

OUR VOICES

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Director

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OXFAM

A new environment in Oxfam

Jude Perera

Program Director, Oxfam in Timor-Leste

Hello, Friends!!!

I am Jude Perera, hailing from the beautiful island nation of Sri Lanka, often referred to as the Pearl of the Indian Ocean. Sri Lanka is renowned for its production of Ceylon black tea, cherished for its distinct flavour and aroma. Moreover, our people are known for their warm smiles, earning Sri Lanka the moniker "Land of Smiles."

Having garnered invaluable experience working with various organizations, I have always been drawn to the allure of diverse cultural environments and unique challenges. This is precisely why I eagerly sought the opportunity to work in Timor-Leste.



One of my lifelong aspirations has been to immerse myself in different cultures across the globe, and Timor-Leste has been a pivotal destination on this journey. The rich tapestry of its culture and the resilience of its people have captivated my heart. Moreover, joining Oxfam has been a dream come true, as I have encountered a team of remarkably friendly, passionate, and dedicated individuals.

While Oxfam's work in development, humanitarian aid, and advocacy is undeniably compelling, what truly sets it apart is the unwavering commitment of its team and partners to uplift the communities they serve. I feel extremely lucky and privileged to be part of the Oxfam family in Timor-Leste, where every day presents an opportunity to make a meaningful difference.

Feminists in action

Maria Jose de Carvalho Soares, Gender and Inclusion Advisor

The Feminists in Action project is an initiative aimed at bolstering diverse feminist organizations to serve as catalysts for positive change in the realms of women's and girls' rights, equality, and empowerment, as well as advancing the cause of marginalized communities on a global scale.

This groundbreaking project is a collaborative effort involving Oxfam in Timor-Leste and esteemed international organizations such as Oxfam France, Care France, Equipop, the Mediterranean Women's Fund (FFMed), XOESE (Francophone Women's Fund), and the Pan-African Women's Welfare Initiative (IPBF). Together, we form a consortium entrusted with managing the program, which is generously funded by the French Development Agency.

Within this initiative, Oxfam in Timor-Leste is proud to partner with organizations that have already showcased their prowess as feminist advocates.

These esteemed partners include the Community Based Rehabilitation Network Timor Leste (CBRN-TL), Empreza Diak, and MANEO.

CBRN-TL is at the forefront of advocating for gender equality and social inclusion, particularly focusing on empowering women and girls with disabilities through impactful advocacy initiatives and capacity-building programs in rural areas. Their dedication to promoting

women's economic empowerment and gender equality is truly commendable.

Empreza Di'ak, a national NGO, is dedicated to enhancing the lives of Timorese people through economic empowerment activities, creating opportunities for individuals to uplift themselves and their communities.

Finally, MANEO, a women-led organization based in the Oecusse-Ambeno Special Administrative Region, is dedicated to empowering communities by fostering awareness of human rights and gender equality principles.

Under the Feminist Project, these organizations have forged a powerful alliance, fostering a network that promotes mutual learning and knowledge-sharing. Together, we are harnessing the collective strength of feminist organizations to drive meaningful change and create a more equitable and inclusive society.

Want to know more about Oxfam's new country strategy?

Visit :
<https://oxfam.box.com/s/7t1a98fs8lel2jzsyvsqzopih1sxi35f>







Promoting Resilient and Inclusive Disaster Responses

Last year, Paulo Neves from Raes Hadomi Timor-Oan (RHTO) and Cris Caetano from Oxfam in Timor-Leste took part in the Asia-Pacific Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in Brisbane, Australia. Paulo delivered a presentation shedding light on the pivotal role played by disability organizations in effectively mitigating the risk posed by natural disasters.

"Timor-Leste faces various natural calamities such as floods, prolonged dry spells, hurricanes, rising sea levels, earthquakes, and tsunamis. Over the past two years, our nation has endured severe flooding that wreaked havoc on homes, livelihoods, and even claimed lives," Paulo highlighted.

"When disasters strike, individuals with disabilities are particularly vulnerable, especially in a cultural context where their capabilities are often undermined by other community members. Therefore, it is imperative to engage people with disabilities and disability organizations in the implementation of programs

aimed at reducing the risk of natural disasters," Paulo emphasized.

