



SECRETARIA DE ESTADO DA JUVENTUDE E DO DESPORTO

NATIONAL YOUTH POLICY





**DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF TIMOR-LESTE
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR YOUTH AND SPORT**



Foreword

It is my pleasure as Secretary of State for Youth and Sports to present this new National Youth Policy for Timor-Leste, a guiding document for Government and development partners alike to support youth development in our country. This strategic document sets ambitious objectives for us all in assisting young people, providing them with opportunities and supporting their bright future.

In 2014, started a process of conferences at municipal, RAEOA and national levels that gave a voice to the young people of Timor-Leste. Hearing their concerns, the Secretariat of State for Youth and Sports hereby set off to revise the existing Youth Policy so as to best meet their needs and reflect the current situation they live in. This present document now articulates the State's current vision for Timorese youth.

Developed in a participatory manner, the document calls upon all partners – youth groups, government institutions, development agencies, donors – to contribute to the youth sector. It is truly multi-sectorial in nature, recalling the importance of all sectors for comprehensive youth development. If it respects international commitments and conventions, it is first and foremost Timorese in essence, reflecting the socio-cultural, economic and political reality of Timor-Leste's youth.

We hope this document can shed light on to what needs to be done for youth from now on. With the majority of the population of Timor-Leste below the age of 25, investment in the youth sector are considered highly strategic for the State and this new National Youth Policy shall be the framework that guides effective interventions.

Our thanks and appreciation go to the various partners who supported the development of this National Youth Policy to its successful completion.



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PART – 1

**BACKGROUND, CONTEXT AND
DEFINITION OF YOUTH**

1.1 Background

Timor-Leste is a country that has established its own vision to become an upper middle-income country by 2030. It is a country where the majority of the population is youth which, on the one hand, can be a potential asset to the country's development but on the other hand, can become an impediment to its very development. Due to this fact, investments for the development of the youth sector should be treated as a matter of priority and considered highly strategic for the State of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste.

The new National Youth Policy is considered a reflection of the socio-cultural, economic and political reality of Timor-Leste's youth, which is evolving through time. This National Youth Policy is a State's policy that reflects the aspirations, willingness and concerns of the youth of Timor-Leste.

The National Youth Policy is the framework and general vision that provides guidance for the development of youth in all its aspects in the whole country. This Youth policy seeks to respond to great challenges and concerns that both young men and women are facing in their daily lives. It is also considered a political stand to acknowledge the participation of young women and men in the struggle for self-determination.

This National Youth Policy recognizes young women and men as assets for socio-economic transformation of the society. Through this National Youth Policy, the Government declares its commitment to investing in youth, as it is believed

that young people have the spirit to develop themselves and their country, commitment to help others, and have hope and dedication to care for their country.

The needs and interests of young men and women are central to national development. As such, this Youth Policy provides the basis and guidance to the development of youth. This policy also provides ways for the Government to set priorities and strategic steps, demonstrating its commitment to the development of youth through an implementation mechanism that is appropriate and with adequate allocation of resources.

This policy is a framework for partnerships with national, international and inter-ministerial agencies.

The Government of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste hereby affirms its political and financial commitment to ensuring the implementation of the National Youth Policy.

1.2 Context of the National Youth Policy

The Constitution of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste clearly defines the rights and responsibilities of its citizens: the right to equal treatment without discrimination (Section 16, Paragraph 2); the rights of the child (Section 18); and the right of the child to have access to justice (Section 132); the right to freedom, security and integrity (Section 30, Paragraph 1); the right to dignity and privacy (Section 36); the right to participation in politics (Section 46, Paragraph 1 and 2); the right to employment (Section 50); the right to private property (Section 54); the right to security and social assistance (Section 56); the right to health and medical assistance (Section 57); the right to housing (Section 58); the right to education and culture (Section 59); and the right to a healthy environment (Section 61, Paragraph 1). It also states that youth with disabilities enjoy the same rights as other citizens

(Section 21, Paragraph 1). Particularly in Section 19, Paragraph 2, it is stated that youth have the rights to education, health and vocational training.

Together with all these rights, there are also responsibilities that young people should comply with. Paragraph 1 of Section 19 of the Constitution of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste mentions the duties of young citizens, and their responsibility to consolidate national unity, to participate in reconstruction efforts, to defend and develop the country.

The National Youth Policy was developed taking into consideration national norms and legislations derived from the Constitution of the Republic of Timor-Leste. It also recognizes and considers international norms and conventions that promote, stimulates and act as catalysts to accelerate the development of the youth sector in Timor-Leste.

1. Norms, Policies and National Legislations:

- a. The Civil Code: it mentions some issues that are linked to the rights of the child. The Code defines minors, parental authority, minors' representation, support to the child, custody and regulates child adoption as well.
- b. The National Strategic Development Plan: the overarching objective of the National Strategic Development Plan 2011-2030 is to accelerate economic growth and reduce poverty. These two objectives will provide significant contribution to the social, economic and political development of youth. The social and infrastructure sectors are the key sectors for national development. Together with these two important sectors, petroleum industries, agriculture and tourism are identified as potential sectors that will significantly drive the economic development of the country. This strategic plan also

recognizes that young people are the future leaders, and it is they who will contribute to the social and economic transformation of the society. The State will do everything within its power to support young people and provide them with opportunities to gain experience, skills and positive values so that they may be able to participate in the national development.

- c. Basic law on Education: This law, which was approved and promulgated in 2008, mentions that: “all citizens have the right to education and culture”. This implies that it is necessary to promote equal opportunities to all people and remove economic, social and cultural inequalities. Basic education is declared universal, mandatory and free, which guarantees that all people have access to education.
- d. Basic law on Sport: This law, which was approved and promulgated in 2010, constitutes the basis for the development of the sport sector. This law is not specifically linked to young people but most sport participants and athletes are of a young age. Therefore, the development of a sports sector should include the promotion of the talents of young women and men, the development of basic sport facilities, and the strengthening of the capacity of the managers as a positive means to youth development.

2. International Norms and Conventions:

Timor-Leste is the signatory to many international conventions. All international conventions guarantee the rights and responsibilities of all people. In addition, and of specific relevance to young people, some conventions affirm in a comprehensive manner the Rights of the Child and adolescents (UNCRC), the Civil and Political freedoms and protection (ICCPR), and the participation and protection of

the girl child and young women (CEDAW). The Government has also ratified the Hague Convention regarding the Protection of Children and Co-operation in Respect of Inter-country Adoption and the additional protocol to the Convention against Transnational Organized Crime to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children. It similarly ratified the International Labour Organization's Convention concerning the Prohibition and Immediate Action for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour. There also exist other international norms mentioned here below:

- a. *Charter of the United Nations* – Timor-Leste, as a member of United Nations Organization (UN), has agreed to the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, which promote the right of young women and men to participate in the life of the society.
- b. *The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)* – The National Youth Policy recognizes and reaffirms the commitment of the United Nation Organizations (UN) to develop the well-being of youth, as laid out in the MDGs.
- c. *The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)* – As part of the post-MDGs agenda, the SDGs demonstrate the commitment of the UN and its member states, of which Timor-Leste is part, to achieve goals for sustainable development and mention important commitments to achieve youth development.
- d. *United Nations World Programme of Action for Youth (UNWPAY)* – The principles of the UNWPAY helped orient the elaboration process of this National Youth Policy. The 15 priority areas of the said document (which include education, health, employment, juvenile delinquency, drugs,

globalization, HIV/AIDS and other areas) were given consideration in the National Youth Policy of Timor-Leste.

1.3 Definition of Youth

This Policy defines Youth as young people aged 15 to 24 years. The National Youth Policy decides to use this age bracket of 15 to 24 to refer to all young women and men, married and unmarried. This age group is further disaggregated into adolescents (15-19) and young adults (20-24). The definition was chosen to reflect that the State also recognizes that adolescence is an important stage in youth development and is different from other age groups. Adolescents experience life differently from young adults; similarly young adults have different needs in life compared with adolescents.

This definition recognizes that starting from this age, young people experience biological and sociological changes, which mark the transition from life as a child into life as a youth and the initial stage of adulthood. Even though this Policy defines youth as aged 15-24 for the purpose of benefiting from Government services, it also recognizes other existing legislations with other definitions of youth. The law on Elections of community leaders for example defines the representation of young women and men as those aged 17-35 and the Youth Parliament Programme only considers youth participants between the ages of 12-17.

