

# WOMEN'S SAFETY AUDIT REPORT

## Public Parks

### 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 5 public parks from October 2022 - October 2023.

A total of 260 individuals took part in the assessment, with 152 women and 108 men, representing the municipalities of Baucau, Dili, Covalima, and RAEOA. These five public parks include:

- **Dili** - Largo Lecidere and Cristo Rei
- **RAEOA** - Parke Desportu and Portu Kitahara
- **Covalima** - Suai Loro Park

### 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 public parks safer for women and girls in Timor-Leste.



Women Safety Audit Walk at Lecidere Park in 2022. Photo: (C) Kanami UN Women Timor-Leste

## Findings

### Overall perception level of safety

The WSA conducted in 5 public parks, it is evident that safety concerns vary across different areas.

30% of respondents from all parks found toilets frightening, while 33% felt uncomfortable, suggesting significant concerns regarding safety and cleanliness. However, a notable proportion perceived toilets as acceptable (18%) or comfortable (19%), indicating that some respondents felt relatively at ease using these facilities.

Regarding walk paths, 20% of respondents found them frightening, and a considerable majority (43%) felt uncomfortable, indicating concerns about safety and accessibility. However, there is a relatively higher percentage of respondents who perceived walk paths as acceptable (10%) or comfortable (27%), suggesting better safety perceptions in this area compared to toilets.

A vast majority of respondents (66%) found rubbish disposal frightening, indicating significant concerns about cleanliness, hygiene, and potentially hazardous conditions. Only a small percentage perceived rubbish disposal areas as acceptable (9%) or comfortable (6%) and uncomfortable (19%), highlighting serious safety and environmental issues within public parks, particularly in this area.

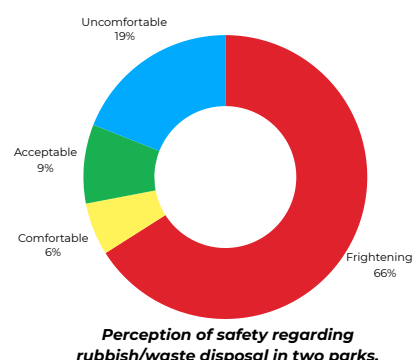
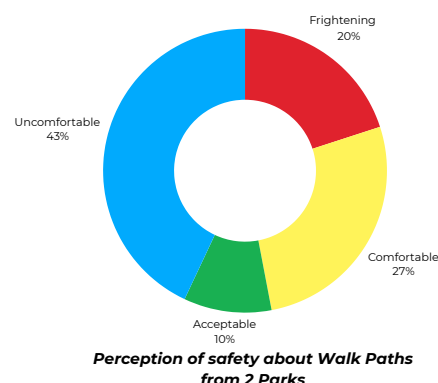
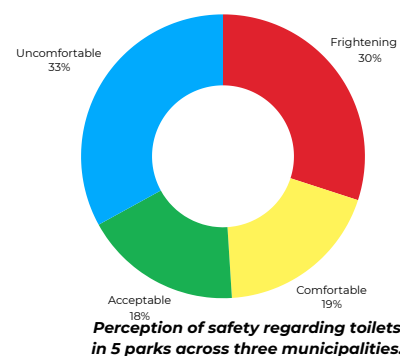
Additionally, in the garden area of one park, a significant portion of respondents (58%) found it uncomfortable, indicating concerns possibly related to maintenance, cleanliness, or potential hazards. However, a notable percentage perceived the garden as acceptable (8%) or comfortable (19%), suggesting that some respondents felt relatively at ease in this area.

Similarly, the vendor stalls generated discomfort for 55% of respondents, indicating potential safety or security concerns related to commercial activities within the park. While a portion perceived this area as acceptable (19%) or comfortable (9%), the discomfort levels were relatively high.

Security measures within the park, such as security personnel or surveillance, evoked significant worry, with 84% of respondents finding them frightening. This suggests serious concerns about safety and security within the park environment.

The perimeter wall or fence, electricity installations, and the park itself were viewed with varying levels of discomfort, indicating potential safety issues related to infrastructure or amenities within the park.

Interestingly, the entrance to the park and ticket sale place were perceived relatively positively, with higher percentages of respondents finding them acceptable or comfortable. However, the entrance to the ship generated discomfort for 35% of respondents, indicating potential safety or security concerns specific to this area.



