

July 2009



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## EVALUATION OF THE DISTRICT SUPPORT WORKER -WOMEN'S RESOURCE CENTRE PROJECT



**Futura iha Feto Nia Liman Laran - The Future in Women's Hands**

## **Evaluation of Project:**

**District Support Workers - Women's Resource Centre Timor Leste**

**Futura iha Feto Nia Liman Laran - The Future in Women's Hands**

July 2009

Final document

For Fundasaun Alola

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**Photos on Cover:** A tais weaver (Baucau), a woman and her chicken in the newly constructed chicken coop (Baucau), basket weaving from Same (Manufahi), a woman in her garden (Baucau), the Gender Focal Point in front of the banner for International Women's Day (Manufahi), a painting from the Vulnerable Persons Unit (Covalima).

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## **Acknowledgements**

Thanks to the District Support Workers and project staff from Fundasaun Alola who accompanied this evaluation with energy and commitment.

Special thanks to the members of women's groups in Baucau, Manufahi and Covalima who welcomed us to their community and shared their insights into life in rural Timor-Leste.

## Executive Summary

The District Support worker program began in 2007 as part of the Advocacy Program at Fundasaun Alola (FA) with support from the Norwegian government via the Network for Norwegian and East Timorese women (NET) and Women for Development (FOKUS). The program has been very active in the past 2.5 years, with multiple trainings, community development and conferences organised for women based in the districts.

The District Support Worker project was initially conceptualised with two key facts in mind, being

- a) That FA was receiving many requests for 'project proposals' for women from the districts
- b) The need for a local contact to allow FA greater accessibility to each district

The primary goals of the project are to develop leadership skills in women, promote peace and reconciliation and facilitate responses to health, human rights, and women's access to justice. The goals of the project are ongoing processes that require constant work. FA has successfully contributed toward these goals as part of a wider network of actors working towards the achievement of them in Timor-Leste.

The DSW project has one locally recruited woman in each district that supports 3 women's groups, generally active and established groups. There is a high participation rate in the trainings offered by the DSW/FA in gender, justice, domestic violence and human trafficking. One of the most commonly identified strengths of DSW/FA activities at district level by women's groups was access to information.

However, a major theme of the DSW evaluation was the mix of community development, training, advocacy with a lack of clarity of the overall strategic direction and contribution toward FA Advocacy Program. This has led to staff implementing many small activities beyond their area of expertise.

Advocacy should be driven by a bottom up approach and FA is uniquely placed, in terms of resources, profile and skilled staff, to seek women's opinions about the issues that matter most to them at a village level. FA now has 3 years experience in running a district based program. FA is one of the only local NGOs that has a presence in each district, and this should be considered a core strength of FA. FA should actively pursue support for the continuation of a district presence, albeit in a different form.

FA now needs to consider a new strategic direction for their Advocacy program, and a presence in the Districts is expected to be an essential component to women's empowerment in Timor-Leste.

The report recommends that FA develop a new working model for the continued presence of at least one staff member in each district to ensure that women's voice are loud and clear on national development issues, and that women have access to information through FA.

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## Abbreviations

AMKV	Asosisaun Mane Kontra Violencia (English: <i>Association of Men Against Violence</i> )
CEDAW	Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CNRT	Congresso Nacional da Reconstrucao de Timor (English: National Congress of Timorese Reconstruction)
DSW	District Support Worker
FA	Fundasau Alola (English: <i>Alola Foundation</i> )
FAO	United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation
FHP	Family Health Promoter
FOKUPERS	Forum Komunikasi Untuk Perempuan Timor Lorosa'e (English: Womens Communication Forum)
FOKUS	Forum for Women and Development (Norway based)
Fretilin	Frente Revolucionária de Timor-Leste Independente (English: Revolutionary Front for an Independent East Timor)
GFP	Gender Focal Point
IOM	International Organisation for Migration
JSMP	Judicial System Monitoring Project
MAF	Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MSG	Mother Support Groups
MSI	Marie Stopes International
NET	Network for Norwegian and East Timor women
NGO	Non-government Organisations
NORAD	Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation
OPMT	Organisasaun Popular Mulheres de Timor (English: Popular Organisation of Timorese Women)
PRADET	Psychosocial Rehabilitation and Development for East Timor
WRC	Women's Resource Centre
UNICEF	United Nations Children Fund

## **What is the purpose of this Evaluation?**

The purpose of the evaluation is to review the effectiveness, impact and sustainability of interventions to date and to provide recommendations for Fundasaun Alola (FA) on whether the District Support Worker (DSW) project as currently constructed and funded is worth continued support in 2010 and beyond.

### **For whom is this Evaluation?**

This evaluation is undertaken to provide information to:

- i) Fundasaun Alola (FA), Timor-Leste
- ii) Network for Norwegian and East Timor Women (NET), Norway
- iii) Forum on Women and Development (FOKUS), Norway

### **What kind of Evaluation is this?**

This evaluation can be described as an external evaluation, which will address primarily qualitative issues based on participatory workshops with the beneficiary women's groups, formal and informal interviews with partners and staff as well as observatory visits to Women's groups.

There was extremely limited quantitative data available through the established Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) mechanism. There was no baseline survey and therefore the evaluation focused on qualitative processes.

The three (3) districts Baucau, Manufahi and Covalima visited as part of this evaluation were chosen based firstly on FA staff perceptions of the relative success or limitation of the DSW project. In order to achieve a balance, a 'highly successful' district and 'least successful' district were chosen, with a third district considered 'average' by staff. Further criteria included accessibility and a balance between projects that commenced in 2007 and projects that commenced in 2008.

Government counterparts in the field and other partners have been asked to give their opinion about the DSW project. The counterparts for formal interviews in each district vary depending on established working relations and availability of the counterpart at the time of the evaluation.

None of the Women's groups or counterparts were paid in cash or in kind for their participation.

It should be noted, that only three (3) of thirteen (13) districts were visited. The regional variation between the three (3) districts suggests that the success of the project depends very much upon the personality and experience of the DSW, as well as geographical, political and social variations between districts.

This report attempts to draw wider lessons from the experiences of eight (8) Women's groups in three (3) districts, but recognises that this is a relatively small sample, and that other districts may have different project outcomes.

### **Who is carrying out the Evaluation?**

The Evaluation is first and foremost carried out by the consultant, Sarina Kilham, assisted by the FA/DSW project team in Timor-Leste and two Research assistants hired specifically to support the community based evaluation component. FA staff facilitated many of the workshops under supervision of the Consultant, as learning and capacity building during the evaluation was identified as an important component by the consultant and senior management staff of FA.

### **What is the period of Evaluation?**

The evaluation was carried out from during July 2009 for a period of fourteen (14) days.

### **What should happen next?**

There are a series of important steps which need to occur post-evaluation.