PART - 2

PRINCIPLES, VALUES AND OBJECTIVES

2.1 Principles and Values

The National Youth Policy follows certain principles and values, guiding its development (from the initial stage to its finalization), implementation and evaluation. These principles and values further reinforce the principles and values, which are already contained in the Constitution of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste.

a. Based on Human Rights

It is necessary to adhere to the principles of human rights in matters of youth work. Recognizing that all people shall enjoy human rights without discrimination, this entails that the accountability of duty-bearers for youth development be upheld and the participation of rights-holders be guaranteed. This also means compliance with the international and national legal frameworks, as the Policy seeks to promote and protect human rights principles already contained in the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste's Constitution.

b. Participatory

Young people are the architects and agents responding to the challenges they face. Thus, it is crucial to consider youth participation in democratic processes, in their communities and in decision-making processes for national development. This principle delineates the need for consulting with and listening to young people, considering and/or involving young people when

decisions on development activities that directly affect their lives are being made.

c. Responsive to Gender

Promoting gender inclusion principles for the development of young women and men means promoting opportunities and equal treatment for all young people, young women and men alike.

d. Respecting of Cultural Diversity and Diversity of Religion and Belief

Recognizing cultural diversity and diversity of religion or belief as a basis for development also means recognizing the role of culture and religion or spirituality for youth development.

e. Based on Evidence and Knowledge

The National Youth Policy promotes the use and publication of data and the use of information systems and technology in decision-making processes, as well as in the design of programmes/activities for youth. It considers evidence from various sources as a basis for decision-making. It gives importance to data, monitoring and evaluation, and evidence when planning and implementing programmes and/or activities.

f. Inclusive and Non- Discriminatory

Youth development initiatives need to uphold at the highest level the principle of non-discrimination based on gender, age, class, status of disability, race, ethnicity and sexual orientation. It needs to create conditions for young women and men to feel secure and comfortable, and for them to gain due respect and support, so that they can effectively participate in the development process.

g. Accountable

Good governance for development at all levels needs to give importance to the sense of responsibility and accountability. Young people understand that their behaviours affect other people; they need to have the sense of responsibility for their own decisions. Local governance needs to take an active role in articulating the needs of young people and become accountable to the local development. This encourages young people to adopt healthy behaviours and pro-social behaviours in the community. It is also necessary to put in place a political system, which is accountable for service performance in the area of youth development.

h. Holistic

Development initiatives should include all aspects of the life of a young person and respond to their physical, social, economic and spiritual needs within a certain socio-political context. In doing so, it can guarantee that youth gain the necessary knowledge, skills and experiences they need.

2.2 Vision and Objectives

The vision and objectives of the National Youth Policy are the following:

1. Vision

The National Youth Policy’s vision is for young people to be “healthy, educated, competitive, active and responsible citizens, who are proud to be Timorese.”

2. Objectives

- a. To guide and provide orientation to Timor-Leste's State entities in the development of holistic and integrated youth sector.
- b. To promote participation of young women and men in the strengthening of the democratic process, including in decision-making processes, leadership and involve youth in other national development programmes.
- c. To reduce youth unemployment through the promotion of self-employment.
- d. To mobilize resources for youth programme implementation at all levels.
- e. To provide psycho-social support and other services for youth in situations of conflict, difficult circumstances, and for most marginalized young people.
- f. To promote cooperation amongst inter-governmental agencies, civil society groups, private sector and religious institutions in the implementation of youth development programmes.
- g. To strengthen the capacity, skills and knowledge of youth to be able to solve by themselves the social, economic and political problems they face.
- h. To develop institutional capacity of youth organizations to guarantee the implementation of youth development programmes that covers the whole country.
- i. To ensure that key issues of youth development are integrated into the agendas and programmes that Government agencies, civil society groups, private sector and religious institutions plan and implement.

- j. To promote harmonization of policies, programmes, strategies and research related to youth issues.
- k. To promote and guide moral development, ethics, civic and other values.

PART - 3

RIGHTS, RESPONSIBILITIES AND OBLIGATIONS

3.1 Rights of Youth

- a. Young people have the rights to well-being, freedom and security.
- b. Young people have the rights to knowledge through family education, and good quality formal and non-formal education.
- c. Young people have the rights to dignity and secured private property.
- d. Young people have the right to decent employment.
- e. Young people have the rights to health services and good medical assistance
- f. Young people have the right to live in a healthy environment.
- g. Young people have the right to get involved in organizations, and have the right to express their opinion.
- h. Young people have the right to access all information related to development.

- i. Young people have the right to protection from violence, exploitation and abuse.
- j. Young people have the right to have a secure future, and the right to peace, in a healthy and sustainable environment.

3.2 Responsibilities and Obligations of Youth

- a. Young people have the responsibility to comply with the law, obey all existing legal and cultural norms conducive to development.
- b. Young people have the responsibility and moral obligation to participate and contribute to the development process.
- c. Young people have the responsibility to respect the adults, other young people, traditional values, public and private property.
- d. Young people have the responsibility to strengthen unity and stability, promote peace and development.
- e. Young people have the responsibility to respect, protect and care for a healthy environment.
- f. Young people have the responsibility to be liable and accountable for their actions.
- g. Young people have the responsibility to guarantee that all citizens are free from exploitation, intimidation, violence, crime and degradation.
- h. Young people have the responsibility to extend their solidarity, volunteer, demonstrate sincerity in helping others.

3.3 Government's Obligations towards Youth

Section 19 of the Constitution of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste provides the State with an opportunity to:

- *Paragraph (1)*: promote and encourage youth initiatives towards the consolidation of national unity, reconstruction, defence and development of the country.
- *Paragraph (2)*: promote education, health and vocational training for the youth as may be practicable.

As the sovereign entity of the State of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste, based on the Constitution as mentioned above, the Government has obligations to:

- a. Encourage the participation of young women and men in the development process in rural and urban areas.
- b. Recognize the rights of young women and men and give them the opportunity to take responsibility for their own actions.
- c. Encourage young women and men to continue to learn about human rights values, social justice, equity and gender equality.
- d. Facilitate assistance to young women and men so that they achieve their goals and develop their talents.
- e. Be sensitive to the needs of young women and men and the difficulties that they are facing.
- f. Respect and consider the various contributions of young women and men in the national development process, through the use of their talents, resources and ideas.
- g. Provide equal opportunities to young women and men so that they can access learning opportunities.

- h. Create opportunities for young women and men so that they can be involved in the decision-making processes which affect their lives, environment and society.
- i. Provide adequate financing to young women and men so that they can undertake youth projects and programmes that are sustainable.

3.4 Society's Obligations towards Youth

- a. Promote parental responsibility.
- b. Provide a positive environment for mental, emotional and physical development of young women and men.
- c. Demonstrate positive behaviours and become an example to young women and men.
- d. In relations to gender equality, provide equal treatment of young women and men and give equal access to resources of the family to them.
- e. Provide family education, facilitate assistance and support specific needs of young people living in particularly difficult conditions.

PART – 4

PRIORITY TARGET GROUPS

The National Youth Policy hereby becomes the basis for the development of all young people in the State of Timor-Leste. Notwithstanding, this Policy recognizes that there are some young people who have specific needs and they need special

attention from the Government, civil society, private sector and development partners due to the specific challenges that they face.

4.1 Young Women and Men in Rural Areas

According to the demographic data available on youth, most young people live and work in rural areas. These are the young people who often face many difficulties in accessing quality education, adequate health treatment, and training and employment opportunities. This situation contributes to urbanization and other social challenges in the society. Due to this fact, development programmes and activities, particularly in the area of youth, need to be designed in a more strategic manner giving special attention to youth development in rural areas.

4.2 Out of School Youth and School Drop-outs

Structural challenges in education, economic difficulties and family needs often lead to families depriving their children of the benefit of education. Sometimes, young people are asked to abandon school early; other times, children do not enter school at all. These young women and men are then at a greater disadvantage compared to those who receive good education or complete their education. Their life situation can lead to them getting involved in activities that are against the law, having poor health and it provides a fertile ground for bad influences, which may include them engaging in alcohol and drug abuse.

4.3 Youth with Disability

Young women and men with disabilities face great challenges in their lives. Their situation becomes more complicated when

they don't receive appropriate education and are unable to access opportunities needed for their development. All development programmes should acknowledge their existence, recognize their skills, knowledge, and respect their rights to participate and define what their aspirations and needs are. Thus, when designing youth development programmes and activities, there is a need to focus on their protection and their participation. Planned programmes and activities need to guarantee that the principle of inclusiveness is upheld, based on human rights.

4.4 Young People Who Earn a Living in the Streets

The on-going development progress does not provide equal benefits to all people. The phenomenon of young people earning a living in the streets is rising, especially in Dili. Young women and men who earn their living in the streets, especially those involved in commercial sex and those who are roaming by the roadsides, are vulnerable to many risks, including the risk of sexual exploitation, involvement in crime, infections from sexually transmitted diseases, drug risks (sale and use) and of falling prey easily to political and economic manipulation from people with bad intentions.

