

**HUMAN SECURITY OF BORDER COMMUNITIES IN COVALIMA,  
BOBONARO AND RAEOA, TIMOR-LESTE**

**MAPPING AND ASSESSMENT REPORT**



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# Acronyms

AIDS

Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome

BPU	Border Patrol Unit
COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease, 2019
EBF	Escola Básica Filial
GIS	Geographic Information System
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
IOM	International Organization of Migration
IPACSS	Institute for Peace and Conflict and Social Studies
RAEOA	Região Administrativa Especial Oecusse-Ambeno
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNTL	Universidade Nasional Timor Lorosa'e

## Glossary

aldeia	sub-village or community
área protegida	protected area
daya	traditional midwife
liman-badaen	community midwife
ojek	motorcycle taxi
pulsa	electricity credit
suco	village
tais	traditional handwoven textile of Timor-Leste
tara bandu	customary law

## Acknowledgements

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The IPACSS assessment team comprises Li-Li Chen (research coordinator, lead author), Elsa Pinto (team leader, lead author), Lynda-Ann Blanchard (report quality control advisor), Antero Benedito da Silva (internal team affairs and activities advisor), Camilo Almeida Ximenes (political advisor), Avelino Ribeiro Soares de Deus (financial officer), and Norberto Soares Ximenes (administration officer).

The team also recruited 60 alumni, students and faculty from the Faculty of Social Sciences at UNTL and engaged local communities as research partners in data collection and in facilitating dissemination and consultation workshops. This report could not have been validated without their participation.

## Executive summary

The border of Timor-Leste was the frontline of COVID-19 but remains under-protected and under-studied. It is crucial to understand the specific vulnerabilities, needs and service gaps of border communities to assist in future response actions.

The International Organization of Migration (IOM) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) commissioned this study on vulnerability and resilience among border communities in the municipalities of Bobonaro, Covalima and Regiao Administrativa Especial Oe-Cusse Ambeno (RAEOA), conducted by the Institute for Peace, Conflict and Social Studies at the National University of Timor-Lorosa'e (IPACSS-UNTL).

The response plans developed for the COVID-19 pandemic in Timor-Leste did not adequately take into consideration the specific needs of border communities. This study complements existing national and local plans and strategies by applying the human security approach to better understand their vulnerabilities and forms of resilience.

This study examines the issues, concerns and solutions of border communities around the seven pillars of human security – community, economic, environmental, food, health, personal and political security – in addition to education security as an eighth pillar. Key stakeholders and service providers offered their knowledge, experience and insights on these eight pillars through a granular, community-led, evidence-based assessment.

The evidence collected in this study will enable government stakeholders and policymakers to achieve a better understanding of border communities' own perspectives on their unique vulnerabilities and resilience in the context of COVID-19 and other human security issues.

The study reveals high rates of malnutrition and child marriage, the normalization of family violence and border-crossing, the neglected condition of education and health facilities and resources; vulnerable food and water sources; and anecdotal reports of health threats including respiratory disease, tuberculosis and HIV and AIDS.

The assessment reveals clear recommendations from communities as to how to address such human security concerns. Broad lessons that emerge from the study include the interdependency and highly contextual nature of human security challenges, which suggest that while good practices in one place may offer insights and ways forward, there is no one-size-fits-all solution.

Policy key
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Human security concerns in the border communities of Timor-Leste are interlinked and interdependent.</li><li>• There are varying levels of vulnerability and resilience in border villages and municipalities. Whereas some villages have limited capacity to respond to human security risks and challenges, others demonstrate greater communal resilience.</li></ul>

- Just, effective and efficient practices used in one village may not be suitable for replication in other villages, yet may provide important lessons and insights for others.

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Background

Since the COVID-19 pandemic began in early 2020, Timor-Leste's borders have been sites of contestation. The Timor-Leste government quickly tightened border controls to restrict movement and limit the spread of the virus. While strict border management may have helped to lower COVID-19 risks and protect public health, the vulnerabilities of isolated and remote border communities were also exacerbated in the midst of the pandemic, including the difficulty of accessing health care, water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) facilities and social protection, as well as life-saving information.

The COVID-19 regulations also led to reductions in border trade, which is a major economic resource for many border communities, thus restricting livelihoods. The government of Timor-Leste allocated US\$ 250,000,000, of which US\$ 150,000,000 was used to cover public administration functioning and measures related to COVID-19 based on Law No.2/2020. Additionally, the government adopted universal social protection policies and economic recovery plans to mitigate the impacts on communities. An Inter-ministerial Commission was established in February 2020 to coordinate COVID-19 measures.

However these government plans and policies failed to include the specific needs and risks of border communities. The disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on these communities has to be addressed by a more inclusive and comprehensive approach to public policy, as international organizations, such as IOM and UNICEF, have identified.

This assessment aims to provide data from border communities for policymakers and development partners to use in the design of targeted economic, social and environmental recovery policy and response. This research and assessment project envisions a comprehensive approach, with a clear gender dimension, that utilizes a human security framework: "To ensure more inclusive and comprehensive preparedness, response, and recovery plans, not only related to the COVID-19 pandemic but for any future crisis that could impact border communities and the country at large" (see Annex 5).

## 1.2 Human security approach

The human security approach takes the individual as the referent object of security. It underscores the need to consider the survival, livelihoods and dignity of individuals as the fundamental basis of national, regional and international peace and development.

Human security is a multi-sectoral and flexible concept that facilitates the sharing of experiences and analysis of the diverse challenges faced in border areas. A better understanding of the vulnerability of each group, and their diverse coping mechanisms, is key for future preparedness and response, both for COVID-19 and other potential threats that may arise.



This approach is guided by four fundamental principles:

- people-centred
- comprehensive
- context-specific
- prevention-oriented

Typically organized around seven pillars, the approach has an overarching focus on protection and empowerment, and is a useful framework to understand the specific needs of individuals and communities and to develop a step-by-step analytical process for understanding human security imperatives.

The human security approach has been criticized for gender blindness.<sup>1</sup> This assessment therefore incorporates a cross-cutting gender dimension to analyse the power inequalities, gender-based violence and barriers or injustices faced by women and girls. Critics have also pointed out that the human security approach focuses on human survival and the avoidance of risks and threats (i.e. protection), while overlooking human development and capacities.<sup>2</sup> For example, education is an essential part of human development and capacities, including for health, employment, nutrition etc. and, furthermore, is crucial to many security aspects of gender. Women's illiteracy may affect their employment, income and exercise of basic rights, such as political participation. Moreover, in the first inception workshops with border communities, education emerged as a key human security concern. For this reason, this analysis has added an eighth pillar, education, to the seven recognized pillars. While the human security approach does not aim to exhaust the full range of human needs, adding education is important to balance an inclination towards protection over empowerment.

**Box:**

Pillars of human security	
Economic security	Political security
Food security	Personal security
Health security	Environmental security
Community security	Education security*

\* added for the purpose of this study

<sup>1</sup> Parmar, Parveen K, et al, 'Need for a Gender-Sensitive Human Security Framework: Results of a quantitative study of human security and sexual violence in Djohong district, Cameroon', *Conflict and Health* vol. 8 no. 6, 2014, doi:10.1186/1752-1505-8-6.

<sup>2</sup> Sen, Amartya, 'Basic Education and Human Security', Background paper for Basic Education and Human Security workshop, Commission on Human Security, UNICEF, Pratichi (India) Trust and Harvard University, Kolkata, 2–4 January 2002, <<https://afed.itacec.org/document/Education%20and%20Human%20Security.pdf>>, accessed 15 February 2024.

### 1.3 Context and rationale

About 6 per cent of the 1.3 million people in Timor-Leste live in the country's border areas.<sup>3</sup> The border separating Indonesia and Timor-Leste is approximately 250 km long, extending from Mota-Ain/Batugade in the north, to Salele/Mota Masin in the south, in addition to the Special Administrative Region Oecusse-Ambeno (RAEOA), a western exclave (see Figure 1).

**Figure 1: Map of Timor-Leste, with border municipalities highlighted**



Border communities live on the edges of formal states and move across borders, and can exercise rights with the limits of a state's territorial jurisdiction.<sup>4</sup> Although there are hundreds of Border Patrol Unit (BPU) personnel at immigration and customs posts, controlling border migration and defending border security, border-crossing for cultural purposes is widespread in these areas of Timor-Leste. This is specifically seen as a traditional form of border-crossing, as many community members have family and close cultural and linguistic ties across the border.

The movement of people across the border between Timor-Leste and Indonesia dates to colonial times. In the Portuguese era, the border was never settled and was under negotiation with other powers. Even after Timor-Leste became independent from Indonesia, the terrestrial boundaries have not been fully settled. For example, the legal status of Noel Besi-

<sup>3</sup> General Directorate of Statistics, United Nations Children's Fund and United Nations Population Fund, *Timor-Leste Population and Housing Census 2015: Analytical Report on Education*, GDS, UNICEF and UNFPA, Dili 2018, <[www.unicef.org/timorleste/reports/timor-leste-population-and-housing-census-2015](http://www.unicef.org/timorleste/reports/timor-leste-population-and-housing-census-2015)> accessed 15 February 2024; see also Annex 2.

<sup>4</sup> Nnadi, Dera and Chinedu Okoye, 'Border Communities, Ungoverned Spaces and Nigeria's National Security', *International Journal of Community and Cooperative Studies*, vol. 10, no. 1, 2022, pp. 30-43, doi:10.37745/ijccs.2014/vol10n13043.

Citrana in RAEOA was only settled in 2023.<sup>5</sup> No infrastructure was allowed to be built in Naktuka due to the territorial dispute, and violence and unrest have prevailed in the area.

The border passes through many remote mountainous or riverine areas, which makes it difficult for the BPU to monitor irregular migration. Although a Migration Information Data Analysis System was installed by IOM at the main crossing points in Salele and Batugade in December 2022, it is yet to be installed at smaller crossing points, making it difficult for understaffed and under-resourced BPUs to systematically track or document movement.<sup>6</sup>

Due to limited access to employment and markets, border communities largely depend on subsistence farming and informal cross-border trade as their main sources of food and income. Most consume local produce but imported cereals, as local production of the latter cannot always cover their needs. For example, in Lalawa village, Covalima, the local community mainly grows corn and cassava, but also relies on imported rice. People travel across borders to transact goods, such as cooking oil and cigarettes, which are cheaper in Indonesia.

A crucial factor impacting on economic security is education, including the extent to which students have access to and can participate in schools. Data from the 2022 census show that around 55 per cent of people aged 3–29 years attended school, while 45 per cent did not. In Covalima, of 41,239 people in this age range, only 20,134 people attended school. Secondary schools are commonly lacking in villages in the border areas of this municipality, and children who wish to continue their education need to migrate elsewhere, while some may choose to discontinue education.

People in the border areas are vulnerable to different types of health insecurities, compounded by poor accessibility of essential health services, WASH, health education and food markets. In addition, they may experience health security risks, as they are mainly reliant on unimproved sources of drinking water, such as unprotected wells, springs or other open sources. The 2022 census found that 18.6 per cent of people in rural areas rely on unimproved drinking water sources.

Data on personal insecurity are either unavailable or obscured in Timor-Leste, but lack of data does not mean people are free of risks of human trafficking, domestic violence or other personal insecurity. In 2016, IOM identified 187 cases of suspected human trafficking across borders.<sup>7</sup>

In Timor-Leste as elsewhere, the COVID-19 outbreak led to border closures and restrictions which affected everyone but impacted disproportionately on women and girls. Informal

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<sup>5</sup> Colo, Cipriano, 'TL-Indonézia Finaliza Negosiasaun Fronteira Terrestre no Avansa bá Asinatura Tratadu', Hatutan.com, 30 November 2023, <[www.hatutan.com/2023/11/30/tl-indonezia-finaliza-negosiasaun-fronteira-terrestre-no-avansa-ba-asinatura-tratadu/](http://www.hatutan.com/2023/11/30/tl-indonezia-finaliza-negosiasaun-fronteira-terrestre-no-avansa-ba-asinatura-tratadu/)>, accessed 15 February 2024.

<sup>6</sup> International Organization for Migration, 'Timor-Leste Strengthens Border Management Procedures with IOM Support', IOM, 7 March 2023, <[www.iom.int/news/timor-leste-strengthens-border-management-procedures-iom-support](http://www.iom.int/news/timor-leste-strengthens-border-management-procedures-iom-support)>, accessed 15 February 2024.

<sup>7</sup> International Organization for Migration, *Informing Programme and Policy Development on Human Trafficking in the Timor-Leste- Indonesia Border Area*, IOM, 2017, p.13.

traders, who are mostly women from lower-income families, were prevented from engaging in what was often the only source of livelihoods for them and their families. In addition to immediate economic and food insecurity, such women were also more vulnerable to domestic violence and gender-based violence while restrictions on movement were imposed.<sup>8</sup> Women risked being trapped at home with perpetrators of violence without being able to connect with referral networks or support groups.

COVID-19 exacerbated the risks faced by vulnerable border communities with limited capacities and resources. Although the government adopted comprehensive economic recovery plans to mitigate the social and economic impacts of the pandemic, without addressing the specific needs of border communities inhabiting a dynamic and fragile environment, people living in these communities risk being overlooked. This assessment evaluates the general situation of border communities during the COVID-19 pandemic and identifies their risks and needs, as well as their institutional and infrastructural resources and challenges, in order to facilitate the protection and empowerment of border communities during and beyond COVID-19.

#### 1.4 Use of this report and communication of its findings

This report was shared with border communities that participated in focus group discussions as well as with key stakeholders and service providers who participated in the key informant interviews. A policy brief with a summary of the findings and recommendations of this report, was disseminated to border communities, local stakeholders and service providers working in areas of human security. As part of the process of obtaining informed consent, participating individuals and organizations provided written and oral consent for information gathered from the discussions and interviews to be used once stripped of personally identifiable information (e.g., names). Focus group discussion participants also agreed that IOM and UNICEF could incorporate information contained in the report into any forthcoming papers, and to communicate the results to other development partners, government and embassies, etc.

