



WOMEN'S SAFETY AUDIT REPORT

Government Offices

Background

A safe space for women is crucial, ensuring their secure access to fundamental rights, information, and services. In alignment with Timor-Leste's National Action Plan for Gender-Based Violence 2022-2032, the Joint Programme **“Together for Equality” (T4E)**, implemented by UN Women, UNDP, UNFPA, and IOM, aims to prevent and respond to Gender-Based Violence by creating safe public spaces for women.

The Women's Safety Audit (WSA), a tool developed in Canada and refined by UN-HABITAT, is instrumental in identifying factors that may lead to increased violence against women and girls (VAWG) and providing recommendations to enhance public space safety.

As part of the T4E Programme implemented by **Rede Feto Timor-Leste** and its affiliated members (**UFD Baucau, Esperança, FKSH** and **MANEO**), 16 public spaces and 8 public institutions in Baucau, Covalima, Dili and RAEOA were audited using the WSA tool.

This initiative, facilitated by Rede Feto with technical support from UN Women and financial support from KOICA, aims to assess and propose recommendations to improve the safety, inclusivity, and accessibility of public spaces for everyone including women and girls.

Scope

The WSA conducted an evaluation on women's safety in specific areas of 3 Government offices between October 2022 - October 2023.

A total of 223 individuals took part in the WSA, with 129 women and 94 men, representing the municipalities of Baucau, Dili, Covalima, and RAEOA. These three institutions include:

- **Dili** - Ministry of Public Works
- **Baucau** - National Directorate of Transportation and Terrestrial
- **Covalima** - Administration Municipal Cavalima

Methodology

This assessment engaged government officials and local stakeholders in data collection using quantitative and qualitative methodologies, including Focus Group Discussions, Women's Safety Audit walks, and validation meetings, empowering them and fostering ownership of safety issues to make government offices safer for women and girls in Timor-Leste.



Women Safety Audit Walk assessment in the Ministry of Public Works' office in 2022. Photo: Helle Miguel, UN Women/Timor-Leste

Findings

Overall perception level of safety

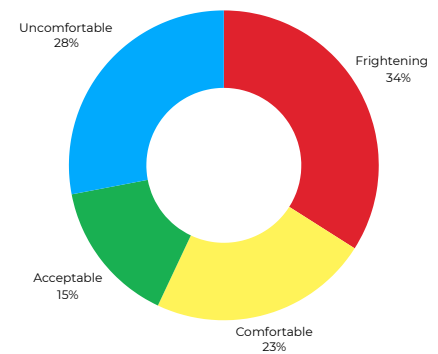
34% of respondents from 3 Government Offices find toilets frightening, indicating safety and cleanliness concerns. 28% feel uncomfortable, indicating potential hygiene issues. However, 15% find them acceptable or comfortable (23%), indicating some level of satisfaction with this facility.

Most respondents (39%) have concerns about the safety of the footpaths in 2 government offices. However, more respondents 28% and 15% find footpaths acceptable or comfortable, compared to toilets.

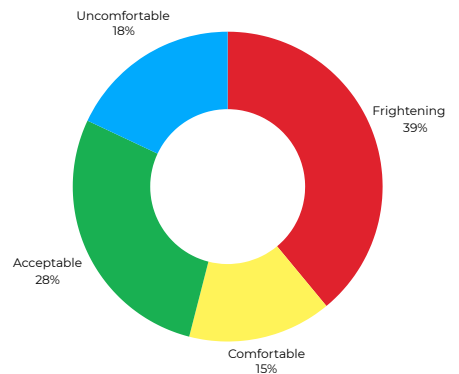
The WSA shows mixed perceptions of safety in 2 government offices' car park areas. 29% find the park frightening, while 20% feel uncomfortable. However, 26% find it acceptable and 25% find it comfortable, suggesting a significant portion feel at ease. Despite concerns about safety, a significant percentage perceive the car park as acceptable or comfortable, indicating varying levels of safety perception in this area.

Additionally, the WSA conducted assessments across various other areas within each of the government offices, revealing mixed perceptions of safety such as; The canteen area from 1 government office perceived generally positive perceptions (3% frightening, 39% uncomfortable, 53% comfortable), indicating satisfaction with safety and cleanliness standards. The registration desk and driving license room from 1 government office indicate high fear levels (66% frightening and 84% uncomfortable), indicating serious safety concerns possibly related to overcrowding or inadequate security measures.

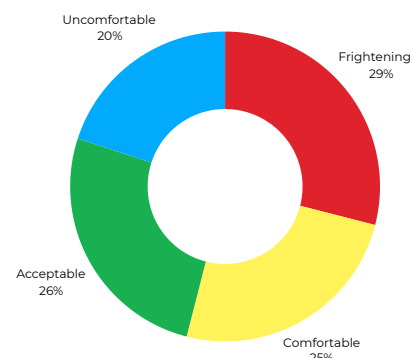
Similarly, the staircase area from 1 government office received mixed perceptions (37% frightening, 32% uncomfortable, 21% acceptable), suggesting moderate safety concerns, compared to other areas. Overall, while some areas like the canteen may be perceived positively, there are significant safety and security concerns in areas such as the registration desk, driving license room, and staircase, emphasizing the need for improvements in safety measures and infrastructure.



Perception level of safety in toilets across 3 Government Offices



Perception level of safety in Footpath from 2 Government Offices



Perception level of safety in Car Park from 2 Government Offices

“ 39% expressed **fear** with the footpaths and 34% found the toilets **frightening** ”

Safety issues identified

Physical Environment



Inadequate or poor lighting

The registration desk and driving license room exhibit the highest levels of concern for inadequate lighting, with 100% and 89% of respondents, respectively, expressing widespread worry about lighting conditions in these areas. In toilet facilities from all offices assessed, 53% of respondents noted inadequate lighting, while 35% raised issues about poorly lit pathways. Additionally, the canteen area (42%), staircase area (32%), and car park (30%) from one office also show a moderate level of concern, indicating potential safety risks associated with insufficient lighting in staircase.