Oxfam and its partner RHTO seized a remarkable opportunity extended by the Australian Humanitarian Partnership (AHP), which includes RHTO's involvement in the country committee for the Disaster READY program. The collaboration between RHTO and AHP in Timor-Leste is essential for ensuring that all members of the AHP consortium, such as Care International, World Vision, Plan International, Oxfam, ADRA, and others, adhere to the minimum standards for the inclusion of persons with disabilities in project implementation.



Photography by Carlos Correia/OiTL

Lessons from #COP27

The COP27 climate change conference in Egypt brought together 190 nations, with over a hundred heads of state and 35,000 public participants converging to address the urgent imperative of global climate action. Amidst the discussions, the focus remained steadfast on each country's commitment and accountability in mitigating the climate crisis, particularly in ensuring that global emissions are curbed to prevent exceeding the critical threshold of 1.5 degrees Celsius warming.

OiTL team members, Lucio and Carlos, were privileged to be part of Timor-Leste's delegation, lending their voices and insights to the discourse. Their attendance underscored OiTL's unwavering dedication to advancing Climate Justice through multifaceted initiatives spanning Climate Financing, Disaster Response, and Carbon Farming under the Rai Matak project.

"At the COP27 conference, the delegation was divided into four teams to attend specific issues which were being presented and negotiated. Areas included Mitigation, Adaptation, Financing, Loss and Damage, Gender, Technology and others. Oxfam attended

mostly discussions on Mitigation, Adaptation and Financing," said Lucio and Carlos.

"During the negotiations, Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and Small Island Development States (SIDS) formed an alliance to negotiate with developed countries to demand a commitment to contribute to an annual climate fund of \$100 billion which developed countries must pay for, including taking responsibility for losses and damage by creating new financing mechanisms."

Stand against violence

Joana Maria

Gender Justice Program Officer

In Timor-Leste, individuals with disabilities face numerous challenges, including the persistent threat of violence within their families, communities, and public spaces. To foster an inclusive society free from violence, the Community-Based Rehabilitation Network (CBRN-TL) is leading the charge to ensure equal participation in the national development process, particularly for women, female youth, and girls with disabilities.

Norberta Soares, Director of CBRN-TL, described the organization's journey since its establishment in 2014: "CBRN-TL emerged as a national organization focused on community-based rehabilitation for people with disabilities and became a member of the Community-Based Rehabilitation Network Asia-Pacific (CBRN-AP)." With a team of fifteen individuals, predominantly comprising women and people with disabilities, CBRN-TL remains committed to its mission.

"Our primary focus at CBRN-TL is to prevent violence against women and girls with disabilities while promoting inclusive community-based rehabilitation in Timor-Leste," stated Norberta, reflecting on her role as Director. "Though initially challenging, embracing this responsibility has been deeply fulfilling, especially during this formative period for CBRN-TL within the global organization."

CBRN-TL's mission is to create an inclusive society for people with disabilities. "We have implemented activities such as sharing information through socialization and training on disabilities issues such as preventing violence against women and girls with disabilities; research on people with disabilities' access to public services; and advocacy on rights and inclusion of people with disabilities related to development programs."



Learn more about CRBN-TL's work on their Facebook page :
<https://web.facebook.com/cbn.timorleste>



Partnerships for Greening the World

Ross Merry da Gloria
Communications Coordinator

In Viqueque, the Rai Matak project has become a catalyst for change, empowering individuals like Amelia and Francisco to participate in reforestation efforts and cultivate a sustainable future for their families.

Amelia, speaking from Maquedique suku in Viqueque municipality, emphasized the collaborative nature of her work with her husband: "I've never seen him as someone with a disability. He's capable of anything. Together, we farm and tend to our land." Their introduction to the Rai Matak project in 2021 sparked their interest, as they realized the potential to plant trees on their expansive plot of land while continuing to cultivate vegetables alongside them, providing a sustainable source of income.

With enthusiasm, Amelia shared their progress: "We've already planted four hundred teak trees on our farm. We recognize the changing climate patterns, with unpredictable rainy and dry seasons affecting our crops." Despite these challenges, they find solace in the benefits of their reforestation efforts. "The teak trees we've planted are proving invaluable. The Rai Matak team assured us that by planting these trees, we're enhancing the land's resilience to natural disasters."