#### 1.5 Purpose, objective and scope

The **purposes** of this assessment are to:

- explore the relationship between human security and border communities to discern vulnerabilities and challenges for people living in, or interacting with, border communities in Timor-Leste
- identify the risks and needs of (specified) border communities and identify gaps in terms of policy and legal responses

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<sup>8</sup> CARE, Rapid Gender Analysis COVID-19 Timor-Leste, CARE Evaluations, 2020, <[www.careevaluations.org/evaluation/care-rapid-gender-analysis-covid-19-timor-leste](http://www.careevaluations.org/evaluation/care-rapid-gender-analysis-covid-19-timor-leste)> , accessed 15 February 2024.

- identify the current capacities, resources and options of border communities in response to various human security risks

The **objective** of this assessment to enhance understanding of the complex picture of human security issues affecting border communities. Such an analysis will inform and enable communities to prepare for and prevent security risks, and assist key policymakers and implementers to engage with the specific needs of communities in remote border regions, leading to more inclusive and comprehensive responses for disaster recovery (such as COVID-19), with specific guidelines and principles guided by human security imperatives.

The assessment will achieve its objective by:

- disseminating assessment findings and policy recommendations for COVID-19 recovery aimed at policymakers (both local and central levels) to strengthen the resilience of border communities, including suggestions to apply the human security approach for other regions/sectors to ensure no one is left behind; and
- enhancing local partnerships and coordination mechanisms to become more resilient and inclusive of communities and stakeholders (including local stakeholder mapping).

The **scope** of this assessment included research undertaken between May and December 2023 at the municipal level. Twenty-three villages in Bobonaro, Covalima and RAEOA were pre-selected as the main sites for data collection. Together, these municipalities provide an overview of the specific situation of border communities in Timor-Leste; two detailed case studies are included in this report.

Pre-assessment inception workshops were conducted in selected villages of three municipalities between 31 May and 7 June 2023, while data was collected in July and August 2023. The preliminary findings and recommendations of this assessment were disseminated and discussed with border communities, local stakeholders and service providers during dissemination, consultation and capacity-building workshops in November and December 2023.

## 1.6 Assessment questions

This assessment asks the following questions:

- What are the border communities' experiences of human security? What risks or threats do they experience?
- How do communities cope with/respond to these risks and threats?
- To what extent does the border community have access to basic sectors, such as legal assistance, food, police, social protection, WASH, health and education? What are the barriers faced by border communities?
- To what extent are the needs of border communities addressed in existing crisis preparation and response mechanisms and frameworks?

Based on the above questions, the team developed a methodology examining eight aspects (“pillars”) of human security, and questionnaires for mapping service providers and local stakeholders.

### 1.7 Assessment framework

The human security-based framework of eight pillars has gender as a cross-cutting area to make sure the framework, questions and principles are gender-sensitive and inclusive. In the inception phase, the team selected two border villages or areas in each municipality and conducted five inception workshops. Five workshops were held in three municipalities:

- Bobonaro: the workshop was held in the Balibo Administrative Post and Maliana Administrative Post
- Covalima: Lalawa and Beseuc villages participated
- RAEOA: Nipane and Bene-Ufe villages participated

Twenty-three border villages (*sucos*) were selected:

- Seven villages in Bobonaro: Tapo-Memo, Saburai, Lebos, Gildapil, Saburai, Leohito, Batugade, Cowa;
- Eleven villages in RAEOA: Beneufe, Usitaco, Costa, Lelaufe, Benafi, Malelat, Abani, Usitaqueno, Bobometo, Naimeco and Nipane; and
- Five villages in Covalima: Beseuc, Lalawa, Belulic Leten, Fatululic and Fatumea.

Where appropriate, sub-villages (*aldeias*) within *sucos* were assessed. The data collection phase included assessment and mapping. The assessment component used focus group discussions to collect information on vulnerability, gaps and needs, resilience and recommendations, by asking four questions for each pillar of human security:

- **Vulnerability:** What are the risks/vulnerabilities related to each pillar of human security for your border community? Before, during and after COVID-19?
- **Resilience:** How do you / does the community cope with these risks to human security? Before, during, and after COVID-19?
- **Gaps:** How do you / does the community address the vulnerability? And what other needs are identified for you / in your border community?
- **Recommendations:** Do you or your communities have ideas or recommendations to improve this situation related to human security concerns?

To map service providers and local stakeholders, questionnaires were created and Kobo Toolbox utilized. Local stakeholders include government authorities, faith-based organizations, professional associations, and women and youth groups with at least five members. Service providers include national or international groups or organizations that provide services in essential sectors.

## 2. Methodology

This section outlines the assessment tools, including data collection and analytical approaches, sampling criteria, research ethics and protocols and research limitations of this study. Three qualitative research methods underpin this assessment: key informant interviews, focus group discussions and desk review. Site visits and participant observation are also utilized, and case studies have been developed as part of this this assessment.

### Key informant interviews

Interviews were conducted using semi-structured questionnaires with service providers, government staff, vendors, business owners and for-profit groups, international development partners and different community sub-groups, to map service providers in the regions. The selected informants were from different sectors including health, education, agriculture, social protection, state administration, justice, gender, economy and the private sector.

### Focus group discussions

Focus group discussions were used in the inception workshops and for data collection and consultation to collect different voices and perspectives. Small groups of 10–12 people participated in each session. For example, one or two villages were selected for each inception workshop. At least 10 participants were recruited from the selected villages, and 2–4 moderators facilitated the discussion of assigned topics and questions. Each focus group discussion lasted 2–3 hours.

### Desk review

An Excel table was aligned with the evaluation matrix to identify the main references and key sources of information in the secondary literature. All primary and secondary data were triangulated to verify and substantiate the information.

### 2.1 Sampling and criteria

The assessment plan was to reach different groups of informants who could provide information on human security themes. Service providers in health, gender, water, markets and humanitarian assistance, as well as local stakeholders, were mapped. Local authorities, BPU's and the National Police of Timor-Leste, and distinct social groups such as persons with disabilities, women, older persons and youth, were engaged to participate in the focus group discussions for assessment purposes. Each village conducted one focus group discussion with 10–15 participants; in total, 21 were conducted in 21 border villages of RAE OA, Bobonaro and Covalima. Data collection followed all national protocols and guidelines of the Ministry of Health and World Health Organization (WHO) to prevent the spread of COVID-19. The assessment only recruited adult participants (older than 17 years of age).



## 2.2 Sampling strategies

In the assessment phase, three municipal research teams travelled to municipalities of RAEOA, Bobonaro and Covalima to identify participants from communities, local stakeholders and service providers. A total of 75 local stakeholders and 65 service providers were recruited. As part of data collection, 21 focus group discussions with 344 participants selected by purposive sampling were conducted in the three municipalities.

## 2.3 Data collection and analysis

Senior IPACSS researchers led three teams totalling 60 national and local community enumerators in the three border municipalities of Bobonaro, Covalima and RAEOA. The enumerators participated in a four-day research training at IPACSS-UNTL. The training covered five modules: an introduction to research ethics; research methods with local communities; questionnaires and mapping; Kobo Toolbox and geographical information system (GIS) training and research protocols for fieldwork. The enumerators were grouped into teams responsible for 1–3 villages in each of the three municipalities (*see Annex 1*). Each team spent 5–10 days in one municipality, and another two weeks transcribing and report-writing. Field visits to communities were undertaken between May and September 2023.

The team used mixed methods for data analysis. An external Kobo consultant worked with lead researchers to process quantitative data from mapping local stakeholders and service providers, with Excel-generated statistics and data visualizations for quantitative data analysis. Qualitative data sourced through focus group discussions, key informant interviews and observation were organized around the eight pillars and analysed using interpretative methods.

## 2.4 Ethical considerations

The IPACSS team completed the UNICEF training modules on “Procedures for Ethical Standards in Research, Evaluation, Data Collection and Analysis”, as well as training on “The Human Security Approach: From Principles to Practice”, and “Introduction to Ethics in Evidence Generation”, with certifications issued for main project team members.

Research assistants and enumerators participated in training workshops, including in research ethics. Formal voluntary consent forms were obtained from the research participants, as well as consent to utilize images, film and audio recording. Consent was provided both orally and in written form, with local languages used where appropriate.

More generally, the IPACSS team is familiar with ethical principles and codes of international human rights standards, such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the United Nations Convention on Refugees, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women. The team is also familiar with the principle of “no-one left behind” of the Sustainable Development Goals



(SDGs) and the principle of “do no harm”, with particular attention to the UNICEF Procedure for Ethical Standards in Research, Evaluation, Data Collection and Analysis.

The assessment took place in a post-conflict, post-COVID-19 context in Timor-Leste. Priority was given to a participatory-based assessment which was local- or community-based, sensitive to gender and inclusive. Local communities are the best to define security threats and their severity, including chronic and non-chronic threats such as COVID-19 and natural disasters, how these risks threaten different groups of border communities and the interplay of contexts, communities and risks. This assessment used the insights, perspectives and lived experiences of border communities as the starting point to understand how to better respond to risks and threats. Inclusion ensured the meaningful representation and participation of different sub-groups within the border communities. An inclusive and participatory-based consultation with communities helped capture the varied risks, impacts and opportunities of sub-groups within communities, and help to reveal the assets and capacities of community in response to human security challenges. A gender-sensitive understanding of the local community and environment’s dynamic was crucial to grasp power dynamics and inequalities among stakeholders, in terms of both resources and capacities.

## 2.5 Limitations

A total of 23 villages (*sucos*) participated in the assessment, with focus group discussions bringing together a diverse range of sectors in each location. This synthesis report reflects the opinions of individuals and organizations, and does not claim to represent the voices and views of all Timor-Leste border communities. Through participatory methods and professional facilitation, the discussions gathered a wealth of information. However, each focus group discussion was conducted in half a day, which constrained deeper discussions on many topics. Participants noted their desire for the discussions to be longer to provide further opportunities for more nuanced discussions. Some participants also noted their own lack of expertise in some of the areas discussed.

## 2.6 Consultation process

Half-day focus group discussions and key informant interviews were conducted in border municipalities to hear perspectives on health security. Participants included representatives (stakeholders and service providers) from 23 *sucos* across three border municipalities: Bobonaro, Covalima and RAEOA.

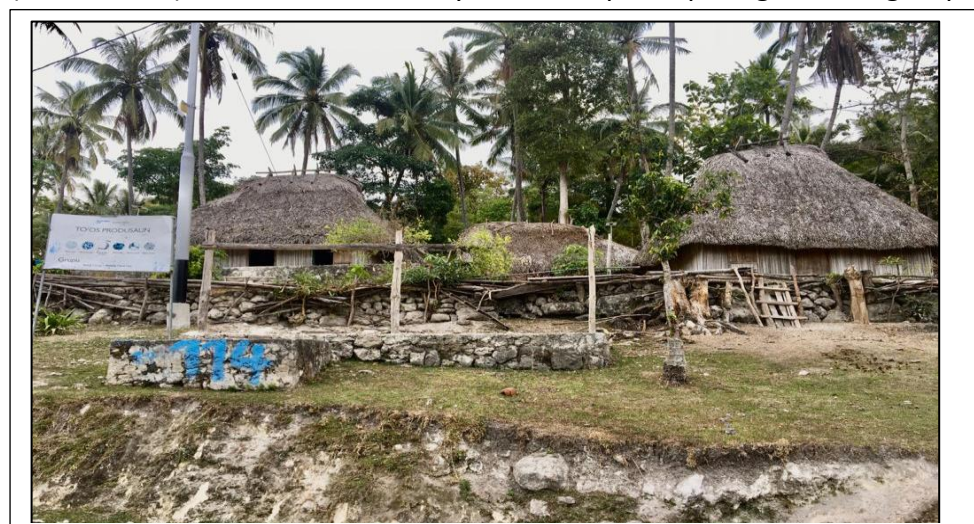
**Table 1: Population of border municipalities**

Municipality	Population	Male	Female
Bobonaro	106,639	53,704	52,935
Covalima	73,933	37,604	36,329
RAEOA	80,685	40,991	39,694

Source: Timor-Leste Population and Housing Census, 2022

Each border municipality has a number of villages or sucos which directly share a border with Indonesia (*for population of border sucos, see Annex 2*). The population of the 23 villages in the three municipalities is 79,892, six per cent of the overall population according to the 2022 census. Smaller designations also exist in the community structure of Timor-Leste: sucos may also contain sub-villages, known as aldeias.

Seven sucos in Bobonaro, five in Covalima and nine in RAEOA were involved in consultations (*see Annex 2*), with 339 community members participating in focus group discussions.



© Lynda-Ann Blanchard/2023

Aldeia Mane Haat, Suco Cowa, Bobonaro.

**Table 2: Focus group discussions and their composition**

Municipality	Focus group discussions held	Participants			Composition
		Total	Female	Male	
Covalima	5	68	32	36	Government authorities,* school teachers, health professionals, church groups, media, women and youth groups
Bobonaro	7	95	51	44	Government authorities, the Timor-Leste Defence Force† and BPU‡ members, service providers, church, people with disabilities, school teachers, health professionals, women and youth groups, elders, agriculture groups
RAEOA	11	176	63	113	Government authorities, youth, teachers, health professionals, local stakeholders (such as cooperatives), BPUs and Village Police Officers,** elders, farmers and community representatives
<b>Total</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>339</b>	<b>146</b>	<b>193</b>	

\* Including chiefs of villages or sub-villages and government officials at administrative posts and at village level.

†Tetum: Forças de Defesa de Timor Leste or Falintil-FDTL

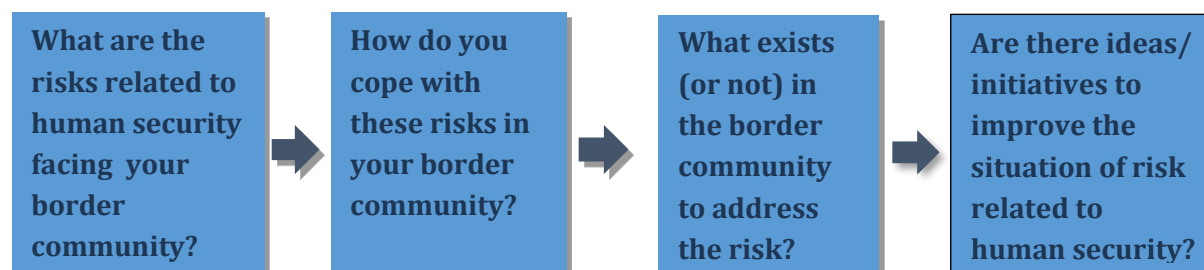
‡ Tetum: Unidade Patrullamentu Fronteira

\*\* Tetum: Ofisiál Polísia Suco

The focus group discussions and key informant interviews sought to understand the perspectives of border communities regarding their perceived vulnerabilities and resilience

to human security concerns. Questions were asked about each of the eight pillars of human security, in the contexts of before, during and after COVID-19.

