

Timor-Leste

The Asia Foundation is working with local, municipal, and national level government, as well as civil society partners and communities, to strengthen governance and policy, eliminate violence against women, enhance economic opportunities for women, and promote peace and justice in Timor-Leste.



SUPPORTING GOOD PUBLIC POLICY

The Asia Foundation is supporting the development of capacities and mechanisms for good public policy generation and implementation that more accurately reflect public needs. By engaging in initiatives that guide effective public policy through evidence-based research while working with a broad range of civil society partners, the Foundation is strengthening policy advocacy in Timor-Leste and promoting meaningful engagement between civil society and government actors. This includes establishing training and mentoring programs for both municipal and national NGOs, which provide an opportunity for organizations to build capacity in policy advocacy, while also developing strategies to target specific policy issues. The Foundation is actively seeking the participation of women NGO partners and will support policy reforms on issues that impact women, particularly at the municipal level.

The Foundation is also helping to build a network of influential policy reformers in order to leverage the importance of key individuals in shaping public policy. Through regular meetings, workshops, and conferences, group members share experiences and knowledge, and use their collective power to address key policy issues in Timor-Leste. These initiatives provide for meaningful change and a reform-minded agenda, which will have a positive

impact on development outcomes for Timorese citizens.

FOSTERING LASTING PEACE AND SECURITY

Since 2009, The Asia Foundation partnered with the Polícia Nacional de Timor-Leste (PNTL) to help put principles of community policing into practice. The PNTL has shown its commitment to these principles by including community policing as a central part of its most recent five-year strategic plan and developing a specialized model of community policing for Timor-Leste.

The Foundation is helping the PNTL develop Community Police Councils (CPCs) to implement the principles of community policing by providing training to council members on setting safety and security agendas. The Foundation's activities reduce resentment, apathy, and opposition to police in target communities and discourage the public from taking the law into their own hands. At the same time, these activities help bring the PNTL closer to communities and help identify and resolve community problems in a proactive rather than reactive manner.

Through advocacy and technical advice to national government, the Foundation also supports legisla-



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The Asia Foundation supports the active participation of women in all aspects of Timor-Leste's development.

tive and structural changes to improve coordination and cooperation between *suku* councils and the police at the local level.

STRENGTHENING ACCOUNTABLE GOVERNANCE

The Asia Foundation works to improve public service delivery through greater government accountability. Since 2012, we have supported local NGO partners to provide independent qualitative monitoring for the nationwide community-driven development initiative, *Programa Nasional Dezenvolvimentu Suku* (PNDS). This monitoring, supported by the Australian government and conducted in close partnership with the government of Timor-Leste, has revealed the successes and challenges of PNDS implementation, including how communities participate in and benefit from the small-scale infrastructure projects of PNDS. The learnings of this initiative have also led to changes in how communities and local government entities manage and prioritize these projects.

In late 2016, NGO Forum Timor-Leste (FONGTIL) and The Asia Foundation began implementing a program, funded by the European Union, to support local NGOs to implement social audits and use the results to advocate to government for more effective and appropriately resourced public services for communities across the country. The program directly supports the ongoing efforts of Prime Minister Rui Maria de Araújo, who introduced the social audit initiative at the swearing in of the new government in early 2015. The Prime Minister identified the priority sectors of agriculture, education, health, and basic infrastructure, and the government and civil society subsequently forged a partnership for social auditing marked by a Memorandum of Understanding between FONGTIL and the Prime Minister. The social audits will support citizens to evaluate public sector policy and implementation against the government's stated objectives and commitments, using concrete evidence that has been collected in a participatory and inclusive manner. The program supports the development and refinement of rigorous tools and guidelines for data collection and citizen engagement, provides financial and technical support to NGOs to implement social audit projects nationwide, and works to ensure that the findings are followed up and taken into account in policymaking,

collaborating closely with the Social Audit Unit in the Office of the Prime Minister.

WORKING TO END VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

The *Nabilan* program (Ending Violence Against Women) is an eight-year intervention aimed at reducing the proportion of women in focus areas who have experienced violence in the previous 12 months and improving well-being for an increased number of women and children who have been affected by violence.

The *Nabilan* program is grounded in the fundamental principles of women's and children's rights, and the equality of women and men. The program's strategic approach works toward long term institutional and behavioral change, while employing a holistic approach to ending violence against women, working on prevention, services, and access to justice. This aligns with the national government's own holistic framework – the National Action Plan on Gender-based Violence. The program is informed by research conducted on the underlying causes and opportunities for ending violence against women and children in Timor-Leste, and seeks to ensure that program interventions are informed by research. *Nabilan* cooperates with government and civil society organizations, and is engaging in participatory work at the community level to develop and test new approaches to improve prevention and access to support.

PROMOTING WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

Recognizing economic empowerment for women as an important area of focus, The Asia Foundation, in collaboration with two local partners and with funding from the U.S. Embassy, is supporting women *Tais* (a traditional woven cloth) weavers throughout the country to enhance their livelihood opportunities. Activities include assessing access points to national and international markets, capacity building on product quality and diversification, and enhancing finance and business skills. The goal of these efforts is to empower women and girls to avoid abusive relationships, stay in school, become economically sufficient, contribute to the evolving economy of Timor-Leste, and promote cultural traditions of Timor-Leste through the modernization of marketing strategies and development of collectives for traditional tapestries.

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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