Amelia and Francisco's story exemplifies the transformative impact of the Rai Matak project, not only in revitalizing the environment but also in empowering communities to thrive in the face of environmental challenges. Through partnerships and collective action, initiatives like Rai Matak are paving the way for a greener, more sustainable world.



Francisco and Amelia from Maquedique suku,
Viqueque municipality

Stronger and more prepared

Cris Caetano

Resilience Program Senior Manager

In April 2021, Cyclone Seroja hit the island of Timor, affecting almost the entire territory of Timor-Leste, including Auntie Agusta from Lahane Oriental suku, Dili, whose home bore the brunt of the storm, resulting in significant damage and loss of household possessions.



Auntie Agusta in her home which is more resilient and accessible, Lahane Oriental suku, Dili municipality

Forced to evacuate their home in the wake of heavy floods that inundated Dili and neighbouring municipalities on 4th April, Auntie Agusta and her family sought refuge in a small tent. Their decades-old residence, once a place of comfort and security, had succumbed to the ferocity of nature, rendering it unsafe for habitation. For an entire year following the calamity, Auntie Agusta and her family made do with makeshift accommodations, enduring the hardships imposed by displacement.

In January 2022, a collaborative effort between Oxfam in Timor-Leste, RHTO, and the Civil Protection Authority sought to assess the impact of Cyclone Seroja and subsequent flooding on affected communities, particularly those with disabilities like Auntie Agusta.

Previously cramped within the confines of her two-bedroom dwelling with her children and young grandchildren, Auntie Agusta's relief was palpable as she recounted the transformation brought about by the #BuildBackBetter project, funded by the Australian Humanitarian Partnership. "I am very happy because this house has been fixed with help from engineers (men and women), which means we can live securely and protected from heavy rains in the future. The ramp also helps me with my visual impairment."

With the project #BuildBackBetter financed by Australian Humanitarian Partnership, Auntie Agusta's house was renovated, with an added ramp to make the house more accessible.

Fighting for a more inclusive Timor-Leste

Adilsonio da Costa Junior
Strategic and Engagement lead

Timor-Leste's ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities represents a significant achievement stemming from persistent advocacy efforts by civil society organizations, particularly disability rights groups.

In July 2022, the National Parliament unanimously approved two resolutions: the Ratification of the International Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Ratification of Protocol Options for the Convention. This decision laid the foundation for Timor-Leste to become a signatory to this crucial international agreement.

Oxfam, alongside partners and allies, actively engaged in various advocacy campaigns orchestrated by civil society and disability organizations. These efforts included formal and informal dialogues with government officials, TV appearances, reports, press conferences, and social media campaigns aimed at urging the government to ratify the convention.

Through the Open the Books (OtB) project, funded by the Australian NGO-Cooperation Partnership (ANCP), Oxfam, in collaboration with partners like the Timor-Leste Disability Association (ADTL), Ra'es Hadomi Timor Oan (RHTO), Core Group on Transparency (CGT), and promoter groups, celebrated these achievements.



The commitment of the government and National Parliament to ratify the convention is commendable. It is anticipated that Timor-Leste's newfound status as a signatory will prompt further actions to implement its provisions. The hope is that adequate resources and programs will be allocated to fulfil the needs and rights of people with disabilities in Timor-Leste.

COUNT ME IN IN THE 2024 STATE BUDGET



“ A 2024 State Budget which is responsive to the needs of people with disabilities is a key indicator of inclusive and sustainable development ”

#Countmeintothe2024StateBudget
#InclusiveDevelopment



Collaboration for National Policy which is Sensitive to the needs of People with Disabilities

Adilson da Costa

Strategic and Engagement lead

OiTl, in partnership with key stakeholders under the Open the Books project, convened a crucial meeting with the Minister of Public Works, Sr. Abel Pires, and his team. Participants included prominent organizations such as the Timor-Leste Disability Association (ADTL), Ra'es Hadomi Timor Oan (RHTO), Core Group on Transparency (CGT), and technical advisors from the Centre for Inclusive Policy (CIP) in India and CBM in Australia.

