

## It's normal to feel anxious with the COVID-19 pandemic. Here are some ways to reduce stress



Take time to laugh, play and connect with your support network



Eat healthy food and try to cook something new



Find ways to exercise or move your body



Step outside and breathe fresh air



Stay offline from news and social media at least 1 hour before sleeping

## GENDER AND COVID-19

Timor-Leste announced its first confirmed case of COVID-19 on 21 March 2020 and subsequently, the Government declared a State of Emergency. Since that time, the Timor-Leste Government, civil society and development partners have worked closely to prevent the spread of COVID-19. While Timor-Leste has so far avoided large numbers of people falling ill to COVID-19, the economic and psycho-social impacts of the pandemic have been felt across the country. Women have been at the forefront of the COVID-19 response and are disproportionately affected by the crisis. Movement restrictions, disruptions in school and work are linked to increased gender inequality and increased violence against women and children. For Timor-Leste to recover better, there needs to be attention to the diverse socio-economic costs that will last beyond the pandemic.

UN Women Timor-Leste is working closely with the UN family, partners and civil society organizations to respond to the various socio-economic issues exacerbated by the pandemic.

Read the web version here



*“We must use the experience with COVID-19 to show with our actions what it means to “leave no one behind”. This requires more women from diverse backgrounds to be around decision-making tables, issues facing those most excluded prioritized and investments made for closing gaps in equality,”* said UN Women’s head of office in Timor-Leste, Mrs. Sunita Caminha.

### UN WOMEN TIMOR-LESTE IS RESPONDING TO COVID-19 BY FOCUSING ON FIVE AREAS OF ACTION, INCLUDING:

#### 1. Ending Violence Against Women and Girls

- As part of the EU-UN Spotlight Initiative, UN Women
  - supported civil society to engage in the production of communications materials and social media messaging on preventing gender-based violence during physical isolation and quarantine.
  - signed a letter of agreement with Secretary State of Equality and Inclusion (SEII) to assist government in its implementation of the NAP GBV to accelerate efforts to end violence against women and girls.
  - collaborated with UNFPA and Maluku Timor, to develop a booklet in support of the MoH to provide information to individuals in quarantine centers and guidance for health workers to use.

#### 2. Women, Peace and Security

- continues to advocate for increased representation of women in COVID-19 response mechanisms, showcases the contributions of diverse women in leadership and raises awareness of existing networks of women leaders across the country.

#### 3. Women’s Economic Empowerment

- With a focus on women in informal work, engaging in the Baucau Safe Market Taskforce, UN Women with ILO under the joint UN Secretary General’s COVID-19 Fund to raise visibility of gender issues and support monitoring of the gender dimensions in the Monetary Support Programme and other COVID-19 economic recovery plans.

- With TOMAK, are providing communications and technical supports to market vendors and members of the Safe Baucau and Safe Market Technical Working Group to assess and document changes in economic activities and market management in response to COVID-19.
- Mainstreaming gender into the Joint UN Socio-economic Impact Assessment, led by UNDP. The findings and recommendations will inform the UN, government and broader partners in upcoming COVID-19 response programming.

#### 4. Communications, Coordination and technical assistance

- developed social media communications to amplify attention on women’s roles in COVID-19 responses and the gendered experiences of the pandemic.
- distributed over 1,000 WHO brochures on COVID-19 prevention with CSO and women’s group in Dili and Baucau municipalities.
- With UNICEF convened bi-weekly Gender and Protection Working Group meetings involving over 40 representatives from public institutions, civil society and development partners to coordinate efforts on gender and protection in COVID-19 responses.
- Members of the Gender and Protection Working Group developed guidelines to support the Ministry of Health in protecting women and children in the quarantine and isolation facilities from sexual exploitation, harassment and abuse.



