

Strengthening Social Inclusion and Nutrition in Timor-Leste

KEY INFORMATION

SECTOR Nutrition and Social Inclusion

LEAD PARTNERS World Food Programme, United Nation Children Fund and International Labour Organization

DURATION May 2025 – April 2029

PROJECT LOCATION Timor-Leste (Aileu, Covalima, Dili, Lautem municipalities)

TOTAL BUDGET EU EUR 9,900,000

TOTAL BUDGET EUR 11,765,296

DATE 07-11-2025

Background

Timor-Leste is experiencing a critical malnutrition crisis, with nearly half of children under five being stunted—the third highest rate globally. The country also faces significant food insecurity, affecting 36% of the population, which hampers socio-economic development.

Timor-Leste's malnutrition crisis is deepened by pervasive poverty, with 46% of the population affected. Only 37% of households can meet nutritional needs, and less than 14% of children under five have an adequate diet.

Timor-Leste's social protection system is insufficient in addressing poverty and vulnerability, with limited non-contributory measures and contributory programs that only reach those in formal employment. The country's social protection coverage is below the Asian and Pacific average of 53.6%, reflecting challenges in expanding coverage amid a prevalent informal economy.

The Government of Timor-Leste is focused on linking social protection with nutrition to achieve significant results. Efforts include ensuring nutritious meals for school children through initiatives like sourcing local food, promoting fish consumption, fortifying rice, and creating a school recipe book. Furthermore, the government is enhancing social transfers for pregnant and breastfeeding women, aiming to support vulnerable populations more effectively.



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Project Details

The initiative focuses on reducing malnutrition and enhancing social inclusion for vulnerable groups like pregnant and breastfeeding women, children under five, and school-aged children. By strengthening safety nets, the program aims to improve these groups' nutritional and health outcomes. Achieving this involves increasing the government's capacity at both national and municipal levels to effectively manage, implement, deliver, and monitor integrated nutrition and social protection schemes for these populations.

The project aims to enhance the ability of authorities to manage, implement, and monitor integrated nutrition and social protection interventions. It focuses on:

- Expanding outreach of Mother Support Groups to aid pregnant and breastfeeding women.
- Improving school feeding programs by collaborating with local farmers and millers, ensuring safer kitchen facilities, and upgrading water and sanitation services.
- Upgrading water and sanitation facilities at key health centers in four municipalities.
- Extending social security benefits to vulnerable informal workers.
- Launching comprehensive public information and awareness campaigns to encourage behavior changes related to nutrition—such as diets, care practices, water treatment, and hygiene—and to promote social inclusion.

The project aims to benefit key public institutions involved in implementation, including the Ministry of Education (MoE), Ministry of Health (MoH), and the Social Security Institute (INSS-MSSI), while also extending advantages to other bodies like the State Secretariat of Cooperatives (SECOOP), the Ministry of Agriculture, and local farmers.

Emphasizing a participatory approach, the project encourages active involvement of social partners and CSOs in municipalities during the planning, implementation, and monitoring stages of relevant activities.

CONTACT DETAILS

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Expected results

The action aims to achieve specific activities that include training, supporting community-based organizations, providing technical assistance to farmer groups, constructing kitchen and water and sanitation facilities, and developing strategies to adapt the contributory social security system to benefit the most vulnerable. These activities target the following impacts:

- **Poverty Reduction:** By tackling malnutrition and promoting social inclusion, the poverty among pregnant and breastfeeding women, children under five, and school-aged children will be mitigated
- **Improved Health Outcomes:** The initiative focuses on enhancing the nutritional and health results for vulnerable groups, such as children under five, school-aged children, and pregnant and breastfeeding women, by ensuring better access to reinforced safety nets.
- **Government Capacity Building:** The project endeavors to boost the government's capacity at both national and municipal levels to effectively manage, execute, deliver, and monitor integrated nutrition and social protection schemes for vulnerable populations.

Website: [Timor-Leste | World Food Programme \(wfp.org\)](http://Timor-Leste | World Food Programme (wfp.org))

PROJECT PARTNERS



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