The meeting focused on two pivotal issues: enhancing public infrastructure accessibility for people with disabilities and advocating for a state budget that upholds the rights of individuals with disabilities. Minister Abel Pires expressed strong support for the advocacy efforts led by the OtB team, acknowledging their influence on key policy areas such as infrastructure accessibility and the ratification of the International Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Highlighting the shared responsibility in ensuring accessibility, Minister Abel emphasized the need for collaboration between the government and disability organizations. He underscored the importance of conducting assessments to identify accessibility gaps, with a commitment to integrating these findings into infrastructure plans across ministries.

Moving forward, Minister Abel pledged to champion accessibility initiatives in his advocacy efforts, signalling a promising step towards inclusive policy development. By integrating accessibility considerations into infrastructure planning and design processes, Timor-Leste aims to create a more inclusive built environment that caters to the diverse needs of all its citizens, including those with disabilities.





Land justice, now!

Zeca Nunes
Land Program Coordinator

To address longstanding grievances related to land rights, Oxfam and members of the Land Network facilitated a national dialogue between affected community members and the Government of Timor-Leste. The dialogue encompassed various contentious issues, including the ZEESM project, Suai Supply Base, Aileu University city, and the expansion of Dili airport, among others, which have historically left communities without adequate responses from the government.

The primary objective of the dialogue was to provide a platform for affected communities, including women, men, and people with disabilities, to voice their concerns directly to decision-makers and demand the fulfilment of their rights. Key among these demands was the right to fair compensation following the expropriation of land, homes, and plantations.

During the dialogue, affected communities collaborated on issuing a joint declaration containing recommendations for the government. These recommendations emphasized the need for policies safeguarding communities' land rights and emphasized the importance of thorough public consultations before any land expropriation, in accordance with existing legal principles outlined in Land Law No. 13/2017 and Expropriation Law No. 8/2017.

As a result of these recommendations, the Government, represented by the Ministry of Justice, the National Parliamentary Committee A, and the President of the Republic, has committed to addressing the concerns raised by affected communities. These concerns will be presented to the Council of Ministers with the aim of finding a resolution, particularly concerning land disputes and ensuring fair compensation for communities in the RAE0A region.

This dialogue has provided affected communities from regions across Timor-Leste, including Oecusse, Suai, Ainaro, Same, Baucau, and Dili, with a critical opportunity to have their voices heard. Oxfam, alongside its partners such as the Land Network and Jurists for Advocacy, played a pivotal role in facilitating this space for dialogue, empowering communities to advocate for their rights and demand justice. #LandJusticeNow represents a collective call to action for equitable land rights and fair compensation for all affected communities in Timor-Leste.

#LandJusticeNow!





MINISTÉRIO DA JUSTIÇA



The Disaster READY project 2.0 has been launched

Cris Caetano

Resilience Program Senior Manager

Cris Caetano, Resilience Program Senior Manager at Oxfam in Timor-Leste, announced the continuation of the Disaster READY 2.0 project, building upon the success of its predecessor which concluded on June 30, 2022. The project, slated to run for the next five years (2022-2026), is a collaborative effort between the Government of Australia and leading civil society organizations from Australia, including Oxfam, Care International, Plan International, Caritas, and World Vision.

The overarching goal of the Disaster READY 2.0 project is to ensure the active involvement of all individuals, with a particular focus on women, girls, people with disabilities, and other vulnerable groups, in disaster preparedness and mitigation activities. Oxfam in Timor-Leste will spearhead the implementation of this vital initiative, collaborating with six local partner organizations: Kdadalak Sulimutu Institute, Matadalan Institute, MANEO, A-FFOS, BIFANO, and Ra'es Hadomi Timor-oan (RHTO).

Operating across four municipalities—Dili, Ermera, Likisá, and Oecusse—the Disaster READY 2.0 project will extend its reach to encompass seven administrative posts, twenty-two sukus, and sixty-one villages. Crucially, the success of this program hinges on robust collaboration with key stakeholders, including the Civil Protection Authority, relevant line ministries, municipal authorities, suku-level disaster management committees, and relevant UN agencies.