1. **Socialization-internal:** The District Support Worker team should sit together to discuss the recommendations. Each staff member and District Support Worker needs to know the recommendations and the issues discussed in the report.
2. **Action Plans:** It should be identified which recommendations the team agrees with and the actions that need to be taken to implement or realise the recommendations. Actions must be time defined and practical. The action plan should involve a time-line and actions to be taken in preparation for end of the current funding in December 2009
3. **Socialisation- external:** Many Women's groups, partners and government staff gave their time and good will to participate in this evaluation, and were informed that the evaluation recommendations would be reported back. It is important that to follow through with this within a reasonable time-frame, normally 6-8 weeks after the final report.
4. **2010 and beyond:** If further funding is not established prior to December 2009, FA needs to consider how the project will be either be wound down or absorbed into other FA projects. If FA chooses to seek further funding, the organisation needs to consider the recommendations of this report.

## Background:

The Women's Resource Centre (WRC) was established at Fundasaun Alola (FA) in 2003.

By 2004 it was recognised that FA needed to expand to work directly in the districts, in part in response to the large number of proposals arriving from women's groups requesting training and support. FA was aware that it lacked 'on the ground' knowledge of the situation in each district, and that district visits by Dili based staff involved issues of access, time and financial limitations.

From 2004-2006, FA sought external support for the District Support Worker(DSW) project, and in September 2006, the Network for Norwegian and East Timor Women (NET) and Forum for Women and Development (FOKUS) responded to FA request for support. FOKUS revised FA proposal to include activities on the promotion of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 and the Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).

Funded from 2007-2009, the project is a three-year project that FA is required to apply for each calendar year. Whilst the overall objectives and structure of the project remain the same, the activities for each year change. The first two years of the project were funded by the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation, NORAD and the final year of the project was funded directly by FOKUS.

In the first year of the project, six DSW were recruited in the districts that had established Mother Support Groups (MSG) through FA. The remaining 7 DSW were recruited in the second year of the project. This evaluation was undertaken in July 2009, with six months funding remaining.

### This Program's Focus

The project documentation describes the focus as:

*Strengthen the capacity of women's groups to actively participate in leadership and development in their communities and pilot mechanisms for young people to similarly participate. Develop skills in leadership, community facilitation and program development to address local priority issues. District Support Workers (DSWs) coordinate the program, supporting women and young people, and work through existing groups linked to Alola programs and networks or establish new groups as required, to build local community capacity in management, leadership and facilitation skills*

(see 2009 page 2 – description is the same in 2007 and 2008 application)

### Role of the District Support Worker

The role of the District Support Worker was initially conceptualised with two key facts in mind, being

- c) That FA was receiving many requests for 'project proposals' for women from the districts, and staff realised that they had very little on the ground understanding of each districts unique situation and

- d) The need for a local contact to allow FA greater accessibility to each district as the severe lack of infrastructure means that meeting arrangements, contacting local women's group and the local administration in the district, sub-district and village level is nearly impossible without a locally situated staff member

In light of these circumstances, the role of the District Support Worker has facilitated greater contact between the FA Dili based office and each district. The infrastructure limitations have improved little in the past three years, and it should be expected that if FA wishes to have on-going contact with rural women and maintain the relevance of FA programs, that a District based worker will be essential in the short to medium term.

The District Support Workers are contracted to work three (3) days a week under the FOKUS/NET funded core project component, and some DSW are working five (5) days a week with funding from other sources.

The DSW attend a full day monthly meeting in Dili, which is used for training, discussion, information sharing, and the settling of monthly accounts, reporting writing and other administrative tasks. The amount of time dedicated to 'training' varies, staff initially reported that most training sessions occurred in the morning prior to morning tea (that is, 8am-10.30am) – a session of 2.5hours but felt that training could be up to 5 hours.

In the three districts visited as part of this evaluation, the DSW appeared to have successfully built relationships with local stakeholders, though there were noted differences between the three districts.

In the two districts that had a Gender Focal Point (GFP), both were aware of the DSW, FA activities and generally positive about FA. These two districts had organised joint activities with the GFP, and both positively reinforced the important and unique role of the DSW.

*We can say there has been a little change from 2007-2009, for example when there is training in Baucau, women come from far away to participate...but I'd like to know, why does the DSW only go to nearby sub-districts? I heard that the funding wasn't enough, the GFP in the government have the same problem, there is no budget for women's activities.....<sup>1</sup>*

#### **Gender Focal Point, Baucau.**

One district did not have a GFP, and it appeared unlikely that one would be appointed in the near future as there was disagreement between the district and national levels about the appointment of a man to this position. The District Administrator had recommended a man to the position of GFP and the recommendation had not been accepted at a national level

*The Gender Focal Point needs to go to Dili often and (transport) costs are difficult... a woman to travel to Dili in whatever conditions? - there isn't any woman who can do this<sup>2</sup>*

#### **District Administrator Covalima**

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<sup>1</sup> Quote in Tetun: *Mudansa hituan 2007-2009,por exemplo treinamentu iha Baucau feto partisipa, ema mai husi dook hakarak tuir...tamba-sa ba distritu besik la ba dook? Mana dehan fundos la to'o. Ami iha governmo iha problema hanesan, orsamento laiha*

<sup>2</sup> Quote in Tetun: *ba/mai Dili osan susah, feto ida ba/mai Dili qualquer kondisaun?- feto laiha*

In all three districts, it appeared difficult for the DSW to access the senior local administration such as Sub-District Administrators and District Administrators. Whilst the mid-term project report (page 3) states the DSW is meeting monthly with the District Administrators, this was not the case in the three districts visited. The difficulties of the sole female DSW accessing the senior local administration should not be underestimated.

*Domestic violence has a link with Timorese culture, only with time, years possibly hundreds of years will this change. In ten years we can't do much, the mentality of people will only change with a new generation*

**District Administrator Covalima**

In one District, the DSW had a good relationship with the local *Chefe do Suco* (*English: Village Chief*), whereas the other two districts seemed to have little contact with this level of local administration.

There was a mix of good relationships with other NGOs, especially Timorese national or locally based NGOs. This in part maybe based on personal connections, for example, where the DSW had worked together with the Director of a local NGO through her previous position but there were many examples of links being forged with local NGOs in order to carry out joint activities.

However, during the evaluation the DSW project team were keen to only visit NGOs that had a specific and direct working relationship with FA in the district level, and were reluctant to visit other NGOs to gauge a level of awareness of the DSW and FA activities.

This suggests that the relationship building at district level depends very much on the background of the DSW, her contacts from previous work and her individual ability to forge new working relationships. In two districts, when the evaluation team visit 'non-partner' NGOs, we discovered that they were implementing projects that complimented or mirrored FAs work, for example, microcredit and improvement of household level economy projects for women. The DSW project staff did not see the relevance of these visits, which is unfortunate, as FA should be seeking to create a good profile and cooperation with all NGOs at the District level, not just implementing partners.

The DSW receive a monthly stipend of \$120 for three days work, plus a \$20 hospitality allowance (for holding meetings at their home residence), a \$60 local transport allowance (for travel within their district to visit women's group), a \$20 travel allowance to attend the monthly meeting, a \$60 per diem for the monthly meeting (breakfast, dinner and accommodation as lunch is provided by FA), \$20 phone credit. In total, the average DSW receives \$300 for basic duties.

In addition to this, at least eight (8) DSW receive an extra \$89 for activities funded through the Marie Stopes International (MSI). This brings the total for some DSW to \$389.