4.5 Young Women

As shown by many studies, young women are at a disadvantage compared to their male counterparts in many aspects of their development. Data related to early marriage, domestic violence, malnutrition, mortality, low education progress, out of school and drop-outs, and limited participation in socio-economic life have all become common features of their situation.

In recognition of the profound and specific challenges of girls and young women, programmes and activities derived from

the National Youth Policy need to focus on balancing young women's participation and increase their role so that they are better able to contribute to form a society which upholds gender equity and equality. The Youth Policy principles of gender responsiveness and human rights need to be given due consideration in the planning of programmes and activities for youth development.

4.6 Young People Who Do Not Have Enough Opportunities to Practice Their Skills and Apply Their Knowledge

Many young people have talents in sports and art or in other areas of development. Many have also obtained sufficient education, skills and knowledge to help themselves and their families. Many also have the skills and knowledge to improve their situation, develop themselves, as well as the economic situation of their family or their community. They are however not given enough opportunity to practice their skills and apply their knowledge and as a result feel frustrated. This situation occurs because the education and training system creates unrealistic expectations. Aware of the disconnect between labour market demand and skills supply, the State should maximize the use of existing resources for them. Thus, when designing programmes and activities, there is a need to consider how best to link the training and education with the macroeconomic situation. In doing so, all of those who have talents, skills, non-formal knowledge and skills in formal education can be given the opportunity to practice what they have learned.

4.7 Illiterate Youth

The reason for the continued occurrence of illiteracy in the society is a complex one. This is not solely linked to a lack of educational opportunity for it also has a strong connection

with family culture. Illiterate young women and men are a youth group that is facing great challenges regarding their personal development, and ways they can make a positive contribution to the community. These young people are the ones who are more prone to follow the people who harbour bad intentions for the country and the State. They can also fall prey to the risk of economic exploitation, and have the potential to get engaged in behaviours that are against the law. Government and non-governmental institutions, together with development partners, have the important role to continue to design programmes and activities to combat illiteracy, joining effort to end illiteracy amongst young people.

4.8 Unemployed Youth

Many young people are unemployed. The youth unemployment rate is greater than the unemployment rate of the general population. At the same time, many more young people are currently accessing better education, various vocational training opportunities and opportunities to increase their knowledge. With an increased availability of opportunities, so do their expectations to get better jobs with higher incomes.

Most employment opportunities are actually in the Government, and are currently not enough for all young people to participate in the formal sector. Job opportunities in the private sector exist but not enough new opportunities are created to absorb the number of new entrants into the labour market every year. This situation creates uncertainty regarding income and effectively becomes a great obstacle for youth development. With the unemployment rate increasing, it will also increase the risks of social ills in the society, including frustration and criminal behaviours. This situation can lead young people to get involved in anti-social behaviours, which the State will then need to address and spend more money on.

4.9 Most at Risk Youth

Many young people expose themselves to various risks, living lives that include drugs, alcohol abuse, cigarette, suffering from HIV/AIDS or being involved in violence and crime. Media publications note that Timor-Leste has become a potential transit route for drug trafficking. A culture of alcohol consumption and easy access to alcohol allow young people to easily consume. Smoking cigarettes also becomes increasingly common among young people. This poses healthy risk for them and other people. The number of people suffering from HIV/AIDS is increasing. Violence and crime involving youth happen almost every day in the society. These occurrences often have links with members of martial art groups.

The Policy's strategies need to give specific attention to these young people and the risk factors that influence the lives of young people. There should also be a strengthening of the mechanisms that can contribute to the reduction of risky behaviours of youth.

PART – 5

GOALS AND STRATEGIC INTERVENTIONS

The majority of Timor-Leste's population is below 25 years of age. Youth aged 15-24, as defined in this Policy, constitute a very substantial part of the society, accounting for almost 21% of the total population in 2015 which was of 1,167,242¹ people. Representing such a significant percentage

¹Preliminary Report of Population Census 2015

of the population, young people put a strong economic pressure on the country. As an increasing number of young people complete school, this situation also adds pressure on social development, when high expectations for when they finish their studies remain unmet. Such a large youth population creates great challenges for the Government to provide adequate public services and cater to their development needs in all areas.

The demographic distribution of youth in urban and rural areas is not equal. Available data shows that the majority of Timor-Leste's youth live in rural areas. However, when one compares the youth population to the general population, the proportion of youth living in rural areas appears to be smaller than the proportion of the general population living in rural areas. The municipalities with the highest proportion of youth population are Dili (26%), Aileu (22%), and Ermera (21%). In contrast, the municipalities with the smallest percentage of youth population are Oecusse (16%) and Viqueque (17%). The youth population in rural areas is smaller because many young people migrate to Dili and other urban centres in search for opportunities to study, to access better academic courses, to look for a job or because they have found a job there, to follow their family, or even more simply to look for entertainment. Therefore, there is a need for a holistic, adequate, integrated, sensitive and responsive strategic intervention to respond to the situation of Timor-Leste's youth.

Through the Municipal and National Youth Conferences in 2014, young people of Timor-Leste were able to identify the most pressing problems they are facing in their daily lives, which can be categorized into five thematic areas: education, health, employment, civic involvement and violence. They were also able to elaborate their own strategies to address

them. These identified problems and corresponding strategies are detailed in the following sections.

5.1 Youth and Education

5.1.1 Current Situation

Timor-Leste has made very significant progress in education. There are 38% of students in the total population. 14.2% of these are in secondary level and 5.1% are in tertiary or university level. The number of youth enrolled in schools continues to increase. At present time, more young people are attending schools than ever in the past. The approval of the Basic Law of Education (2008) and the Career Regime System of Teachers and Qualification System of Teachers (2011), the development of school infrastructure, and training for teachers all marked important changes and progress in the education sector development.

A policy on inclusive education was developed to raise awareness and ensure that all people have appropriate education regardless of their ability and situation in order to develop their capacity, knowledge and skills. This policy gives special attention to people with disabilities, children in extreme poverty and those living in remote rural areas, young pregnant women, minority ethnic groups, children who earn a living in the streets and those infected by HIV/AIDS.

The State recognizes that people's education level is a key indicator for progress in the development of the country. It is not only a matter of staying on to higher levels but also of receiving a good quality education in all its aspects. Completion rates are one indicator of access to good education. However, it is crucial to look at other factors such as the participation of parents, the provision of school

materials and equipment which are relevant to the need of young people's lives, the extracurricular activities, and the children's abilities to gain skills and knowledge to face the challenges in their daily lives as well as in the future. Young people who receive quality education will break the vicious cycle of poverty in society; they will become a strong resource for sustainable development and become the foundation for the stewardship and enrichment of the life of the country.

Statistic data shows that 83% of young people aged 15-24 are attending schools². It is also important to highlight that more young women are attending schools than in the past: from 11% in 2004, it had increased to 25% in 2010³. The data also shows that the number of youth who are entering secondary education continues to increase: from 39% in 2006, it had increased to 57% in 2010⁴. Results show that 85% of young people aged 15-24 are able to read some parts of a complete phrase⁵. Interpretation of data from the census shows that the number of illiterate people continues to decrease.

Even so, not all young people manage to complete pre-secondary and secondary school. The 2010 data showed that only 11% of 25-34 year-olds finished pre-secondary education; only 26% of 25-34 year-olds finished secondary school and there were only 7% of 25-34 year-olds that finished their tertiary level of education⁶. There were also 14% of young people aged 15-24, who have never attended school. The Ministry of Education identified in its strategic plan several reasons to explain why young people do not

² Recalculation of data from Youth Situational Analysis

³ Youth Monograph 2010

⁴ EMIS – Statistical Yearbook 2010, Ministry of Education

⁵ Demographic and Health Survey 2009-2010

⁶ Youth Monography 2010

always finish their education: “*the distance from home to school, the lack of transportation, weather factors such as heavy rains, the obligation to work in the household (for example during harvest), the cost related to education, frequent absences of teachers, lack of access to water and sanitation in schools, overloaded class rooms (especially in the first grade), violence in schools, the quality of teaching, school management in relation to monitoring and promotion of school attendance*”⁷. This state of affairs affects even more children and young people with disabilities, those living in extreme poverty, those who are ill, teenage mothers, and those who earn their living in the streets.

