

Community Policing in Timor-Leste

The Community Policing Support Program in Timor-Leste is jointly implemented by The Asia Foundation and the New Zealand Police, funded by the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT). It supports the Polícia Nacional de Timor-Leste (PNTL) to achieve a locally relevant and sustainable model of community policing in Timor-Leste that makes a lasting impact on peace and security.



As citizens of the newest independent nation in Asia, the people of Timor-Leste have high hopes for the PNTL as a vanguard of peace, stability, and justice. However, the PNTL is still a nascent institution with limited experience, resources, institutional systems, and procedures to adequately address local security needs.

The Asia Foundation's experience supporting the PNTL in Timor-Leste since 2008 has shown that crime in Timor-Leste can be greatly reduced by fostering more effective community-police partnerships and cooperation. In 2009, the Foundation and the PNTL formed a partnership to undertake a pilot project in Conflict Mitigation through Community-Oriented Policing (CMCOP), funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

In 2011, the project was expanded into a five-year program targeting 11 municipalities in Timor-Leste, with support from USAID and the New Zealand Aid Programme. HAKOHAK (*Hametin Kooperasaun Hamutuk Polisia ho Komunitade*) (Embrace: Strengthen Cooperation between Police and Communities) ran until December 2015. It helped the PNTL develop their policy model for community policing and establish Community

Police Councils (CPCs). CPCs implement the principles of community policing at the *suku* (village) level by developing strategies to prevent and respond to safety and security concerns affecting communities. These activities help bring the PNTL closer to communities and together identify and resolve community problems in a proactive rather than reactive manner.

The new Community Policing Support Program, which began in January 2016, consolidates accomplishments in community policing policy and practice achieved during the course of the HAKOHAK program and its partner program, the Timor-Leste Community Policing Program (TLCPP) implemented by the New Zealand Police. The new program supports a sustainable and locally relevant model of community policing and its absorption by the Timorese State to become the full responsibility of PNTL and relevant ministries. It aims to ensure viable sustainability through integration with local governance structures. Another key focus is on the development and integration of effective crime prevention strategies, and improving response approaches to common issues, including Violence Against Women and Children (VAWC), that are consistent with the law.



TIMOR-LESTE

The Asia Foundation has been programming in Timor-Leste since 1992 and established an office in Dili in 2000.

Since 2009, The Asia Foundation has partnered with the Polícia Nacional de Timor-Leste (PNTL) to help put principles of community policing into practice.

COMMUNITY-ORIENTED POLICING

Community-oriented policing aims to improve the performance of police and build public trust by fostering collaborative community-police partnerships. The Community Policing Support Program is creating mechanisms to strengthen cooperation between police and communities, by facilitating dialogues, problem-solving forums, and training to enhance the capacity of community policing officers and their commanding officers. These use a problem-solving approach to respond to the security needs and expectations of local communities. The program helps build stronger ties between local organizations, government agencies, community leaders, and the PNTL to increase awareness and understanding of local security concerns.

Non-governmental organization partners assist in building the capacity of CPCs, comprised of police officers as well as a diverse range of community members (e.g. *suku* chiefs, traditional elders, veterans, religious leaders, teachers, women's representatives, and youth leaders), to tackle issues relating to public safety and security. Together with PNTL District Commanders, the PNTL's National Department of Community Policing (NDCP), and the citizens of Timor-Leste, the Foundation is helping communities and police improve safety and security across the country.

INSTITUTIONALIZING COMMUNITY POLICING PRACTICES

The key focus of the Community Policing Support Program is to institutionalize community policing practices by the PNTL, Ministry of Interior (MOI), and Ministry of State Administration (MOSA) in order to ensure their future sustainability and expansion of community-oriented policing by state actors. The program supports PNTL, MOI, and MOSA in the strategic development and implementation of a community policing model adapted to the Timorese context. This involves working at the policy level to support development of laws, policies, standard operating procedures, and planning and budgeting processes to substantiate further development of community policing practice. The program will facilitate an inter-ministerial workshop to clarify the respective roles and responsibilities of the PNTL and MOSA through *suku* councils to manage and support the CPCs.

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This will provide a sustainable institutional framework for the expansion of community policing councils to all 442 *sukus* in the country.

MENTORING AND TRAINING OF PNTL AND COMMUNITY POLICING STRUCTURES

To ensure that policy decisions lead to improved community policing practice, PNTL trainers will train existing 123 CPCs and 30 new CPCs about government decisions on the role of local government in community policing. The program continues to mentor the existing 11 Municipal Security Councils (MSCs) and 123 CPCs established during previous phases of community policing programming (2011-2015) to identify key security concerns and solutions, and create joint action plans. Women's Representative Security Meetings (WSMs) continue to meet quarterly to strengthen women's voices at the MSCs.

COMMUNITY SAFETY AND SECURITY FUND

By leading problem-solving forums, CPCs are working with local stakeholders to create and implement home-grown community policing initiatives, some of which are receiving support from the program's Community Safety and Security Fund. Projects receiving funding will have quick and visible benefits for the community and help inform citizens and police on their collective responsibility for improving security. Community Police Officers are leading PNTL efforts to work jointly with local stakeholders to carry out the initiatives.

IMPROVING COMMUNITY RESPONSES TO VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND CHILDREN

VAWC has been identified as one of three consistent top priorities for CPCs. In order to strengthen the response of CPCs to these forms of violence through the due legal process, the program improves VAWC response planning at the *suku* level, provides small grants to women's security groups, facilitates training for all CPCs in appropriate reporting of cases according to due legal process, and monitors data on the referral and status of VAWC cases by CPCs.

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.



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