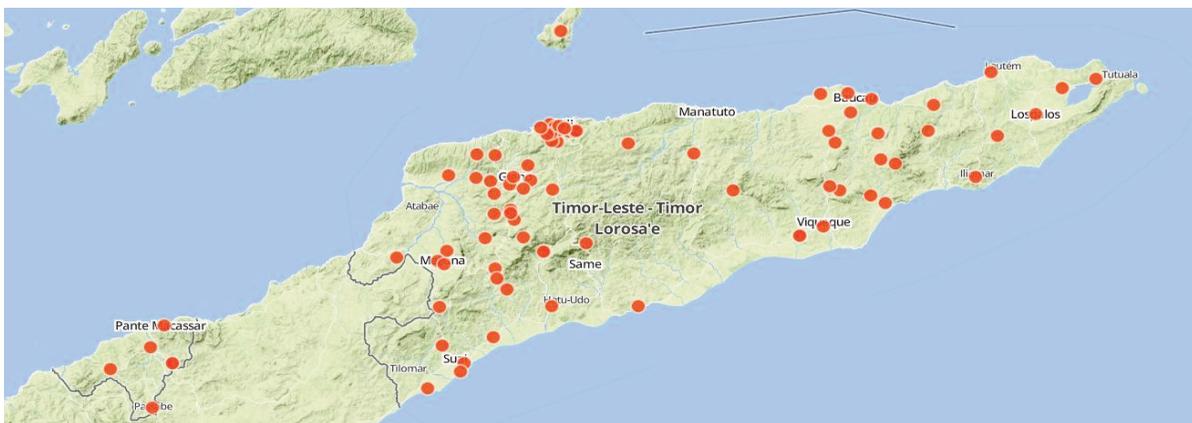


Timor-Leste Public Opinion Poll

From September-October 2013, The Asia Foundation in partnership with NGO Belun, conducted its second nationwide opinion poll, interviewing 831 adults across all 13 districts of Timor-Leste. Respondents were selected at random – regardless of status, seniority or education. This bi-annual opinion poll provides a snapshot of national perceptions towards important issues including the performance of the government, the conditions in people’s local area, and people’s optimism for the future. By ‘measuring the pulse’ of the country every six months, this opinion poll provides valuable insights into the priorities and sentiments of the general public in Timor-Leste.

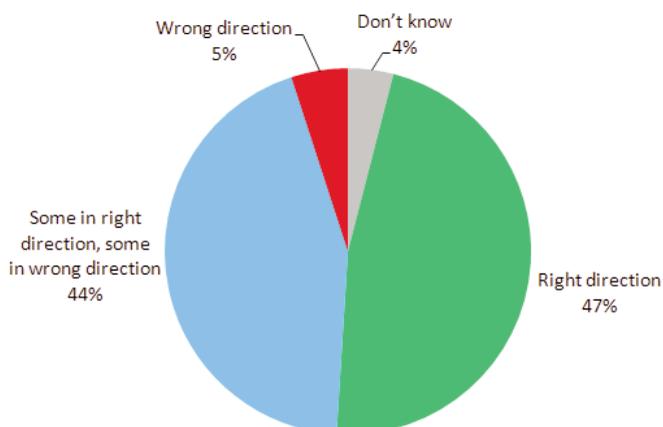


831 interviews were conducted from randomly selected sampling points in each of the country's 13 districts (shown above)

OVERALL PROGRESS

Almost half of all respondents believe the country is going in the right direction, whilst only 5% believe it to be going in the wrong direction. Forty-three percent gave a mixed response saying some things are going in the right direction, but other things are going in the wrong direction. Whilst there has been no significant shift in public sentiment in the past 6 months, more respondents offered a mixed response (up 8%) than in March 2013.

