

Local Governance in Timor-Leste

The Asia Foundation has been implementing programs aimed at strengthening local governance in Timor-Leste since 2009. These programs endeavor to increase the capacity of local leaders and help build ties between community members, local leadership, and municipal and national level government. The Foundation's local governance programs recognize the importance of community knowledge and expertise in addressing local needs, including peace and security, and adopt a "bottom-up" approach to foster participation and empower communities in the process of their own development.



STRENGTHENING LOCAL GOVERNANCE

Over the past four years, The Asia Foundation has developed key relationships with police District Commanders as well as Municipal Administrators. While the primary focus has been on developing police structures that work with communities to identify safety and security issues, both village (*suku*) council leaders and Municipal Administrators have been incorporated into these governance structures to provide oversight, accountability, and integration into other government ministries. While these structures have been working effectively at the local level, the local governance actors have not been incorporated formally into a national policy framework like the police have through the Ministry of the Interior's support for community policing. The Ministry of State Administration has not developed a formal policy framework on how it both works with the Ministry of Interior at the national policy level nor how the Municipal Administrators and village councils coordinate their security and safety functions at the local level with the police.

SUPPORTING *SUKU*-LEVEL SECURITY PROGRAMA APOIU GOVERNASAUN *SUKU*

Programa Apoiu Governasaun Suku (PASA *ba Suku* or Pass to *Suku*), funded by the United Kingdom's Department for International Development, is working to build a strong relationship at the national level between the Ministry of Interior and Ministry of State Administration that will enable better cooperation and collaboration at the municipal and *suku* levels between *suku* councils and *suku* police officers. By helping to integrate local governance structures into the safety and security framework, urgent safety issues that are beyond the scope of the police are more easily tasked out to relevant ministries, enabling nuanced service delivery to help build safe and secure communities. The program also works at the legislative level by providing advocacy and technical advice to the Ministry of State Administration and the National Parliament to pass the *suku* law, which includes mandated cooperation between *suku* councils and the police.



TIMOR-LESTE

Since 2009, the Foundation has been implementing programs aimed at strengthening local governance in Timor-Leste.

Since 2012, the Foundation has been working to promote women's participation and to strengthen the involvement of women leaders at the *suku* level.



MONITORING LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

The Asia Foundation is also providing monitoring support (funded by the Australian aid program) for the nationwide community-driven development initiative, *Programa Nasional Dezenvolvimentu Suku* (PNDS). In 2012, the government of Timor-Leste formally approved the general policy to establish a national mechanism to accelerate community-driven development in Timor-Leste. The mechanism aims to empower communities by supporting them to determine and manage their own small-scale infrastructure projects, while providing additional work opportunities to increase household incomes.

The Foundation is currently working through local NGO partners to provide independent, qualitative monitoring and evaluation of PNDS implementation in nine municipalities. This monitoring examines the process and systems for PNDS implementation; community participation and distributive/social equity at different stages of the PNDS cycle; and focused research

studies, directed at understanding broader issues related to the PNDS program and how it fits into the Timorese governance environment. PNDS has found that this monitoring has helped the communities improve their capacity to supervise and manage development projects. Women's priority projects are now considered in almost all *suku*, and, through training on PNDS, capacity of community management team members to manage and implement projects has improved. The Foundation has also found that by providing *suku* councils an independent supervisory role on PNDS projects rather than a management role is more effective and avoids conflict of interest or politicization of the project. The Foundation has also developed two key pieces of research to help inform the PNDS program: *Implementing PNDS in urban sukus: Challenges and opportunities*, and *A Report on the Impact of the program for District Development (PDD) and the Local Development Program (PDL) on the Growth of Private Companies and the local Political Economy in Three Districts of Timor-Leste*.

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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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