



WOMEN'S SAFETY AUDIT REPORT

Markets

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 8 markets from October 2022 - October 2023.

A total of 498 individuals took part in the WSA, with 319 women and 179 men, representing the municipalities of Baucau, Dili, Covalima, and RAEOA. These 8 markets include:

- **Dili** - Taibessi market
- **Baucau** - The New Market, the Old Market and the Terminal Market
- **RAEOA** - Numbei Market and Maumate Market
- **Covalima** - Mercado Tuan no Mercado Foun

Methodology

This assessment engaged 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 markets safer for women and girls in Timor-Leste.



A woman vendor in the Baucau's old market. Photo: Jaime Luis_UN Women Timor-Leste

Findings

Overall perception level of safety

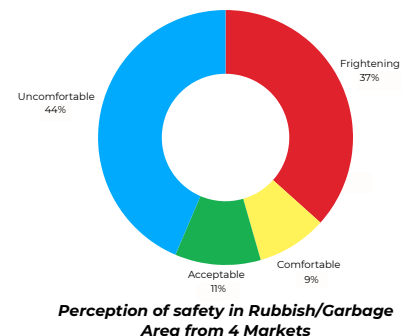
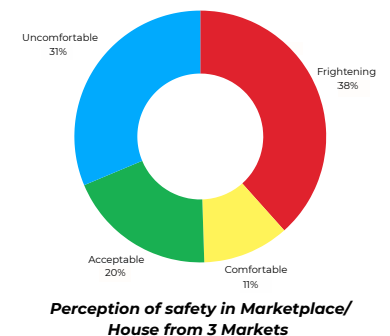
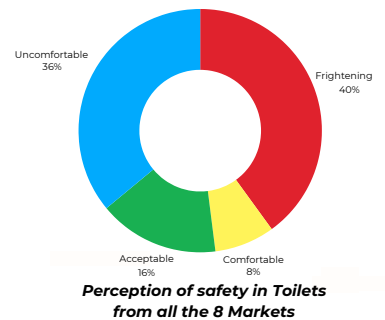
The toilet area in all the markets is a major concern for safety and cleanliness among marketgoers, with 40% finding it frightening and 36% uncomfortable, while only 16% find it acceptable and 8% find it comfortable, indicating widespread discomfort.

The market house/building area elicited varied feelings of safety. While 38% perceived it as alarming and 31% as uncomfortable, 20% regarded it as Acceptable, and 11% as comfortable. These findings suggest that despite apprehensions, a notable portion of participants considered it secure and comfortable.

The rubbish/garbage area is perceived as frightening by 37% of respondents and uncomfortable by 44%, indicating a high level of concern for cleanliness and safety. Only 11% found it acceptable, and 9% found it comfortable, highlighting the prevailing dissatisfaction with this area

The perception of safety varies across other areas assessed within the markets. At the entrance, the majority of respondents had a relatively positive perception, with only 9% finding it frightening, 40% feeling uncomfortable, 41% finding it acceptable, and 10% considering it comfortable. However, the walking paths presented a more mixed perception, with 34% finding it frightening, 31% feeling uncomfortable, 20% finding it acceptable, and 15% finding it comfortable.

Concerns about cleanliness and safety were prevalent in areas like market toilets in the bush, canteens, and butchers, with high percentages of respondents expressing alarm. Despite some areas being perceived as acceptable or comfortable, addressing safety concerns and implementing enhanced safety protocols throughout the market is crucial.



“ 40% found toilets in the market **frightening** and 44% felt the rubbish/garbage areas **uncomfortable**. ”

Safety issues identified

Physical Environment



Inadequate or poor lighting

Inadequate lighting emerged as a major concern across all eight markets audited. Forty-seven percent (47%) of respondents expressed concerns about inadequate or no lighting in market toilets, which poses safety and hygiene risks, especially for women and girls. Additionally, 100% of respondents reported inadequate lighting in critical areas such as the canteen, butcher, vendor area in the street, toilets located in bush areas, and abandoned places. Eighty-eight percent (88%) reported poor lighting in parking areas, 63% at market entrances, and 28% in areas designated for waste disposal, impacting visibility and safety, particularly at night. Only 25% of respondents indicated concerns with lighting in the market buildings, and 22% within the walkways.



Openness

Thirty-seven percent (37%) of respondents from across eight markets expressed concerns regarding privacy in the market toilets, while all respondents (100%) from one municipality noted similar issues in crucial areas such as the canteen, butcher, street vendor areas, toilets located in bush areas, and abandoned places. Equally, areas like the vendor area in the market, an area designated for rubbish/waste disposal, Marketplace/house, Walk path, and parking area showed fewer privacy concerns. These findings underscore potential privacy and security concerns across different areas of the market, suggesting a need for interventions to enhance safety and comfort for visitors, vendors, and customers.



Poor visibility

All respondents (100%) expressed significant safety and security concerns, particularly regarding visibility issues in toilets located in bush areas and abandoned places. Moderate concerns were also reported regarding toilets within the markets (42%). Although visibility concerns were less pronounced in areas like the entrance, market area/houses, walkways, vendor places, and parking, they still highlight potential safety risks and navigation difficulties for visitors, vendors, and customers within the market environment.



Poor condition of walk path

A majority of respondents, 80%, indicated issues with the poor layout and congestion at the entrance to the four markets, hindering safe passage for vendors and customers. Additionally, All respondents (100%) expressed similar concerns regarding vendor areas in the street, canteens, butchers, abandoned spaces, and toilets in the bush. With 60% citing concerns about the poor layout of walk paths to parking areas, and 40% expressed similar concerns about toilets in all eight markets, highlighting the need for interventions aimed at improving accessibility and ensuring safety throughout the market environment, particularly for women and girls and Persons with disability.



Poor security or protection

In the audit, all respondents (100%) identified security issues in specific areas including toilets in bush areas, canteens, butchers, vendor areas, and abandoned places. Additionally, 96% expressed concerns about security in parking areas, 73% at market entrances, 59% in vendor areas, and 50% in market toilets. These concerns are linked to the absence of security personnel and nearby security posts in and around the market, indicating potential risks for vendors and customers.

Social Environment:



High people density

All respondents (100%) expressed concerns regarding overcrowding and potential safety hazards for vendors and customers in specific locations, including canteens, butcher shops, abandoned areas, abandoned place, and street vendor areas. Additionally, 92% highlighted congestion in parking areas, 59% at the market entrance, 56% in vendors area in the market, 43% across all eight market toilets, and only 27% in areas designated for waste disposal, indicating potential safety risks for women and girls as well as congestion concerns.



Gender diversity

According to the Audit findings, 34% of respondents expressed concerns regarding the design, privacy, safety, and accessibility of market toilets for women and girls across all eight markets, noting issues related to crowding by men and boys in these areas. A unanimous 100% of respondents shared similar concerns regarding abandoned places around the market, canteen, Butcher, and vendor areas in the street, with 92% expressing similar feelings about parking areas, and 51% about the market entrance. A smaller proportion of respondents reported similar concerns about the rubbish/garbage place (23%) and walk paths (9%). These findings underscore the importance of promoting inclusivity and addressing potential obstacles faced by women and individuals of diverse genders to prevent harassment.

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 National 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.

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.

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 costs for implementing the safety improvements in the 8 markets 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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