



WOMEN'S SAFETY AUDIT REPORT

Hospitals

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 2 hospitals from October 2022 - October 2023.

A total of 131 individuals took part in the WSA, with 77 women and 54 men, representing the municipalities of Baucau and RAEOA. The two hospitals include:

- **Baucau** - Hospital Horex
- **RAEOA** - Referral Hospital

Methodology

This assessment engaged penitents, hospital personnels 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 hospital safer for women and girls in Timor-Leste.



Findings

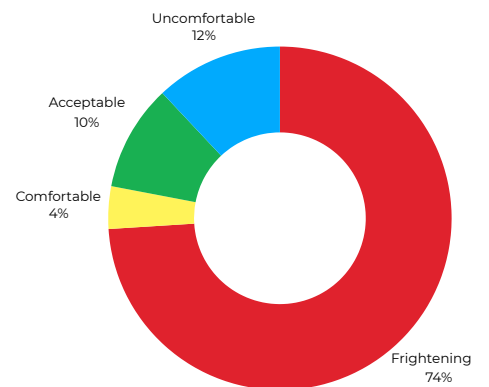
Overall perception level of safety

The findings highlighted the need for improving safety measures and addressing concerns across various areas of the hospitals, especially in spaces like hospital toilets and adult observation rooms where fear and discomfort were most pronounced.

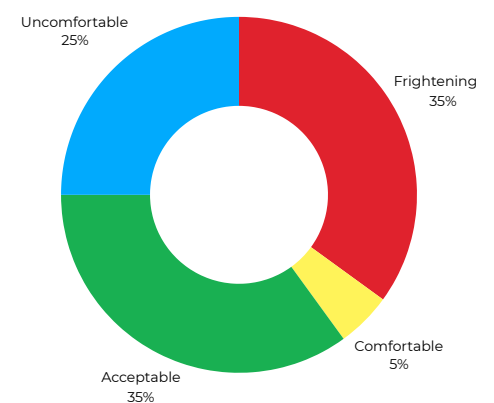
A significant 74% of respondents from both municipalities found toilets in the hospital frightening and 12% uncomfortable. Despite this, 10% found it acceptable and only 4% found it comfortable.

While the perception of safety in maternity rooms was less alarming compared to hospital toilets, it remained a concern. 35% of respondents found it frightening, 25% uncomfortable, 35% acceptable, and only 5% comfortable. Although a sizable portion found it acceptable, there was still room for improvement to address the discomfort experienced by a quarter of respondents.

Additional areas assessed from the 2 hospitals include the road entrance to the hospital is less alarming but still raises concerns, with 50% finding it frightening, 25% uncomfortable, 15% acceptable, and 10% comfortable. The adult observation room is also a concern with 64% of the respondents finding it frightening, 23% uncomfortable, 8% acceptable, and 6% comfortable. This indicates a pervasive sense of fear and discomfort associated with this area.



Perception of safety in hospital's toilets



Perception of safety in Maternity Rooms

74% of respondents found the hospital toilets **frightening**, and 35% found the maternity rooms **frightening**

Safety issues identified

Physical Environment



Inadequate or poor lighting

A significant percentage of Respondents (84% and 75%) from two municipalities highlighted inadequate lighting in vital areas such as hospital toilets and the Maternity Room, respectively. These spaces are crucial for ensuring patient and staff safety during childbirth and postnatal care. In one municipality, all respondents (100%) noted lighting deficiencies in critical areas such as the Emergency Room and Outpatient Department (OPD), with an overwhelming majority (91% and 88%) highlighting issues in the Consultation Room and Adult Observation Room respectively. Nearly half (46%) expressed worries about lighting at the road entrance to the Hospital. This highlights the pressing need for adequate lighting to support patient care and ensure staff safety, especially in emergencies, which is vital for effective communication and medical procedures. Although a smaller percentage of respondents reported lighting issues in the Pharmacy and Administration Room (6%), it remains crucial to prioritize sufficient lighting for operational efficiency throughout the hospital.

Openness



A notable percentage of respondents (100% and 83%) expressed safety concerns in the adult observation room at one hospital and hospital toilet at two visited hospitals, respectively, indicating potential risks to patient privacy and security. Additionally, 40% highlighted concerns in the road entrance, while areas such as the Outpatient Department (OPD), emergency room, and consultation room did not report any safety issues. However, even areas with lower percentages, like the pharmacy, administration room and the maternity room, highlighted the need for attention to privacy and security.



Poor visibility

All the respondents (100%) have expressed concerns regarding visibility management in the adult observation room, while 99% voiced similar concerns about the road entrance to the hospital. Moreover, 91% of respondents identified safety issues in the emergency room and consultation room, with 79% expressing concerns about hospital toilets from the two hospitals and 60% about the maternity room. These findings suggest possible violations of patient privacy and security, prompting concerns about unauthorized access or observation in these areas.



Poor condition of the walk path

All respondents (100%) have expressed concerns about the design of the pathway leading to the road entrance and the walkways to the adult observation room, with 76% indicating similar worries about toilet facilities from the two hospitals, they noted potential hazards or obstacles that could delay the movement of patients, visitors, or staff. Such obstacles could pose safety threats and disrupt the smooth movement within the hospital premises. Nonetheless, it's worth mentioning that respondents did not report any safety concerns regarding walk paths in various other areas such as the maternity room, outpatient department (OPD), emergency room, consultation room, pharmacy, and administration room.



Poor security or protection

All the respondents (100%) have expressed concerns regarding insufficient security and discomfort in the emergency room and road entrance. Furthermore, a vast majority, 99%, expressed concerns about safety in adult observation rooms, with 91% raising concerns about consultation rooms, 81% about toilets, and 75% about administration rooms, citing potential risks related to unauthorized access or insufficient security measures. Conversely, areas such as the maternity room (40%) and pharmacy (38%) showed relatively lower levels of reported issues.

Social Environment:



High people density

According to the audit findings, All respondents (100%) identified issues with crowding or congestion in the road entrance and adult observation room, with 78% noting similar issues in the toilets. These congestion issues could have impeded the efficient flow of patients and staff and compromised safety protocols. Additionally, while no reported issues were noted in the emergency room and consultation room, other areas like the Outpatient Department (OPD) exhibited moderate percentages (22%) of safety concerns related to people density.



Gender diversity

All audit respondents (100%) indicated concerns with the lack of privacy and an inclusive environment where everyone felt not respected and valued, particularly noting issues in the adult observation room and road entrance, with 78% also highlighting concerns in the toilet. This suggested potential shortcomings in accommodating diverse gender identities or ensuring inclusive facilities, possibly contributing to feelings of discomfort or discrimination among patients and visitors. While critical areas like the consultation room (36), Maternity room (20), and the emergency room (18%) reported moderate to lower percentages. It's worth noting that spaces such as the OPD, pharmacy, and administration room did not report any safety concerns regarding gender diversity.

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 (Hospitals) and include the phasing improvement plans in the Annual Action Plan (AAP) 2025 and beyond.

Where as 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 (Hospitals).

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

An estimated cost for implementing the safety improvements in the 2 hospitals is currently not available due to various needs for scope 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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