

Plan Timor-Leste

Country Strategic Plan Summary for 2007 – 2011



This document describes how Plan Timor-Leste and its partners will mobilise their various resources to protect, respect and fulfill children's rights. It provides the strategic framework for consistent and continued action from 2007 to 2011.

Timor-Leste: An Overview

Timor-Leste is located in Southeast Asia, at the eastern end of the Indonesian archipelago. The country covers almost 15,000km² of mostly rugged, mountainous terrain.

Timor-Leste has a population of approximately one million, of whom, nearly half are under 15 years old. Most people live in rural areas and are dependent on subsistence farming.

In 1999, after twenty-four years of occupation by Indonesia, which followed over four hundred years as a colony of Portugal, the people of Timor-Leste voted overwhelmingly for independence and achieved nationhood in 2002. The new country's progress was severely hampered by civil unrest in 2006 leading to an initial internal population displacement of over 100,000 people.

Many of these displaced people lived in camps in and around the capital, Dili. The camps are now closed and most have returned to their communities but work still remains to ensure that people are able to live peacefully together with their communities of return.

Key Issues Affecting Children in Timor-Leste.

Improvements have been achieved over the past few years but there are still many issues negatively affecting the children of Timor-Leste including:

- Poverty, this is widespread but most severe in rural (often highland) areas, where communities are small, geographically remote and have limited access to markets and key services.



Girls reading a local language book



Timor-Leste has a large child population, with most living in rural areas.

- Education, schools in rural areas are often hard to get to, overcrowded, ill equipped and have low teacher capacity. Literacy levels are very low and there are few books in local languages.
- Many Timorese children are underweight, malnourished, prone to diseases and do not have adequate access to clean water and healthcare.
- Child abuse affects thousands of children and includes corporal punishment, degrading treatment, physical and psychological abuse, neglect and child labour.
- Children are not usually consulted when adults make decisions, and they lack opportunities to participate in matters concerning their lives.

Plan in Timor-Leste

Plan Timor-Leste takes a child-centred rights based approach to community development that engages children, their families and communities in the development process assisting them to be active participants in their own development.

Plan has worked in Timor-Leste since 2001, initially working with children and their communities in relief and emergency activities. Since then, Plan has broadened its work with government on key areas such as pre-school curriculum, child rights, and community health and has responded to changing circumstances, providing emergency relief for internally displaced people during and after the 2006 crises and now shifting to long-term recovery and peace building.

Plan began child sponsorship in 2010 to allow for more long-term funding for long-term sustainable community programs.

Plan Timor-Leste's country goals

Plan Timor-Leste's Country Strategic Plan (2007-2011) focuses on the following six child-centred country goals.

Child protection

Understanding of child rights is very low in Timor-Leste. Plan has many awareness-raising and training initiatives that support and train communities, local child protection officers and child rights protection organisations and institutions.

Water and environmental sanitation

Plan is working with communities to build sustainable, community-managed water and sanitation services and is raising awareness of the importance of good hygiene practices including hand washing, sanitary toilet use and environmental cleanliness.

Education: Learning for transformation

Plan Timor-Leste is working with communities and government to increase enrolment in early childhood and primary education and improving education through teacher and parent training and providing facilities that create a child-friendly learning environment.



Children washing their hands from a Plan facilitated, community managed, borehole tap



Children participating in Plan's Playgroups

Emergency response and disaster risk management

Plan Timor-Leste provided emergency support in camps for displaced people through water and sanitation, child protection and education initiatives. Now that the camps are closed, Plan continues work on peace building activities and helping to reintegrate displaced people back into their communities.

Youth engagement in society

Plan Timor-Leste supports youth to increase their positive role in society through peace building, conflict resolution and reconciliation activities, including music and sports.

Youth livelihoods

Plan Timor-Leste works with young people providing opportunities to earn income through vocational, business and life skills training.

"We didn't have anything like that when we were younger. Only after Timor-Leste has gained independence, there are playgroups after school. These kids are already confident. We are grown up but we are only just starting to build our confidence"

- young female from Maurusa speaking about Plan's early childhood care and development activities.