**Figure 2: Questions asked in focus group discussions**



The focus group discussions were designed to encourage frank and open conversations among community representatives. To encourage this, the facilitators assured participants that the report would be non-attributable and sought informed consent to participate in the discussion and to share inputs with United Nations partners.

Specific recognition was given to sensitive issues, including:

- domestic or family violence as a public crime
- prevalence of HIV-AIDS and tuberculosis
- illegal trade and travel across the border
- child labour as family economy
- gender-diverse and other minority identities

The focus groups were conducted in the national language, Tetum, and in local languages where possible, with the assistance of community research assistants. The design and methodologies were developed with ethical research considerations as stipulated by UNICEF and IOM protocols.

### 3. Findings

The results in this section represent a synthesis of the inputs from the focus group discussions and key informant interviews conducted with 23 border villages in Timor-Leste. The findings are organized in terms of risk or vulnerability (i.e. the risks or threats to which a community is exposed), gender (i.e. taking into account the barriers or challenges that women and men experience differently) and resilience (i.e. the capacity of a system to absorb shocks and to bounce back better).<sup>9</sup>

#### 3.1 Human security risks

The participants' views of vulnerabilities facing border communities were solicited at three stages: before, during and after COVID-19, in relation to the eight pillars of human security.

##### Economic security

**\*\*In border communities, economic security and food security are interrelated.**

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, border communities had limited access to markets, employment opportunities or food items and engaged in cross-border trading.

During emergencies such as COVID-19, and natural disasters such as climate events, access to border markets and economic activities was hindered, yet in some municipalities some cross-border economic activities continued.

After COVID-19 emergency measures were imposed, economic activities could resume, but the communities' purchasing capacity was mediated by the inflated price of basic goods such as cooking oil and rice.

*"During COVID-19 we did not make the movement to find money by bringing gasoline and goods from the border, which had a negative impact on our family's economy"*

– Focus group discussion, Fatumea, Covalima, 7 August 2023

*"[...] however, things that we can carry on our heads, and carry on our shoulders are okay because they help us to response to our other basic needs"*

– Focus group discussion, Cowa, Bobonaro, 27 July 2023

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<sup>9</sup> See, for example, Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development, 'What Does "Resilience" Mean for Donors? An OECD factsheet', OECD, 2013, <<https://web-archive.oecd.org/2015-01-16/234450-May%2010%202013%20FINAL%20resilience%20PDF.pdf>>, accessed 15 February 2024.

*“We could see that to-and-fro movements in border area happen. This also means human trafficking could also happen to and fro, also transactions of drugs could happen in this area”*

– Focus group discussion, RAEOA, 15 November 2023

### Food security

\*\* Food security is compromised when access to and availability of food becomes limited due to climate and crop disease. It was also compromised during the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown. However, COVID-19 response and recovery policies tended to leave the long-term development of agricultural sector aside. The chronic under-production of food could not respond to local demands, such as for rice.

The main food supply depends on imported goods, such as rice and cooking oil. Availability and accessibility to food in rural and remote areas may be at risk at times due to inconsistent subsistence farming practices and various environmental impacts, such as drought and floods.

*“Here when we have limited food, we would rely on our local produce such as corn and taro, and as for cooking oil, we would kill some pigs for meat and use the oil from the pork meat”*

– Focus group discussion, Lebos, Bobonaro, 28 July 2023,

\*\* The risk of malnutrition among children is high,<sup>10</sup> and women are also at risk due to lack of knowledge around balanced nutritious diets.

\*\* During COVID-19, remote communities did not have access to rice, cooking oil and other food items, because there was no transportation to markets. This put community members at higher risk of hunger and malnutrition. They were obliged to reduce the quantity and quality of food they consumed due to lack of access to basic food and income.

\*\* Communities faced higher food costs during and after COVID-19.

### Health security

\*\* Various chronic and non-chronic, communicable and non-communicable diseases were prevalent in border villages even before COVID-19. Respiratory diseases, coughing, leprosy,

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<sup>10</sup> In 2013, about 50 per cent of children under the age of five were stunted. Child and maternal malnutrition are key drivers of mortality, and contributed to 27 per cent of deaths of children under five in Timor-Leste. Cited in: Provo, Anne Marie, et al, *Malnutrition in Timor-Leste: a review of the burden, drivers, and potential response (English)*, World Bank Group, Washington DC, 2017, <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/666231491492248496/Malnutrition-in-Timor-Leste-a-review-of-the-burden-drivers-and-potential-response>, accessed 15 February 2024.

HIV and AIDS<sup>11</sup> and tuberculosis<sup>12</sup> were all reported, however the number of HIV and AIDS cases is hard to ascertain due to stigma surrounding the illness,<sup>13</sup> underreporting and limited data.

\*\* Malnutrition among children and women remains a significant concern.

\*\* Even before COVID-19, health-care facilities and services were not easily accessible to everyone. Communities reported that the border areas lack doctors, midwives and maternal houses for women to give birth, contributing to greater risk of maternal mortality.

*“No doctors or general medical staff, and no specific place for the pregnant mothers to give birth”*

– Focus group discussion, Beseuc, Covalima, 5 August 2023

*“Just recently, a mother and her child died during childbirth. You go to the health post, but no medicines, we need to buy medicines. About the river, when rainy season, community in from Lebos, Lontas, Gildapil could not access health facilities. If possible, government needs to build a health post in Lebos”*

– Focus group discussion, Lebos, Bobonaro, 28 July 2023

\*\* Animal diseases, such as African swine fever, are common. Many such diseases are fatal to animals, and cause food and economic losses, but veterinary services are unavailable.

\*\* During COVID-19, other illnesses were not a priority for health-care services. For example, in Belulic Leten (Covalima), an elderly person who had had a stroke and needed transportation to hospital could not access health personnel.

\*\* Border communities were on the frontline of COVID-19 infections; in Belulic Leten (Covalima) alone, 23 cases were detected. The local community experienced criticism and discrimination from outsiders for bringing disease to Timor-Leste.

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<sup>11</sup> More than 1,500 cases of HIV and AIDS have been registered since 2003 with an increasing trend. The latest data show that while the capital, Dili, has the highest rate, it is followed by RAEOA (10 new cases registered) and then by Bobonaro and Covalima with a few other municipalities. See: Tatoli, ‘Health Ministry Reports 184 New Cases of HIV Infections’, Tatoli 9 October 2023, <<https://en.tatoli.tl/2023/10/09/health-ministry-reports-184-new-cases-of-hiv-infections/17>>, accessed 15 February 2024.

<sup>12</sup> In 2017, there were 498 cases per 100,000 persons, of which 50 per cent were untreated.

<sup>13</sup> Estrela+, Marie Stopes Timor-Leste and United Nations Population Fund Timor-Leste, *HIV Stigma Index Report*, Estrela+, Marie Stopes Timor-Leste, UNFPA Timor-Leste, Dili, 2019, <<https://timor-lesste.unfpa.org/en/publications/hiv-stigma-index-report>>, accessed 15 February 2024.

## Education security

\*\* Before COVID-19, border communities in all municipalities lacked access to education, including access to schools, educational facilities, teaching materials, human resources, quality teaching staff and library facilities. Many schools lacked WASH facilities.

\*\* In Belulic Leten (Covalima), children who live in remote villages have to walk two hours to school. Sometimes they are too tired to focus on their studies after they arrive, affecting their performance. Schools also reported lack of access to clean water.

\*\* In Gildapil (Bobonaro), there is only one primary school for students from Gildapil, Lebos and Lontas. Students and teachers in Lebos find it difficult to access the school in Gildapil during the rainy season as the two villages are separated by a river.

\*\* In RAEOA, a few villages have pre-schools: there are two pre-schools in Bobometo, in Oesilo administrative post and one in Malelat in Passabe administrative post. This impacts on reading and writing skills, and compromises children's capacity for education. It was reported that there are no secondary schools in either of these administrative posts, meaning that youth can only access secondary education in Pante Makassar, which seriously compromises education security in this border region.

\*\* During the COVID-19 lockdown, teaching and learning activities at school were suspended and students stayed at home. However, online learning was not an option, due to the lack of electricity and telecommunication infrastructure in most border communities. Therefore, teachers might discontinue teaching due to limited mobility during the pandemic. Parents with little or no education had difficulty educating their children during lockdown.

*"We as parents need to teach our own children. During COVID-19, there was no teaching and learning at school, children were not allowed to go to school. So, we have to teach our own children or younger siblings at home"*

– Key informant interview with a teacher, Gildapil, Bobonaro, 27 July 2023

\*\* Barriers to quality education are various, including lack of qualified teachers to teach subjects like mathematics and English. In Tapo-Memo (Bobonaro), for example, students have to pay an extra US\$ 1 to have an outside facilitator/teacher for English.

\*\* Basic school facilities, like chairs, tables and even electricity, are in short supply, like the Escola Básica Filial (EBF; primary-level school) in Cowa (Bobonaro). All schools in Bobonaro reported no access to library facilities and a lack of textbooks. In Leohitu, the EBF has a library building which is in very poor condition. Limited access to school materials, no libraries, limited textbooks, and limited materials for cooking to prepare food for school meals are common. Moreover, lack of qualified teachers adds to the vulnerability of education security for border communities.



\*\* During and after COVID-19, some children may drop out of school due to financial issues and early marriage.

\*\* In particular, this may have negative impacts on for girls: communities reported that child marriage and early pregnancy were common in border villages.

### Community security

\*\* Conflicts within and among communities arose due to disputes over water, land and livestock, which can perpetuate or intensify disadvantage and lack of power of vulnerable border communities with limited resources and capacities for survival. Women are particularly affected as they are primarily responsible for unpaid domestic and care work, such as fetching water, raising animals and collecting firewood.

\*\* In Bobonaro, a farmer was reported to have been murdered due to a land dispute in July.

\*\* In Tapo-Memo (Bobonaro), the Malibaka river is shared by Indonesian and Timor-Leste border communities. However, due to their strong irrigation systems, the Indonesian community has good access to water, while the Timor-Leste community does not, pointing to possible future conflict over water resources.

\*\* In Fatumea (Covalima), it is reported that minor conflicts over animals occur between Indonesian and Timor-Leste border communities.

\*\* The existence of martial arts groups and ritual arts groups in border communities was perceived as potentially bringing risks to communities if conflict arose among them. However, no major incidents have been reported in Bobonaro and Covalima which have large numbers of group members, nor in RAEOA, which has a smaller number.

*“Although the community has a variety of martial arts groups, such as PSHT, KERA SAKI, 77 and Kungfu Master, they have strong traditional connections and therefore there was no conflict between them”*

– Focus group discussion, Futumea, Covalima, 7 August 2023

### Political security

\*\* A reliable security sector, strong rule of law and accessible legal services can ensure human rights and human security, but these are weak in border areas.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the government of Timor-Leste adopted security measures to tighten border control that did not duly consider communities’ needs, and raised concerns of abuse of power against communities by the security sector.

\*\* The legal identities of some border residents, as well as children with international parents, were not registered as they lacked access to birth certificates – an essential document to



facilitate access to other important documents (such as an electoral card, identity card and passport), and to benefits and social protection programmes.

*“Fatululic village experienced one problem: people who have lived here since Indonesia time until now had no electoral cards, and had no access to social security, such as subsidy for the elders”*

– Focus group discussion, Fatululic, Covalima, 7 August 2023

*“For documents, sometimes their father is from the other site, and mother is from this site, it will be so complicated to obtain their legal documents, or other identification cards, so it is a major problem here”*

– Focus group discussion, Cowa, Bobonaro, 26 July 2023

\*\* Communities reported harassment and threats by police and military while crossing the border before, during and after COVID-19. Some villages noted that relations between security forces and the community were not good, possibly because the former are not local and are rotated to this location, making it difficult to build sustainable relationships of trust.

\*\* The villages of Batugade, Tapo-Memo, Gildapil and Lebos (all in Babonare) reported that communities did not have good relations with the border police. In Malalet (RAEOA), the community reported incidences of violence by the Indonesian police and having to pay USD\$10 to travel across the border. By contrast, villages such as Saburai (Bobonaro) were reported to have a positive relationship with the security forces.

*“We have good relationship; we protect our community and they protect us as well. Here we do not have access to electricity, we only use solar panels in our centre. So, community members would come and charge their mobile phones here. In return, sometimes, in the morning, when we wake up they already bring us some breakfast such as boiled cassava and taro”*

– Interview with BPU, Saburai, Bobonaro, 27 July 2023

\*\* Laws are not equally applied across border communities. For example, the electoral process (including the Electoral Law) is not always known or accessible. Participants from all border communities reported that people in the community could not participate in the 2023 elections because they lacked electoral cards or identity cards, while frail or sick voters could not travel to voting centres. The elderly and people with disabilities were especially vulnerable to exclusion for this reason. Some villages reported political pressure to vote for particular parties or candidates.

## Personal security

**\*\***Domestic violence, child marriage and early pregnancy are common, but are rarely reported or addressed. The lack of effective legal and protective services for women and girls, such as legal support (police) and shelters or safe houses, compounds the vulnerability of women and children.

**\*\***In RAEOA, community members highlighted the risks associated with the increasing prevalence of early marriage, pregnancy and divorce among young people. In Abani (RAEOA), communities noted the incidence of girls getting married (becoming pregnant) aged as young as 12–14 years, and divorced at 17 years of age. Early marriage and early pregnancy were also cited as concerns by community members in Bobonaro and Covalima.

*“Why do early marriages happen? This is because of the influence of technology, because the use of phones to access pornography. It could lead to early marriage. When early marriage and early pregnancy happen, then domestic violence will also happen”*

– Community consultation, Costa, RAEOA, 15 November 2023

**\*\*** Violence against women and child labour were commonly reported in all the border communities. Villagers described domestic violence as a “problem of spoons and plates”, meaning that family violence is an internal or familial issue which cannot be shared or addressed outside the household. Meanwhile, child labour is considered a normal way for children to contribute to family incomes.