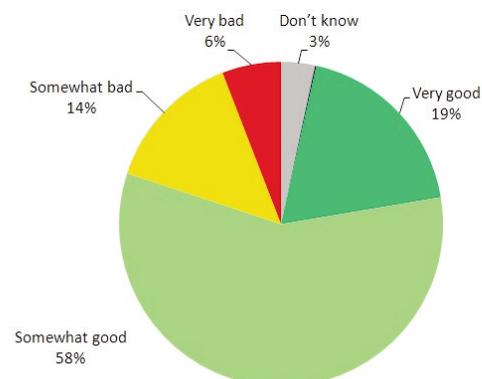
Generally speaking, do you think things in Timor-Leste today are going in the right direction, or do you think they are going in the wrong direction?



GOVERNMENT PERFORMANCE

Seventy-seven percent of respondents believe the government is doing a good job (including 19% who said “very good” and 58% who said “somewhat good”). Twenty percent of respondents believe the government is doing a bad job (including 14% who said “somewhat bad” and 6% who said “very bad”). Negative sentiment towards the government’s performance has increased 6% since March 2013 (from 10% “somewhat bad”, and 4% “very bad” in March 2013).

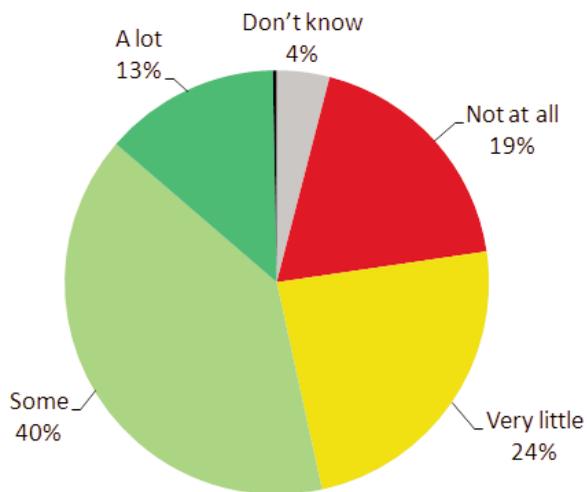
Thinking of the government, how do you feel about the way it is carrying out its responsibilities? Are they doing a very good job, somewhat good job, somewhat bad job, or very bad job?



INFLUENCE ON GOVERNMENT

Fifty-three percent of respondents believe the government hears and considers their views, with 13% of respondents saying the government does this “a lot” and 40% saying “somewhat”. In contrast, 43% of the public believe the government does not consider their opinions, with 24% of respondents saying the government hears and considers their views “very little” and 19% saying “not at all”.

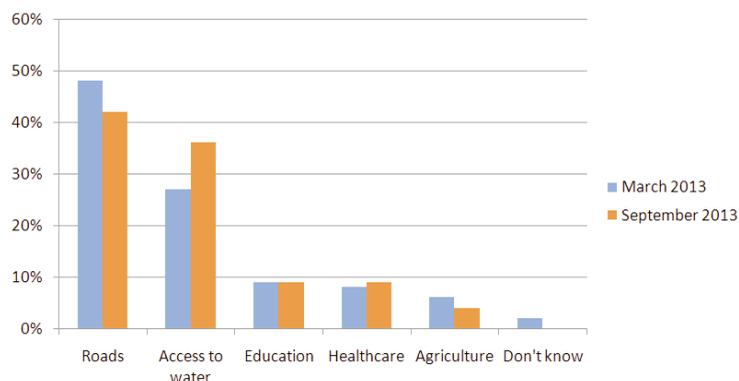
How much do you think the government hears and considers your views?



LOCAL PRIORITIES

Faced with a choice between education, healthcare, agriculture, access to water, and roads, 42% of the public said improving roads was the biggest priority in their local area. Thirty-six percent said access to water (up 9% from March 2013), which may be associated with seasonal transitions (from rainy to dry season). Education and health were each the highest priority for 9% of the population, and 4% selected agriculture. The order of priorities remains unchanged from March 2013.