The relevance of this relates to the skill level and expectations of FA on the DSW. The DSWs were primarily not recruited as skilled workers, and this is reflected in the varying age,

skills, education and experience of each DSW. Each DSW received a contract from FA with a clear monthly salary, and the DSW are generally assuming that they are FA staff and are treated as such in their respective districts.

However, FA appears unclear internally if the DSW are volunteers, as per the original project documentation, on a stipend, or staff in which case they should be subject to a competitive recruitment process and paid as per the official FA salary scale. FA also appears unclear on the terminology of 'stipend' - which is usually paid to a volunteer or student to cover any costs associated with their position, such as transport and hospitality, which FA is paying separately to the DSW.

In a small survey, 75% of the DSW felt that their 'stipend' (mostly referred to as a salary) was insufficient. This should be considered a surprising response as the total allowance reflects at least a 'middle income' bracket for Timor-Leste.

The 'extra' payments allocated to some DSW and external funding complicates the issue of 'stipend' or salary. There was at least one case of a DSW applying on behalf of their community to another donor for a grant of approximately \$1000. The grant money was allocated directly in the district and FA had no control or accountability for the expenditure of the funds. As the donor assumed that FA was involved in the application and expenditure, this created friction between FA and the DSW.

The 'grey area' surrounding the role of the DSW has allowed situations like this to occur and raises questions about the role of the DSW. Are they a volunteer or are they a staff member? Is the amount of the remunerations reflecting the skill level of the DSW and competitive when compared to rates for the government or other local NGOs?

It was not possible to answer these questions in full during the evaluation due to time limitations. However, FA should seriously consider a review of the status of the DSW as either a volunteer or a staff member.

This review should perhaps be incorporated into a wider review of volunteers associated with FA as it has been reported that there exists significant friction between 'volunteers' in the MSG (no stipends, no allowances) and the 'volunteer' DSW (paid stipend and other allowances). A standardisation for all FA programs of volunteer rates, expected levels of responsibilities, code of conduct and the allowances able to be claimed would create greater transparency in this area.

## **Role of NET**

NET has been actively involved as a FA partner in securing funding for the DSW project, regularly visiting the project and acting as a 'go between' for FA and FOKUS. NET has supported FA with meets the requirements of FOKUS/NORAD funding, and assisted with report writing and contributing to timely submission of documentation as needed. NET consists of volunteers, who have demonstrated huge commitment to the project and the future of FA activities in the districts.

NET has also attempted to provide innovative cross-cultural exchange, through facilitating Norwegian weavers to visit Timor-Leste to meet and exchange information with local weavers.

NET had completed two visits to Timor-Leste at the time of this report, with a third visit planned for the last week of July 2009. The objective of NET's visits as per the contract between NET and FA are:

*The Norwegian partner will visit the project each year to learn about the activities and results and to pass on information to the Norwegian gender network, aiming at extending network contacts between Norway and Timor-Leste (p.6 Mathisen and Bunning 2007).*

NET provided brochures and newsletters about FA/DSW activities that had been used for promotion of FA/DSW in Norway and NET sends approximately 6 newsletters per year to NET members, which includes information on FA.

It was not possible to independently verify if network contacts had increased between Norway and Timor-Leste as a direct or indirect result of these visits. There was no background information available on the institutional or solidarity links between Norway and Timor-Leste at the commencement of the project in 2007, and therefore no way to measure if such links had increased, remained static or declined.

Whilst the visits have been important for NET in maintaining good working relations with FA, from a project management point of view the visits do not appear to offer any new insights or add value to the project and most of the information contained in the visit reports would have been available via email. This brings into question whether the visits offer 'value for money' and met their original objective.

NET and FA describe the visits as such

*The visits primarily link to the fundraising and donor role of NET. It is from these visits that enough information is gleaned to continue the process in Norway each year of raising the 10% of funding on which the bulk funding is dependent. The visits are by volunteers, and their responses to what they see, their photos, their engagement with the people who are engaged with the project are reported back to supporters in Norway.*

Staff in FA were under the impression that these visits were monitoring visits. It appears that NET also treated at least one of the visits as a 'monitoring' visit, with project management including accounts, contracts and working plans being subject to review. The results report for 2007-2008 states

*Project accomplishment is assessed during the annual project visit from Norway (p.6)*

This is an unfortunate situation, as it has led the FA/DSW project team to believe that adequate monitoring was occurring and that the project results and outcomes were highly likely to be evaluated as positive, given the encouraging feedback from NET's visits.

In this instance, it appears that the express purpose of the visit for networking was not defined clearly enough and this has allowed a 'blurring' between networking and monitoring visits. Whilst the visits may be considered 'monitoring' from the point of NET, that is, ensuring that the funds raised are being used to implement the project, it should be very clearly stated that 'Monitoring' from a project management point of view is a technical activity that involves measuring progress toward set indicators and answering core evaluation questions such as relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability.

The visit documentation does not identify the challenges facing the District Support Workers, the fact that no baseline survey had been completed and whilst many women's groups were meeting regularly and active, that this was a result of working with strong established groups, rather than a direct outcome of the FA/DSW program.

During the stakeholder interview, NET pointed out that the visits were important to maintain enthusiasm and a profile of Timor-Leste in Norway. Personal visits facilitate the building of relationships and trust between staff, increase cross-cultural communication and allow for a better understanding of the local context.

The visits from NET may have an appropriate role and place within the overall cooperation framework between NET and FA. It is recommended in the future that both NET and FA very clearly outline the purpose of visits, responsibilities and how the visits will contribute to the project

## **Role of FOKUS**

FOKUS is the primary donor to the District Support Worker project. The role of FOKUS appears to be administrative, with most correspondence focused on contracts and funding.

In 2007 and 2008, the primary source of funding was from the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad). In 2009 the funding arrangements changed. In the correspondence (13 March 2009) from FOKUS in March 2009 it was stated

*Norad did not grant FOKUS the full amount that was applied for ...*

However, NET stated that it was not lack of Norad funding that triggered the shift in funding source, but a strategic decision on behalf of FOKUS to use funds in their 'TV portfolio' which needed to be expended (interview with Bente Mathisen 20/07/09)

Either way, this move had implications for FA, as the new funding arrangement meant that an Administration/Overhead fee was not included in the 2009 budget and was declared 'non-negotiable' by NET (email correspondence 20 March 2009).

It is assumed that FA was left in a difficult situation, with contracts signed and activities planned to the end of the 2009, FA has legal obligations to continue to provide salaries and implement the program.

To be informed well into the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of the funding year (2009) that the standard Administration/overhead fee was not included, shows a serious gap in understanding and communication between FA, FOKUS and NET. It also left FA no choice but to continue to implement and to attempt to cover the gap in Administration fee from other programs. The DSW program could not operate but for the extensive Administrative support from FA, and there was no sufficient reasoning given by FOKUS and NET for 'non-negotiable' position of this.