Secretary of state for equality and inclusion (SEII) signs partnership agreement with un women as part of the EU-UN Spotlight Initiative (SI) Program in Timor-Leste. Photo: UN Women\_Helio Miguel

## **SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EQUALITY AND INCLUSION (SEII) SIGNS PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT WITH UN WOMEN**

The partnership is part of the \$13 million European Union-United Nations Spotlight Initiative to assist government and civil society in Timor-Leste to accelerate efforts of ending violence against women and girls, as part of the global vision to reach [SDG 5 on Gender Equality](#) and its target on ending violence against women and girls by 2030.

Through the agreement, UN Women has allocated USD \$130,000 to SEII and will provide technical assistance to support the implementation, coordination and monitoring of the National Action Plan on Gender-Based Violence (NAP GBV) 2017-2021, which will cover an initial 18 months, from June 2020-December 2022.

*UN Women is an important partner of the Timor-Leste government in the promotion of gender equality and social inclusion. Violence against women and girls continues to become a barrier to achieve equality and to create an inclusive society. The signing of this LoA under the Spotlight Initiative will provide an additional support to complement the government's efforts to end gender-based violence focusing on prevention,"* said Her Excellency State Secretary of Equality and Inclusion Ms. Maria José Fonseca Monteiro de Jesus.

The partnership will deepen the UN Women and SEII collaboration toward strengthened implementation, monitoring and coordination of the NAP GBV at national and municipal levels. **The Spotlight Initiative in Timor-Leste** will contribute to the elimination of violence by responding to the needs of women and girls and addressing the underlying causes of violence against women and girls using a multi-sectoral and intersectional approach across the ecological model to implement interventions in the following six pillars: (1) Legislation and Policies, (2) Institutional strengthening, (3) Prevention of violence, (4) Available, accessible and quality services, (5) Quality and reliable data, and (6) Supporting women's movements and local civil society organizations.

*"By starting within our institutions, working nationally and locally, and deepening the collective knowledge and practices for preventing violence against women, this partnership has the potential to bring us closer to a Timor-Leste where women and girls can enjoy their right to live free of violence"* said Sunita Caminha, Head of Office UN Women Timor-Leste.

The Spotlight Initiative in Timor-Leste was developed through collaboration of the EU, the UN, the Government of Timor-Leste, under the leadership of SEII, and diverse civil society partners. It is implemented by five UN Agencies (UN Women, UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA and ILO) continuing this partnership with SEII and civil society partners under leadership of the UN Resident Coordinator, with UN Women ensuring technical coherence across the Program.

The overall vision of the Spotlight Initiative in Timor-Leste is that women and girls enjoy their right to a life free of violence, within an inclusive and gender equitable Timor-Leste. The programme is aligned to the Timor-Leste NAP on GBV (2017-2021) and the National SDG Roadmap, particularly on SDGs 5 and 16.



Traditional tais weavers at a panel discussion on Protect, Preserve and Promote Tais. Photo: UN Women\_Helio Miguel

## [EMPOWERING WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP, ECONOMY AND SUSTAINING WEAVING CULTURE THROUGH WEAVERS' NETWORK](#)

Weaving *tais* is a traditional rural economic activity performed mostly by women in Timor-Leste. Not only is weaving *tais* an essential part of the country's cultural heritage, many women rely on the activity to support their families financially. However, weavers face challenges to sustain their trade due to a decrease in weaving activities and original *tais* preservation.

UN Women Timor-Leste and Timor Aid, an organization dedicated to increasing the quality of life in Timor-Leste, have entered into a partnership to establish two new Weaver's Networks and strengthen two existing networks in Oecusse and Suai, established in July and October 2019 respectively. *Tais* weavers will be able to identify and prioritize the support they need, and coordinators elected by the weavers will work with Timor Aid and The Alola Foundation to organize training for weavers, including advocacy, build group leadership skills, improve *tais* quality and business development.