Using the participatory method of *problem tree analysis*, young people from 65 administrative posts, in 13 Municipalities, aged 15-30, who participated in the Municipal Youth Conferences identified that the causes of young people not being able to finish their studies and are as a result illiterate are: lack of facilities in schools, poor road access, long distance to school, some young people being orphans, some parents being unemployed, and parents not knowing about the importance of schooling. They also noted some contributing factors such as the recruitment of teachers not being based on the needs on the ground, the teachers lacking professionalism and the education budget being insufficient. All these reasons are similar to what was already identified by the Ministry of Education. In addition, these young people noted that their peers were not able to finish school because of some social norms that serve as impediment within the community. These social norms that become impediments include: parents who are wanting them to marry early to benefit from the dowry/bride price (*barlake*), wanting them to have children soon to ensure the next generation, parents

⁷Ministry of Education, 2011, National Strategic Plan of Education 2011-2030, Timor-Leste Government, p 22

having too many children, parents giving priority to traditional rituals so that there is not enough money left to support education, forcing their children to contribute to the income generation of the family, early marriage, young people who abuse alcohol, young people who adopt risky sexual behaviours (*ransu livre*), and young people who are unmotivated to go to school. None of the causes that have been identified stands isolated from the others. All those causes are inter-related; some contribute directly to young people dropping out of school and cause them to be illiterate, while other causes are mere secondary causes to the situation of young people. From the analysis made by the youth, it can be noted that there are three important categories of factors that are interconnected. The first category is related to the families of young people who abandon school and are unable to finish studies. The second is the individual mind set of young people, who do not want to complete their studies or abandon their studies. The third is related to structural elements (policies, programmes, environment), which lead to low retention rates in schools.

It is also observed that formal education at present gives great importance to the cognitive development of young people. It does not however seem to give importance to character building, considering them as people and citizens of a country. With limited time spent in schools, around only 3-4 hours a day, and few extracurricular activities in schools, young people miss many opportunities to learn positive values and opportunities to form their characters. The school as an educational entity which provides comprehensive quality education should give consideration to the character building of young citizens, the life skills of young people, strengthen their leadership capacity and democratic culture, and promote healthy lifestyles.

5.1.2 Goals and Strategic Interventions

a. Goals

Be educated and civic-minded citizens of Timor-Leste, who live a long and productive life which allows them to participate in the economic, social and political development process.

b. Strategic Interventions

1. Develop and improve the education system and provide trainings that:
 - Favours equal opportunity for young people in rural and urban areas so that they are able to access a modern quality education which is inclusive and accessible;
 - Is oriented toward improving knowledge and entrepreneurial skills of youth so that they are able to participate in economic, social and political development processes; and
 - Foments character and civic behaviour, ensuring healthy lifestyle, promoting democratic culture, ethics and morality in schools in order to complement cognitive development of youth.
2. Raise awareness about the use of information and communication technology for youth and society in order to encourage the use of modern technology. It is also necessary to raise awareness about the importance of education in the community to prevent the habit of not sending children to schools.

3. Develop and strengthen public service management and increase the capacity of human resources that are adequate in the area of education and training; give attention to the well-being of education personnel, especially in rural areas.
4. Develop school infrastructures (facilities, materials, equipment including library and laboratory), which is adequate to support an effective learning environment in both rural and urban areas.

5.2 Youth and Healthy Lifestyle

5.2.1 Current Situation

The National Strategic Development Plan 2011-2030 states that good health is essential to quality of life. Children and young people deserve to have good access to health services, nutritious food and adequate hygiene in order to take care of their health. Medical treatment for all is a fundamental right that is enshrined in the Constitution of Timor-Leste. The government has made notable progress in the health sector, especially progress in the area of child and young people's health. The rate of treatment for common illnesses has reached 78% and mothers who have had antenatal care now stand at 80%. Treatment for tuberculosis patients has also reached 89% as per the 2013 data. Fertility rate was less than 7.8% in 2003 and it has been further reduced to 5.7% in 2010.⁸

Even though the Government has achieved progress in all these areas, challenges in the health sector prevail, especially regarding the health of children and young people. Timor-Leste is a country that has the highest number of child-bearing

⁸National Strategic Development Plan 2011 – 2030

adolescents in Southeast Asia— one that is even higher than in Indonesia and Thailand. The fertility rate of young women aged 15-19 is 51 per 1,000⁹. The Demographic and Health Survey confirms that amongst young women aged 20-24, 24% said they gave birth before they turned 20. This means that one in every four young women becomes a mother during adolescence. It is important to note that young women from rural areas give birth earlier than those who live in urban areas. Dili has the lowest percentage and Oecusse has the highest percentage of young mothers. Young women giving birth earlier in life is more likely to occur in poor families and for young women who have a low level of education.

Young women who get pregnant and give birth early in life face bigger risks than mothers who conceive and give birth later. These risks include death of the baby, premature deliveries, great difficulties during labour and the death of the mothers. Survey data showed that the rate of mothers aged 15-19 who died due to birth related complications is two times higher than for mothers aged 20-24¹⁰. The rates of preterm birth, low birth weight and asphyxia are higher among the children of adolescents, all of which increase the chance of death and of future health problems for the baby. From 1000 children who were born of mothers under 20 years old, there were 103 children who died before reaching the age of 5.^{11A}

⁹Table 4.1 p 49, in Resent Fertility, Statistic National Department (DNE) [Timor-Leste], Ministry of Finance [Timor-Leste], and ICF Macro. 2010. Timor-Leste Demography and Health Survey 2009-10. Dili, Timor-Leste: NSD [Timor-Leste] and ICF Macro.

¹⁰Maternal Mortality rate for mothers aged 15-19 is 1,037 per 100,000 compared to the rate of 534 per 100,000 for mothers aged 20-24. See Mortality Monography: Timor-Leste Household and Population Census 2010, National Directorate of Statistics (DNE) and United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA, Table C-1, p 56

¹¹National Department of Statistics, Ministry of Finance, and ICF Macro, 2010. Timor-Leste Demography and Health Survey 2009-10: Keys Results

malnourished mother is at high risk of giving birth to a low weight-born baby who will be prone to growth failure during infancy and early childhood, and be at increased risk of morbidity and early death. Adolescents are at risk because their biological and psychological condition does not allow them to best carry a pregnancy and give birth. When looking at the link between early pregnancies and education, it is found that these mothers are often under pressure to abandon their studies and they are less likely to return to school after giving birth or stay in school during pregnancy. They and their parents also receive social pressure from the community to continue having more children. This will impact the ability of adolescent mothers to pursue an education, which has long term implications with regard to their future employment opportunities.

When children grow up and become adolescents, their nutritional needs increase. When they lack adequate nutrition intake, their growth and development (physical, cognitive and psychological) will be impacted. As a result, Timor-Leste is now confronted with a big challenge of malnutrition among its youth population. Three nutrition surveys undertaken in 2003, 2009 and 2010, and the nutritious food survey of 2013 all demonstrate that there is a reduction in underweight prevalence from 37.7% in 2003 to 24.8% in 2013. However, anaemia prevalence increased from 31.5% in 2003 to 38.9% in 2013 in children between the ages of 11 to 16. Surveys demonstrate that 55% of children in 2003 were underweight (measuring weight and height). There are 28% of young people within the age range of 15-19 and 20-29 who do not have a normal weight¹². When they do not have a normal

of youth. Dili, Timor-Leste; NSD and ICF Macro, p 7.

¹² DHS 2003, DHS 2009-10, Food and Nutrition Survey 2013 – data from TLDHS 2003 recalculate and convert using WHO 2006 Child Growth Standard for comparison and TLDHS 2009/10 and TLFNS 2013 (Source for

weight, they run out of energy quickly, which impacts their work productivity. They are also much more likely to frequently get sick. This situation is compounded in young people with anaemia and iron deficiency. There is a total of 21% of young women aged 15-29 who are suffering from anaemia or lack of iron¹³. The lack of iron contributes to feeling fatigued, as well as weakens the immune system rendering individuals more susceptible to infections and diseases.

Common diseases that frequently affect the community are: acute respiratory disease, diarrhoea and pneumonia. There are also contagious diseases that preoccupy all people such as: tuberculosis, dengue, hepatitis, sexually transmitted diseases such as HIV/AIDS.

Currently, young women and men continue to face the risk of HIV/AIDS infection. The first case of HIV was reported in 2003. HIV/AIDS cumulative case records from 2003 to 2014 show a total number of 484 infected people, of which 76 are males and 65 are females between the ages 15 and 24. From the total number of HIV/AIDS infected people, 51 have already died (EIS 2014). However, the time of infection for those infected by HIV/AIDS cannot be determined: people may live with HIV undetected for many years before they are diagnosed as HIV positive. As a result, many young people might be infected but they are unaware that they have contracted the virus. The spread of HIV is on the rise among young people. Half of young women and two third of young men aged 15-29 have received information related to AIDS but there is very limited knowledge about how to protect themselves from HIV. It was found that 40% of un-married

conversion estimates:

<http://www.who.int/nutgrowthdb/database/countries/tls/en/>)

¹³Recalculate from Tabela 12.10: Nutritional Situation of Women, Timor-Leste DHS 2009-10, p 166.

young men are sexually active¹⁴ and only 14% of un-married young men 15-29 reported having used a condom the last time they had sexual intercourse¹⁵. The cause of lack of knowledge about HIV is actually related to various challenges young people face in their daily lives.