### **Note from FOKUS**

*NORAD operates with an 8% overhead fee for projects and programs receiving support. This amount is supposed to cover the Norwegian partner organization's administrative costs, but it is up to the Norwegian partners to decide how this amount should be distributed/spent. A large amount of the financial support to Alola Foundation is directed towards administrative expenses; salaries and operating expenditures. FOKUS is not in a position to cover such expenses as well as an overhead fee to Alola as well as administrative support to NET. In communication with NET, FOKUS has tried to explain this clearly. According to the evaluation report this has not been fully understood by the Timorese partners, and this lack of communication is of course regrettable.*

It is understood that the equivalent amount of 5% Administration/overhead fee was included in the final budget proposal, but allocated to different areas such as fuel for cars, so the problem was not with the fiscal amount but rather the budget line 'administration/overhead'.

Given that different donors have different amounts that they are willing to contribute to Administrative/Overhead costs, it is suggested that FA should chose a minimum percentage which if a donor cannot or will not contribute, FA chose not to pursue the program or project.

## **Monitoring and Evaluation of the Project**

Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) of the project can be considered poor. Whilst in all project documents, extensive M&E has been planned, in reality, staff did not have a central database or collection of information of quantitative data. Further, the project documentation confuses a baseline survey, referring to a 'baseline evaluation'. A baseline survey was not undertaken at any point in the project.

This has made assessing the impact of the project difficult, as many of the indicators have been developed only in relation to activities, rather than outcomes, and rely on quantitative increases in either participation (training), number of established groups, group membership or Women leaders of Suco's and/or communities.

Staff have undertaken regular trips to the Districts and DSW attend monthly meetings in Dili in which a written report is provided to DSW project staff. Some activities have been followed up with qualitative reports, but the level of reporting remains very vague and contributes little to assessing the impact and effectiveness of the program.

Problems identified focus on lack of physical materials or inputs, and the recommendations focus on 'increase capacity of the DSW' without identify the skills or capacity area that needs increasing.

Further, some of the qualitative reporting on activities is not true.

For example, in the 2008 *Program Project Mid Term Report*, it is reported that twelve of thirteen districts present a weekly radio show (excluding Atauro, Dili District). In the three districts visited as part of this evaluation, there was no such weekly radio show, and in fact, the community radio station had been broken and not functioning for several years in Manufahi district. This suggests that either reporting is being purposefully falsified, Dili based staff are poorly informed about the activities actually undertaken in the districts or there were communication barriers between Timorese and International staff.

On discussion and clarification with FA staff on this issue, none of the present staff were directly involved in the report writing of the mid term report, however, they felt that FA had produced radio programs, albeit not in every district, and 'mis-communication' over achievements between national and international staff was the most likely cause of this mistake.

This is further illustrated by the stated relationship with the District Administrator's

*DSWs work closely with the District Administrators in their area*  
(pg. 4 Mid Term Program Project Report)

During this evaluation, it was only possible to meet with one District Administrator, who was only very vaguely aware of FA activities and in fact, seem much more keen to discuss FOKUPERS activities in the district. The one DSW declared that she did not have a close relationship with the DA in her District, and in fact worked more closely with the Gender Focal Point, and in the final district, the DA was in Dili on business.

This is not to say that the DSW are not attempting to have a close working relationship with the District Administration. It is recognised that the DSW may have several barriers to accessing the DA, including perceived importance of (or lack thereof) women's issues, FA as a local NGO with limited funding and the general high demands on DA time and limited resources. However, it would be preferable for FA to identify and recognise these barriers, rather than overstating achievements in relationship building.

The weakness identified in the DSW project M&E are part of wider lack of understanding of M&E within the Advocacy area and possibly within FA. The log-frame approach, or adding simple indicators such as 'increased participation' does not provide enough information to implement M&E. Monitoring and evaluation is important, not only for external donors, but its primary use should be to facilitate internal learning and for improving project performance.

Staff noted the requirement to produce reports in English limited their direct ownership over content and this highlights an important issue of capacity building within FA. There were several instances where international staff were taking responsibility for report writing in order to meet requirements by external donors.

It is suggested that local staff are supported to take a more pro-active role in report writing for external donors. This will encourage 'ownership' of the content of such reports and assist staff to take responsibility for projects outcomes, activities and the timeliness of reporting.

## **Financial Reporting**

FA is independently audited each financial year. At the moment, the Advocacy Program receives approximately 50% of its funding from NET and FOKUS (specifically for the DSW program), and 50% from other donors. The financial reports are shared with NET and FOKUS.

There was no evidence or reports of mismanagement of any funds during this evaluation.

## **Achievement of objectives**

### **To what extent have the projects' objectives been achieved?**

In the 2009 application, the primary goals of the project is listed as

- a) *Identify and develop leadership skills in women and young people to increase their active participation in civic society and community transformation.*
- b) *Promote peace and reconciliation across Timor-Leste.*
- c) *Facilitate forums with local and international organizations and government to respond to health, human rights, and women's access to justice.*

*In Norway the goal is to share information about project-activities with Norwegian NGOs and solidarity groups to build and extend network-contacts between Norway and Timor-Leste*

The goals of the project are actually ongoing processes that currently require constant work. FA will only ever contribute toward these goals as part of a wider network of actors working towards the achievement of them. The activities carried out by FA as per the contract with NET and FOKUS could be considered to be successfully achieved, making a strong contribution toward the process of empowerment of women in Timor-Leste.

It appears that the majority of women's groups that FA partners with are active groups, and that there is high participation in the trainings offered by FA in gender, justice, domestic violence and human trafficking. Groups often identified training as an important activity, especially group coordinators.

The Women for Peace conference was a successful endeavour and is covered separately in the conference reports.

FA has made excellent linkages with a range of partners NGOs, at a national level including PRADET, JSMP, FOKUPERS, AMKV, UNICEF, IOM, MSI, Ministry of Social Solidarity and the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries.

These partnerships have been both a strength and weakness of the program. A strength in that creating linkages and working with existing skilled trainers and facilitators in Timor-Leste is an excellent model for program implementation.

A weakness as the project activities covered such a wide mix that the project team and DSW energies have been dispersed in managing the implementation of a variety of activities, rather than focusing on the core 'advocacy' goals of the project.

The establishment of the DSW has certainly been important for increasing access and the FA profile in the districts.

It is noted that whilst all the projects objectives have been successfully met and individual activities completed, the extent to which the DSW project has contributed to women's leadership, empowerment and access to justice remains limited due to macro-level factors that are unlikely to change in the short time-frame of this project. Further, the project has limited scope with only one DSW per district covering large, dispersed and isolated populations that are not easily accessible.

**"Top 10" reasons why the DSW see their role as important**

1. DSW receives training, increasing (our own) capacity to implement activities in each district
2. The DSW can be a guide for our communities and women
3. DSW can form working networks in the districts
4. (we) give motivation to the (women's) groups
5. DSW carries out monitoring.
6. DSW receives assistance from the government
7. DSW can refer cases to the VPU Police, PRADET and the hospital
8. DSW 's are in 13 districts.
9. DSW is valued through the salary that is received from FA
10. DSW receives transport money from FA

*It should be noted that the last two points are focused on the personal benefits to the DSW. The DSW voted to these into the Top 10 as the formal support from FA and 'position' was considered a key aspect of success.*

## **To what extent have the target groups been reached?**

It is hard to assess the extent to which targets groups have been reached, as the project documentation does not identify a target group specifically for the DSW project but rather refers the target groups for other FA programs.

