

Institutional Strengthening of Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Timor-Leste

Photo: UN Women/Christina Yiannakis

Context

UN Women in Timor-Leste works in partnership with stakeholders in four main priority areas to contribute to UN Women's global goals around women's economic empowerment, women in peace and security, ending violence against women, and mainstreaming of gender equality into national planning and budgeting.

Between June 2013 and December 2016, UN Women implemented the project "*Institutional Strengthening for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Timor-Leste*", generously funded by the Government of Norway with a budget of USD \$1.8 million. Through the project, UN Women supported the Government of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste to demonstrate increased accountability for the implementation of its gender equality commitments.

The project is aligned to UN Women's Strategic Plan 2014-2017 Result 5: *Governance and national planning fully reflect accountability for gender equality commitments and priorities*, and corresponds to Government priorities as set out in the Strategic Development Plan 2011-2030 (SDP), as well as in the V - VIth Constitutional Government Programmes 2012-2017.

The project aimed to facilitate two outcomes:

- 1) Gender equality provisions of the programmes of the Fifth (and Sixth) Constitutional Governments in three selected ministries (State Administration, Finance, and Justice) implemented by 2017;

and 2) Gender equality advocates' capacities to demand accountability increased.

From November-December 2016, UN Women Timor-Leste recruited independent evaluators to assess:

1. The **project's progress at the outcome level** by measuring the output level achievements
2. The **relevance of the project strategy** and design in the evolving context of Timor-Leste
3. The **progress made** by the Secretary of State for the Support and Socio-Economic Promotion of Women (**SEM**), Gender Study Centre of the National University of Timor-Leste (**GSC UNTL**), **Rede Feto and other partners** in institutional capacity to maintain results over time; and
- 4) to **provide recommendations for future** gender mainstreaming interventions for UN Women, SEM and other key stakeholders.

The overall approach to evaluation was participatory and consultative, using a qualitative approach to evaluation that ensured inclusion of different stakeholders - partners and beneficiaries from a range of Government institutions and CSOs. The evaluation involved a desk review of relevant documents (e.g. annual reports, performance monitoring framework); 19 key informant interviews with UN Women staff, partners and consultants; and four (4) focus group discussions.

What has UN Women achieved?

The Evaluation found that UN Women Timor-Leste:

- **Facilitated the set-up of a coordination mechanism** (including SEM, Ministry of Finance, and the Unit of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation – UPMA) to mainstream gender in the State Budget process. By 2016, 12 Government Institutions had Annual Actions Plans with allocated budgets for gender equality for a total amount of USD \$9.2 million. These included four institutions in the baseline (Ministries of Health, Education, Social Solidarity and Secretary of the State for Security – now Ministry of Interior) plus the eight target institutions (Ministries of State Administration; Agriculture and Fisheries; Finance; Justice; Public Works, Transport and Communications; Tourism; National Police; and the Secretary of State for Vocational Training and Employment Policy).

