

TIMOR - LESTE*

Women and Youth Democratic Engagement

DURATION: 03/2026 – 12/2027

Timor-Leste has made progress in women's political participation, with 36.9% representation in Parliament following the 2023 elections, yet women remain underrepresented in sub-national decision-making roles. In the recent Suco (village) elections, only 4% of Suco Chiefs are women. Deep-rooted gender norms, limited access to networks, and limited opportunities to strengthen and develop strategic leadership capacity hinder women's meaningful participation, especially among marginalised groups, including women with disabilities.

Despite legal frameworks such as the Suco Law (Law No. 9/2016), which establishes village governance structures, introduces election quotas, and promotes women's participation in leadership, significant barriers to leadership persist due to entrenched cultural and social constraints.

This project addresses these gaps by strengthening leadership, promoting gender equality, and fostering inclusive participation in governance and decision-making processes.

This project aims to strengthen the leadership, participation, and influence of women and emerging leaders in decision-making and governance in Timor-Leste:



Enhancing knowledge and understanding of local governance systems and the Local Power Law¹ and of normative or legal frameworks pertaining to gender equality and political participation (international, regional or national).



Strengthening capacities of emerging local leaders in transformative leadership, conflict resolution, decision-making, public speaking, and advocacy and communications among others.



Promoting gender equality and challenging discriminatory social norms and stereotypes.



Fostering networks, collaboration, and dialogue between stakeholders and communities.



Ensuring inclusive and meaningful participation of marginalized groups in the governance processes, including of women with disabilities.

*Two municipalities: Baucau and RAE OA.

¹ Lei Numeru 23_2021_10 de Novembro, see [here](#).

KEY TARGETS INCLUDE

120

EMERGING
LEADERS

trained and mentored to strengthen leadership, advocacy, and participation in local governance and decision-making processes

2

MUNICIPAL
FORUMS AND
MULTIPLE COMMUNITY
DIALOGUES

conducted to enhance exchanges, networking and community engagement on governance and gender equality

10

TRAINERS

equipped to deliver trainings on the Local Power Law, local governance and leadership skills in the two municipalities

10

COMMUNITY THEATRE
PERFORMANCES AND A
VIDEO CAMPAIGN

on eliminating violence against women in politics and challenging discriminatory social norms

PARTNERSHIPS



Masine Neo Oe-cusse (MANEO),
in RAEOA Municipality

Unidade Feto ba Dezenvolvimentu (UFD),
in the Baucau Municipality

KEY ACTIVITIES

- ▶ Facilitate coordination meetings with CSOs and conduct Training of Trainers for sub-partners.
- ▶ Deliver trainings on the Local Power Law, legal and normative frameworks on gender equality, and transformative leadership skills.
- ▶ Provide mentoring sessions and virtual bi-monthly coordination to strengthen leadership skills and advocacy efforts.
- ▶ Organize community dialogues and municipal level forums to promote dialogue and engagement in communities.
- ▶ Implement advocacy initiatives through theatre workshops and community theatre performances.
- ▶ Launch a video campaign and celebrate the 16 Days Campaign against gender-based violence to raise awareness on violence against women in politics and challenge discriminatory norms.



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