*“The children of Beluluk Leten village have to help parents to wait for animals near the borders”*

– Focus group discussion, Beluluk Leten, Covalima, 7 August 2023

*“Most of the time child labour also happens in this situation. Where most boys already become an ojek [motorcycle taxi] driver as early as 13 years of age”*

– Focus group discussion, Tapo-Memo, Bobonaro, 27 July 2023

**\*\*** In RAEOA, cases of extreme violence were reported to the local authorities. A husband who killed his wife in Naimeco village was imprisoned; in Lela-Ufe, a man cut off both his wife’s arms and was imprisoned; while in Nitibe, a man killed his wife and left their only child to be looked after by the grandfather. Suspicions of sex trafficking in RAEOA were also mentioned.

**\*\*** People agree that illegal trading is one way for border communities to meet their basic needs, but creates risks when they are apprehended by the police or Indonesian military in the border areas, including threats, high fines or physical violence.

\*\* Some communities shared that, during COVID-19, personal security risks increased due to school closures and stay-at-home policies.

### Environmental security

\*\* Border communities face constant environmental security risks. As subsistence farmers, they are vulnerable to shocks due to climate change or extreme weather, which have significant impact on lives and livelihoods. The El Niño climatic phenomenon and some local practices also cause deforestation, desertification, water scarcity, soil loss and landslides.

\*\*In RAEOA, communities face challenges such as deforestation, land degradation and desertification, while in Bobonaro and Covalima they experience landslides, erosion and deforestation.

\*\*In Gildapil, Lolotoe and Maliana (all Bobonaro), environmental risks include landslides, strong winds and flooding during the wet season, which may cause loss or damage to crops and properties.

\*\* In Bene-ufo (RAEOA), landslides occur in Papu and Qiubaki areas in the wet season and destroy roads, settlements and farms. In the Nibin area of Usitaqueno (RAEOA), 280 families experienced displacement due to flooding and landslides in 2021.

\*\* Traditional practices, such as slash-and-burn agriculture and cutting down trees, continue to be practiced by communities without thinking about reforestation or sustainability. Water shortages remain a big concern in all the municipalities.

*“The communities got used to burning the ground and cutting down the wood”*

– Focus group discussion, Beseuc, Covalima, 5 August 2023

## 3.2 Challenges to achieving human security

The challenges to achieving human security are organized around four themes: social capital, economic development, infrastructure development and institutional framework for governance, while the gender dimension runs across all themes. These themes correspond to the priority areas of the SDGs and the National Strategic Development Plan 2011–2030.

### Social capital

#### Education security:

- Border schools do not equally cover or be accessible to all border communities, and often lack adequate and quality human resources, facilities and equipment. The 2022 census found that about 72.4 per cent of the population of Timor-Leste aged 10 years can read or write, but in RAEOA, this figure is 56.7 per cent, the lowest in the country's municipalities.

- The Basic Education Curriculum Reform, which includes school gardening and health, was developed in 2010 but is yet to be implemented.<sup>14</sup> Several communities could have benefited from school gardens and knowledge about nutrition to address malnutrition, but schools and teachers often lack the capacity, facilities and knowledge to provide nutritious meals for children.
- While the School Inspection Manual<sup>15</sup> gives guidelines for inclusive education and assessing whether schools promote inclusiveness and non-discrimination in the classroom, in practice, gender equality, disability and social inclusion are not mainstreamed in school curricula or in teacher training.
- Girls are exceptionally vulnerable if they need to live away from home in order to continue their schooling. They are also vulnerable if unable to leave home due to school closures during COVID-19 or other disasters. Girls without adequate access to protective knowledge or support are at risk of sexual violence.

### Health security:

- Commonly cited challenges include the limited number and coverage of health posts and community health centres<sup>16</sup> and medical personnel, and poor quality of basic health-care facilities, equipment and limited access to medicines. In Covalima, the five border sucos shared one community health centre with 14 staff in Belulic Leten, while others merely had health posts. In 2013, 1.3 health-workers were available per 1,000 people,<sup>17</sup> far below the recommended minimum. Physical inaccessibility, including distance and the availability and affordability of transportation, tends to limit access which impacted particularly on women, especially those seeking maternal health services.
- In Bobonaro and RAEOA, border communities shared common stories about the personal security risks to pregnant women in accessing health services, which is born out by the maternal mortality rate.<sup>18</sup>
- Health staff serving border communities mentioned the risk of HIV and AIDS in these areas as individuals cross the border frequently to Indonesia which has a high number

<sup>14</sup> Provo, Anne Marie, et al, *Malnutrition in Timor-Leste: a review of the burden, drivers, and potential response (English)*, World Bank Group, Washington DC, 2017, <<http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/666231491492248496/Malnutrition-in-Timor-Leste-a-review-of-the-burden-drivers-and-potential-response>>, accessed 15 February 2024.

<sup>15</sup> Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport, *School Inspection Manual*, MEYS Government of Timor-Leste, Dili, n.d.

<sup>16</sup> The primary health-care network in Timor-Leste comprised 71 community health centres, 323 health posts, 469 integrated community health services and mobile clinics and 5 hospitals in 2018. See: United Nations Children's Fund, *Health Sectoral Thematic Report*, UNICEF, Dili, 2018.

<sup>17</sup> Asante, Augustine, et al, 'Retaining Doctors in Rural Timor-Leste: A critical appraisal of the opportunities and challenges', *Bull World Health Organ*, vol. 92, no. 4, April 2014, pp. 277–282, doi: 10.2471/BLT.13.123141.

<sup>18</sup> According to the most recent data, the maternal mortality rate is 215 per 100,000 live births; see United Nations Children's Fund, *Timor-Leste At a Glance 2023*, UNICEF, Dili, 2023, <[www.unicef.org/timorleste/media/5581/file/Timor%20Leste%20at%20a%20Glance%20as%20of%20May2023%20with%20Census%20data\\_final.pdf](http://www.unicef.org/timorleste/media/5581/file/Timor%20Leste%20at%20a%20Glance%20as%20of%20May2023%20with%20Census%20data_final.pdf)>, accessed 15 February 2024.

of people registered as living with HIV and AIDS. In 2017, 725 people from East-Timor were living with HIV and AIDS and 287 accessed antiretroviral treatment.<sup>19</sup>

### Personal security:

- Gender-based violence, domestic violence, child marriage and early pregnancy are urgent personal security issues for all border communities.<sup>20</sup> Women and girls are particularly vulnerable due to a lack of protective legal and policy resources, services and programmes. In 2020, the Vulnerable Person Unit registered 13 cases of gender-based violence and 130 of domestic violence in RAEOA, 17 and 68 respectively in Bobonaro, and 16 and 35 respectively in Covalima.<sup>21</sup> Even when legal mechanisms and support addressing violence against women or children exist, the dominant patriarchal values prevent those affected from easily seeking help, as there is a strong preference to resolve disputes through traditional justice approaches that often do not prioritize women's interests. Data from 2016 show that only 20 per cent of women who experienced violence sought help.<sup>22</sup> Logistical matters, such as distance and inaccessibility, put women's shelters, medical services, ambulances and reproductive health centres out of reach. For example, in Bobonaro, there is only one reported and confirmed secure shelter that takes women with their children. In Covalima, one shelter in Salele was identified, which was far away from many border communities.
- Existing government and development partner programmes addressing gender-based violence and domestic violence were acknowledged by service providers as helpful for communities, yet limited human resources and logistical issues prevent coverage of all border villages with inclusive and gender-specific education programmes. Representatives of the Ministry of Social Solidarity and Inclusion, Secretary of State for Equality and the Vulnerable Person's Unit need to travel extensively between border villages and administrative posts to investigate the needs of communities, yet this is too demanding and the distances too great to enable effective support.
- Timor-Leste is a destination country for human trafficking, with 65 confirmed cases registered in 2016.<sup>23</sup> In November 2021, the Council of Ministers passed Decree-Law No.9/2021 to establish the Commission to Combat Trafficking in Persons. However,

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<sup>19</sup> Ministry of Health and World Health Organization, *National Strategic Plan for HIV/STI Programme in Timor-Leste*, MoH Government of Timor-Leste and WHO, Dili 2017.

<sup>20</sup> In 2016, as many as 10 per cent of girls aged 15–19 years had begun childbearing in Bobonaro, Covalima and RAEOA. See: General Directorate of Statistics, Ministry of Finance and ICF, *Timor-Leste Demographic and Health Survey 2016*, Dili and Rockville Maryland, 2018, <<https://dhsprogram.com/publications/publication-FR329-DHS-Final-Reports.cfm>>, accessed 15 February 2024.

<sup>21</sup> Sekretaria Estadu ba Igualdade no Inklusaun, *Relatoriu ba parliamentu nasional konaba implementasaun planu asaun nasional violensia bazeia ba jeneru (PAN-VBJ) Tinan 2020*, SEII, Dili, 2021.

<sup>22</sup> General Directorate of Statistics, Ministry of Finance and ICF, *Timor-Leste Demographic and Health Survey 2016*, Dili and Rockville Maryland, 2018, <<https://dhsprogram.com/publications/publication-FR329-DHS-Final-Reports.cfm>>, accessed 15 February 2024.

<sup>23</sup> Fundasaun Mahein, *The Impact of Migration on Timor-Leste and its Security Sector*, Fundasaun Mahein, Dili, 2018, p.19, <[www.fundasaunmahein.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/MNH-16-Migrations-English-Final.-pdf.pdf](http://www.fundasaunmahein.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/MNH-16-Migrations-English-Final.-pdf.pdf)>, accessed 15 February 2024.

BPU in border sucos are under-equipped and under-resourced, with 3–4 staff responsible for patrolling the entire administrative unit, and may be unable to monitor or prevent human trafficking.

### Infrastructure development

#### Community security:

- There is limited access to infrastructure and basic services; for example, there is a lack of well-paved roads and bridges in border areas, and those that exist may be washed away during the wet season. Almost half of rural roads were reported as poor or bad in a 2015 survey.<sup>24</sup> Lack of basic road infrastructure in border communities compromises access to markets, schools and emergency services, such as ambulances.
- Other infrastructure issues such as lack of electricity and water, built houses and schools lacking WASH facilities, lack of information and communication technology infrastructure and phone signal coverage were also reported. In Belulic Leten, Fatululic and Fatumea (Covalima), there is no electricity, and the local community uses solar panels or traditional oil lamps. This is also the case in Saburai and in Railuli sub-village in Cowa (Bobonaro). In Gildapil and Lebos (Bobonaro), the community has access to electricity, but local shops do not sell electricity credits (*pulsa*), and people must travel three hours to Maliana town to purchase them.
- Conflict within and among communities may arise over water, land and livestock, yet the implementation of rule of law is lacking to address such issues or to protect the rights and property of border communities. In 2013, a traditional chief was allegedly killed in Naktuka (RAEOA) over ownership of local farmland.<sup>25</sup> In 2016, around 150 Indonesian citizens who were formerly refugees from Timor-Leste illegally migrated to Naktuka to tend to communal rice fields.<sup>26</sup>
- Women in border communities generally lack access to or control of resources or property. When community security deteriorates, the disadvantaged status of those with limited or no access to land and other resources may be perpetuated or intensified.

#### Environmental security:

- Border communities have a high proportion of subsistence farmers. Climate change and extreme weather conditions, such as strong winds and rainfall, have major impacts on soil and water resources as well as on harvests. Timor-Leste faces a high

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<sup>24</sup> Ministry of Public Works, Transport and Communications, *Rural Roads Master Plan: Investment strategy 2016–2020*, MPWTC Government of Timor-Leste, Dili, 2015.

<sup>25</sup> Fundasaun Mahein, 'Problems and Security Concerns along the Oecusse Border', Dili, 2016, <<http://www.fundasaunmahein.org/2016/06/10/problems-and-security-concerns-along-the-oecusse-border>>, accessed 15 February 2024.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

degree of vulnerability to climate change and other global challenges, ranking 122 out of 185 countries on the ND-GAIN Index in 2021.<sup>27</sup>

- Negative practices are reported in other border communities which are detrimental to environmental sustainability, such as slash-and-burn cultivation in RAEOA, or tree-felling without replanting in Covalima. This renders local communities vulnerable to environment risks, such as water shortages, in the long term.
- Women and girls are responsible for unpaid domestic and care work in rural areas. Those living in communities where water resources are difficult to access may need to travel long distances to fetch water, exposing them to further personal security risks.

## Economic development

### Economic security:

- Reported issues include limited access to markets due to poor infrastructure, limited and expensive transportation, and the long distances from remote villages to markets in municipal towns.
- The community reported that tax paperwork and other business requirements are too complicated and inaccessible, compelling people to become involved in illegal trade across the border.
- There are limited employment opportunities in border areas, and people working in the informal economy and as subsistence farmers are not covered in current social protection schemes. Social protection programmes exist for vulnerable mothers with children, pregnant mothers, the elderly, persons with disabilities and veterans, but not for the unemployed. Informal economic activities include running small kiosks or vegetable stalls selling local rice and other food crops, selling petrol, operating private *ojek* or tuk-tuk services, and participating in cooperatives and savings and loans groups. Child labour is part of the informal economy and subsistence farming in border communities.
- As most people are subsistence farmers, their harvest is mostly consumed by the household instead of being sold for profit.
- Access to markets is often expensive and risky for women, who seek out closer markets across the border. This has caused increased vulnerabilities or security concerns for women, especially in terms of threats or harassment by border security.

### Food security:

- As subsistence farmers, food security is not a major concern for most border communities. During the COVID-19 pandemic, most people survived on what they

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<sup>27</sup> Notre Dame Global Adaptation Initiative (ND-GAIN), *ND-GAIN Country Index 2021*, Climate Change Adaptation Program, University of Notre Dame Environmental Change initiative, Notre Dame Indiana, 2021, <<https://gain-new.crc.nd.edu/ranking>>, accessed 15 February 2024.



grew in their backyards or the animals they tended. In Covalima, people could not purchase rice, but still had access to foods such as taro and cassava as substitutes for rice. This also applied to communities in rural areas of RAEOA and Bobonaro.