*The target group for the project is women and young people in regional areas who are members of groups associated with current AF programs in weaving, breastfeeding promotion and education. (p.3 Contract 2007)*

The 2009 contract is more specific

1. 20 producer groups representing over 400 women,
  2. 22 mother support groups who promote breastfeeding and nutrition – representing 337 women
  3. Scholarship holders and friendship schools projects representing young women across 84 schools.
  4. Locally based women's support groups – 65 groups representing each sub-district in Timor-Leste
- (p.3).

Of these four groups- two can be discounted immediately as there are no groups representing each sub-district and the DSW have never worked with the scholarships holders or friendship schools<sup>3</sup>.

MSG have worked with the DSW to varying degrees of participation. The friction between the MSG and the DSW, primarily relating to the different status of volunteer (as discussed under Role of the DSW) has meant it appears there is minimal participation of the MSG in DSW activities. The MSGs have their own challenges (see Hobday et al 2008).

The primary target group of the DSW appears to be producer groups. The activities of the producer groups vary, though the main activities are tais weaving, basket weaving, sewing and recently through FA, some agricultural activities.

Of the three districts visited, all the groups existed prior to the establishment of the DSW program. Some of the groups had existing relationships with FA through other programs (for example, economic development) whilst for other groups the relationship with FA was relatively new through the DSW. The targeting of existing groups has both positive and negative consequences.

The positive consequences are that the existing groups have established sense of unity, are accustomed to organising activities together and enjoy each others company<sup>4</sup>. This makes the groups easy for the DSW to work with, and the groups visited were linked into other institutions such as the local administration, church and other NGOs. The women in these established groups appeared to be strong women confident in their own skills and leading their community. In Manufahi district, it was observed that women that had participated in the

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<sup>3</sup> The DSW project team does not agree with this statement and has noted that through a partnership with UNICEF, 'Life-skills' training has been implemented in many friendship schools and that the DSW is involved in soliciting participants. However, this training was not mentioned as an activity by any of the DSW during the workshop, no schools were visited in the districts as part of the evaluation and no documents were provided to the consultant on this activity. FA may wish to report separately on this item.

<sup>4</sup> The groups often mentioned the importance of having 'space' to meet and talk about women's issues

FA evaluation, were attending traditional medicine training at the Catholic Sisters residence in the same week (not an associated FA activity).

The negative consequence of working with established groups is that in some cases, FA has appeared biased, that is, choosing to work with certain women's groups and not others. The DSW's reported that other women's groups were 'jealous' of the FA Women's groups because FA had access to power, funds and government support<sup>5</sup>. This has created friction in some communities.

#### **Political associations**

An interesting example of perceived bias is in Manufahi district where all the established groups were associated with the Organisaçao Popular Mulheres de Timor (OPMT- a political aligned women's resistance movement from pre-1999), the GFP reported that the DSW/FA appeared politically biased and other women's group didn't understand why FA did not want to work with them.

This is an interesting point, as the OPMT is generally associated with the Frente Revolucionária de Timor-Leste Independente (Fretilin) political party, whereas throughout the evaluation, FA was associated with the Congresso Nacional da Reconstrução de Timor (CNRT) by several stakeholders.

This example illustrates that working with groups without clear criteria that are communicated to the wider community can create confusion and misunderstanding.

Further, some producer groups that were independent now appear to have shifted their expectations to FA being their primary 'purchaser' and donor. Independent weaving groups were requesting that FA provide thread for weaving and expressed disappointment that FA was not purchasing their tais

*Alola comes here to support us to weave tais, so we weave many tais but then they don't buy them. This will send us bankrupt.*

#### **Weaver, Baucau.**

In part this situation has arisen as the DSW are untrained and unskilled in dealing with traditional textiles and baskets. The DSW are also not trained community development workers and some DSW believe that economic development simply involves FA purchasing the products that the groups make. This has led to unrealistic expectations regarding price for average quality textiles and baskets. This is discussed in length in the report on producer groups by Threads of Life (see Howe, J 2009). The primary recommendation from this report is that only highly skilled and specifically 'textile' trained expert FA staff should deal with producer groups for long term economic independence of the groups.

Teenage single women were only present in one group in one district that was visited as part of this evaluation, and it is unclear if the participant and activities discussed were actually

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<sup>5</sup> DSW hetan kecemburuan social hosi fetu sira nebee la tama ba grupo. Iha grupo balun nebe la gosta DSW nia grupo tamba grupo sempre hetan ajuda

part of the FA/DSW activities<sup>6</sup>. As noted earlier, FA believes that young women have been targeted through the UNICEF 'Life-skills' project.

### **Which factors have impeded the implementation of the project?**

The project documentation identifies the following as risks and challenges to the project

1. The security situation
2. entrenched traditional cultural barriers;
3. the poor quality of education in schools
4. poor road infrastructure,
5. long distances and
6. poor telecommunications

These are correcting identified and continue to remain relevant at the time of the evaluation.

These challenges were perhaps underestimated in view that each DSW is a sole worker, with their own childcare and household responsibilities, relying on public transport to access the groups and would frequently confront issues of being a female worker for an organisation promoting women. The cultural and traditional barriers are significant, and affect the ability of the DSW to effectively engage with Village chiefs, Church and local administration.

*The reality is that the DSW is not invited to meetings, because the DSW is a woman and is not allowed to speak above men<sup>7</sup>*

### **Manufahi DSW**

As a sole female worker at the district level, all the DSW visited were working 'close to home' (that is, in Sub-Districts that are relatively accessible). The DSW in the three districts visited stated that they visited each group monthly, but also acknowledged that often this visit didn't occur because either lack of transport, inaccessible roads (weather conditions), pregnancy or childcare duties. One DSW was expressing milk for her 5-month old baby, in order to be able to visit groups that involved a full day of travel. Another pregnant DSW had planned to restrict her movement to groups easily accessible as her pregnancy continued.

The expectations of FA on what could be achieved by the DSW have probably been too high given the local circumstances. The majority of the DSW are young women, which is of note in a highly hierarchal society that values age and experience. In Timor-Leste, it is often harder for young women to have a 'voice', even more so for gender related issues, when the majority of local leaders, both cultural leaders and civil servants, are older males.

### **Which factors have promoted the implementation of the project?**

Whilst the poor telecommunications and lack of transport are identified as major challenges to the DSWs attempting to complete their work, in one sense these challenges have contributed to the strength of the program.

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<sup>6</sup> Notably, an intra-district volley ball competition was mentioned as the most important activity. Neither FA staff, the DSW or any other groups mentioned this as a FA activity. FA staff felt this young woman was talking about her own 'extra-curricular' activities, not FA activities.

<sup>7</sup> "realidade waihira iha encontro sira la convida DSW, tamba hanesan feto e labele koalialiu mane."

The DSW are using public transport and all their communication with groups is on a face to face basis. This has meant the DSW continues to have excellent 'grassroots' connections with the community and generally good interpersonal relations with the women's groups that they support. This personal connection appears to be a key factor to the success, and in the future if the program was to expand, would point to recruiting at sub-district level, rather than expanding responsibilities of a district based worker.