Rosalia M. Soares, Culture Program Team Leader from Timor Aid, explained the benefits of this partnership for weavers. *"This partnership aims to support the weavers to be able to stand up for themselves through the weaver networks that will be established in the selected municipalities. The weavers' networks will serve as a basis for channeling trainings and mentoring needed by the weavers. The weavers will also learn to be responsible for the support that they receive."*

Further to these benefits, Rosalia also emphasized that the partnership will contribute to sustaining the weaving culture. *"The partnership also stated the inclusion of young weavers in the trainings to allow for the process of intergenerational skills transfer that will contribute to the sustainability of the tradition."*

Envisioning the future progress of this partnership, UN Women is well aware of the challenges ahead concerning the sustainability of *tais*. *"Weavers are key players, but to give value to the practice, greater investments are needed. This can build on what UN Women is supporting for partners to empower women weavers and engage their participation in leadership, but requires a shared UN Women commitment to ensure implementation of the initiative can be sustained for future generations,"* said Teresa Verdial, who leads the Women's Economic Empowerment portfolio at UN Women. As Timor-Leste is now seeking the approval from UNESCO to register *tais* as part of Timor-Leste's cultural heritage, women weavers and their intergenerational role will be critical in ensuring the protection, preservation and promotion of *tais*.

To learn more about tais, click [here](#).

## WOMEN, PEACE & SECURITY

The following two pages are dedicated to activities under the “**Enhancing women’s meaningful Leadership and Participation in State Building and Development in Timor-Leste,**” project which is generously funded by the Government of Japan



### FROM WHERE I STAND: "HAVING MORE WOMEN IN CONFLICT MEDIATION IS POSITIVE FOR EVERYONE INVOLVED."

*Martinho Carvalho Sarmento, recently promoted to the position of Inspector General, knows the benefits of having women involved in conflict mediation and prevention. Previously Chief of the Department for Community Conflict Prevention (DNPCC), Inspector Sarmento has been working with UN Women to promote gender equality in the workplace and the community. He is planning to use his new expanded role and his knowledge of gender equality issues to increase women’s participation and leadership in many departments of the Ministry of Interior.*



Martinho Carvalho Sarmento, Inspector General at the Ministry of Interior in Timor-Leste. Photo: UN Women/Helio Miguel

“Throughout our time working with UN Women, my staff and I completed training on leadership in gender equality and human rights. I was interested in these trainings because I wanted to know more about how to promote gender equality in my workplace. Before this, I never really knew much about how to make work more equal, as it was not the norm around us. I used to think that there were male and female jobs, but now I realise that this is a stereotype, and anyone can do whatever job they want to do, as long as they work hard and are dedicated.

I was also inspired by the trainings to try and encourage more female staff to take on leadership roles. I used to get women to lead civic education training in my department, and trust women to make decisions as conflict mediators. From this change, I noticed some jealousy coming from other departments in the ministry – a lot of men asking why are women getting this attention now? Also, many Xefe Sukus (leaders of the village) have underestimated a lot of women in their roles as conflict mediators.” [Read more here](#)

**MINISTER OF EDUCATION: “CONNECT WITH RESPECT (CWR) CAN BE A MODEL FOR EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES AT SCHOOL.”**



Connect With Respect reflection session for the implementers from Ministry of Education and SEII. Photo: UN Women\_Helio Miguel

In May, the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport (MoEYS) and UN Women Timor-Leste signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to roll-out the CWR initiative in schools. The MoU reflects the shared commitment to continue to roll-out the Connect with Respect (CWR) initiative to promote respectful relationships and gender equitable norms. The initiative has been supported by the Governments of Australia and Republic of Korea from 2018-2020 and building on success identified during this time, the UN Women and MoEYS will scale up this initiative to another 45 pre-secondary schools in Ermera and Bobonaro under the EU-UN Spotlight initiative from 2020-2021.

Key pre and post survey results from students and teachers who participated in the CWR extra-curricular initiative in 2019 shows almost all of 72 participants who completed the post-survey believed males and females should do equal amounts of chores at home, compared to only 79% of boys and 47% of girls in the pre-survey. Furthermore, 100% of girls in the post-survey believed that males and females should be treated equally at home, compared to only 68% in the pre-survey.

Considering the positive outcome from the response, the former Minister of Education Dulce de Jesus Soares requested to continue this initiative “CWR materials correspond with what MoEYS would like to bring to schools for character development.” She also emphasized that the CWR initiative can offer support at the ministerial level in order to promote positive discipline strategies.