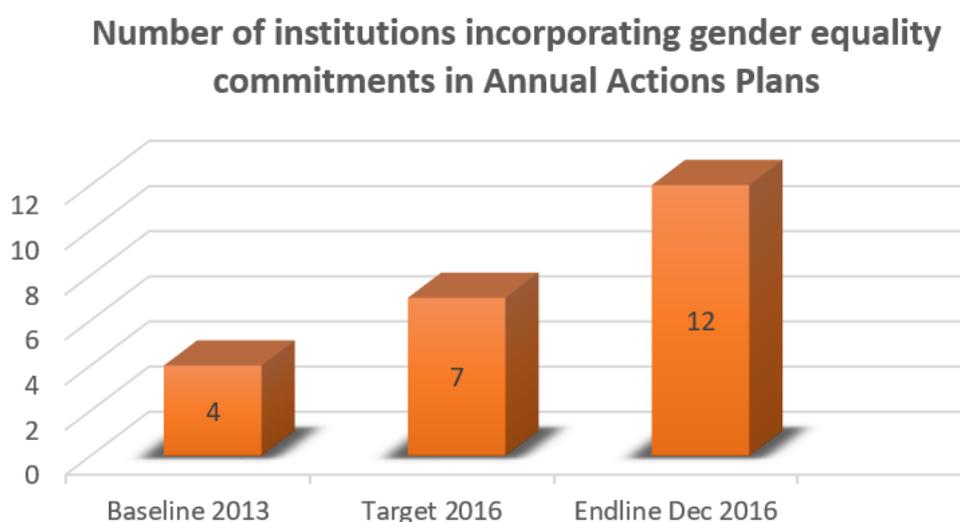


Figure 1 What has UN Women achieved – Mainstreaming gender in the State Budget

- **Supported the issuance of a first Gender Budget Report** in 2016 by the Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation Unit (UPMA) of the Prime Minister’s Office, enabling future gender analysis and monitoring of the State Budget.
- **Provided technical assistance toward the adoption of three major policies** supporting women’s political participation and economic empowerment.
- **Strengthened the capacity** of staff from SEM, National Parliament, and Prime Minister’s Office to increase understanding of gender responsive budgeting and planning.
- **Contributed to strengthening the organizational capacities** of civil society organizations in advocating for gender-equitable budgets, laws and policies.
- **Expanded networking within the larger gender architecture in Timor-Leste** by bringing together and increasing mobilization of women’s right’s advocates and creating joint efforts across institutions.

Good Practices - Project Case Studies

BOX 1: Coordination brings results - 100% Hau Pronto (100% I AM READY) campaign



Photo: UN Women/Christina Yiannakis



Photo: UN Women/Christina Yiannakis

The number of female village (“suco”) leaders elected in 2016 doubled from 11 in 2009 (2% of the total) to 21 (4.5%) in 2016, while a record 319 women stood for elections. This milestone was facilitated through the “100% Hau Pronto” (“100% I’m Ready”) national advocacy platform initiated by the NGO Patria with 15 national and international civil society organizations who successfully advocated for the Suco Law 9/2016 requiring inclusion of female candidates for village leadership elections. UN Women contributed to the campaign, through trainings, legal advice on alignment of the Suco Law and CEDAW, funding the platform’s Secretariat and social media portal.

UN Women supported Fundasaun Patria on women’s political participation at the local and municipal level since 2013, including through the organization of 6 conferences (4 at national level, 2 at Municipal level). For example, in May 2015, Fundasaun Patria created space for the 100 female potential village chief candidates to meet inspiring women leaders, discuss their plans for local governance and gender equality with government officials, and network to gain support for their campaign during a two-day conference. The 100 candidates gained skills on advocacy and campaigning through workshops and developed draft campaign advocacy plans. Demonstrating their new skills following the conference, approximately half of the 100 women developed an electoral roll and/or campaign plan in preparation for the 2016 elections. The campaign has a [Facebook page](#) that reaches out to 1,000 members and a blog highlighting stories of the candidates.

BOX 2: Clear demands and targeted advocacy for increased budgets



Photo: UN Women/Camille Wauters



Photo: UN Women/Felix Maia



Photo: UN Women/Camille Wauters

Civil society organizations (CSO), including women’s organizations, with technical assistance from UN Women, successfully advocated for changes in the 2016 and 2017 State Budget and became increasingly recognized by the Parliament for their technical expertise on gender. UN Women facilitated deeper analysis of gender allocations with civil society partners in the Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB) Working Group. Targeted training and hands on support by UN Women helped the group to use national commitments (such as the Maubisse Declaration on rural women’s empowerment, the NAP – GBV, and CEDAW obligations) as benchmarks to develop a Chart of Demands, analyze the State Budget and call the Government to account for its commitments. In 2016 USD \$15,000 funding was allocated for the re-entry policy for young mothers and pregnant girls, and USD \$85,000 to fund safe spaces in hospitals for GBV survivors (“Fatin Hakmatek”).

