

UNITED NATIONS POPULATION FUND (UNFPA)

Organizational Overview and Approach to Gender

The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) is a United Nations agency with a sizable country program in Timor-Leste. Across the world, UNFPA encourages national collection and use of population data so as to guide the formation of appropriate development policies and programs. In particular, UNFPA is concerned with development practice related to reproductive rights and health, the reduction of poverty by means of accessible reproductive choices, and gender equality. Gender-based violence is a key focus issue for the agency.

In Timor-Leste, UNFPA gives technical assistance to its primary partners, which are government ministries and offices. Secondary partners include NGOs and other United Nations and donor agencies. While UNFPA operates from UN House in Caicoli, UNFPA staff are also placed to work directly with government and NGO partners. For example, the UNFPA Gender-Based Violence Program Co-ordinator and Assistant, as well as a Training Officer, work with project staff in the Office for the Promotion of Equality, and UNFPA funds an organizational development advisor to work with PRADET Timor-Leste.

As the excerpt below demonstrates, UNFPA approaches gender from a combined health, rights and development perspective. Not only does it analyse the effects of gender inequality by considering women's experiences, it also looks at the impacts of gender equality on overall populations. Taking gender-based violence as an example, UNFPA argues that it is necessary to work towards prevention, not only to ensure the rights of women and children, but also to guarantee the physical, psychological and fiscal health of the broader population.

Programs

UNFPA's country programme for 2003 to 2008 consists of three broad projects: Provision of Comprehensive Reproductive Health Services and Training, Availability of Disaggregated Population Data and Strengthening the National Capacity to Address Gender-Based Violence. It is in the latter project that gender analysis comes to the fore in project design and objectives, though clearly reproductive health and population data projects have the potential to significantly impact the pursuit of gender equality.

Strengthening the National Capacity to Address Gender-Based Violence

The central implementing agency partner for this project is the Office for the Promotion of Equality, and other partners include: the Ministries of Health, Education, Justice and Labour, and Solidarity; PRADET Timor-Leste; the Judicial System Monitoring Programme (JSMP); and FOKUPERS. As mentioned above, three UNFPA project staff (one foreign and two nationals) work with OPE staff.

The main catalyst for establishing this project was the First National Congress of Women in Timor-Leste held in 2000, which called for a national strategy to address gender-based violence, in particular domestic violence. UNFPA and the newly formed OPE came together to begin work in 2001.

This project has a number of components and objectives. The first relates to the development and adoption by parliament of legislation to ensure that domestic violence is clearly

delineated as a crime and can be prosecuted. This has been a challenging and lengthy struggle for the many organizations and individuals that have advocated for domestic violence law. While the legislation has been drafted and submitted with significant UNFPA-OPE co-ordination, it is part of a broader penal code as per the Indonesian legal system, rather than being a separate piece of legislation. The passing of the domestic violence law has thus ostensibly been held up by multiple deliberations on the content of the penal code by parliamentarians. Along with continuing to lobby parliament, UNFPA has moved forward in its planning to build a strategy of implementation and socialization for when the legislation becomes law.

Gender-based violence is perhaps the most widespread and socially tolerated of human rights violations ... It both reflects and reinforces inequities between men and women and compromises the health, dignity, security and autonomy of its victims.

The consequences of gender-based violence are devastating. Survivors often experience life-long emotional distress, mental health problems and poor reproductive health. Abused women are also at a higher risk of acquiring HIV. Women who have been physically or sexually assaulted tend to be intensive long-term users of health services. The impact of violence may also extend to future generations: Children who have witnessed abuse, or were victims themselves, often suffer lasting psychological damage.

The cost to countries is high as well: Increased health care expenditures; demands on courts, police and schools; and losses in educational achievement and productivity.

United Nations Population Fund, *State of World Population Report 2005*.