In terms of non-communicable diseases, it can be observed that many young people in Timor-Leste have an unhealthy lifestyle, consuming food with too much salt and fat and little engaging in physical activity. They smoke tobacco and consume alcohol and as a consequence, suffer from obesity and stress, which contributes to an 80% increased incidence of common non-communicable diseases such as cardiovascular, diabetes, cancer, chronic respiratory diseases and mental illness. (NCD Risk factor survey 2014)

According to the data from the Global Youth Tobacco Survey (GYTS), 66% of young men and 24% of young women consume tobacco. The National Survey on Risk Factors for Non-communicable Diseases 2014 also shows that 35.5% of young men and 1.6% of young women consume alcohol.

Additionally, 3.3% of young men and 3.8% of young women do not consume adequate quantities of fruits and vegetables. The prevalence of processed food consumption with high salt content is of 22.45% for young men and 7.2% for young women (NCD risk factor Survey 2014).

It should also be acknowledged that the percentage of physical inactivity among the youth population is increasing in the country: 17.9% for young men and 22.2% for young women. Overweight prevalence is of 2.4% in young men and 16.7% in young women (NCD risk Factor Survey 2014).

¹⁴Youth Reproductive Health: Quantitative and qualitative analysis TL, UNFPA, 2009

¹⁵Timor-Leste 2009–10 Demography and health Survey: Key Results on Youth, p 5

The prevalence of mental illness also continues to increase in our country, caused by genetic factors, stress, trauma, domestic violence, drug addictions, malnutrition and other psychological factors. All this strongly contributes to increasing incidences of common mental illnesses such as psychosis, schizophrenia, mental retardation, suicide attempts, depression and others. Cumulative data show that until 2015, there were 158 young men and 194 young women who were suffering from mental illness. (EIS Report 2015)

Preventative measures can be taken to mitigate the rise of these non-communicable diseases through the promotion of healthy lifestyles among youth that includes stopping smoking, stopping alcohol consumption, promotion of regular physical activity, consumption of healthy food in order to reduce obesity and stress. Other preventive measures include regular visits to health facilities to have medical check-ups and to have early treatment of any disease to reduce further complications and morbidity rates.

Estimated data from WHO for death caused by traffic accidents per 100,000 shows 19 deaths due to traffic accidents. This figure represents a very high percentage of accidents compared to other countries in the South East Asia region: Timor-Leste ranks second after Thailand. (Global status survey on road safety 2013)

Considering the impact of the various risky behaviours detailed above it is crucial to implement and enforce preventive measures to contribute to the reduction of number of death and injury caused by traffic accident. In addition, we need to ensure young people comply with regulations which have been established in our country such as the use of helmets, the use of seat belts, reducing speed and abstaining from alcohol consumption when driving cars and motorbikes.

In the Youth Conferences that were held in 13 Municipalities, young people identified and analysed the health problems their peers are facing and it was agreed that persistent health challenges experienced by youth are strongly linked to Government policy and program implementation. Young people identified the lack of facilities and lack of health workers' knowledge about the health needs of youth which was confirmed by the Ministry of Health stating that the Ministry itself lacks the workforce to meet the targets set out in its Health Strategic Plan 2011-2030. Moreover, young people observed that youth health problems are significantly linked to poverty, insufficient economic capacity, no access to employment, and malnutrition among young people. They noted that youth health problems are also strongly linked to the attitude, situation and behaviours of young people themselves. Examples include tobacco consumption especially cigarettes, stress and depression, risky sexual behaviours (*ransu livre*), lack of knowledge about reproductive health, lack of family education, ignorance of how to prevent sexually transmitted diseases, being ashamed to speak about their sickness, consumption of NAPSA (Narcotics, Psychotropic and Addictive Substance), indiscriminate/undiscerning use of technology, and early pregnancy. Social norms also many a time pave the way to various illnesses affecting youth, including the lack of family education, the *barlake/dowry* cultural system, the perception that discussing sex is taboo and the acceptance of drunken behaviour in the community.

5.2.2 Goals and Strategic Interventions

a. Goals

Timor-Leste's youth live healthy lifestyles and are able to access youth-friendly and quality health services. Young people themselves become promoters of healthy living.

b. Strategic Interventions

1. Develop capacity and health facilities to provide youth-friendly service and medical advice in health posts, in schools, in youth centres, in religious centres and through the means of information communication technology.
2. Promote education about the concept of a family to parents and educators in relation to adolescence development.
3. Provide education and disseminate information about sexual reproductive health, including about HIV/AIDS to young people in the communities and in schools in cooperation with Youth Associations and/or Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO).
4. Encouraging the development of healthy mind-sets and skills of youth for healthy lifestyles by promoting their participation in physical and sport education activities.
5. Develop the mechanisms to control and regulate the access, use and consumption of NAPSA for youth in cooperation with Youth Associations and/or Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO).
6. Promote participation of youth in health policy/programme development, which includes mental health, and increase adult and youth awareness about prevention of communicable and non-communicable diseases,

7. Increase youth organizations' capacity to influence decision makers to give attention to the situation of youth health.

5.3 Youth and Employment and Employability

5.3.1 Current Situation

Overall, the economic situation in Timor-Leste continues to improve, even though it faces challenges related to inflation – but economic growth shows positive signs with double digits figures. The government is now implementing significant infrastructure development in order to lay the foundation for development of the non-oil sectors. Equipped with vital skills and knowledge, young people would have opportunities for productive and remunerative employment in infrastructure projects, in the growing service sector and in overseas jobs. However, due to the low absorptive capacity of the labour market and competition from migrant workers, opportunities even for skilled young people are lacking. The agricultural and service sector in Timor-Leste are the largest contributors to employment in absolute terms, while the oil and gas sector employ relatively few people.

According to the Labour Force Survey 2013, the unemployment rate (21.9%) for young people aged 15-24 is high, a large proportion of those being young men. Youth unemployment rate is higher than rates in the general population: as age increases, the risk of unemployment decreases. There are a total of 22,100 young men and women who are employed (11.1%). More than 6,000 young people are identified as unemployed (21.9%). The number of unemployed youth is disaggregated as follows: young men

(4,300 or 25.3%), young women (1,900 or 16.7%). This definition of unemployment describes young people, who are actively seeking employment. Thus, those who are not in search of jobs are not considered to be unemployed. Finding employment opportunity is quite difficult for young people in rural areas: available opportunities are not accessible to all. Finding jobs opportunities is particularly difficult for young women and for young people with deficiency, a situation also true in urban areas.

The number of young people who are not in education, employment or training (Not in Education, Employment or Training/NEET) is more than forty eight thousand (48,000). Most of them are in Dili (13,000), Baucau (5,000) and Bobonaro (5,000). When looking at NEET, there are more young women (26,000) than young men (22,000).¹⁶The situation of young people who are seeking jobs without success and who are not in education or training has become a great concern to the State. High levels of youth un(der)employment and lag time before finding employment can lead to, or are a contributing factor to frustration. In combination with added pressure from the family, peers and society, it can lead to young people engaging in risky behaviours with detrimental consequences for them as well as society.

In the analysis of the case of youth employment and employability, young people from 65 administrative posts who participated in Municipal Youth Conferences raised several important causes. These causes have many similarities across all municipalities. The first cause they identified is about *inputs* for employment creation and employability which include: the government not providing incentives for

¹⁶ Labour Force Survey in Timor-Leste, 2013, from SEPFOPE, Ministry of Finance, General Directorate of Statistics

youth's economic activities, the lack of employment opportunities, the lack of confidence to compete with other workers, young people having insufficient capital to start their own businesses, the lack of creativity from young people, the low level of skills to compete for jobs, inadequate quality of teaching and the great distance to training centres.

Young people also discussed other causes that are linked to government policies, including the disconnect between the education policy and the labour market, a school curriculum that doesn't strengthen self-reliance in students, a weak labour law without adequate protection of workers, a lack of investment in productive sectors, and the dependency of the economy on the oil and gas sector.

When it comes to the quality of government services, young people highlighted the following: young people do not have information about employment and training opportunities; young people in *sucos* do not have enough knowledge about how to prepare themselves for the world of work; and gender discrimination is pervasive in the job recruitment process. Young people also note that there are impeding social norms which include: early marriage, a preference to work only as a public servant, families not allowing young people to leave homes (especially women) and some young people only wanting to enjoy life and not work.