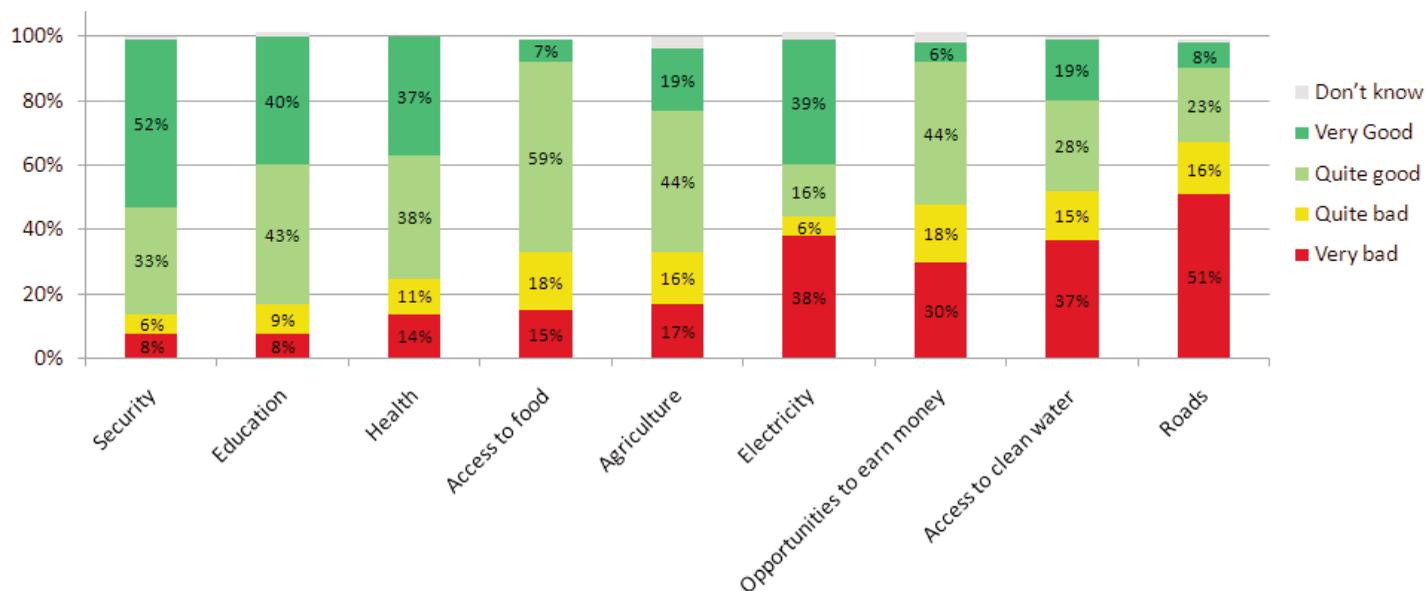
Of the following issues, which do you think most needs to be improved in this area - education, health, access to water, agriculture or roads?



LOCAL CONDITIONS

Respondents were asked to rate various conditions in their local area. As in our March 2013 opinion poll, security and access to education received the highest ratings, with over 80% percent of respondents saying the condition of each was either “somewhat good” or “very good”. Roads received the lowest rating, with only 31% of respondents rating the condition of roads as either “somewhat good” or “very good” (up 6% from March 2013). Rural respondents and those working on farms were more likely to negatively rate the conditions of roads, electricity, jobs, health, education and agriculture compared to urban respondents.

I would like to ask you about today's conditions in the village/neighbourhood where you live. Would you rate (insert item here) as very good, quite good, quite bad, or very bad in your area?