Limited funding for activities should also be seen as a strength of the program, as it has not created a dependency culture or an expectation of large 'handouts' from FA, though there is a danger of this in the near future.

The commitment, strength and desire to learn of the individual group members should be recognised as the key factor that promoted success of the program. Whilst there is variation amongst the groups, overall of the groups visited, it was the women's commitment, sense of ownership over their group and the benefit of have a 'safe women's space' (mentally not physically) that created success. This is not due to the DSW or FA, though many groups did express that having FA *tau matan* (oversight) inspired them to meet regularly, but due to the fact that FA chose to work with established, successful groups.

*We meet twice a week, once to weave and the second time to collect money, and we talk, sometimes about our kids, sometimes about our gardens, sometimes to complain about our husbands! But it is good to come and get all that stress off our minds...*

#### **Group Member Covalima**

The high level of commitment of the DSW should be commended. The DSW are clearly enthusiastic and committed to their role. During this evaluation, there were no major complaints or accusations against the DSW, and the trust that existed between the DSW and the women's groups was clearly a major contributor toward the success of the project. To an extent, the dedication and responsible attitude of the DSW has balanced out the challenges.

#### **Are there other institutions offering similar services?**

Each district has a Gender Focal Point (GFP), though the government has recently adopted a policy that each GFP must be a woman, so in at least one district the post remains vacant. There are GFPs in the local administration, and also within some line Ministries, with varying degrees of activity, depending on their other work responsibilities. The role of the GFP appears primarily to promote women's activities within the government and therefore compliments the role of the DSW. In interviews with two GFP, they expressed satisfaction with a good working relationship between the GFP and the DSW.

There are several NGOs in the district involved in community development projects, included agricultural and microfinance activities targeting women, and given that the DSWs have no expertise in this area, it is questionable whether this should be pursued as an activity by FA. The DSW do not have the skills to 'broker' sustainable responses to communities' development needs. This is discussed further in under Recommendations.

It was frequently raised from Women's groups that having the presence of the DSW and FA was inspirational support for their group to keep meeting and working together, and they felt that opportunities (for training or economic development) were now available the FA had taken interest in supporting their group. Lack of interest in supporting Women's groups and activities from either the local or national government was frequently raised as a concern during the evaluation.

The role of the DSW as an advocate for women, a source of information and as a local contact for FA is not offered by any other institutions at the district level. This should be considered the key aspect of the DSW project that is unique and worth pursuing.

## **Sustainable livelihood and empowerment of women's and young people**

### **Projects impact on the empowerment of women and young people in the area**

The DSW activities have been many and varied since 2007. It is hard to measure the 'empowerment' of women through the project, as there is no quantitative data to illustrate indicators that might allow for a clearer picture of individual activities and how these contribute toward overall goals (for example, increase in participants income through FA supported activities).

Certainly, women in the groups visited reported positive feedback in being able to access training, information, support and oversight of their groups.

Of the women's group visited, both with and without men present during the workshop, an increased ability for the women to contribute to the household income was seen as highly positive outcome. Men were very vocally supportive of the women's groups, and women reported that their husbands were 'happier' now for them to participate as they could see direct benefits.

This feedback illustrates that FA strategy of economic development for women contributing to gender equality remains relevant and appropriate for the Timor-Leste context.

### **What extent has it been promoting sustainable livelihood?**

The project has identified appropriate partners (Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, World Vision) and activities for the promotion of sustainable livelihoods (access to seeds, chicken coops). These activities were identified in conjunction with women in the groups, and at the time of the evaluation, the participants were very satisfied with the activities (and their new chickens).

However, the activities have been undertaken in relative isolation from a long term sustainability approach. Notably

- **Small animal rearing:** The DSW approach to sustainable livelihoods has been a 'reactionary' approach, responding to a request for chickens in one district and extrapolating the activity to other districts. The DSW received training on chicken rearing by a Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries (MAF) trainer, in Dili, in a FA training room, with no chickens present. The DSW were then expected to remember the training on 'chicken rearing and health' and in turn train the groups. This represents a poor approach to sustainable livelihoods and is poor training practice.

Receiving one day training does not make the DSW either experts in chickens or skilled trainers. Further, some groups had already re-sold the chickens they received, chickens were still roaming free in many cases and there had been no thought given to a long term strategy to ensure all group members received chickens<sup>8</sup>

- **Bookkeeping Skills for Groups:** the groups had received training on savings and credits, which most groups reported as still functioning. However, not one group visited had an update to date finance book, the most recent entry being from March 2009, whilst some groups had no entries since October 2008. Further, many groups books lacked details (credit and debit columns not completed) and the groups were not followed up and supported by either the DSW or FA.

It is expected that there will be very little long term sustainability from these activities. The seeds distributed in some districts were from the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) and were hybrid seeds, which are valid for one season growing only and seeds will not reproduce in the second year. This type of seed distribution is appropriate from a food security viewpoint, ensuring increased vegetable consumption for one year, but is not a long term sustainable livelihood approach. There was no seed saving or post harvest storage taught to the groups.

There is some confusion as to whether FA was the 'broker' for these activities, and simply facilitated distribution on behalf of MAF, or whether FA directly received funding from MAF to implement themselves. As two conflicting reports were made during this evaluation, this warrants further attention by FA.

The point of these two examples is that the DSW project staff have focused on completing activities and distributing items from small 'extra' grants as opposed to building long term lasting skills in the group members. It is questionable whether this was an effective use of per diems, drivers, vehicles and staff time.

FA needs to have clearer boundaries over the role of FA as either a broker or as a direct implementer. Activities with partners need to meet basic criteria of contributing toward the goals of the project, not just meeting the needs or wants of women's groups, and to ensure that the cost and staff time dedicated to such activities is warranted.

### **Community needs and action plans to lobby for change in communities**

Of the groups visited as part of this evaluation, no groups were developing action plans or lobbying for change in their communities at a Suco, sub-district or District level.

However, the Women for Peace congress could be considered a 'nation wide' lobby for change, and realistically it is large gatherings such as this that allow women's voice to be heard in Timor-Leste at the moment. The Women for Peace congress was 'socialised' in several isolated Sucos in all districts. This should be considered a strength of the conference, to ensure that information was shared both from the district to Dili, and then from Dili to the districts.

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<sup>8</sup> The chickens were mostly kept in a cage at the group coordinators house. The group coordinator received 10 chickens on average. There was no plan for how future chicks or eggs would be fairly distributed, or how the chicken program would reach all group members.

As outlined above, many women expressed that they found the groups an important space to be able to discuss women's issues and 'de-stress' with their friends via informal information sharing.

### **In what way have the project influenced on young people's `situation in Timor Leste.**

Very few young people were involved and it appears in general not specifically targeted by the DSW. There is huge potential to work in this area, given that FA has a long term view of change for women. The next generation of young women would benefit from increased access to information, skills building and training.

AS noted earlier, FA has a program with UNICEF to provide 'Life-skills' training to young women. No information on this was available during the evaluation period.

## **Partner cooperation**

### **Mutual understanding and communication between Alola and NET**

The support from NET is considered an important relationship to FA. The visits allowed for the forging of trust and relationship building between individuals, and for NET staff to familiarise themselves with the reality and challenges of the DSWs. NET supported FA to implement the DSW in the style and manner that FA deemed most appropriate. International solidarity between women's groups is an important part of development for Timor-Leste.