5.3.2 Goals and Strategic Interventions

a. Goals

Young men and women, including youth with disabilities have equal opportunities to increase their employment skills, are able to employ themselves, have employment opportunities and are able to demonstrate good performance in the work place.

b. Strategic Interventions

1. Increase opportunities and resources so that young people can practice their skills and knowledge and create more opportunities for decent work for young women and men in rural and urban areas.
2. Improve and further develop formal and non-formal education systems with the objective of increasing labour market responsive knowledge and skillsets and fostering youth entrepreneurial skills.
3. Increase financial and human resource capacity of youth organisations and/or non-governmental organisations that are working with or for youth to provide youth entrepreneurship promotion programmes.
4. Strengthen laws and policies to protect young workers within the country and establish cooperation with overseas institutions to protect youth labourers who are working overseas.

5.4 Youth and Civic Participation

5.4.1 Current Situation

Participation promotes the well-being and development of young people. Effective youth participation in turn enriches democratic processes, as their active participation helps improve the provision of government services that affect young people's daily lives. The need for young women and men's involvement and participation was already evident during the time of struggle for self-determination with the spirit of participatory and active volunteerism on various fronts.

At the time of independence, in order to strengthen the involvement of youth and encourage their participation in strengthening the independence process, the government established laws and policies, including the Community Leaders Election Law establishing the mechanisms to allow the participation of a young woman and a young man as youth representatives in every *Suco* Council. Government resolution no. 23 of 18 November 2010 established the Youth Parliament Program to provide a space for the exercise of democracy, which is independent and impartial, promotes youth participation and raises young people's awareness of their rights and responsibilities as citizens. The political parties also have youth organizations, which elect their own leadership, work towards strengthening civic education, promote voters' education and foster a spirit of democracy among political party's youth. A provision for a youth wing is enshrined in each statute of the political parties.

As a result of the support and various collaborative partnerships that the government is forging with other entities, positive results are beginning to emerge. A survey was carried out in 2012, which showed that 83% of youth voted in the 2012 election. The same survey also asked about the youth's commitment as active citizens to solving problems in key areas of concern as identified by young people themselves. The results show that 62% of young men consider themselves highly committed, and 50% of young women responded in the same way. The survey also showed that 20% of young people were involved in community initiatives, especially in activities of the church and political parties¹⁷. The evaluation

¹⁷ Sampling from youth aged 15-29 totalling 601 persons and adopted from representatives in two sucos in 12 administrative posts located in 6 municipalities. See reference in 'footnote' below, Shiva Dhungana & Ann Adams, 2013, pp 15-16.

that was done with the members of the Youth Parliament in the period of 2010-2012 shows that members of the Youth Parliament are more active in church activities as well as in community sport activities.

Another survey asked about the sentiment of pride of Timor-Leste. The survey shows that 80% of youth are proud of the existing political system and the implementation of the system. 80% of young people said that they are proud of the history of the country and 62% said that they are proud of its culture¹⁸. According to yet another survey, there are 14% of young women and men aged 17-24 who are involved in many activities organized by political parties in their community. The same survey shows that 16% of youth report ready to change their votes in the next elections if they do not receive enough attention from political parties¹⁹. The data indicates that access to information is a major constraint to youth participation. There are 36% of young men and 41% of young women aged 15-29, who do not read newspapers, listen to the radio nor watch national and Indonesian television. The District Youth Forum organized by CNJTL and SFCG also noted that *Suco* Council Youth Members do not seem to have knowledge about their tasks and responsibilities as youth representatives in the *suco* Councils. At the same time, Council leadership resists the active engagement of young people in the decision making process²⁰.

Shiva Dhungana & Ann Adams, 2013, Youth, Democracy & Peace building in Timor-Leste: a Joint Baseline Study of Democracy and Development in Action through Media and Empowerment (DAME), funded by the 10th European Development Fund & Youth Engagement to Promote Stability (YEPS), funded by United States Agency for International Development, p 25.

¹⁸ Leach, Michael, "Longitudinal change in East Timorese tertiary student attitudes to national identity and nation building, 2002-2010," *Bijdragen tot de Taal Landen Volkenkunde*, Vol. 168, no. 2-3, (2012),p 247

¹⁹Survey IRI Timor-Leste Poll, 2014

²⁰Report of District Youth Forum 2014, CNJTL and SFCG

From the data that has been presented, it is noted that youth civic engagement and participation is not yet strong in community activities and their participation is also not strong in the areas that most affect their daily lives, such as education and health. In the 13 Municipalities' youth conferences, young people expressed that major obstacles to youth civic engagement and participation were: the lack of human resources and facilities to promote participation, the limited support to infrastructure for social communication, existing youth centres not having enough facilities to support participation and youth engagement, the great distance of youth centres from the homes of young people, the low quality education and education facilities, the limited ability of youth to share information, the weak economic capacity of youth and the non-existence of information and communication technology in all places.

The second major obstacle identified by young people is related to cultural attitudes of families and the wider community as well as to young people's own behaviours, impeding youth's engagement and participation. These causes include the lack of trust from those who are older, the traditional culture of communicating and educating within the family not giving a voice to young people, young people themselves sometimes ignoring participation opportunities, a perceived lack of concern for the well-being of the community, a focus sometimes on solely earning money, at times waiting for adults to organize things for them, and a lack of encouragement from adult people.

5.4.2 Goals and Strategic Interventions

a. Goals

The young people of Timor-Leste, guided by a spirit of solidarity, participate actively and constructively in the development process at all levels, and value their culture.

b. Strategic Interventions

1. Increase access to multimedia information from community centres up to municipal level.
2. Promote youth civic participation and involvement by involving them more in the process of planning, implementation and evaluation of policies and programmes that affect their lives.
3. Promote better communication between generations in order to strengthen understanding about historical values and cultural diversity.
4. Strengthen initiatives that promote volunteerism.
5. Adopt an inclusive approach to enable young people to express their ideas and talents, including young people with disabilities.
6. Create and develop learning spaces to raise awareness about civic values and to develop leadership potential and talents of youth.
7. Further promote development that is sensitive to gender and to people with disabilities in all sectors.
8. Develop the institutional capacity of youth organizations and other organizations that are working with or for the youth in order to ensure civic values promotion and civic participation in local community, at the national and international level.

5.5 Youth and Violence and Crime

5.5.1 Current Situation

The life of young people is the continuation of the life of their parents who have suffered from violence and crime for many years under the colonial rule, a suffering sometimes also inflicted by their very family and community. Violent events that happened in the past affect the way adults approach young people, whether at school, at home or in the community.

The government of Timor-Leste together with the international community, non-governmental organizations and youth groups have all done their part to break the cycle of violence and crime within the society. These efforts include the creation of Timor-Leste Commission for Reception, Truth and Reconciliation, the development of basic infrastructure, the implementation of law and order, the establishment and development of a judicial system, and the establishment and maintenance of a democratic process to ensure political participation of all people in the nation-building process and in the strengthening of the State. The government strengthened the capacity of the National Police of Timor-Leste, especially by creating and institutionalizing community police. This initiative is a mean to prevent and respond to violent and criminal actions that occur in the community. Other programmes were also initiated on civic education, social assistance and entertainment, especially initiatives by youth groups to maintain peace in the community.

The development efforts that the government and several organizations implemented have resulted in the continued reduction of the number of violent incidents since 2008. The Early Warning and Early Response (EWER) system established by the NGO *Belun* that is being used to monitor

public conflict and violence has demonstrated that the number of incidents which occurred in 2012 has been reduced by half compared to 2009 (the number of incidents went down from 14 incidents in each administrative post to an average level of 7²¹). The security situation continues to improve, as shown through the evidence collected in surveys carried out in 2008 (World Bank²²) and 2009 (Asia Foundation²³). The survey of the World Bank shows that 92% of respondents said that they feel safe in their community and that their properties are also secure. The survey of Asia Foundation also shows that half of the population believes the situation in their area is very good. However, the violence committed by youth continues to be a concern. The *Situation Analysis* Report of *Belun* from January to August 2014 shows that the total number of young people who provoked violence makes up almost half (211) of the total number of incidents of 517.²⁴ This number continues to be a concern to all people.

Young people come in contact with the justice system as victims, witnesses, because they are in conflict with the law or as part of a justice process such as a custody battle. A report from the Vulnerable People Unit (VPU) shows that from 2008 to 2012, the type of crime young people were involved in includes theft (23 cases), fighting (18 cases) and sexual assault (12 cases). Another report mentions 26 cases of assault or murder involving young people, 11 cases of theft and 9

²¹ BELUN's EWER June 2012-September 2012 Potential Conflict Analysis.

