The Nabilan Program: Innovations and challenges in ending violence against women in Timor-Leste

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Timor-Leste Context
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- Post-conflict setting, history of colonization, occupation, and displacement
- Normalisation of violence
- Half of the population living below the poverty line
- Literacy: 50%
- Predominantly Catholic
- 2010 Law against Domestic Violence.
- 2009-2010 Timor-Leste DHS: 39.2% women have experienced physical or sexual violence since the age of 15.
The *Nabilan* Program aims to reduce the proportion of women who experience violence, and improve well-being for women and children affected by violence.

Lack of recent reliable data on prevalence and perpetration rates of violence against women for Timor-Leste.

Combined methodology: WHO Multi-country Study on Women’s Health and Domestic Violence against Women, and UN Multi-country Study on Men and Violence.
Challenges: Language

• Tetum, Portuguese, and Bahasa Indonesia, as well as 26 indigenous languages
• Maintaining adherence to international methodology while ensuring widespread comprehension
• Questions phrased in first-person and hypotheticals didn’t work
• Limited numeracy
Challenges: Size

• Logistical challenges
  • Poor road quality or lack of roads

• Confidentiality
  • Intricate family and social networks, everyone knows everyone
  • Communication of study to other communities, news travels quickly
  • Difficulty in finding private spaces

• Large families
  • Time constraints on female respondents

• Survey fatigue, distrust of NGOs
Challenges: Statistical data

- Nationally-representative sample
- Communicating methodology and findings to local stakeholders
- Inconsistent numbers of households in EAs
- Lack of up-to-date maps and household lists
Challenges: Enumerator perceptions

- High tolerance and normalisation of violence
- Urban/rural divisions: perceptions of Dili-based enumerators of rural populations
- Catholicism underpinning assumptions about relationships, right and wrong
- Traditional beliefs: *koki*
Opportunities: the *Nabilan* Program

- Eight-year timeline
- Transition to local management
- Multi-sectoral, working through local government and non-government partners.
- Working across the ecological model
- Supporting activities including shelters, court monitoring, and men’s behaviour change programs
- Promoting gender-equitable workplaces
The four integrated pillars of the *Nabilan* Program, based on National Action Plan on Gender-based Violence.
Opportunities: *Nabilan* Program Research

- Commitment to evidence-based programming
- Mapping of NGO prevention activities
- Scoping assessment of access to justice
- Economic Dimensions of Domestic Violence
- Upcoming research: motivators of men’s behaviour change, and women’s pathways to services and justice.
- Baseline results expected in late 2015
Nabilan Baseline: Female Respondent Comments

• “I want to share my thinking because for some, this always happens: husbands beat wives. To move forward, we need to change this behaviour.”

• “I feel happy to have said out loud what I feel.”

• “I want to change men’s behaviour which always pushes women to work inside the house, because I want women and men to do the same work with the same rights.”
• “This research opened my understanding about how to consider women as people, and not as objects to use as we want.”

• “This research is very important because [it] opened my thinking that when we force a person's daughter to sleep with us, this is a sexual violation, and beating someone's daughter, this is domestic violence. As men, we must consider women because women have the same rights as men. Thank you very much.”

• “I feel very proud of this interview because this is a motivation for me to change myself and avoid violence and crime.”
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Obrigadu barak