



# WOMEN'S SAFETY AUDIT REPORT

## Public Transportation

### 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 a specific areas of 9 microlet routes and a bus terminal from October 2022 - October 2023.

Total of 136 individuals participated in the WSA, comprising 94 women and 42 men, representing the municipalities of Baucau and Dili. These transportations and terminal include:

- **Dili** - Microlet routes (no. 1-6 and 8-10)
- **Baucau** - Kota Lama Market Bus Terminal

### Methodology

This assessment engaged passengers 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 public transport safer for women and girls in Timor-Leste.



A typical crowded public transportation's terminal in Dili. Photo: Helio Miguel\_UN Women Timor-Leste

## Findings

### Overall perception level of safety

The perception of safety in microlets and bus terminal varies across different areas. Microlet routes evoke a relatively mixed perception as shown below.

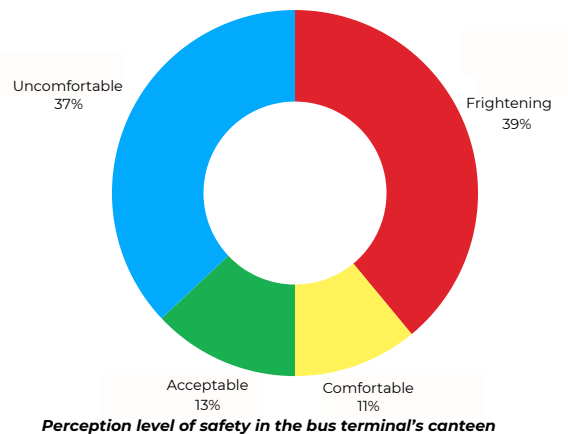
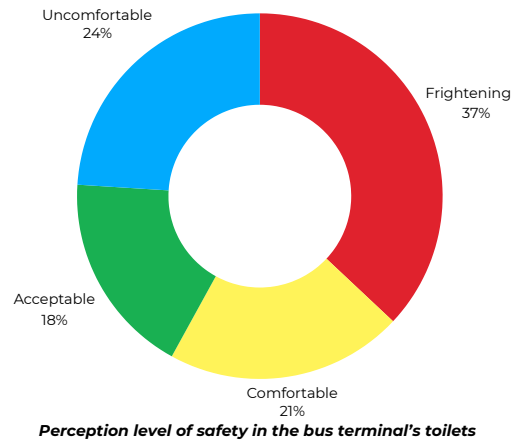
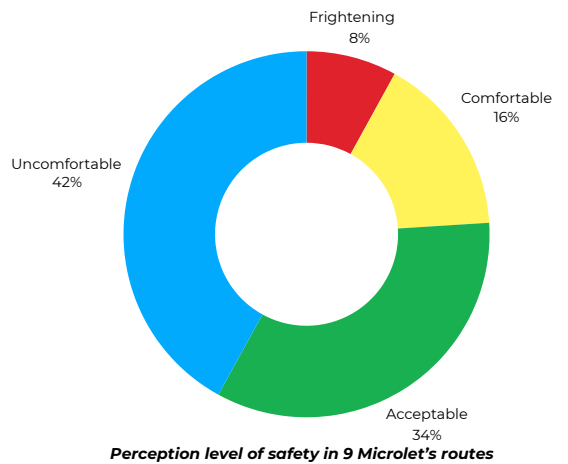
A small percentage (8%) of respondents found microlet routes frightening, while a significant percentage (42%) felt uncomfortable. However, there was a notable percentage (34%) who perceived them as acceptable, and 16% found them comfortable, indicating a varied perception of safety.

The canteen area at the bus terminal generated considerable concern, with 39% finding it frightening and 37% feeling uncomfortable, suggesting potential safety issues within dining facilities.

In terms of toilet facilities, a substantial percentage (37%) of respondents found them frightening, while 24% felt uncomfortable. However, there was a relatively higher percentage (21%) who found them comfortable, indicating a mixed perception of safety in this area.

Additionally, a higher percentage (39%) of respondents found car parks frightening, and 24% felt uncomfortable, suggesting potential safety risks associated with parking facilities.

Meanwhile, the footpath evoked the highest level of fear, with 50% of respondents finding it frightening, indicating substantial safety concerns regarding outdoor pathways.



“ 37% founds the toilets **frightening** and 42% found the microlet routes **uncomfortable** ”

# Safety issues identified

## Physical Environment



### Inadequate or poor lighting

All respondents (100%) expressed concern regarding insufficient lighting in the terminal's canteen, toilets, and car park areas, along with poorly lit pathways within the terminals. Additionally, 97% of respondents noted worries about lighting in Footpaths within the terminal and lower percentage noted the same with public transport routes (33%), highlighting potential safety hazards associated with inadequately illuminated pathways. Addressing lighting issues is imperative to enhance safety and security in public transport routes and terminals.



### Openness

All respondents (100%) have expressed concerns regarding privacy, transparency, or accessibility across areas such as the canteen, toilets, car park, and footpath within the terminals. However, only 28% of respondents expressed worries about openness in public transport routes. This indicates the need to enhance safety perceptions and ensure a supportive environment for users of public transport and terminals.



### Poor visibility

Among respondents, 27% express concerns about visibility in public transport routes, However, in all other areas, including the canteen, toilets, and car park area, 100% of respondents expressed concerns about visibility. The only exception is footpaths, with 97% expressing concerns. These findings suggest potential issues related to poor lighting or obstructed views, which could impact safety and security perceptions in these spaces.



### Poor condition of walk path

All respondents (100%) have expressed concerns regarding walk paths leading to the canteen, toilets, and car park areas. They have noted issues such as uneven surfaces, obstacles, or insufficient signage, which may compromise the safety and convenience of movement for passengers and visitors. Additionally, 65% of respondents have voiced similar concerns about walk paths in public transport routes and terminals, suggesting potential challenges related to accessibility, navigation, or infrastructure conditions within these spaces.



### Poor security or protection

A substantial majority of respondents, comprising 72%, expressed worries about security and protection in public transport routes. Furthermore, all other areas, including the canteen, toilets, car park, and footpath, reported 100% of respondents expressing concerns about security and protection. These findings suggest a pervasive sense of insecurity and potential safety threats within these spaces.

## Social Environment:



### High people density

All respondents (100%) have expressed concerns about overcrowding or congestion in the canteen, toilets, car park, and footpath within the terminals. Additionally, 58% expressed the same worries in public transport routes, especially within the Microlets and stopover points. This congestion could lead to discomfort, hinder movement, and pose safety risks, especially in emergency situations for women and girls.



### Gender diversity

In public transport routes, 43% of respondents expressed concerns about gender diversity, suggesting potential issues related to inclusivity or representation where areas are dominated by men and boys, benefiting them more. Similarly, all other areas, including the canteen, toilets, and car park, had 100%, except footpath with (97%), of respondents expressing the same concern. These results underline the importance of fostering a more inclusive environment within these spaces to ensure equitable access and experiences for all genders.



## Short-term Recommendations

The following are recommendations is 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 public transport and terminals 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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