Jose and Silvia, Oxfam in Timor-Leste engineers, supporting the community in Lahane Oriental under the Build Back Better project

World Humanitarian Day

On [#WorldHumanitarianDay2022](#), observed annually on August 19th, the global community unites in addressing climate change as a pressing challenge, demonstrating solidarity with individuals confronting crises worldwide.

PAs part of this collective effort, the Inclusive Housing project [#BuildBackBetter](#) stands out as a beacon of hope for communities impacted by Cyclone Seroja, which devastated parts of Timor-Leste on April 4, 2021. Designed to aid in recovery and bolster preparedness for future disasters, the initiative has successfully rebuilt fifteen homes with support from the governments of New Zealand and Australia.

At the heart of this project lies the invaluable contributions of Oxfam engineers such as Maun José and Mana Silvia, alongside their counterparts, who played pivotal roles in the design, supervision, and coordination processes. Working closely with key partners like Ra'és Hadomi Timor Oan and Civil Protection, these engineers ensured that the rebuilt homes were not only [#inclusive](#) but also [#resilient](#), enabling communities to withstand the challenges posed by natural disasters.

[#WorldHumanitarianDay2022](#)

[#OxfamTimorLeste](#)

[#BuildBackBetter](#)

[#InclusiveHousing](#)

[#Accessibility](#)



Jose and Silvia, Oxfam in Timor-Leste engineers, supporting the community in Lahane Oriental under the Build Back Better project

Tentative Event Calendar

January-June 2023

- Workshop on inclusion recommendations from CBM with partners Hakbiit RHTO (Oxfam with RHTO) – March
- Training PSEAH for all Hakbiit partners (Oxfam) - March
- Workshop provided by EQI for all Hakbiit partners on involving men in programs - March
- Launch of report and workshop in Dili with stakeholders about Unpaid Care Work - May
- ToT on Numeracy and Literacy with Hakbiit partners in Dili (lead by Empreza Diak) – May-June
- Reflection Te kete Kotui (climate financing & women and land) – all partners - March
- Climate financing workshop - March
- Training for people with disabilities on climate financing - May
- Training on gender for climate financing partners - May
- Training on Community based Disaster Risk Management) in four suku - AFFOS & BIFANO – March-June

Tentative Event Calendar

January-June 2023

- Training: Women in Leadership in seven suku - MDI, AFFOS and BIFANO (March-June)
- Monitoring the parliamentary election – ADTL (March)
- Regular meeting Open the Book program – ADTL (March-April)
- 2024 General State Budget Analysis (CGT) – March
- Dialogue with political parties on the General State Budget 2024 – CGT – March
- Media Campaign (CGT) – March
- Reflection on the Open the Book project – all partners - June
- Training for focal point/disability ambassador – lead by RHTO in collaboration with ADTL, CGT and Oxfam (March-April)
- Audience with decision makers – RHTO, collaborate with CGT & Oxfam (March-April)
- Workshop with members of National Parliament about disability rights – RHTO, collaborate with ADTL, CGT and Oxfam (March-April)
- Celebration of International Women's Day – all Rai Matak partners - March
- Safeguarding training - HMI, CCC, NETIL (March)
- GALS training – Timor-Verde (March)
- Annual reflection – Rai Matak project – all partners (May)

Acronyms

AHP : Australian Humanitarian Partnership

CEDAW: Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

CRPD : Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

CBRN-TL : Community Based Rehabilitation Network Timor Leste

DRP : Disaster READY Program

DFAT : Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

EhD : Ema ho Defisiensia

EU : European Union

FONGTIL : Forum ONG Timor-Leste

GALS : Gender Action Learning System

GfD : Governance for Development

HMI : Ho Musan ida

KSI : Kdadalak Sulimutuk Institute (KSI)

MFAT : Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade

OiTL : Oxfam in Timor-Leste/Oxfam iha Timor-Leste

OTB : Open the Book

OSS : Organizasaun Sosiedade Sivil

RAEOA : Rejiaun Administrativa Espesial Oe-Cusse Ambeno

RHTO : Ra'es Hadomi Timor-Oan

SRA : Sentru Rekursu & Advokasia

ZEESM : Zonas Especiais de Economia Social de Mercado de Timor-Leste

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