ISSUE IN FOCUS: DECENTRALIZATION

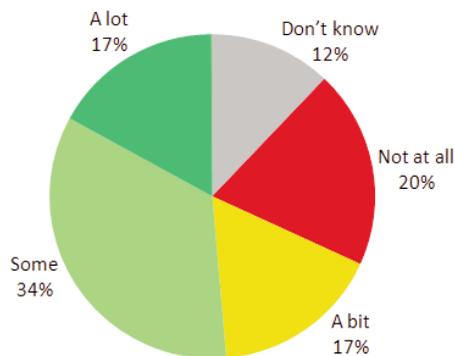
In 2013, the Government of Timor-Leste proposed a new law aimed at leading the country towards a decentralized government structure, with the expectation that decentralization will lead to improved delivery of government services. Socialization of the decentralization process took place in April 2013 with further changes to the proposed legislation in the latter half of the year. In its latest opinion poll, The Asia Foundation explored national understanding and expectations of decentralization, as well as sentiments towards the level of consultation undertaken by the government.

UNDERSTANDING OF DECENTRALIZATION

Fifty-one percent of respondents interviewed said they understand “some” or “a lot” of the government’s plans for decentralization. However, 37% of respondents claim to understand little of the process (understanding either “a little” or “not at all”). Twelve percent of respondents were unable to rate their understanding of decentralization (“don’t know”).

Urban respondents were more likely to say they understand decentralization (60% claiming they understand “some” or “a lot”) compared to rural respondents (47% understand “some” or “a lot”). Respondents who had completed primary school or above were also more likely to say they understand decentralization (61% claiming they understand “some” or “a lot”) compared to those who did not finish primary school or had no education (41% understanding “some” or “a lot”).

The government is currently undertaking a process of decentralization. How well do you feel you understand these plans?

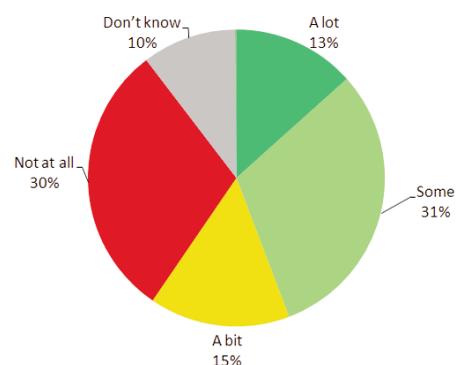


CONSULTATION ABOUT DECENTRALIZATION

Forty-five percent of respondents think they have not been well-consulted by the government about decentralization (consulted either “a bit” or “not at all”), whilst 44% claim that the government has consulted with them (either “some” or “a lot”).

Urban respondents were more likely to have experienced “some” or “a lot” of consultation with government (54%) compared to rural respondents (39%). Respondents who completed primary school or above were also more likely to report that the government had consulted with them on decentralization (50% saying they were consulted “some” or “a lot”) compared with respondents who did not finish primary school or had no education (39% believing they were consulted “some” or “a lot”).

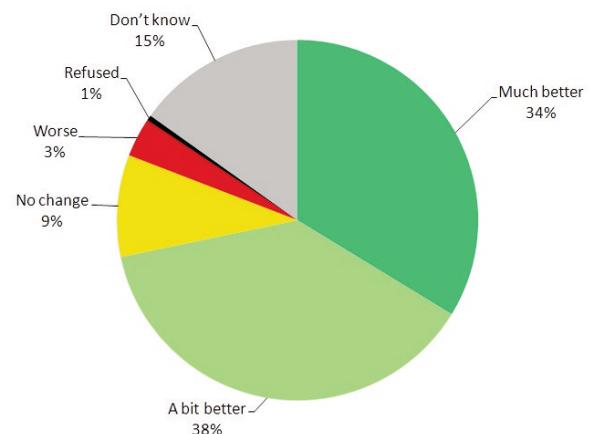
How much do you think you have been consulted by the government about decentralization?



IMPACT OF DECENTRALIZATION

Respondents were asked to consider how the delivery of government services might be impacted by decentralization. Seventy-two percent of respondents believe that decentralization will result in improved service delivery (either “a bit better” or “much better”). Nine percent believe there will be no change to service delivery, whilst only 3% believe that service delivery will become worse. Fifteen percent of respondents were unsure of the potential impact of decentralization on service delivery (“don’t know”). Respondents were more likely to be optimistic about the impact of decentralization on service delivery if they had completed primary school or above (78% either “a bit better” or “much better”), compared to those who had not completed primary school or had no education (65% either “a bit better” or “much better”).