²²The result of national survey carried out on the Justice Program for the poor by the World Bank notes that 'the perspective of youth about faith and community conflict', Justice for the Poor Briefing Note Vol 5, Issue 1, June 2010, p 2. Adopted from youth situation analysis document

²³ Asia Foundation Timor-Leste, 2013, Public Opinion Survey, September, p 2. Adopted from youth situation analysis document

²⁴The calculation is based on Situation Analysis by Belun from January to August 2014 adopted from www.belun.tl

cases of youth fighting/aggression.²⁵

It was found that of the criminal cases that were presented to the tribunal and were monitored by JSMP from March to April 2013, there were 40 criminal cases involving children. Cases included murder, physical assault, and rape, maltreatment of children and sexual abuse of minors. Among these 40 cases, sexual abuse of a minor is the most common crime with a total number of 27 registered cases at the tribunal, followed by physical assault (5 cases) and rape. The majority of children who are victims are aged 15 and below and most of the victims are female. In all these cases, there was a family connection between the perpetrators (close or distant) and the child victims. During the JSMP monitoring for the cases that occurred, most cases against children happened in Dili (12 cases) followed by Ermera (8) and Liquica (7). The smallest number of cases happened in Manufahi (1) and Ainaro (2). From these cases, many perpetrators had been sentenced and many had been imprisoned. When analysing the cases that have been presented to the tribunal, it can be deduced that the number of reported cases is small compared to the actual figures, as many other cases go unreported.²⁶

Many women continue to be impacted by different forms of violence, which take on physical, sexual, psychosocial, emotional and economic forms. This kind of violence occurs mostly within the household (domestic violence) and happens due to various reasons such as alcohol abuse, especially from men or husbands. The 2009-2010 Demographic and Health Survey found that 60% of married women suffer from violence when their husbands abuse alcohol compared to 26%

²⁵ Situation Analysis of Children in Timor-Leste 2012-UNICEF, p149

²⁶ Children's Access to Formal Justice in Timor-Leste: A Status Report, 2013, JSMP, p.44-25

of married women whose husbands do not abuse alcohol²⁷. The report by *Belun* on public violence incidents also shows the link between the influence of alcohol abuse and violence. The Situational Review Report for the month of November 2013 indicates that 26% of public violence that occurred in the community was linked to alcohol abuse²⁸. Easy access to alcohol, combined with high youth unemployment and a lack of positive activities may be the causes for alcohol abuse.

Most young people in the age groups of 15-19, 20-24, and 25-29 are migrating. The motivation for young people to migrate are to continue studies, to follow the family or spouses, to obtain training opportunity, for the purpose of job seeking, for the purpose of moving away from poverty in the rural areas, for the purpose of seeking entertainment and for some, the purpose is to moving away from the violence that they face. National statistics data shows that more than 12% of Timor-Leste's population are involved in internal migration. Whether they are aware or not, their migration behaviours make them vulnerable to urban violence, crime and sexual diseases. The most likely destination for internal migration is Dili. Destinations of external migration are principally Indonesia, Portugal, Australia, England and Northern Ireland. In the urban areas such as Dili and municipal capitals and in migrations destinations overseas, there is violence occurring amongst young Timorese and between young Timorese and people from other countries. In Indonesia for example, there was the case of violent incidents in 2013 resulting in the death of some 3 Timorese students²⁹. The emergence of various forms of delinquency is often a reaction to exclusion and marginalization in urban areas and unresolved hatred from the

²⁷ Survey DHS 2009-2010

²⁸ Belun Situation Review, November 2013 EWER Report

²⁹ Data from Regulatory Commission of Martial Arts (KRAM)

past, compounded by urban population growth, unequal access government services and various existing conflicts.

Many young people join martial art organisations, especially young men. There are currently around 15 to 20 Martial Art Groups. Some martial art organisations have a bad reputation in the public and the community. There is a strong negative sentiment about the martial art's influence on the lives of young people. A public opinion survey done by Asia Foundation in 2013 illustrated that many people have a negative perception of martial art groups and see them as the cause for instability and insecurity. In that survey, 61% of respondents said that martial art groups do not provide benefits to their community. This is contrasted by 16% of respondents who said that martial art groups provide benefits to the community. The report by *Belun* also demonstrated that the number of violent incidents involving martial art groups continue to diminish. Within a period of 8 months, starting from January to August 2014, there were only two reported incidents initiated by martial arts group members³⁰. It is difficult to identify with accuracy the cause of the high level of violence of the members of martial art groups. Potential causes are the problems within the family, dispute over land, sport competition, personal problems between two young people or a combination of all of these problems.

In the youth conferences held in 13 municipalities, young people analysed the determining factors for youth involvement in crime and violence. It was found that the larger cause may be linked to existing policy and legislation, especially because of their implementation, as well as linked to existing social norms within society. Looking at the overarching policy frameworks and legislation, it was noted that there is a need for improvement of the quality of

³⁰ Calculation is based on Situation Analysis of Belun from the month of January to August 2014, adopted from www.belun.tl Calculation

education, in particular in relation to the professionalism of teachers, who lack proper training and therefore are not able to instil a sense of citizenship in youth. Young people also noted that even if there is an education policy and plan in place, there is no comprehensive quality control mechanism for its implementation. Furthermore, young people observed that law and order measures are not fully implemented yet. In assessing the enforcement of the law, they also noted unjust implementation as well as challenges such as the lack of a law for juvenile justice that could respond to young people in conflict with the law. In terms of social norms, young people observed that the occurrence of violence and crime is often caused by a weak sense of mutual trust. There is a high level of hatred among people, not accepting that others hold different ideas, and there is a lack of knowledge and awareness of how to resolve their problems in a peaceful manner. They also noted that violent behaviour occurred because of people's experience of violence in the family, and negative influences from their social environment. Drugs and drunken behaviours also are noted as important factors that contribute to violence and crime in the society.

The second major cause they highlighted is the economic challenges young people are facing. Many young people have not found jobs because of the lack of employment opportunities. Due to their families' vulnerable economic situation, young people miss out on seizing available opportunities. This situation is linked to a combination of lack of skills and knowledge, social alienation, and eroding family support structures. In this situation, they sometimes resort to violence.

5.5.2 Goals and Strategic Interventions

a. Goals

The young people of Timor-Leste possess a strong spirit, a sense of responsibility and social sensitivity, and are able to create a peaceful environment through the strengthening and application of democratic principles.

b. Strategic Interventions

1. Increase the capacity of youth organizations to become facilitators of conflict transformation and promote the practice of maintaining peace in the community.
2. Create space and opportunity that can facilitate young people's initiatives and promote youth creativity in order to strengthen and enhance sentiments of social solidarity, the spirit of volunteerism and national unity.
3. In accordance with the principle of *Sovereign Democratic State*, reinforce the justice system through developing child protection laws and fomenting awareness around the importance of compliance to the laws related to youth in order to maintain peace and stability in society.
4. Create a secure space for young people, especially young women, to support them and to keep them away from the vicious cycle of violence.
5. Promote positive relationships among youth and their parents and family. This can provide a significant influence in young people's confidence and behaviour. This influence must start from young children and continue through the stages of youth and

adulthood. The risk of violence will increase more from negative relationship elements in the family environment.

PART – 6

**POLICY IMPLEMENTATION AND
RESOURCE MOBILIZATION**

**6.1 The Implementation of the National
Youth Policy**

Central to a good implementation of the National Youth Policy is the young people themselves. Regular consultation with the youth in order to understand their needs, challenges and expectations is an important means to ensure successful implementation of this National Youth Policy. In addressing their needs and expectations, most resources will come from the State, as stipulated in the Constitution of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste (Section 19, Paragraph 2). Hence, successful and efficient implementation of this National Youth Policy in achieving its objectives requires a multi-sectorial collaboration and coordination between sectors such as with health, education, agriculture, fisheries, commerce and industry, tourism, science and technology, environment, cooperatives, gender equality and other relevant sectors. It is also equally important to build collaboration with donor agencies, civil society organisations, religious groups, private sector and universities as a means to accelerate progress in the process of youth development as defined in the present National Youth Policy. The above-mentioned framework sets

a position for government agency or body as a leading sector for youth development.

The implementation of the National Youth Policy also requires significant commitment in all political and economic aspects from all level of the Government, within the territory. The young people themselves should be the key partners for the organization or institution implementing this NYP. Accordingly, the State considers young men and women as its asset and agent of social, political and economic change, not only as an object for development.

6.2 National Action Plan for Youth

The National Youth Policy is a framework and provides a general vision to guide youth development in Timor-Leste. But to contextualize its implementation, a National Plan of Action needs to be elaborated, which would be comprehensive, holistic and define clearly the role of agencies and implementing partners in the development of the youth sector.