- However, food vulnerability is increased by lack of knowledge about nutritious food, limited access to and availability of such foods and lack of purchasing power due to income insecurity. A 2020 report found that 37.6 per cent of households were affected by moderate or severe food insecurity.<sup>28</sup> Food insecurity can also be exacerbated by environmental insecurity, such as climate change and soil erosion. This has serious gendered impacts on children and women in the long term.
- Long-term development of the agriculture sector, changes in cropping systems and improved shock-resistant crop varieties are needed, yet are undervalued in government policy.
- The National Council for Food Security, Sovereignty and Nutrition in Timor-Leste was established in 2012 to coordinate ministries to address food security and malnutrition. The National Action Plan for a Hunger and Malnutrition-free Timor-Leste is a multi-sectoral framework to address food insecurity and malnutrition. However, its work is yet to be operationalized and institutionalized at district and sub-district levels.<sup>29</sup>

### Institutional framework

#### Political security

- The 2023 parliamentary election went smoothly, but there were reports that elderly persons or and persons with disabilities were excluded from voting due to insufficient access. Communities also claimed that there was a tendency of political intervention during the election, and nepotism in local political recruitment and appointments.
- Human rights violations at the border, such as human trafficking or abuses of power by security personnel, are likely not reported due to the weak rule of law and a lack of monitoring mechanisms. Women and young girls risk physical or sexual violence and human trafficking.
- Existing policies and programmes do not always align with community priorities and practices on the borders. The lack of legal documents and identities of border residents and their children were reported to not be adequately addressed. Those without legal identities may be unable to access social and legal protection and security programmes or to exercise their civil and political rights.

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<sup>28</sup> United Nations Timor-Leste, *Socio-Economic Impact Assessment of COVID-19 in Timor-Leste*, United Nations Timor-Leste, Dili, 2020.

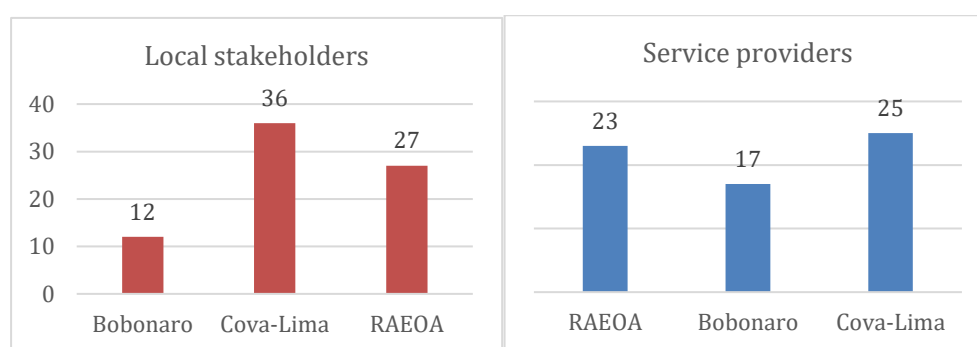
<sup>29</sup> Provo, Anne Marie, et al, *Malnutrition in Timor-Leste: a review of the burden, drivers, and potential response (English)*, World Bank Group, Washington DC, 2017, <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/666231491492248496/Malnutrition-in-Timor-Leste-a-review-of-the-burden-drivers-and-potential-response>, accessed 15 February 2024.



### 3.3. Priority areas and critical gaps

A mapping of 75 local stakeholders and 65 service providers in border communities (see *Figures 3 and 4*) found that local stakeholders focus on agriculture and economy, while service providers concentrate on health and education. This demonstrates an inconsistency between top-down and bottom-up initiatives and needs.

**Figure 3: Number of local stakeholders and service providers in border areas**



#### Mapping local stakeholders

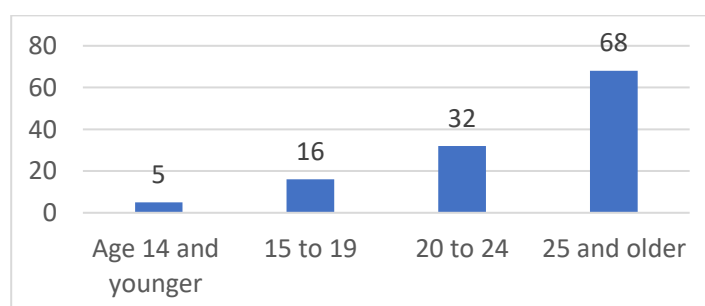
The mapping of local stakeholder groups showed that these include community groups, cooperatives, community-based NGOs, government institutions, church groups and women's and youth groups.

Local stakeholders in RAEOA are mostly concerned about economic security, while those in Covalima are mainly focused on food and agriculture security.

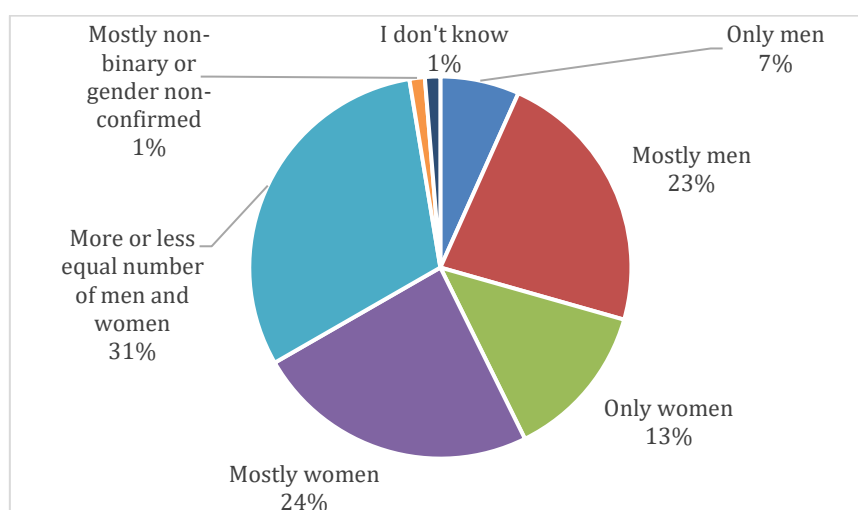
Members of local stakeholder groups are typically aged 20–24 years or above 25 years, suggesting that young people aged 15–19 years and their interests are under-represented (see *Figure 4*).

While 31 per cent of local stakeholder groups have equal numbers of male and female members and 37 per cent are women-led, about 30 per cent are male-led and 1 per cent have members who are non-binary or gender-non-conforming (see *Figure 5*). The largest number have gender parity. It is notable that although women are active in leading local stakeholder groups, these groups do not necessarily advocate for women's issues or rights.

**Figure 4: Age distribution of members of local stakeholder groups**



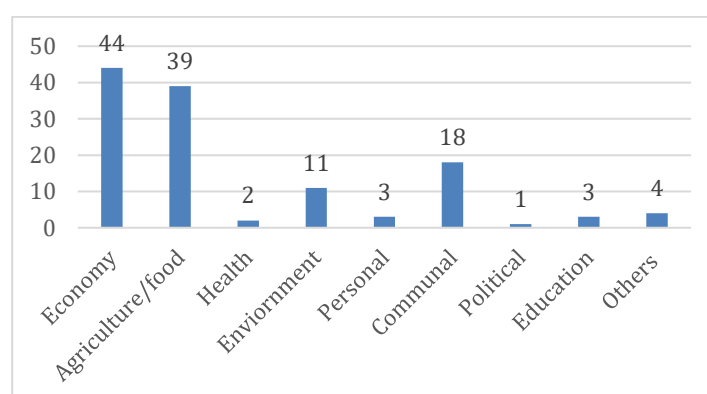
**Figure 5: Gender distribution of members of local stakeholder groups**



The priority areas for local stakeholders groups are economic and food/agricultural security, far outranking other human security concerns (*see Figure 6*). Community and environmental security are the next highest ranked priorities, with all remaining human security pillars ranked very low by local stakeholders. The two top-ranked areas of human security concern have a strongly gendered dimension, as women-led groups are engaged in economic security, while men-led groups mainly work in food/agricultural security.

Local stakeholder groups generally target the general public and the elderly; only seven focus specifically on children. Sixty-one per cent work for or with border communities specifically, whereas 39 per cent work with other communities, though they are located in border areas.

**Figure 6: Human security focus areas for local stakeholders**



### Mapping service providers

Service providers included international and local NGOs providing services in essential sectors: in schools, hospitals and clinics, police and border control and in shelters.

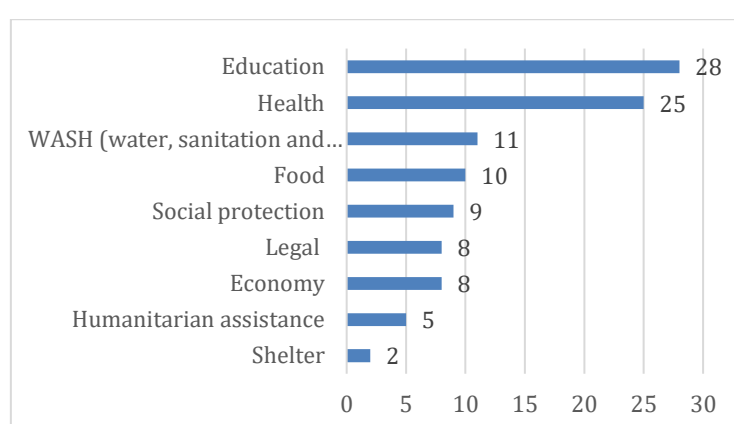
RAEOA has the lowest ratio of service providers of the three municipalities, with service providers largely concentrated in Nitibe administrative post, suggesting that the other border communities in the municipality may lack access to essential services including health and education sector.

The priority sectors in which service providers operate are education and health (see Figure 7). Service providers are engaged in formal and informal education, health-care and vaccination, and WASH. Few service providers note a focus on gender-specific services, and environmental security is not prioritized.

The beneficiaries of the services delivered by these providers in border communities are mainly the general public and children, with the lowest service provision for the elderly.

Almost 90 per cent of service providers in border areas work with or for border communities. Notably, three service providers are located at a great distance, with a 1–5 hour journey on foot between the institution and the border community.

**Figure 7: Service providers by sector**



### 3.4 Pathways to resilience

In the face of severe vulnerabilities, some border communities have adapted to precarious situations through grassroots initiatives. However, COVID-19 and other factors impact on their pathways to building resilience.

1. Economic security
  - Cross-border trading and business has continued before, during and after COVID-19.
  - Communities try to sustain family economies by borrowing money, such as during COVID-19.
  - Community-based cooperatives and groups engage in various economic activities, such as baking, *tais* weaving, cooking and farming to generate family and community income.
2. Food security
  - Communities practice subsistence farming, and grow and consume their own local produce and tend livestock.
  - Families share food with each other to reduce food security risks, such as during COVID-19.

- Communities may reduce the quantity and quality of food when incomes or food sources are limited.
3. Community security
    - Strong cultural and clan relations tend to limit conflicts within communities despite the presence of different martial arts and ritual arts groups in the same villages.
    - *Tara bandu* (customary law) is used to resolve issues or disputes among or within communities.
    - Cooperatives are created to sustain community livelihoods in Fatululic (Covalima). These convene different groups to work towards the same goal.
    - Community identities have been strengthened through collective projects, such as building houses or public facilities together, as was done in Saburai (Bobonaro). This does not apply to outsiders and other communities.
  4. Health security
    - In Fatumea and Fatululic (Covalima), communities transport patients to health facilities by motorcycle due to poor roads and lack of access for ambulances.
    - In Lalawa (Covalima), women who are close to their delivery dates move closer to Suai where they can access a hospital more easily.
    - In Bobonaro, traditional medicine is commonly used. For example, a tea of lemongrass and ginger mixed with honey is given to those suffering from flu, while fever is treated by applying coconut oil mixed with certain herbs.
    - In Naktuka (RAEOA), there is no health post and no doctor or ambulance is available. Pregnant women have to travel to a clinic in Citrana or call a *daya* (traditional midwife) to their home to attend birth.
    - Mobile clinic and home visits are important for isolated and remote communities where permanent health posts and community health centres do not exist.
  5. Personal security
    - Border communities commonly use traditional or informal justice mechanisms, such as mediation and *tara bandu* to resolve issues within or between families, including issues such as domestic violence.
  6. Political security
    - Border communities use *tara bandu* if they come into have conflict with the police or military.
  7. Educational security
    - Beseuc (Covalima), has four primary schools, but no preschools, pre-secondary or secondary schools. For example, pre-secondary students walk to Lalawa village about

1–2 hours away. Some parents have built a preschool in Wataba sub-village to fill this gap.

- Similarly, Saburai (Bobonaro) only has primary schools, and secondary students must travel to Maliana town and live away from their family home. A boarding school managed by nuns costs up to US\$ 30 per month, which is unaffordable for most families in Saburai. Instead, the families of students have built a simple house in Maliana, with zinc roof and walls, to accommodate students during the week, and travel back home to Saburai on the weekends. However, this solution carries gendered risks for young girls living on their own.
- During the COVID-19 pandemic, online learning and the *Eskola ba Uma* (school to home) programme were not effective. Teachers were divided into small groups which visited the villages weekly and taught children at home.

#### 8. Environmental security

- Locally, efforts have been made to conserve natural resources. These include drawing on customary law, tree plantation, and community mobilization to build fences or clean springs, in order to preserve water resources and forests.
- In RAEOA, at least 80 water resources have been identified and protected by the community collectively (*see suco and aldeia water management plans in RAEOA in Annex 3*). For example, in Usi Taqueno, conservation efforts include building fences and mobilizing the community to clean three freshwater springs.
- In Lalawa (Covalima), the community has planted *mahoni* and other trees, and implemented *tara bandu* to conserve the environment.
- In Saburai (Bobonaro) the community has designated *área protegida* (protected areas) and protect water resources through *tara bandu*, ensuring that water can be distributed to all households. All community members must adhere to this customary law, and anyone who breaks the law is subject to sanctions (such as the offering of a buffalo).
- Environmental cooperatives have been established in some border communities. For instance, the Cowa Youth Farmer's Cooperative in Bobonaro demonstrates community solidarity to protect the planting of food crops and implements sustainable water management practices that contribute to community resilience.
- On the other hand, events in Batugade village (Bobonaro) demonstrate the limits of customary law. In the last two or three years, the community decided to apply *tara bandu* to some parts of the sea to control overfishing. However, while this community refrained from fishing, people from the Indonesian side came to the protected areas to fish. *Tara bandu* thus constrains those who agree to this law, but does not bind outsiders. Consequently, community members cancelled the *tara bandu* in 2022. This situation also led to tensions between fishers from Indonesia and Timor-Leste, but no major incidents were reported to the authorities.

