

Delivering Survivor-Centered Response to Gender-Based Violence Survivors in Papua New Guinea and Timor-Leste



More than **2 in 3** women in PNG have experienced some form of physical and/or sexual violence



Almost **2 in 3** women in Timor-Leste experienced intimate partner violence in their lifetime.



More than **3 in 4** women and men in Timor-Leste believe a man is justified in beating his wife.

Though the project Strengthening National Capacities of Health Sector in Papua New Guinea and Timor-Leste to Deliver Survivor-Centered Response to Gender-Based Violence (GBV) was envisioned prior to the global COVID-19 pandemic, the topic could not have been more relevant in 2020-2021 when countries across the globe, including in the Asia-Pacific, saw an exacerbation of pre-existing GBV and harmful practices.

The measures deemed necessary to control the spread of COVID-19—such as restriction of movement, reduction in community interaction and closure of services—not only increased the risk of exposure to GBV for women and girls, but also limited their access to services and support. As predicted globally, the COVID-19 crisis is likely to have longer term negative consequences on women’s health and well-being, safety and security, and economic participation and empowerment.

In both Papua New Guinea (PNG) and Timor-Leste, the COVID-19 pandemic emerged later than in the rest of the Asia-Pacific. While the respective UNFPA Country Offices were prepared with contingency plans to prepare and implement the program under pandemic-related restrictions, it has not been without challenges.

Challenges

- The recent spike in COVID-19 cases in Timor-Leste has made field visits and engaging partners more challenging.
- Due to COVID-19, health actors have been occupied with health services

and therefore not always available to discuss GBV-related initiatives. UNFPA Country Offices have been consistently advocating for GBV service provision to be considered as part of essential COVID19 response.

- Given travel restrictions due to COVID-19, international expertise

has not been possible to recruit. Where national capacities are limited, recruitment has been challenging. UNFPA Regional Offices are providing technical support as needed to ensure the quality and timeliness of activities are not affected.

Strategies

- Coordination and consultation with provincial and municipal government authorities and service providers to establish cooperation frameworks for project implementation.
- As both PNG and Timor-Leste are

also receiving support from Global EU-funded Spotlight Initiative to prevent and respond to GBV in the countries (in adjoining provinces separate from those identified for Zonta), the two country teams have mapped activities to ensure complementarity of interventions and to avoid any possible duplication.

- UNFPA is liaising with other partner UN agencies to ensure they are building on existing foundational work, where possible, and avoiding duplication of investment.
- Recruitment of the personnel that will support implementation is underway. In the meantime, existing staff is supporting the inception phase.