UN Women will continue to support the MoEYS to implement the Prevention Pillar of NAP-GBV 2017-2021 through the roll-out of the CWR initiative and will complement the sessions with a series of parenting sessions, support to school codes of conduct, partnerships with social service providers, etc. as part of a whole school approach to prevent school related GBV. The initiative is fully supported by the MoEYS, “MoEYS is keen to mainstream gender equality in the education sector and wants to see more women in decision-making positions.” To accelerate the initiative, the MoEYS is considering to integrate CWR’s materials into the revised secondary school curriculum. During the COVID-19 period, UN Women provided inputs on ongoing and planned activities to the MoEYS COVID-19 Response Plan and its proposal for the Global Partnership for Education.



# UNPRPD

MPTF

Partnership on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

## 10 FACILITATORS READY TO ROLL OUT A TOOLKIT ON GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE (GBV) PREVENTION AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS WITH DISABILITIES



10 facilitators represent different organizations received their training certificates. Photo: UN Women\_Helio Miguel

providers supporting survivors of violence to create a better service that is more accessible and inclusive for persons with disabilities, especially women and girls.

*“These facilitators can bring a transformation to the service providers and will raise the concern of social inclusion in public institutions, private sectors and others.”* said ADTL Executive Director Cesario da Silva.

As the umbrella for organizations of persons with disabilities, ADTL committed to support adequate capacity development for persons with disabilities and to facilitate their advocacy in the field. Under the joint UN *Empower for Change* program, UN Women and the UN Human Rights Advisor’s Unit, are partnering with ADTL to coordinate the trainings on the GBV toolkit, which was developed by advocates from organizations of persons with disabilities’ under the leadership of CBRN-TL, with technical guidance from UN Women.

*“UN Women is a proud partner to continue the journey with the organizations of persons with disabilities to support services which can be more accessible for all. At the moment, UN Women is also developing our next five year strategy for Timor-Leste and we commit to continue the collaboration with organizations of persons with disabilities to advance our mandate on gender equality,”* stated UN Women Head of Office in Timor-Leste Sunita Caminha.

In addition to providing training to facilitators, UN Women is supporting the facilitators to have reflection, planning and designing sessions prior to meeting service providers. The service providers identified to be engaged in the training are based on the National Action Plan on Gender-Based Violence and include: the Ministry of Social Solidarity and Inclusion (MSSI), State Secretary of Equality and Inclusion (SEII), Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Health, National Police, and civil society such as Fokupers, ALFELA, Pradet, JSMP and Alola Foundation.

Persons with disabilities have the right to be fully protected. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights and legislation in Timor-Leste have set out to integrate the concerns of persons with disabilities into government priority areas and secured a budget to invest in more inclusive development in Timor-Leste. Creating more inclusive services for all will ensure equal participation from persons with disabilities, towards closing long-standing inequalities for good.

Under the Empower for Change Program funded by Multi-Trust Fund Donor through UNPRPD, a year after training to become the lead facilitators for the toolkit on GBV prevention against women and girls with disabilities, 10 facilitators (1 men and 9 women) and 1 sign language trainer from disability organizations in Timor-Leste, under the umbrella of Timor-Leste Association for Person With Disability (ADTL) are ready to roll out the toolkit.

These professional facilitators, which include 6 persons with disabilities, will roll out the training in the months of August – December 2020, aimed at government institutions and civil society organizations, and service

## VOICES FROM THE FRONT LINES OF COVID-19 #MYCOVIDSTORY



Zevonia Vieira, President of Timor-Leste Journalist Association. Photo: UN Women\_Helio Miguel

**Zevonia’s story “As a journalist, I have an obligation to share information with the public at any time, including during this outbreak” [link to full story](#)**

Journalists are a critical source of much-needed public information in the changing context of the COVID-19 pandemic. Stepping into the frontline alongside health and other key public services, journalists are shedding light on the rapidly evolving situation, while community members are often confined to their homes to slow the spread of the virus. The work they perform was highlighted by the Prime Minister Taur Matan-Ruak, during a recent plenary in the Parliament on 27 March 2020, stating “journalists have to move around, to transmit and share information while putting themselves at risk of the virus. Your contribution is needed to calm the public from hoax and disoriented information sources.”