“ 66% respondents felt **frightened** with the waste disposal, while 43% felt **uncomfortable** with the walk paths ”

# Safety issues identified

## Physical Environment

### Inadequate or poor lighting



Most respondents (68%) indicated insufficient lighting in toilet facilities in five parks, with 42% from two parks noting inadequate lighting along pathways. Similarly, 32% of the two parks shared the same issue in rubbish disposal areas. Moreover, concerns about insufficient lighting were expressed by 88% and 69% in areas designated for selling tickets and vendor stalls from one park, respectively, and by 53% of respondents in park gardens, indicating visibility and safety concerns, particularly at night. Additionally, a significant 89% expressed concerns about lighting regarding park security in one park. However, certain areas like perimeter walls (11%) and parking lots (12%) reported lower concerns. Encouragingly, no issues were stated at ship entrances (0%), suggesting adequate lighting in that specific area.

### Openness



A significant majority of respondents (68%) highlighted openness issues in park gardens, indicating potential vulnerabilities or safety risks due to lack of boundaries. Additionally, significant percentages were noted in areas such as park toilets (32%), areas designated for vendor stalls (41%), and park security (47%), suggesting potential privacy or security challenges. Concerns about openness at park entrances (15%) and along perimeter walls (26%) also emphasized potential vulnerabilities. These findings underscored the need for interventions to enhance privacy and security measures throughout public parks, ensuring the safety and comfort of visitors and staff.

### Poor visibility



According to audit findings, the Security area (63%) from one park, Garden (57%) from one park, and Park toilets (23%) from all Parks assessed emerged as areas with significant visibility deficiencies, potentially compromising safety and hygiene, especially at night. Although concerns were less pronounced for areas like parking (19%), park entrances (19%), walk paths (5%), and areas designated for waste disposal (8%), they still signaled potential safety risks or difficulties for visitors.

### Poor condition of walk path



Seventy-three percent (73%) of audit respondents identified problems with walkways, indicating congestion or barriers impeding safe passage at park entrances. Additionally, 38% of respondents noted similar issues with pathways leading to park toilets from five parks, while 55% reported concerns with walk paths near vendors stalls. Moreover, worries were expressed regarding walk paths within parking lots (65%) and gardens (50%), suggesting potential safety risks or challenges in traversing these areas. Though lower percentages were recorded for security of walkway (11%), perimeter walls (11%), and electrical installations (6%), these figures still highlighted possible impediments or dangers affecting accessibility and safety.

### Poor security or protection



All respondents (100%) reported feeling insecure at ticket sale points, 95% expressed significant concerns about the adequacy or effectiveness of security protocols, with 65% expressing insecurity in the parking area and 62% in the gardens from one park. Moreover, notable percentages were observed at park entrances (58%), entrances to the ship (53%), sales areas (46%), and around the toilet facilities (49%), indicating possible vulnerabilities or safety concerns for visitors. Although lower percentages were noted along the walk paths (36%), suggesting potential safety risks and highlighting the necessity for interventions to enhance security measures and guarantee the safety of both park visitors and staff.

## Social Environment:

### High people density



According to the Audit findings, 32% of respondents expressed apprehensions regarding security within the park, with 23% citing concerns at parking areas, attributing them to congestion and mobility issues within these zones. Furthermore, worries surfaced regarding the people density at toilets (19%) and vendors stalls (15%). Although percentages were comparatively lower for spaces such as park entrances (12%) and along walk paths (6%), they still signaled possible overcrowding and safety risks.

### Gender diversity



Significant levels of discomfort were evident in key areas such as security points (84%), park toilets (35%) across all parks assessed, and walk paths (33%) in specific parks. Additionally, elevated percentages were identified in places like waste disposal areas (32%), and vendor stalls (35%) underscoring the challenges or inequalities faced by different genders, particularly women and girls, when accessing these locations. While gender diversity concerns were less pronounced in spaces like gardens (24%), perimeter walls (16%), and electrical facilities (9%), there may still be a need for interventions to promote inclusivity and address potential barriers encountered by individuals of diverse genders within the park premises.



## 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.

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 five public parks 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.

### **Contact Detail:**

Domingas dos Santos Saldanha Alberto  
Advocacy Officer, **Rede Feto Timor-Leste**  
+670 77356663/amyng.saldanha@gmail.com