However, the administrative demands placed on FA to facilitate annual applications, contracts and visits on behalf of NET should be considered. The CEO position is only covered 0.15/day/week toward the DSW project- this amounts 1.2 hours per week, and it was observed that the CEO clearly spends more time than this supporting the DSW project staff and the monthly DSW meetings than is outlined in the contract. This does not include the time spent on DSW accounts, finance, staff contracts, applications and funding contracts. Whilst it is understandable that NET would only cover a small percentage of the CEOs salary, NET should also strive to reduce and limit administrative demand from the NET side.

It is assumed that NET has been very helpful in assisting FA to completing application funding forms, and acting a promoter of FA in Norway. This has clear advantages to FA, such as access to funds, international support for FA activities and contributing towards a high profile. If this relationship is to continue, NET should strive to support senior Timorese management in FA to have the capabilities to complete funding forms and applications without assistance.

As discussed above (see Section 'Role of NET'), the purpose of the visits has been misinterpreted at times.

## **Infrastructure**

### **Are the material resources sufficient for accomplishing the objectives?**

The material resources provided through the project have been sufficient and appropriate. Future funding should consider the depreciation of items such as laptops and cars (which

due to use and the harsh climate of Timor-Leste tend to deteriorate quickly and need to be replaced frequently).

A high percentage of the DSW requested digital cameras, computers, transport (namely motorbikes) and the Women's groups frequently requested a purpose built women's centre.

The consultant expressly advises against any such material inputs, despite these requests, as the costs would be prohibitive and the operation and maintenance of computer and motorbikes would occupy a significant amount of the DSW time.

The DSW strength lies in their grassroots connections at the district level, so being relatively 'material resource poor' means that the majority of their time is spent directly with the groups, which is as FA and NET would expect.

## Relevance of the capacity building provided

### Has the training facilitated by the DSW extended the capacity of the target group?

As there was no baseline survey completed, it is not possible to measure whether participants 'capacity' has been extended or not<sup>9</sup>.

The 2009 application outlines the key areas for capacity building of participants:

- ◆ District Support Worker (DSW) skills in facilitation, management and community leadership
- ◆ Weaving, Breastfeeding, student groups and school communities will develop skills in prioritising, planning, media and nominated technical areas
- ◆ Planning and coordination of community action
- ◆ Integration of development initiatives across sectors and interest groups
- ◆ Financial management and achievement of small scale grants.

The DSW themselves have participated in a wide range of training and in turn, have been expected to train and facilitate workshops, trainings and meetings on a range of subjects. The DSW ranked training and their personal development highly amongst activities completed, but when asked about future needs and current challenges, focused on material items such as salary, office equipment, digital cameras and transport.

Whilst it is appropriate to a certain extent to expect the DSW to facilitate some basic training for the women's groups, it should not be expected that the DSW will be able to be a highly skilled 'all-rounder'.

The current range of activities demand that the DSW is a facilitator, community leader, community development expert, trainer, social worker. These are technical roles that require significant training and years of experience- this would not be reasonably expected of other staff, yet it seems that DSW is often expected to complete multiple roles.

FA needs to consider what is the core role of the DSW, and therefore what are the core skills that should be developed in the short and medium term. As the DSW have a mix of

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<sup>9</sup> 'Capacity building' implies that change has occurred within an individual or organisation. It generally encompasses the notion that transformational change has occurred, and an individual is better skilled or with better capacity to complete their work.

backgrounds and experiences, the training and 'capacity building' of each DSW should meet their individual needs. This means both group training for the DSW and opportunities to participate in other training or mentorship as identified individually.

Women in the groups evaluated were active in their communities and groups prior to the presence of the DSW. It was observed that women were also participating in training provided by other organisations, so attributing women's community action to FA as a result of capacity building would be inappropriate.

Certainly, women participating in the evaluation were aware at a theoretical level of a number of topical issues on which they had received training, being namely domestic violence, gender awareness, justice and human trafficking. The DSW project could certainly claim to have increased women's awareness of these subjects, and women frequently ranked access to information via the DSW as an important activity.

DSW are often considered a contact point for referral of cases of domestic violence or abuse. There exists a referral pathway for such cases in each district, to varying degrees of success. It not recommend that the DSW take a lead role in this activity, as the DSW are untrained, unsupported and FA does not have the capacity to supervise staff who may deal with confrontational and disturbing situations. It is acceptable for the DSW to be part of the referral pathway, but not to be the key contact, lobbyist or supporter for victims.

It is acknowledged that support services for victims of domestic violence and sexual abuse are inadequate in the districts, and that women face many obstacles in the justice system. This issue is appropriately part of a FA advocacy program, but FA should be looking at either how to lobby for change for the provision of support services, or to provide a specific support service that is separately funded. Support to victims should not be considered a 'minor' activity of the DSW.

### **Have male participants supported women's activities in their communities?**

During the evaluation, there were three (3) of eight (8) groups that had men participate in the evaluation process. In general, men were very morally supportive of the women's activities, and felt that they had contributed toward the success of the groups through assistance with gardening, construction (chicken coops) or simply through moral support. The men saw the women's activities as important, especially when household income was improved.

However, it was interesting to observe the participation of the men during the evaluation, as they often attempted to dominate the workshop and it was necessary to separate the men in small focus groups in order to allow the women full space to participate.

Men could be considered a target group for many of FAs training and workshops, especially relating to domestic violence, gender awareness and human trafficking. There are some organisations, such as the Association of Men Against Violence (*Tetun: Assosiasaun Mane kontra Violensia* AMKV) that are very appropriate partners for FA, and this relationship should be built further. Alternatively, FA could actively encourage the support of these associations or training for men through partner organisations such as the Justice System Monitoring Project (JSMP), Justice Facility and International Organisation for Migration (IOM).

## **Leadership Training for Suco council elections and local women's committees**

At the time of this evaluation there had been no specific leadership training in preparation for suco council elections and local women's committees. The DSW were not aware of the number of women who had registered their nomination as a candidate for the elections, and there were no plans for targeted training during 2009.

It will be interesting to observe if there is an increase or decrease in the number of women Chefe de Sucos elected through the Suco Council elections in 2009. The structure of the Suco councils has changed since the last elections, and women are now guaranteed two positions- women's adult representative and women's youth representative.

The lack of pre-election Suco Council training should be considered a lost opportunity on behalf of the program and a significant oversight given that the DSW is part of the WRC and Advocacy program at FA.

Nevertheless, FA could identify any newly elected women's representatives, and the skills development, formal trainings and resources that they need to effectively operate on the Suco Council. Suco council representatives are democratically elected and represent formal leadership, dealing with government programs and are often involved in important community cultural and social events.

It was not possible to measure throughout this evaluation if women had increased their leadership role in their villages in a non-formal sense.

## **Sustainability and future perspectives**

### **Long-term financial sustainability and socio-cultural factors and resources**

The 2008 *Mid Term Program Project Report* states that

*Women in the districts are already beginning to initiate their own training and advocacy programs, independently of the Alola Dili office and with minimal financial support from the DSW (p.9)*

DSW project team identified these activities as marmalade making, agriculture and basket weaving. This could not be independently verified as these districts were not visited as part of this evaluation, but should be considered a positive result.