Zevonia Vieira, President of the Timor-Leste Journalist Association, shares how COVID-19 has changed the way she lives and works. “As a journalist, I have an obligation to share information to the public at any time, including on this outbreak in response to public concerns. People wanted to stay informed and feel secure from reliable information. I’m always ready to support the government through sharing credible information,” said Zevonia.

As Timor-Leste entered its State of Emergency in the middle of March in response to the threat of COVID-19 in the country, the government has emphasized the rule of physical distancing and ensuring front line workers are fully under protective equipment in carrying out their work. Journalists have called for measures to support them to do their job safely. Zevonia noted, “we made a press statement to urge for government’s attention to provide us a media center. [Read more here](#)

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## ADVOCATES IN TIMOR-LESTE BRING UP MARGINALIZED VOICES THROUGH THE EU-UN SPOTLIGHT INITIATIVE



Laura de Jesus, Executive Director at CODIVA. Photo: UN Women\_Helio Miguel

Despite the progress made towards LGBTI rights in Timor-Leste, discrimination is still extremely high against people from the LGBTI community in family, social and institutional settings. To address discrimination, civil society organizations (CSO) and human rights activists persistently advocate to ensure LGBTI persons are not left behind.

Human rights activist Laura Afonso de Jesus is a frontline advocate for LGBTI rights. She is now the Executive Director for CODIVA (the LGBTI umbrella network in Timor-Leste) and has been advocating for LGBTI rights across the country.

During the COVID-19 crisis, through her active enrollment in the EU-UN Spotlight Initiative Civil Society National Reference Group, she has been ensuring that LGBTI rights are not left behind in Spotlight Initiative’s response to the recent pandemic. Together with the reference group, they highlighted that there must be an inclusive response to the COVID-19 crisis, with key public messages to recognize the experiences of the LGBTI community.

She emphasized that in the midst of the COVID-19 crisis, the LGBTI community is much more vulnerable psychologically and financially, as most of them have precarious jobs. “It has brought on financial issues and affected their ability to afford basic needs, especially for those who live alone and are dependent on others because they have been kicked out of their house. [Read more here.](#)

**CAMILLE WAUTERS: “WE SEE HOW POSITIVE THESE CHANGES HAVE BEEN FOR THE WHOLE SOCIETY”**



Camille Wauters on Timorese traditional dress tais

leave more space for women to speak up on community conflict prevention and resolution. I believe this is going to bring about profound change in Timor-Leste, where women are traditionally not allowed to speak out in community conflict resolution practices. I have also learned a lot from the women and men I have been working with, especially at the municipal level. Because a lot of work is focused at the national level with our institutions, when you start working at the municipal level, it's incredible to see how committed they are and how they are bringing change in their communities with very few means.

**What are your aspirations for gender equality advocates in Timor-Leste?**

To continue the work. I think as Timor-Leste has such a long history of working on advocacy and fighting unjust causes, there are some very strong advocates for gender equality – both women and men – who I know will take it forward. I hope we will hear more voices from the municipal level. There have been a lot of gains at the national level, especially in parliament and governance, where women have made significant strides. However, more support is needed at the municipal level, and that's where the next big decisions are going to be taken, especially as there is a decentralization process that is going to happen in Timor-Leste. We need to support them, and I think this type of work is really important.