6.3 Resource Mobilization

Investing in young women and men is a strategic response for the development challenges that Timor-Leste is currently facing. The kind of investment that the government can make is to allocate resources for the implementation of this policy. Accordingly, the successful implementation of the National Youth Policy in achieving its objectives also relies on the ability of government and civil society organizations in mobilizing resources from various parties, both within the country and from external parties (overseas). Critical and key resources required in the implementation of youth

development programmers are human and financial resources, as well as material and technical ones.

The government is committed to providing financial resources that will be reflected in the annual State General Budget (OGE) to implement the National Youth Policy, subject to available financial capacity. It is also noted that the government will strengthen and widen the cooperation with international donors and private sector to mobilize resources to support the youth development programme.

Therefore coordination is an important factor to guarantee the involvement of all parties, the Government (central and local), development partners, civil society and the private sector to collaborate and actively contribute in the youth development process. Thus, this policy recognizes that the implementation of the Policy's strategies is an inter-sectorial issue. However, one lead agency responsible for youth, with specific funding, needs to lead the implementation, coordination and oversee the process of inter-sectorial integration.

6.3.1 Human Resources

To improve the human resource capacity to implement National Youth Policy, the following strategies will be considered:

- The government will manage and improve human resource capacity through the state agency responsible for youth development using various trainings, recruiting new employees who demonstrate a good work ethic, possessing skills and competences suited for work in the youth development sector.
- Higher Education as well as Civil Society groups will provide and/or publish credible data and information

periodically, based on the research on the youth situation and the impact of youth development programme.

- Partnerships with organizations working with/for youth will be strengthened, so will the capacity building of managers of the organizations active in the areas of organizational and financial management and networking development, as well as the capacity to function independently.

6.3.2 Financial Resources

- The government and the people of Timor-Leste should finance and/or invest in youth development programmes.
- The Central Government and/or Local Government should allocate funds for the areas of youth development within the State Budget annually, including the allocation of the budget to organizations involved in the implementation of this Policy.
- The Ministry or Secretary of State with a relevant role to the youth sector, as well as the Local Government should mobilize other resources to support youth development programmes
- Central government, Local government, Civil Society and Development Partners will collaborate to oversee and ensure transparency and accountability of fund allocation and implementation of the youth development programmes/activities aligned with the National Youth Policy.
- The government will promote initiatives and encourage the private sector to support the implementation of National Youth Policy.

6.3.3 Material and Technical Resources

- The government will prepare and provide adequate technical equipment to foster youth activities and improve service quality in the reproductive health sector, formal education, vocational training and leisure activities.
- The Government, in collaboration with all development agencies/partners, should support and facilitate technical assistance relevant to the implementation of strategies as set out in the National Youth Policy.

PART – 7

INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK

7.1 Supportive Bodies

The objectives of the National Youth Policy can be achieved in an effective and efficient manner through enhanced multi-sectorial and inter-ministerial coordination, including with development partners, civil society, religious groups, as well as the private sector, with active participation from all the people of Timor-Leste. Hence, the Government should establish and develop appropriate mechanisms to implement the National Youth Policy.

7.1.1 State Body that is Responsible for Youth

The State body responsible for Youth shall be a Central Government body responsible for establishing, assessing and revising the development of policies in the youth sector, including the National Youth policy, designing and executing priority programmes, and issuing general guidelines on youth

development in Timor-Leste. Other public institutions such as the Government (Central and Local), Development Partners, Civil Society and Private Sector are also responsible for supervising and coordinating the National Youth Policy implementation and/or youth development programmes.

7.1.2 National Council for Youth Development

There shall be an inter-ministerial entity called the National Council for Youth Development (NCYD) led by the Prime Minister of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste. Members of this group shall be selected from the Council of Ministers comprising of relevant Ministries or Secretaries of State that are working in the areas of youth development such as Ministry or Secretary of State mandated for the youth sector, tourism, industry, cooperatives, education, health, gender equality, vocational training and employment, agriculture and fisheries, as well as the Presidency of the Timor-Leste's National Youth Council (CNJTL).

This body shall function as a coordination forum between relevant parties and its main role shall be to develop and integrate inter-ministerial agenda, programmes and projects responding to concerns and aspirations of young people, towards the successful implementation of the National Youth Policy.

The National Council for Youth Development (NCYD) shall also have the mandate to assess and hold to account relevant bodies involved in the implementation of the National Youth Policy.

7.1.3 Youth Associations and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO)

Associations that are led by young women or men with the mission to improve the talents, skills and knowledge of their peers and/or do advocacy for the interest of young people are an important component to ensure the successful implementation of this Policy. Non-state organisations, either at the community or municipal levels, as well as the national level, whose missions are youth empowerment, advocacy, research, and service provision, are considered key players in a successful implementation of this Policy. All non-state organizations including those led by youth could be both implementing agents as well as beneficiaries in the implementation process of this Policy. Hence, available resources should be allocated to youth associations such as Youth Centres, youth organisations associated to religious organisations and other types of organisations. Likewise, the resources have to be equally allocated to other non-state organizations in the achievement or implementation of youth development programmes and projects, including monitoring and evaluation of benefits to the youth themselves and the society or communities they belong to.

7.1.4 National Council of Youth of Timor-Leste (CNJTL)

The National Youth Council for Timor-Leste, previously known as *Loriku Aswain* Youth Presidium, transformed itself in 2002 into an umbrella organization for youth (not individuals) in Timor-Leste. CNJTL has a firm position as a non-governmental organisation, nonpartisan and not for profit.

The National Youth Policy considers CNJTL as its key partner for the implementation of the National Youth Policy.

Its important role is to monitor and evaluate the implementation of National Youth Policy, the result of which will be presented at the forum of the National Youth Development Council (NYDC). Thus, the President of CNJTL shall represent this umbrella organisation in the National Youth Development Council (NYDC). Without prejudice to the role of other bodies, CNJTL also has a role to guide and provide leadership to its member youth organizations in the way they execute the budgetary support received from government and other development partners so that the principle of good governance is respected.

To be effective in its mandate, the government (central), through the state organs responsible for the youth sector will provide annual grants to CNJTL, subject to existing financial capacity, and CNJTL in turn will report back to the state organ responsible for youth on the execution of the grants.

7.1.5 Private Sector

Private sector institutions are important partners to promote the implementation of the National Youth Policy. There is a high expectation to create employment for young people, aid in producing marketable skills that are relevant to the labour market, to finance youth programmes and projects, as well as take part in other development activities within the community.

7.1.6 International Agencies

Multilateral, bilateral donor agencies and international NGOs shall be potential development partners in the design of youth development programmes and projects, in line with the National Youth Policy. Their readiness to provide funds, to put in place capacity building programmes, to facilitate technical assistance, information, and networks are

contributing to the broad implementation of the National Youth Policy. They shall be considered as necessary partners for youth development initiatives.

7.1.7 Social Media Communication

Social media communication (print and electronic) shall be recognized as an important partner in the implementation of the National Youth Policy. There is a high expectation to educate and inform the public about the problems, expectation, and aspirations of young people, and taking stock of accomplishments and failures in response to the situation of young people. It is envisioned that the media will report on and publish the objectives, progress and results of the implementation of the National Youth Policy.

7.2 Monitoring and Evaluation

There is a need for monitoring in order to ensure that the National Youth Policy is implemented in accordance with the guidelines, objectives and principles stated in this Policy. In addition to monitoring, evaluation is needed to measure whether the National Youth Policy objectives and expected results were achieved, and draw lessons learnt from the results of the evaluation to improve the implementation of the National Youth Policy in the future. Evaluations shall be done periodically, once every two years starting from the approval of this National Youth Policy.

Monitoring and evaluation at all levels shall be considered as an essential strategy in the implementation of the National Youth Policy. Appropriate mechanisms of monitoring and evaluation need to be developed in order to systematically measure performance on a periodic basis.

Monitoring and evaluation will be carried out with the following objectives:

- Assists stakeholders to operationalize the National Youth Policy more specifically based on individual sectors or areas, as well as to develop performance indicators as a measurement for evaluation.
- Assess the level of efficiency in the use of resources for the implementation of the National Youth Policy (realisation of youth programmes and projects)
- Measure the long term impact of National Policy implementation within the entire territory.
- Contribute to the collection, analysis and update of a data base on youth development activities and programmes in Timor-Leste, to assist the relevant partners when preparing youth development plans.
- Support and strengthen Monitoring and Evaluation system in the state institutions.

7.3 The Review of the National Youth Policy

In order to account for the dynamic nature of modern societies, change is considered normal. Therefore, it shall be necessary to revise the National Youth Policy periodically, at least once every five years.

This National Youth Policy was adopted by the Council of Ministers on February 2nd, 2016 in Dili, Timor-Leste.



Suporta Husi :