Openness



The audit findings indicated varying levels of concern regarding openness in different areas of government offices. The registration desk stands out with 100% of respondents expressing worries about openness, suggesting potential issues related to privacy or security. In the toilet area from all offices assessed, 51% of respondents showed concern. The driving license room (47%) and the canteen area (45%) also exhibit notable percentages of concern about openness, suggesting potential issues related to transparency or accessibility in these spaces. The footpath area shows a relatively lower level of concern (10%), indicating fewer worries about openness in outdoor pathways. The car park area and staircase area register moderate levels of concern (17% and 13%, respectively), suggesting potential issues related to accessibility or security.

Poor visibility



Visibility concerns were prominent across various areas of government offices. All respondents (100%) expressed concerns about visibility at the registration desk, implying potential challenges in observing surroundings or identifying hazards in this specific area. A majority (63%) shared similar concerns regarding the driving license room, while 38% reported visibility issues in the toilet area. Moreover, moderate levels of concern were noted for the canteen area (24%) and the car park (16%), potentially impacting safety perceptions in these locations. The footpath area exhibited a comparatively lower level of concern (11%), indicating fewer worries about visibility along outdoor pathways. The staircase area showed the least level of concern (8%), suggesting relatively better visibility or fewer perceived safety risks on staircases.

Poor condition of walk path



Crowding and congestion concerns were prevalent in walk paths leading to different areas of government offices. All respondents (100%) expressed concerns about crowding and congestion on the walk paths leading to the registration desk. Concerns about the layout of the pathway to the toilet area were noted by 37% of respondent. And 11% reported similar concerns in the walk paths to the driving license room, 18% expressed similar concerns about the walk paths to the canteen area, indicating moderate levels of worry. Equally, the car park area and staircase area exhibited relatively lower levels of concern (9% and 2%, respectively), suggesting fewer worries about walk paths in these areas.

Poor security or protection



Security and protection concerns were prevalent in various areas of government offices. All respondents (100%) indicated a feeling of insecurity in and around the registration desk, 95% with the driving license room, and 35% with the toilet area, indicating worries about security and protection in these areas. Additionally, the footpath area (32%) and car park (11%) register moderate levels of concern about security and protection, which may affect safety perceptions and comfort levels in these spaces. The canteen area and staircase area showed relatively lower levels of concern (8% and 4%, respectively), suggesting fewer worries about security and protection in these areas.

Social Environment:

High people density



Overcrowding concerns were evident in various areas of government offices. All respondents (100%) indicated issues related to overcrowding around the registration desk, 32% with the driving license room, and 32% with the toilet area, implying worries about overcrowding or limited capacity in toilet facilities. Additionally, the canteen area (16%) and car park (9%) registered moderate levels of concern about people density, which may impact safety perceptions and comfort levels in these spaces. The footpath area and staircase area showed relatively lower levels of concern (11% and 9%, respectively), indicating fewer worries about overcrowding in outdoor pathways and stairwells.

Gender diversity



Concerns about gender diversity were notable in various areas of government offices. The registration desk stands out with 100% of respondents expressing concerns about gender diversity. Similarly, 84% expressed concerns with the driving license room, and 32% with the toilet area, indicating worries about inclusivity or representation in restroom facilities. Additionally, the footpath area (31%) and canteen area (24%) registered moderate levels of concern about gender diversity, The car park area and staircase area demonstrated relatively lower levels of concern (9% and 3%, respectively), suggesting fewer worries about gender diversity in these areas.

Short-term Recommendations

The following are recommendations for the **Governments** for immediate actions.



Improve lighting infrastructure

Allocate funds for installing brighter lights and motion-sensor lighting and include the phasing improvement plans in the Annual Action Plan (AAP) 2025 and beyond.



Enhance physical security measures

Increase security personnel. Install surveillance cameras implement physical barriers and include the phasing improvement plans in the Annual Action Plan (AAP) 2025 and beyond.



Create designated safe spaces

Identify and designate safe spaces within public institutions and include the phasing improvement plans in the Annual Action Plan (AAP) 2025 and beyond.

Whereas civil **society organizations** have the crucial role to monitor the progress and advocating with the relevant government institutions. Moreover, the role of **development partners** is to provide technical support and support advocacy efforts.

Long-term Recommendations



Optimize walk paths for safety and accessibility

Government: Conduct assessments to identify safety hazards. Ensure well-maintained, accessible, and adequately illuminated walk paths.

CSOs: Participate in assessments and provide input on safety hazards. Monitor the maintenance of walk paths.

Development partners: Provide technical support and support advocacy efforts.



Promote gender diversity and inclusivity

Government: Implement policies and initiatives to promote gender diversity and inclusivity.

CSOs: Monitor the implementation of gender diversity policies. Advocate for inclusivity in public institutions.

Development partners: Provide resources and support for gender diversity programs.



Foster community engagement and awareness programs

Government: Organize safety workshops, community patrols, and outreach programs.

CSOs: Participate in and support community engagement activities.

Development partners: Provide funding and resources for community engagement programs.

Costing

Estimated costs for implementing the safety improvements in the 3 government offices are currently not available due to various needs of scope for improvements. However, it is essential to allocate adequate funds to address these safety concerns.

For high-budget improvements, it is advisable to plan these interventions in phases to ensure efficient use of resources and effective implementation. This phased approach allows for prioritization of critical safety needs while also considering budget constraints and resource availability over time.

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