowered – UNICEF (\$9,300)
- Adolescent protection against violence and equipped for life – World Vision Korea and New Zealand (\$145,000)

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WVTL works with female and male adolescents, youth, faith leaders, and couples to demonstrate equitable and non-discriminatory relationships; and parents and teachers to provide a protective environment for children including children with disability; and community leaders and service providers to protect women and children at risk and survivors of family violence. Through this effort, recent evaluations reported that WV projects contributed to a definite shift to non-violent parenting practices and reducing the social acceptance of violence against children. In 2022, WVTL achieved the following:

- **+1,120** adolescents and youth members attended IMPACT youth clubs
- **663** religious leaders and spouses trained in child protection laws and referral network
- **327** teachers trained in child protection and positive discipline
- **2,075** parents mentored in positive parenting
- **458** Community Policy Council (KPK) and Community Action Team (EHF) members trained and better equipped to respond and report child protection and gender-based violence cases.

Partnerships

WVTL's program is aligned with the Government of Timor-Leste's National Action Plan for Children and the National Action Plan against Gender-Based Violence under the Program of the 9th Constitutional Government. Our government partners include the Ministry of Social Solidarity and Inclusion, the Ministry of Education, the Secretariat for Gender Relations and Social Inclusion, and the Vulnerable Division of the PNTL (National Police). WVTL also collaborates with national and local actors that provide legal and/or psychosocial services for women, children and people with disabilities, such as Aileu Women's Association, Uma Mahon, Rede Feto, Asistencia Legal ba Feto no Labarik (ALFeLa), Ra'es Hadomi Timor Oan (RHTO), PRADET, Casa Vida and Ba Futuru.

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