Given what you know about decentralization, to what extent do you think it will change the delivery of government services in your local area? Do you think it will be a bit better, much better, worse or no change?



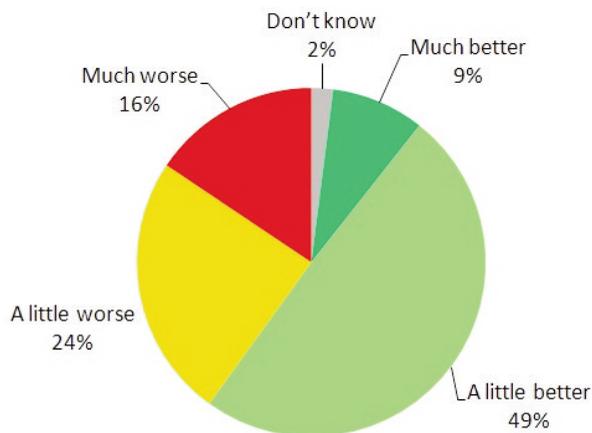
ECONOMIC SITUATION OF HOUSEHOLD

In figures close to those reported in March 2013, 58% of respondents said the economic situation of their household had improved (either “much better” or “a little better”) over the past two years.

Despite this, 40% of respondents said they were worse off (“much worse” or “a little worse”) compared to two years ago.

Respondents with a higher level of education (having completed primary school or above) were more likely to view their economic situation as having improved over the past two years (67% either “much better” or “a little better”) than those who did not complete primary school or had no education (49% either “much better” or “a little better”).

How does the economic situation of your household compare to two years ago? Would you say it is much better, a little better, a little worse or much worse?

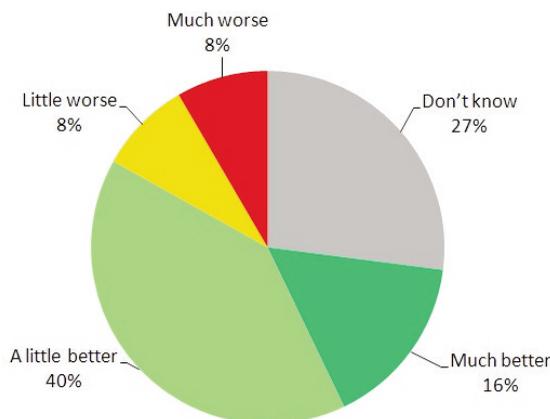


EXPECTED ECONOMIC SITUATION

Fifty-six percent of respondents said they expected the economic situation of their household to improve (either “much better” or “a little better”) over the next year. Despite this, 24% of respondents believe their economic situation will get worse (either “much worse” or “a little worse”) over the next year. Twenty-seven percent of respondents were unsure (“don’t know”) of the economic future of their household in the coming year.

Respondents working on farms were less optimistic about their economic future (48% believing the next year would be either “much better” or “a little better”), compared to people not working on farms (62% either “much better” or “a little better”). Farmers were also twice as likely to believe their economic situation would worsen over the next year (24% responding either “a little worse” or “much worse”) than those not working on farms (12% “a little worse” or “much worse”).

What do you think will happen to the economic situation of your household in a year's time? Would you say it will be much better, a little better, a little worse or much worse?



The Asia Foundation is a nonprofit international development organization committed to improving lives across a dynamic and developing Asia. Headquartered in San Francisco, The Asia Foundation works through a network of offices in 18 Asian countries and in Washington, DC. Working with public and private partners, the Foundation receives funding from a diverse group of bilateral and multilateral development agencies, foundations, corporations, and individuals.

For more information about the Foundation’s Public Opinion Poll or to enquire about adding questions to the next survey, please contact The Asia Foundation:

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