### 3.5 Priority pillars of human security

The pillars of human security are demonstrably interconnected, and participants in this study repeatedly noted this as a key principle for policymaking (see Figure 8). Human security must be contextualized: some villages are more vulnerable to specific risks than others. Accommodating these specific risks and building on existing resilience is necessary for effective policymaking. Human security also has a notable gender dimension which must inform pathways to policymaking.

**Figure 8: Links between the pillars of human security**

<b>Education security</b>	↔	<b>Personal security</b>
Rates of child marriage and early pregnancy are high among girls, affecting their education. However, there is a reluctance to discuss these vulnerabilities.		
<b>Community security</b>	↔	<b>Personal security</b>
Reporting cases of domestic violence is often perceived as the last option; mediation by the village chief or the community is preferred.		
<b>Health security</b>	↔	<b>Personal security</b>
Domestic violence is viewed as a private matter, not as a public crime.		
<b>Economic security</b>	↔	<b>Community security</b>
Market trading is considered a matter of economic survival. Women, in particular, say that the creation of a border marketplace is necessary for community survival.		
<b>Economic security</b>	↔	<b>Food security</b>
Unemployment and lack of job opportunities lead to limited money to purchase food and meet basic needs.		
<b>Environmental security</b>	↔	<b>Food and water security</b>
Subsistence farming is particularly vulnerable to natural disaster.		
<b>Political security</b>	↔	<b>Personal security</b>
Illegal border-crossing come with a risk of personal injury which is compounded for women.		

Due to limited educational facilities in Saburai (Bobonaro), young people can only continue to secondary school if they move away from their families and communities to live in Maliana town. Students stay in town during the week and return to Saburai on the weekends. Living alone, some girls become pregnant when they are only 14–15 years old. This leads them to drop out of school, and many never have the opportunity to complete their education. Parents say that they do not know what to do about this situation.

Border communities are vulnerable to specific human security risks if they lack adequate protection or support systems for personal, community or political security. Women and young girls are particularly vulnerable due to the normalization of domestic and gender-based violence and lack of access to education and financial resources. Communities in RAEOA felt that that COVID-19 policies exacerbated the personal insecurity of women and girls. This was particularly pointed out by communities during the consultation workshop in RAEOA, which took place after data collection to verify the collected data.

“The community is still not confident because they think that the disease is not available. It [the COVID-19 policy] is only a policy to destroy the economy, causing a number of children to be unable to access school properly. In the end, both their children and men are getting together early. Some may not want to continue their school because of insufficient economic capacity to sustain their children’s studies, so parents have taken them out of school”

–Community consultation, Suco Costa, RAEOA, 17 November 2023

A participant in Bobonaro also observed that “After COVID-19, children were not motivated to go back to school. It took some time before schoolchildren in the border region went back to school.”

In Fatululic, the community highlighted the interconnections between economic and food security during COVID-19.

*“During COVID-19, some aspects of economy did not go well, such as access to market in order to sell goods or local produce to support family’s economy. Because of limited movement, community’s local produce was not valuable and needed to be destroyed. As movement was limited, including access to markets, how can we purchase imported goods, such as rice, oil, and other basic needs? It is more difficult for people to buy our local produce inside the suco due to fear of COVID-19”*

– Focus group discussion, Fatululic, Covalima, 7 August 2023

There is often a strong connection between climate change and food security. Communities report that they started to experience more natural disasters after COVID-19. Communities in Saburai, Tapo-Memo, Gildapil and Lebos (Bobonaro) experienced landslides and flooding that destroyed farmland and crops.

*“In January, during the rainy season, we experienced landslides that destroyed all the corn that we planted. The land covered all the cornfields. Many of us suffered this. We lost all of the corn that we grew, and other local foods. Some people already started to suffer hunger because their farmland was destroyed by landslides”*

– Focus group discussion, Gildapil, Bobonaro, 27 July 2023

## 4. Observations, lessons learned and recommendations

### 4.1 Discussion

This synthesis of the ideas, aspirations and experiences shared by participants in this study about their human security concerns sheds light on the vulnerabilities, gaps and resilience of border communities. However, not all border communities face the same challenges in similar fashion, raising two key questions:

1. Which of these communities is the most vulnerable or fragile and why?
2. Which of these communities is the most resilient and why?

To address these questions, the cases of two communities with very different degrees of vulnerability are explored below.

#### Case study 1: Vulnerable communities on the south-eastern border of RAEOA

The south-east border communities of RAEOA are made up of four sub-villages: Aldeia Cutete and Aldeia Lakofuan in Suco Costa, Bairo Nun-Ana in Aldeia Bausiu (Suco Nipane) and Lakofuan. There are 176 families and 617 inhabitants. They have a population of 1,540, but are isolated from their main suco by geographical location. With the exception of Noque in Naimeco village, these aldeias could form their own suco to ensure political security and address the isolation that contributes to community insecurity.

Bairo Nun-Ana, in Aldeia Bausiu, is located in the mountains southeast of Pante Makassar, and is the most isolated area in that region. Environmental security concerns include bad roads and landslides with diminished access during the rainy season. Vulnerable people, such as the elderly and persons with physical disabilities are pushed to the margin. Of a population of 275 inhabitants, 19 people are living with a disability in Bairo Nun-Ana.

Economic security is also compromised. There is no local market near Bairo Nun-Ana, and its residents must travel great distances to Bazar Numbei and Bazar Maumate to sell local products. Vendors at these markets take advantage of the distance to purchase local produce at lower prices, leaving the producers feel they have unfairly treated. Four households also own small kiosks that sell basic commodities in their neighbourhoods. Since there is no rice cultivation in this area, farmers sell cows and vegetables in exchange for rice. Despite this, Nun-Ana is a fertile region and is more or less self-sufficient in terms of food security.

Health insecurity, however, is acute. There is no health-care centre, and nurses visit monthly (when access permits). The residents largely rely on herbal medicine and call an ambulance for serious cases and emergencies. However, due to the lengthy administrative procedures, it can take hours for the ambulance to arrive. In 2020, a woman encountered difficulty in childbirth and both she and her baby died due to the delayed arrival of medical assistance

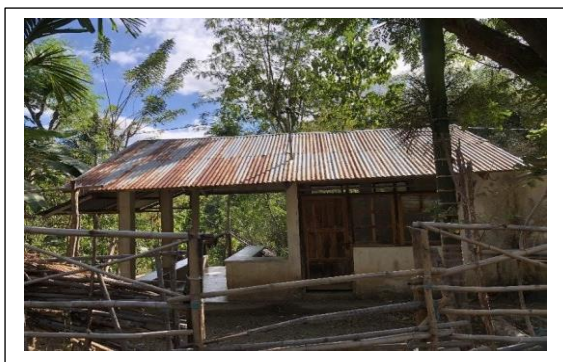


from the hospital in Pante Makassar. Post Sisca has a mobile health-care programme and a building was being constructed to provide health-care, but is abandoned. Women deliver children at home with the assistance of the *liman-badaen*, the community midwife.

In remote areas like Nun-Ana (as well as Kutete, Lakufuan and Noque), people consider domestic violence an internal family affair. Cases often go unreported to the authorities, and even if they are alerted, the authorities do not intervene except in cases of severe injury. In terms of personal security, one community member has been lost, and their whereabouts remain unknown.

There is limited schooling available in this area: preschools are located in Oesilo, Malelat and Passabe, while vocational and secondary schools are located in Passabe and in Bobometo.

The south-east bordering communities of RAEOA demonstrate how vulnerability can persist across nearly all pillars of human security.



© Nobelia/July 2023  
*Housing in Lakofuan, RAEOA*

### Case study 2: Community resilience in Saburai village

Saburai village (Bobonaro) demonstrates how working together as a way of living contributes to resilience. Working together as a group is common in Timor-Leste society. In Saburai, this collaboration builds community resilience in a border area with limited service provision.

Saburai is located almost a one-hour drive from Maliana town. The road is in very poor condition, being dusty in the dry season and slippery in the wet season. There is almost no regular public transportation in this area, making it very difficult for people to travel to town regularly.

Most houses in the village are in good condition, with proper roofing and walls made of concrete, a fact that immediately impressed the research team. The focus group discussion,

observations and interviews have showed that “working together and helping one another” is the key to success in this community.

Saburai’s strong tradition of working together has been passed down through generations. However, none of the people the research team spoke to knew when this tradition started.

When someone needs to build a house, all they need to do is collect some materials, cook some meat and vegetables, and announce it to the community.

In this traditional practice, the houseowner does not need to spend labour. All the community’s men come together to do the physical work, while all the women cook meals for everyone to eat together on working days. Everyone is invited and looks forward to working together to build a house. Indeed, people feel ashamed if they are unable to join. Community members are not allowed to come empty-handed; it is expected that each person will bring cash (as little as US\$ 2) and some rice (1–2 kg). The houseowner notes the contribution from each community member so that when the contributor is ready to build their own house they are presented that amount. In this way, it only takes US\$ 2,000–3,000, and nine days, to build a decent house.

Thus, building a house is not a significant burden for people in Saburai village. It is just the matter of preparing some cash as base, then reaching out to other people for their contribution in cash, labour and materials.

The people of Saburai believe strongly that no one can survive on their own. People need one another. Working together brings people closer and enhances social and cultural relationships. This model of resilience has endured for generations. Saburai’s people are proud of this tradition and want to make sure it is passed down to the next generation.



© E. Pinto/27 July 2023

*Saburai, Bobonaro*

## 4.2 Lessons learned

- Border communities in all municipalities identify economic and education security as priority pillars of human security. Personal, community, political and environmental security seem less urgent concerns.

- Although service providers prioritize health and education security, their delivery and coverage may not match the needs of border communities. These services tend to be less effective at borders.
- There is a potential conflict between the state and border communities due to the nomadic nature of the latter, as well as the history of border construction.
- During the COVID-19 crisis, border communities mainly depended on the security sector with limited human and financial resources of their own to uphold personal security and basic rights. This led to concerns about abuses of power and potential violations of human rights, that require strengthened measures around rule of law.
- The gender dimension of human security and its impact has long been underrated. This risks compromising existing initiatives and programmes aiming to mitigate the vulnerabilities of border communities. Addressing needs while applying a gender-sensitive approach is crucial while for universal human security.
- Socializing, sensitizing and empowering border communities is key to implementing the human security agenda quickly and effectively, making them resilient in case of future emergencies.
- It is necessary to mainstream the human security approach and strengthen the coordination and capacity of service providers and local stakeholders on the national, district and sub-district levels, both before and during emergency times.

### 4.3 Recommendations

In line with the SDGs and the Timor-Leste Strategic Development Plan 2011–2030, human-security-based approaches should:

- be equitable and efficient
- address the needs and access to all sectors for all age groups of the population
- address the special needs of women and young girls
- strengthen the partnership between community, government and development partners to deliver essential services

Policy reforms are necessary to improve political, personal, community and environmental security, while also integrating a focus on gender into the policy reform process. All line ministries and stakeholders belonging to all sectors, as well as national and local stakeholders in specific sectors, need good communication and coordination to respond effectively to human security needs. It is also crucial to sensitize communities by providing life-saving information on the COVID-19 pandemic and thus avoid miscommunication and misinformation, while ensuring a fast and effective local response.

#### Education security

*Key policymakers: Secretary of State for Social Communication; Ministry of Education; Secretary of State for Equality.*

- Increase the number of preschools, primary, pre-secondary, secondary, vocational schools and learning groups, and provide the necessary teaching materials, facilities and human resources.
- Invest in skills development for adolescents to improve employability.
- Subsidize and provide safe, secure dormitories for girls and youth homes in municipal centres that provide secondary education facilities, so that students can continue their education beyond primary school.
- Strengthen the information and communication technology infrastructure and facilities at schools to create the conditions for online learning.

### Health security

*Key policymakers: Ministry of Health; Secretary of State for Equality.*

- Increase the number of medical staff, permanent clinics and hospitals, as well as mobile clinics at suco and aldeia levels.
- Address the health security concerns around diseases commonly found in border areas, such as tuberculosis and respiratory diseases, through awareness-raising and health education.
- Integrate gender-sensitive policies in the reproductive health sector and highlight the particular needs of female health-care staff, pregnant women, lactating mothers and girls as a focus for affirmative action policy.
- Collaborate with stakeholders to disseminate clear and correct COVID-19 information to the local community, such as vaccination.
- Improve the implementation and monitoring of mechanisms and programmes addressing malnutrition.

### Personal security

*Key policymakers: Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Education; Ombudsman for Human Rights and Justice.*

- Provide civic education at community level to raise public awareness of human rights.
- Support key stakeholders (border police) and service providers to work with communities to devise policies that reflect local realities, and reconsider the use of terms such as “illegal trading” and “illegal crossing” in laws and policies to describe common border-crossing activities, as these criminalize communities.
- Raise awareness among communities of gender and child protection, and engage with existing mindsets and cultural traditions to reduce the particular risks of disadvantage, exploitation and violence faced by women and children in border communities.

### Environmental security

*Key policymaker: Ministry of Tourism, Commerce and Industry.*

- Invest in evidence-based research and policies regarding climate change and environmental protections to reduce vulnerabilities affecting multiple forms of human security.
- Put in place financial and action plans for environmental awareness-raising and education amongst communities to support them in moving away from harmful practices and addressing short- and long-term environmental risks such as water shortages and desertification.
- Work with communities to identify high-risk areas vulnerable to extreme weather impacts and establish early warning systems.

### Economic security

*Key policymakers: Ministry of Interior; Ministry of Tourism, Commerce and Industry; Ministry of Agriculture; Ministry of Public Works; Secretary of State for Co-operatives; Secretary of State for Professional Training and Employment.*

- Recognize that cross-border trading as an important source of local livelihoods. Reassess the criminalization of this trade and instead facilitate trade in necessary goods in cross-border markets.
- Promote cooperatives and other community-based initiatives that engage in for-profit activities.
- Improve basic infrastructure, such as electricity, roads, bridges and markets.
- Create training opportunities for qualified and paid health workers, midwives, teachers and agricultural workers.
- Ensure social protection coverage for those eligible under existing programmes, and increasing support in kind and cash for vulnerable communities, women and children, particularly during crises.