BOX 3: Strengthened coordination between SEM and PMO



The Secretary of State for the Support and Socio-Economic Promotion of Women's (SEM) coordination capacity within the Government was strengthened through its role in a new mechanism under the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) in the Unit in charge of planning and monitoring of the State Budget. In October 2016, SEM and the PMO developed a gender report which facilitates tracking of implementation and financing of gender equality. Using the on-line monitoring system of the PMO, a tagging system was used to indicate the gender responsive activities in the 2017 Annual Action Plans of the 22 line ministries responsible for implementing the CEDAW Concluding Observations, the National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security, the National Action Plan on Gender Based Violence and the Maubisse Declaration for rural women's empowerment. The Prime Minister's Office has identified GRB as priority for 2017 to be part of the Government's programme budgeting approach. The tagging system follows UN Women's support to SEM since 2013, when the initial development of a checklist for targeted line ministries on their

Lessons Learned for UN Women



Figure 2. Lessons learned for UN Women - Institutional Strengthening of Gender Equality

- Institutional strengthening and building accountability of governments on gender equality requires long-term support. Gender responsive budgeting (GRB) is a key tool for mainstreaming gender in the Government, and placement of technical assistance in line ministries with a view towards developing capacities within institutions facilitates this process.
- Building diverse partnership and engaging more non-traditional NGO partners on women's rights could enhance the reach of civil society advocacy efforts. Short term projects of one to two years may not bring desired results for partners.
- Awareness-raising on gender issues through community radio demonstrated that communities in remote rural areas could access the information and raise relevant issues at the local level with a wider audience.
- In-depth and extensive consultations and deeper preparatory work is critical (including capacity assessments) in developing new partnerships, prior to conclusion of formal agreements.
- UN Women should assess the feasibility and design results considering realistic changes that can be achieved through a single project cycle, including risks and complexity of proposed outcomes, when designing the results framework and theory of change.
- UN Women should strengthen its monitoring system by improving the use of monitoring tools throughout the project lifetime to better demonstrate and generate evidence of results achieved.

Recommendations to move forward

On programming for institutionalization of gender equality, UN Women should:

- Pursue a second phase of the project to support the on-going gender mainstreaming initiatives in the Government and civil society, building on the achievements and lessons learned from past experiences with attention to sustaining institutional strengthening.
- Consider focused attention to integration of training in specialized training institutions of Government/ public administration to achieve longer sustainability of results.
- Continue to further support partnerships between women's rights groups and non-traditional NGO partners, such as human rights organizations, with focus on social accountability.
- Expand its use of innovative methods (e.g. social media) for public awareness-raising in reaching out to remote rural areas.

On results based project formulation, implementation and monitoring, UN Women should:

- Carry out evaluability assessment of projects at the beginning of implementation, identify challenges and gaps for systematic monitoring of project progress.
- Ensure iterative processes for review of the project's performance monitoring framework that would reflect changing or evolving development contexts in the country.
- Allocate adequate resources for systematic monitoring, including follow-up and satisfaction surveys, among other in-depth analytical tools.

UN Women is the UN entity dedicated to gender equality and the empowerment of women. A global champion for women and girls, UN Women was established to accelerate progress on meeting their needs worldwide. UN Women supports UN Member States as they set global standards for achieving gender equality, and works with governments and civil society to design laws, policies, programmes and services needed to implement these standards. It stands behind women's equal participation in all aspects of life, focusing on five priority areas: increasing women's leadership and participation; ending violence against women; engaging women in all aspects of peace and security processes; enhancing women's economic empowerment; and making gender equality central to national development planning and budgeting. UN Women also coordinates and promotes the UN system's work in advancing gender equality.

UN Women has been present in Timor-Leste since 2001, taking a participatory approach to its work in development by involving civil society, the government, and community participants in the design and implementation of all their work and interventions. Grounded in the vision of equality enshrined in the UN Charter, UN Women Timor-Leste focuses on the following areas of work: Women's Economic Empowerment; Elimination of violence against women; Women, Peace and Security and Gender Responsive Governance.

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