Camille Wauters has been with UN Women since 2008. She started working in Niger as a UN Volunteer for UN Women as Economic Empowerment Officer and then continued working in Palestine. She has been working at the Timor-Leste Country Office since 2014, where she managed the Gender Mainstreaming programme and later the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) programme. Let's hear more about her work with UN Women Timor-Leste:

**What are your reflections over the past 5 years on changes in gender equality and WPS in Timor-Leste?**

Many changes are happening. Because the country was born struggling for independence, which was linked to human rights and gender equality, the country is very vibrant and one of the few I have seen that is advancing very strongly on gender equality. Of course, it has its ups and downs. Because there are strong women's advocacy groups, a lot of advances have been made, especially on the legal side. There is a quota for women in parliament, but also at the village level. There is strong advocacy for more women in the security sector, which has led to the National Action Plan on WPS, approved in 2016. This has really brought a change within the Ministry of Defense and the Ministry of Interior, where there are currently three women and three men who are Director Generals, involved in very high-level decision-making.

**What do you think makes UN Women a unique organization?**

You're with a group of people that are really committed to their work, who really believe that change can happen and that we are there to make it happen. Working for UN Women, you work with government partners at a very high-level of decision-making, so you are able to work alongside your colleagues to bring change within the country on a macro level through policy changes and laws. We see how positive these changes have been for the whole society.

**What have you enjoyed most about working with UNW in Timor-Leste?**

Working with the team and with our colleagues and partners. We have enjoyed learning from partners, seeing how committed and professional they are and seeing the changes we can make. For example, within the Ministry of Interior, working with the National Directorate of Community Conflict Prevention, there is a strong partnership with UN

Women. Our strong mutual trust leads us to developing something quite unique as we are working on strengthening and institutionalizing a gender-responsive approach to mediation. This new approach will

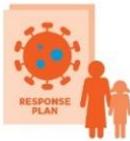
## RESOURCES ON COVID-19 AND GENDER EQUALITY



### CHALLENGES FACED BY DOMESTIC WORKERS DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Domestic workers face particular challenges during Covid-19. Care workers like Ana Paula can help guide employers and inform policy-makers in the design of economic recovery plans. [Read the story here](#)

#### ESSENTIAL SERVICES



Services for violence against women and girls is life-saving and must be part of any #COVID19 response plan.



### VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND COVID-19 MESSAGES

Women and girls are part of the most vulnerable groups in times of humanitarian crisis such as COVID-19. To ensure all people can access information and available support, we need to ensure women’s representation and voices are visible at the decision-making level. During this time, it is important to ensure essential services to address violence against women and girls during times of crisis are not forgotten. These messages are call for action that each of us can take to check on those around us and be there for others, ensuring that violence is never accepted at any time. [Read more here](#)

#### FACTORS INCREASING WOMEN AND CHILDREN'S RISK OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE



#### Changes in everyday life and household tensions

Isolation and staying home increases the risk of abuse for women and girls, as they may be confined with their abusers in households with increased tensions due to movement restrictions, crowded living conditions, health and financial concerns and increased caregiving burdens for women and girls.

**RESPONSE** There must be attention to helping individuals and families manage increased tension and risk for violence, including counselling services, information on how to cope with stress, and quick responses if violence takes place. To report the case and for further assistance, Please contact MSSJ at 3310501/3310219 or Fatin Hakmatek at 77254597/78041671. Click here to access all the available referral number: <https://hamahon.tl/>



### VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS AND COVID-19: KEY ISSUES AND ACTIONS FOR TIMOR-LESTE

Women and girls face even more violence in times of humanitarian crises, such as with COVID- 19 and past outbreaks when movement is restricted. Violence against women has been called a “shadow pandemic” because it has huge consequences on the health and well-being of women and girls, but they often suffer in the shadows which has socio-economic costs that will last beyond the pandemic. These messages provide key actions to ensure that all responses are inclusive and reach the most vulnerable groups. [Read more here](#)



### IN BRIEF: WOMEN'S NEEDS AND GENDER EQUALITY IN TIMOR-LESTE'S COVID-19 RESPONSE

Women and girls’ immediate and long-term needs must be addressed and integrated into Timor-Leste’s COVID-19 response, in order to ensure both women’s access to services and human rights, and to enable women to contribute to shaping the response. Based on lessons learned from previous outbreaks, this brief outlines gender issues related to the COVID-19 pandemic and response in Timor-Leste, and puts forward key questions to be considered by COVID-19 decision makers in Timor-Leste. [Read more here](#)