The second component of this project is to build the capacity of the ‘national structures’ or institutional systems that can address GBV. Key identified structures are OPE itself, the police, the legal sector and suco councils. UNFPA is working with and training a range of institutions to ensure that they have the knowledge, skills and commitment to deal with GBV. Much of the work in 2007 will concentrate on distributing information about the anticipated domestic violence law. In 2006 UNFPA supported the establishment of PRADET Timor-Leste’s ‘Fatin Hakmatek’ in the grounds of the national hospital and the development of JSMP’s Victim Support Services (VSS) unit.

The third project component is to strengthen services to support victims of GBV. UNFPA and other organizations have come together to formalise a ‘referral network’ for service provision to victims. This network includes JSMP, PRADET Timor-Leste, FOKUPERS, the Ministry of Health, the national hospital, and the police. This network and its contact details are being publicized through poster and leaflet campaigns. Individual service-provision organizations are also provided with financial support. UNFPA is supporting activities in three prisons working with past GBV offenders on anger-management techniques in an attempt to prevent repeat offending upon release.

The final component of the GBV program works towards prevention of GBV through increasing public awareness of its criminal status and impacts. UNFPA’s primary activity in this regard is the co-ordination of the annual 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence, a global campaign. Each year UNFPA and participating organizations launch the campaign in a district capital—in 2006 it was held in Viqueque—and various events are held around the

country. Widespread participation by community groups is encouraged through the provision of small grants.

Other activities that aim to increase public awareness of GBV include the production of research, such as Kathryn Robertson's 2006 report, *Gender-Based Violence in Timor-Leste: A Case Study*. This report brought together a range of data about the incidence of GBV in Timor-Leste, analysed some of the factors behind the high rate of GBV, and outlined key organizations working to eliminate GBV and offering service provision to victims. For 2007 UNFPA also plans to advocate for the inclusion of gender equality information in educational curriculum.

Provision of Comprehensive Reproductive Health Services and Training

For its reproductive health project, UNFPA's main implementing agency partner is the Ministry of Health, chiefly the Maternal and Child Health Department. Other partners include the Ministry of Education, Youth and Culture, the Institute of Health Services, Fundasaun Timor Harii (the Build Timor Foundation), Clinic Café Timor (the Coffee Clinic), Cruz Vermelho Timor-Leste (Timor-Leste Red Cross), the Alola Foundation and Marie Stopes International Timor-Leste. Key UNFPA staff include a Family Planning Advisor and a Reproductive Health Advisor to the Ministry of Health, an HIV/AIDS Program Officer, and a Family Planning Focal Person in each of the district offices of the Ministry of Health.

The project's major objectives are various. One primary objective is to ensure wider access to information and services relating to family planning, not only by couples but also by single individuals and young people. Other objectives include developing and broadening the available maternal services and improving women's access to emergency obstetric care. Project activities for 2007 include a national reproductive health workshop, a school health program accompanied by distribution of materials and training of teachers, scholarship provision for training in obstetrics-gynaecology, and grants to key NGOs who provide maternal services. The 'Maternity Waiting Camp'—piloted during the 2006 crisis as a response to maternal health needs in IDP camps—will be consolidated into a 'Maternity Waiting Home' within the national hospital grounds.

Availability of Disaggregated Population Data

Establishing credible population data through which to inform policy and programs is a central tenet of UNFPA's mandate. For this project UNFPA works primarily with the National Statistics Directorate within the Ministry of Planning and Finance. The chief activity of the National Statistics Directorate, with UNFPA's technical assistance, has been to produce the 2004 Timor-Leste Census of Population and Housing. Since this time the project staff have worked on processing the census data in a wide range of ways to promote input into government and institutional planning. They are also making this data available through different means: publications, presentations, websites, and specific processing on request. Additionally, the National Statistics Directorate is working towards providing annual population estimates. Another of UNFPA's key objectives is to build up the institutional capacity of the National Statistics Directorate. UNFPA is considering how to use census data to inform gender-responsive policy and programs.

Contacts

Tel: (670) 333 9807 (GBV Project)
Email: irodrigues@unfpa.org (GBV Project Assistant Idelta Rodrigues)
Address: UN Agency House, Estrada Caicoli, Caicoli, Dili

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