### Food security

*Key policymakers: Ministry of Agriculture; Ministry of Tourism, Commerce and Industry; Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport; Secretary of State for Co-operatives; Secretary of State for Professional Training and Employment.*

- Support subsistence farmers with small loans, seeds and technologies to increase food production and develop emergency response for health or climate emergencies.
- Educate communities on environmental issues, climate change, sustainable development of local food crops and sustainable management of water resources, and nutrition for pregnant and lactating women and children.
- Support school-based programmes to increase knowledge of nutrition, sustainable food production and water management.

## Community security

*Key policymakers: Ministry of Interior; Ministry of Social Solidarity and Inclusion; Ministry of State Administration; Secretary of State for Equality.*

- Build community resilience by combining informal and formal dispute resolution mechanisms to address conflicts over land, natural resources and property.
- Develop training on gender-based violence and domestic violence tailored to community needs and sensitive to local understanding of private issues and public crime. Build the capacity of service providers to strengthen information dissemination and implementation of laws and regulations.
- Coordinate with neighbouring Indonesia to establish boundary commissions in disputed territory to address and reduce cross-border conflicts.
- Strengthening the capacity of custom offices to detect the movement of prohibited goods and human trafficking.
- Consider use of non-security measures to respond to emergencies such as COVID-19 instead of depending on the police and military.

## Political security

*Key policymakers: Ministry of Justice; Ministry of Interior; Ministry of State Administration; Ombudsman for Human Rights and Justice.*

- Improve community access to legal services to engage with border security issues, such as protecting the rights and access to services of children of international and/or uneducated parents.
- Strengthen policy implementation and rule of law on human security issues.
- Integrate human-rights-sensitive approaches in security policies to address abuses of power and violence by the security sector.

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# Annexes

## Annex 1. Activity partner villages in three municipalities of Timor-Leste

Municipality	Administrative Post	Suco	Date of FGD	Total	Female	Male	Composition
Covalima	Fatumean	Belulic Leten	7 August 2023	14	2	12	government authorities (MAE, MJDAC, SMASA, MJPA), schools, health posts, media, and youth groups
		Fatumean	7 August 2023	13	8	5	government authorities (SEI, MAE), schools, local groups
	Tilomar	Beseuc	3 August 2023	14	6	8	government authority (MAE), service providers (MERCY CORPS), church and youth groups
		Lalawa	7 August 2023	14	9	5	government authorities (MAE), women and youth groups, the media
	Fatululic	Fatululic	7 August 2023	13	7	6	teachers, health workers, church, service providers (WORLD VISON), and government authorities
		<b>Total</b>		<b>68</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>36</b>	
Municipality		Suco	Date of FGD	Total	Female	Male	Composition
Bobonaro	Maliana	Tapo-Memo	27 July 2023	15	10	5	youth and women's representatives from 3 different sub-villages
		Saburai	27 July 2023	9	7	2	chief of sub-village, youth representatives
	Lolotoe	Lebos	28 July 2023	17	4	13	F-FDTL, UPF, youth treasury of groups, chief of sub-village, elders
		Gildapil	27 July 2023	18	11	7	health post, vetrans, two persons with disability, community members, elders
		Saburai	27 July 2023	9	7	2	chief of sub-village, youth representatives
	Balibo	Leohito	27 July 2023	11	5	6	education, youth, farmers, village administration staff, agriculture groups / stakeholders
		Batugade	29 July 2023	13	5	8	youth representative, youth leader, women's delegates, stakeholders
		Cowa	26 July 2023	12	9	3	Health post, teachers, health assistant, youth representative, 3 stakeholder community groups
		<b>Total</b>		<b>95</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>44</b>	
Municipality		Suco	Date of FGD	Total	Female	Male	Composition
RAEOA	Nitibe	Bene-ufe	29 July 2023	27	13	14	government authorities, community (farmers)
		Usitaco	27 July 2023	13	1	12	government authorities, community (farmers)
		Banafi	28 July 2023	27	13	14	local authorities, cooperative groups, local king, communities
		Lelaufe	26 July 2023	25	13	12	teacher, communities (farmers), local authorities.
	Passabe	Malelat	27 July 2023	10	4	6	cooperative groups, local NGOs, international agencies, teachers, health worker, local authorities, communities.
		Abani	26 July 2023	17	2	15	cooperative groups, community development officer (special technic of post-administrator passabe), local authorities, local ngos, teachers.
	Oesilo	Usitaqueno	26 July 2023	13	4	9	government authorities, PNTL, school, cooperatives and youth groups
		Bobometo	27 July 2023	7	1	6	government authorities, health worker and community
	Pante Macassar	Naimeco	26 July 2023	13	2	11	government authorities, UPF, school, local groups
		Nipane	25 July 2023	10	4	6	government authorities, UPF, teacher, health worker, agriculture groups
		Costa	25 July 2023	14	6	8	government authorities and local groups.
		<b>Total</b>		<b>176</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>113</b>	

## Annex 2. Population statistics of border communities<sup>30</sup>

Bobonaro				
Administrative Post	Suco	Total	Male	Female
Balibo				
	Batugade	3,164	1,607	1,557
	Cowa	1,773	917	856
	Leohito	3,611	1,878	1,733
Lolotoe				
	Gildapil	1,165	560	605
	Lebos	1,039	539	500
Maliana				
	Saburai	2,594	1,243	1,351
	Tapo-Memo	4,848	2,443	2,405
Total		18,194	9,187	9,007
Covalima				
Tilomar				
	Beiseuc	2,683	1,341	1,342
	Lalawa	1,771	955	816
Fatumean				
	Belulic Leten	1,998	1,035	963
	Fatumea	759	387	372
Fatululic				
	Fatululic	692	352	340
Total		7,903	4,070	3,833
RAEOA				
Nitibe				
	Bene-ufe	3,164	1,612	1,552
	Banafi	1,968	1,021	947
	Lelaufe	3,807	1,937	1,870
	Usitaco	2,347	1,211	1,136
Oesilo				
	Bobometo	8,060	4,057	4,003
	Usitaqueno	1,233	613	620
Pante Macassar				
	Costa	16,783	8,563	8,220
	Naimeco	4,961	2,513	2,448
	Nipane	2,335	1,153	1,182
Passabe				
	Abani	7,373	3,758	3,615
	Malelat	1,764	889	875
Total		53,795	27,327	26,468
Total of all population		79,892	40,584	39,308

<sup>30</sup> Timor-Leste National Institute of Statistics, *Timor-Leste Population and Housing Census 2022 Main Report*, INETL, Dili, 2023, <<https://inetl-ip.gov.tl/2023/05/18/main-report-timor-les-te-population-and-housing-census-2022>>, accessed 15 February 2024.

### Annex 3. Environmental security: Water resources management in RAEOA

No	Name of Suco/Aldeia	Name of Water Spring	Present condition
1	Aldeia Nunu-ana	Be'e matan 4 water springs: Oelolok, Aisaon, Sopo and Oeno	
2	Aldeia Cutete	4 water springs: Oelolok, Aisaon, Sopo and Oeno	Conservation effort is ongoing.
3	Aldeia Noke	4 water springs: Oel-maman, Oemeno, Oe-susu and Oetnanan	Drying out during dry season / one is protected.
4	Aldeia Lakofoan	7 water springs	Two are protected
5	Suco Abani	6 water springs: Tua Mina, Bampua, Oel Sia'e, Oel Bonak, Oe Molo, Matkan and Oel Nupo	Conservation has been launched by SARS
6	Suco Malelat	Boen Sena lokaliza iha foho Bitobe; Nefo Obe lokaliza iha foho nasi lele; na'a boek lokaliza iha foho Hau kilo; Oel Honis lokaliza iha foho meol.	Be matan bot nakonu ho Aihoris; Prevensaun ba be matan: kuda aihoris.
7	Aldeia Hautefo	Oel-bisnaen; Oel-sonab; Oe-puan (being utilised); Oel-kulum; Nasinael; Oe-ana	Conserved but water remains low during dry seasons.
8	Suco Usi Taqueno	11 water springs: Oelatfon (Bairo huaatba), Neksena (kuatnana A/B) and Faen lul (Bairro Neof muti); the community use only these 3 waters spring; Other 6 water springs are: Nitas, Oe-Nael, Man Manas, Ko'e, Bi Neno, Oe Kilo; Olbalena near Tumin (many people access it) and Unini.	Efforts for conservation such as creating fences; and mobilising general cleaning in all 3 water springs; (rampant landslides)
9	Suco Bobometo	3 water springs; Ansao, Noel-ekat, bi Ousi; binesi and Baine which are in distant locations; Oematobe water spring is channelled to Aldeia Usapi-kole;	Ansao water spring is protected zone; and so are others.
10	Suco Usi Taco	3 water springs: oeltume, oelsines and oelbumau	Protected zones
11	Suco Lela Ufe	Bairo Noa-ana in Aldeia Kuatenes access water spring of Welfeno. People of Mahata-Lela-Ufe - Welkaka water spring;	However they are lack of water during dry season; they have to take drinking water from Noebesi river;
12	Aldeia Mana of Bene Ufe	2 water springs: Oelaklali; Ona'a water spring.	Protected zones.

## Annex 4. Questionnaires for local stakeholders and service providers

### The enumerators will interview “local stakeholders” defined as follows:

- 1) Groups which are government authorities, professional associations, faith-based organizations, women’s organizations and youth groups/organizations that are formal or informal; and
- 2) Group/organization with members equal to or more than five members may be included.

### Start instructions for enumerators:

1. **Ask the following pre-screening questions** for the groups that are in the list with 5 members or more:

### Pre-screening questions. If NO to these questions, then stop.

Are there 5 members or more in your group? Yes/No

Do you have a clear objective shared by all members of your group? Yes/No

Did your group meet/organize activities at least twice in the past 6 months? Yes/No

### QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Name of the group \_\_\_\_\_

2. When was this group established? \_\_\_\_\_

3. Where is this group based?

⇒ Choose from list of municipalities / administrative posts / sucos / aldeias

4. Add the group’s GPS location (for the group’s ‘headquarters’ i.e. where it is based)

5. Which location does your group usually implement activities/programs? Please indicate the lowest administrative level (more than one option is ok)

⇒ Choose from list of municipalities / administrative posts / sucos / aldeias

6. How many staff/members are there in the group?

- a. 1
- b. 2
- c. 3
- d. 4
- e. 5
- f. More than 5
- g. I don’t know

7. Does your group have members in the following age groups?

- a. Age 14 or younger – Yes / No / I don’t know

- b. From age 15 to age 19 – Yes / No / I don't know
- c. From age 20 to age 24 – Yes / No / I don't know
- d. Age 25 and older – Yes / No / I don't know

8. What is the gender distribution of this group?

- a. Only men
- b. Mostly men
- c. Only women
- d. Mostly women
- e. More or less equal numbers of men and women
- f. Mostly non-binary or gender non-confirmed
- g. I don't know

9. Are there any persons with disabilities in this group?

- a. No
- b. I don't know
- c. Yes

10. (if Q9 = c) How many persons with disabilities are there in your group?

\_\_\_\_\_

11. What is the objective of this group? \_\_\_\_\_

12. What is the type of this group?

- a. Government
- b. Professional associations
- c. Religious organizations
- d. Women's organizations
- e. Youth organizations
- f. Others, please specify: \_\_\_\_\_

13. What is the area of activity (more than one option is ok):

- a. Economy
- b. Agriculture/food
- c. Health
- d. Environment
- e. Personal
- f. Communal
- g. Political
- h. Education
- i. Others, please specify: \_\_\_\_\_

14. What is the specific activity? \_\_\_\_\_

15. What is the main function of your group? (more than one option is ok):

- a. To develop capacities of communities

- b. To provide assistance for other groups or organizations
- c. To advocate on a specific issue
- d. To prevent conflicts among communities
- e. To provide humanitarian assistances
- f. To gather people together
- g. To represent a or some particular groups
- h. Others, please specify: \_\_\_\_\_

16. What activities are currently undertaken by the group? \_\_\_\_\_

17. How often does the group implement routine activities and programmes?

- a. Daily
- b. Weekly
- c. Monthly
- d. A few times a year
- e. Others, please identify: \_\_\_\_\_
- f. I don't know

18. What is your target population? (more than one option is ok):

- a. The youth
- b. The elders
- c. People with disabilities
- d. Women
- e. Men
- f. Children
- g. General public
- h. Others, please specify: \_\_\_\_\_

19. From whom does the group get support?

- a. Government
- b. CSO
- c. International agencies
- d. Others, please specify: \_\_\_\_\_

20. Is this group registered?

- a. Registered in the Ministry of Justice
- b. Registered in FONGTIL
- c. Registered in other network, please identify: \_\_\_\_\_
- d. Not registered
- e. I don't know

21. Information of the group:

- a. Coordinator of group:
- b. Contact number of coordinator:
- c. Website:
- d. Social media:

e. Email:

22. Does your group work with/for border communities?

23. (If yes on Q.22) Which border suco does your group focus?

24. What is the most pressing issue of the border community?

## QUESTIONNAIRE OF SERVICE PROVIDERS AND ACCESS TO ESSENTIAL SECTORS

This questionnaire ONLY applies to national or international groups/organizations that are providing services.

### QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Name of the institution/agency

\_\_\_\_\_

2. Which sector does this institution/agency serve? (more than one option)

- a. Economy
- b. Food
- c. Health
- d. Legal
- e. Shelter
- f. WASH
- g. Social protection
- h. Humanitarian assistance
- i. Education
- j. Others, please specify: \_\_\_\_\_

3. What is the location of this institution? (more than one option)

Municipality \_\_\_\_\_

Administrative post \_\_\_\_\_

Suco \_\_\_\_\_

Aldeia \_\_\_\_\_

4. Add the group's GPS location (for the group's 'headquarters' i.e. where it is based)

5. Where is the location of intervention? (more than one option is ok)

⇒ Choose from list of municipalities / administrative posts / sucos / aldeias

6. What kind of service provision?

- a. National
- b. International

- c. Community-based
  - d. Others
  - e. I don't know
7. What service does this institution/agency provide? (more than one option)
- a. Access to market
  - b. Growing crops
  - c. Healing/consultation/vaccination
  - d. Legal services, such as access to tribunal and police
  - e. Assisting victims of domestic and gender-based violence
  - f. Access to WASH
  - g. Implementing regular social protection policies
  - h. Providing humanitarian assistance for victims or refugees of natural disasters or other non-traditional security threats
  - i. Improving skills and knowledge through formal and informal education
  - j. Others, please specify: \_\_\_\_\_
8. If service provided related to selling and buying (Q.7a), where is the nearest market of the area? \_\_\_\_\_ **Add the market location on GPS.**
9. If service provided related to growing crops (Q.7b), where is the nearest crop field of the area? \_\_\_\_\_ **Add the crop field location on GPS.**
10. If service provided is health related (Q7.c), where is the nearest hospital or health centre? \_\_\_\_\_ **Add hospital and health centre location on GPS.**
11. If service provided is legal service, such as access to tribunal and police (Q7.d), where is the nearest police station and court in the area? **Add the police station and course location on GPS.**
12. If service provided is assisting victims of domestic and gender-based violence (Q7.e), where is the nearest shelter of the area?
13. If service provided related to WASH (Q.7f), where is the nearest water source of the area? \_\_\_\_\_ **Add the location of water source on GPS.**
14. If service provided is social protection related (Q7.g), where is the nearest place of distribution of bank? \_\_\_\_\_ **Add bank location to GPS.**
15. If service provided is humanitarian assistance (Q7.h), where is the nearest location of distributing centre? \_\_\_\_\_ **Add centre location on GPS.**
16. If service provided is education (Q.7i), where is the nearest training center or school? \_\_\_\_\_ **Add school or centre location on GPS.**
17. Who is your target beneficiary? (more than one option):



- a. The youth
- b. The elders
- c. People with disabilities
- d. Women
- e. Men
- f. Children
- g. General public
- h. Others, please specify: \_\_\_\_\_

18. How often does the institution/agency implement routine activities and programmes?

- a. Daily
- b. Weekly
- c. Monthly
- d. A few times a year
- e. Others, please identify: \_\_\_\_\_
- f. I don't know

19. Does your group work with/for border communities? Yes/No/I don't know

20. (If yes on Q.19) Is your institution close to a border community? Yes/No/I don't know

21. (If no on Q. 20) How far?

- a. Under 1 hour (by foot)
- b. 1-2 hour (by foot)
- c. 2-3 hour (by foot)
- d. 4-5 hour (by foot)
- e. More than 5 hour (by foot)

22. (If yes on Q.20) What issue or challenge did the institution/agency face when serving needs of border communities before COVID-19?

23. (If yes on Q.20) What issue or challenge does the institution/agency face when serving needs of border communities during COVID-19?

24. (If yes on Q.20) What issue or challenge did the institution/agency face when serving needs of border communities after COVID-19?

25. Information of the group:

- a. Coordinator of group:
- b. Contact number of coordinator:
- c. Website:
- d. Social media:
- e. Email:

## Annex 5. Terms of reference

IOM Mission – Timor-Leste

## Terms of Reference

### Introduction

Timor-Leste's municipalities and border communities, particularly the hard-to-reach ones, face unique and multi-dimensional challenges and vulnerabilities, owing to their remoteness and limited access to public services. To support the Government of Timor-Leste efforts to ensure a more inclusive and comprehensive emergency response and recovery, it requires an increased understanding of the specific needs and gaps of the remote border regions and vulnerable populations that reside therein. In order to achieve this objective and promote effective socio-economic recovery, a multi-sectoral approach is required, involving a wide segment of society such as border management authorities, traditional authorities, businesses, religious leaders, women's groups, youth groups and civil society organizations that all play an important role in current as well as future disaster risk reduction, prevention, and response efforts at the local level.

IOM and UNICEF have identified the human security approach as an effective mechanism to bring stakeholders together to find comprehensive solutions to pressing and deep-rooted challenges that the border communities face. The project related to this CEI therefore aims to support the Government of Timor-Leste's efforts contribute to more inclusive COVID-19 response and recovery, using the approach to ensure a people-centered, comprehensive, context specific and prevention-oriented aspects are considered throughout the implementation of all activities.

### Background – The Human Security Approach

The Human security concept and approach places the focus individual as the referent object of security and underscores the need to consider the survival, livelihood, and dignity of individuals as the fundamental basis for national, regional, and international peace and development. It is a multi-sectoral and flexible concept that facilitates the sharing of experiences and analysis of the diverse challenges faced in the border areas. Better understanding of the vulnerability of each group, and their diverse coping mechanisms, will be key to refine future preparedness and response actions, both in the context of COVID-19 and other potential threats that may arise in border areas. Guided by five fundamental principles: *People-centered, comprehensive, context-specific, prevention-oriented and protection and empowerment*, the approach provides a useful tool and framework to better understand the specific needs and for developing a step-by-step analytical process for implementation of human security initiatives.

### Resources for Human Security Concept including Tools, and Guidance:

- Developing Assessment and Tools Applying the Human Security Approach (Annex 1)
- UNTFHS Website: <https://www.un.org/humansecurity/what-is-human-security/>

- UNTFHS Human Security Handbook: <https://www.un.org/humansecurity/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/h2.pdf>
- Human Security Video Gallery: <https://www.un.org/humansecurity/video-gallery/>

#### Project and Donor information:

**Title of the Program:** Assessing vulnerabilities and resilience in border communities in Timor-Leste through the human security approach in the context of COVID-19

**Implementing UN organization(s):** International Organization for Migration (IOM), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)

**Donor:** United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security (UNTFHS)

**Target SGD's:** SDG1, SDG3, SDG5, SDG10, SDG16

#### Objective

The objective of the project is to enhance the understanding of key policy makers and implementers of the specific needs of remote border regions, leading to a more inclusive and comprehensive COVID-19 response and recovery.

#### Deliverables:

Through this project IOM, on behalf of the donor and in partnership with UNICEF, intends to hire a local institution as the implementing partner to conduct the project activities in close coordination with the Government of Timor-Leste's Ministry of Interior as well as local authorities and stakeholders in the targeted municipalities.

The selected institution will be responsible for the implementation of the project activities outlined below between (tentatively) **1 August 2022 to 30 November 2022** (4 months in total). Geographically the assessment will cover border areas in Covalima, Bobonaro and the Special Administrative Region of Oe-Cusse-Ambeno and may also integrate a focus on communities from these border areas who may be temporarily residing in Dili. The selected institution will work under the overall supervision of a program management team comprised of the technical experts from the partnering UN agencies (IOM and UNICEF) and the Human Security Unit in New York.

The institution will be expected to perform the following activities and deliverables during the project duration:

Activity	Deliverables	Tentative payment schedule
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Take <a href="#">UNSSC's human security online training course</a></li> <li>- Conduct desk review on relevant materials related to border areas, and initial interviews as needed</li> </ul>	1. Inception report including key findings from workshops, draft assessment framework, ethical considerations, data collection tools, and detailed timeline	25%

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Organize three inception meetings/workshops (one in each target municipality)</li> </ul>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Lead an initial discussion with Human Security Unit and/or share assessment framework with the Unit for inputs prior to conducting the assessment.</li> <li>- Conduct an in-depth, multi-sectoral human security assessment in border and at-risk communities in target Sucos applying a human security approach. The assessment should incorporate the guidelines in Annex I.</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. Assessment report with findings, analysis, and recommendations</li> <li>3. Interactive mapping of mobility, access to services and markets</li> <li>4. Mapping of local stakeholders to raise the visibility of local groups, including government authorities, professional associations, faith-based organizations, women's organizations and youth groups</li> </ol>	46%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Develop a policy brief, and provide inputs for a professional video, to inform local, national, and transnational decision-making</li> <li>- Organize 4 dissemination workshops with local and national stakeholders on the findings and recommendations of the assessment (one in each target municipality plus one at national level)</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. Policy brief presenting the concept of human security, a summary of the assessment findings and analysis, as well as recommended policy and programming options, in English and two to four local languages</li> <li>6. Workshop report including pre- and post-survey of participants to evidence improved understanding of border community vulnerabilities using human security approach</li> </ol>	13%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Organize consultation meetings with relevant stakeholders to discuss assessment results and lessons learnt from the COVID-19 crisis and how to enhance future emergency preparedness plans and actions using the human security approach</li> <li>- Deliver 12 capacity-building sessions (four/municipality) to strengthen local coordination, preparedness, and emergency management mechanisms, based on gaps</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>7. Consultation report including a summary analysis from consultation meetings with at least 60 stakeholders from diverse groups including professional associations, faith-based organizations, women's organizations and youth groups and number of preparedness and emergency management mechanisms developed and/or strengthened (at least 3);</li> </ol> <p>A comprehensive training report including results from the capacity building sessions.</p>	16%

identified through assessment and consultations		
<p><b>Overarching Outcomes:</b></p> <p>The project has been designed in an integrated manner, with significant synergies between the activities, outputs, and outcomes. As such, outcome 1 will contribute to outcome 2 in that the assessment and mapping will feed into the collective reflection process undertaken under outcome 2. Likewise, the policy briefs and recommendations from outcome 1 will also inform the capacity building and support to coordination, preparedness, and emergency mechanisms under outcome 2. The projects overarching outcomes are formulated as follows:</p> <p><i>Outcome 1: Enhanced understanding of the specific needs and gaps of remote border and at-risk communities</i></p> <p><i>Outcome 2: Strengthened partnerships and coordination among local stakeholders in border regions</i></p>		
<p><b>Expected results</b></p> <p>The objective of this project is to contribute to more inclusive and comprehensive COVID-19 response and recovery by enhancing the understanding of key policymakers of the specific needs and gaps of the remote border regions, using the human security approach. As current COVID-19 response plans in Timor-Leste do not fully take into consideration the specific needs and gaps of border communities and vulnerable minorities such as undocumented migrants, the project aims to complement existing national and local plans and strategies by applying the Human Security (HS) approach. The expected result and impact are better understanding among government stakeholders and policymakers regarding the unique vulnerabilities and needs of border communities, in turn contributing to enhanced future preparedness and response actions, both in the context of COVID-19 and any other potential emergencies.</p>		

<b>Impact</b>
See above paragraph
<b>Partnerships and collaboration</b> <p>As the lead agency, IOM is responsible for the overall implementation of the project in close coordination with UNICEF and Government partners at central and subnational levels. Throughout the IOM and UNICEF will conduct joint monitoring, involving the Government whenever possible, to follow up closely on project implementation and support the institution where needed.</p>
<b>Revised Proposed timeline:</b>
1 April - 30 September 2023 (6 months)
<b>Qualification and experience</b>
<p>The interested institution shall have the following competencies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expertise on carrying out in-depth research and assessments with a multi-sectoral approach</li> <li>• Ability to develop GIS Mapping and IEC material</li> <li>• Experience in organizing consultative and interactive multi-stakeholder workshops</li> <li>• Experience and knowledge of working in local and remote border communities with a different range of stakeholders at national and local levels</li> <li>• Experience in border community outreach activities and familiarity with migration and border management</li> <li>• Excellent coordination and communication skills and readiness to keep partnering organizations updated and consulted on the progress and challenges encountered</li> </ul>
<b>Submission of the project proposal</b>
N/A
<b>Deadline for completion of activities</b>
30-Nov-2022

### Developing Assessment and Tools Applying the Human Security Approach

#### **1. Human security applied to the content, methodology and recommendations**

- a. In developing an assessment tool, the human security framework will guide decisions on:
  - i. The design and content of the assessment tool (variables, topics, etc.)
  - ii. The methodology used to implement the tool (processes)
  - iii. Considerations on how the information gathered from the tool is used to

- develop actions or recommendations (solutions)
- b. The human security framework can also function as a broader umbrella under which existing tools and data collection instruments (or data) can be brought together and connected.

## **2. Content/variables of the assessment:**

- a. In designing the assessment framework, consider
  - i. Risks and threats across human security dimensions as well as from where they originate (global, regional, national, local)
  - ii. The impacts of these risks and crises on institutions and on people (across human security dimensions) –plus ways to consider how they are interconnected or compounding (domino effect)
  - iii. Needs and vulnerability (current and potential status). Consider perceived need, expressed need, absolute need and relative need.
  - iv. Disaggregated data by subgroup
  - v. What exists! Institutional and community assets, resources and capacities – policies, programs, people, organizations, structures, services, etc.

## **3. The processes or methodology for undertaking the assessment**

- a. In defining how the assessment will be undertaken, consider
  - i. Consultations to develop the assessment framework, define its scope and relevant components, including with communities
  - ii. Instruments or sources to capture quantitative/administrative data and qualitative data (existing and new)
  - iii. Inclusive and representative engagement in data collection, as feasible.
  - iv. Post-assessment consultative and inclusive validation of findings as well as sustained dialogue mechanisms for collaborative planning/decision-making
  - v. Establishing mechanisms for ongoing data collection?

## **4. Outputs of the assessment: Recommendations and solutions**

- a. A human security assessment should also guide how data is used to develop recommendations and solutions. To this end consider,
  - i. Integrated solutions and entry points with the most positive multiplier effects on other HS dimensions (combined outputs of multiple stakeholders)
  - ii. A whole-of-society approach (levels and sectors) at the local level to promote and implement solutions
  - iii. Comprehensive responses that also contain targeted elements as necessary to reach those furthest behind or most vulnerable
  - iv. Link efforts to strengthen the policy/institutional environment with community-based solutions (protection and empowerment)
  - v. Building on what exists at the local level and enhancing capacities to manage/resilience to emerging and likely future risks
  - vi. To the extent possible, tackle root and underlying causes for greater impact and sustainability

## **5. Other considerations**

- i. What assessments and data collection processes already exist? How can the human security framework connect existing information, and/or help identify additional data or processes necessary to connect multiple assessment processes?
- ii. Are all components/steps suited to all stakeholders? How to be inclusive and comprehensive while also being targeted and efficient.
- iii. Structure and participation of consultative processes to address sensitivities

of information and vulnerability of certain groups.

- iv. While achieving all the elements outlined may not be feasible, the principles must be applied together and not 'cherry picked' when considering the design/content, methodology/processes or solutions/recommendations.





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