The current model of the DSW project is not sustainable, primarily due to the fact that the project is moving strongly toward a community development model that relies on FA to be the broker for activities from other NGOs/government or providing funds via the project for small, poorly linked activities.

The activities lacked a component that focused on growth within the group (for example, seed saving, systemized distribution of chickens to all group members, ongoing self investment in the savings and credit), and the growth and expansion of the activities relies on FA seeking further inputs. This is a move away from the original idea of having a DSW to facilitate contact between FA and women in the districts, and to provide a better understanding of the districts situation.

In spite of this, the consultant strongly recommends that FA seek funding for the continued presence of a DSW in 2010 and beyond. This is discussed in more detail under recommendations.

### **Future sustainability post FOKUS/NORAD funding support**

FA has partnerships with many other NGOs and government ministries, providing services, activities and funds for the DSW project. Over 50% of the funding for DSW projects are funded from other sources, that is, not funded by NET/FOKUS or NORAD.

Whilst it would be possible for the project to continue, the recommendation is for the continued presence of the DSW but under different terms of reference and advocacy program strategy. This will in turn affect the level of financial support needed and FA should consider the recommendations prior to seeking other funding.

## **Recommendations**

Overall, the DSW project has made excellent, if occasionally misguided, achievements since 2007. This project could be considered as the 'pilot phase' as FA and the DSW have learnt a lot through the presence of a local contact at District level. A presence at the district level for the FA Advocacy Program should be considered essential for future empowerment of Timorese women.

Before attempting a continuation of the DSW project, FA needs to revise its Advocacy program, approach and strategy.

The DSW project became a mix of wide variety of activities, many in the area of 'community development' not advocacy. The Advocacy program should separate community development (which may be more appropriately placed in another program area of FA) and develop a strategy on

- A. How FA will consult with women at a district level to ensure that the advocacy program involves representing their needs, concerns and desire for change
- B. The key areas that the advocacy program will address in a 1, 3 and 5 year framework, including lobbying strategies, networks, and an M&E system to measure change
- C. How FA will have a presence at the district level to implement the advocacy program (that is, not assuming that the same model of one DSW per district for all activities will be repeated).

## **Monitoring and Evaluation**

FA should invest in medium to long term training on M&E for Manager level staff.

Baseline survey should be completed for any future projects if FA wishes to use quantitative indicators to measure progress.

Mid-term evaluations should be conducted for all programs and address in detail key evaluation questions of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability.

National Staff should be encouraged and supported to develop the skills to report to external donors, independently.

## **Advocacy Program Review**

Prior to considering the future of the DSW project, the consultant recommends that FA needs to reconsider the current Advocacy Program structure and focus.

Generally, community development is not considered a component of advocacy programs, and its presence in the FA Advocacy program is confusing, poorly executed and contributes little toward bringing rural women's voices to government for change in their daily lives. A major theme of the DSW evaluation was the mix of community development, training, advocacy with a lack of clarity of the overall strategic direction. There was little or weak linkages between activities and trainings, and often trainings were given as 'one off' with no ongoing support or follow up.

Further, FA does not have the expertise or resources to manage a large community development project that involves distribution of material goods (such as agricultural goods).

FA needs to decide how best the Advocacy program can facilitate women's voices at a village, district and national level to lobby for change creation and to ensure that a women's perspective is included on the nations development agenda.

There is clearly a role for a staff member at district level as part of an advocacy program, but the current model of pursuing small scale activities that have high overhead costs should not be repeated in the future. The program tends to be 'top heavy' with current high number of Dili based staff supporting the DSW with little clarity as to their individual roles. Further, there are weak linkages to the WRC- the two programs are really only associated as they both come under the advocacy program.

Once an overall strategic direction is chosen for the Advocacy program, it should become clearer the role that a district based worker would contribute toward that.

The district based worker should not work with producer groups, as previously outlined by Threads of Life.

FA should consider how to phase out or handover activities with the producer groups in the next six (6) months.

## **Presence of FA in the Districts under a new model**

NET and FA Program level staff had expressed some concern that FA/DSW did not follow a logframe approach. It is recognised that a logframe may be helpful in the medium term but only after FA has reconsidered the strategic direction of the Advocacy program. Creating a logframe at the moment based on the current program would lead to a repeat of the mix of activities with little final impacts or outcomes for women in the broader community.

It is recommended that as FA is high profile local NGO, that in the future only one coordinator is needed for the DSW, and the profile of this person should be carefully considered.

FA is involved occasionally in sensitive issues and the program coordinator needs to be an older woman with extensive advocacy experience that is confident in resolving problems at a district level as they arrive. Timor-Leste is a hierarchal society, and age and prestige are important social factors when mediating sensitive issues. These factors of age and experience may also be considered when recruiting new staff in the districts under a district based advocacy program.

In considering a new model for FA presence in the districts there are a few key components that should guide the program

- FA is uniquely placed, in terms of resources, profile and skilled staff, to seek women's opinions about the issues that matter most to them at a village level. Advocacy should be driven by a bottom up approach, not by a donor led approach. This may mean not participating or turning down donations that do not fit in FA new strategic advocacy vision when such funding would stretch the capacity of the staff to confidently and calmly manage their responsibilities
- One of the most commonly identified strengths of FA activities at district level was access to information. Women appreciated the access to information they received via FA and were keen to receive more information. This highlights the role that the WRC may have in expanding its activities.
- FA now has three(3) years experience in running a district based program. FA is one of the only local NGOs that has a presence in each district, and this should be considered a core strength of FA. FA should actively pursue support for the continuation of a district presence, albeit in a direct form.
- FA should seek the assistance of an external facilitator (national or international) to led the staff through a process of defining a strategic vision for the Advocacy program, separating the community development component (possibly placing this under the responsibility of economic development) and assisting with preparing a realistic achievable program design.

## Summary of Recommendations arising throughout Report

- FA should seriously consider a review of the status of the DSW as either a volunteer or a staff member.
- FA should undertake a wider review of volunteers associated with FA. A standardisation for all FA programs of volunteer rates, expected levels of responsibilities, code of conduct and the allowances able to be claimed would create greater transparency in this area.
- FA should chose a minimum percentage that is required of external donors for Administration/overhead costs, which if a donor cannot or will not contribute, FA chose not to pursue the program or project.
- Local staff are supported to take a more pro-active role in report writing for external donors. This will encourage 'ownership' of the content of such reports and assist staff to take responsibility for projects outcomes, activities and the timeliness of reporting.
- Only highly skilled and specifically 'textile' trained expert FA staff should deal with producer groups for long term economic independence of the groups.
- The role of the DSW as an advocate for women, a source of information and as a local contact for FA is not offered by any other institutions at the district level and should be considered the key aspect of the DSW project that is unique and worth pursuing.
- FA needs to have clearer boundaries over the role of FA as either a broker or as a direct implementer.
- Activities with partners need to meet basic criteria of contributing toward the goals of the project
- FA should be looking at either how to lobby for change for the provision of support services for victims of domestic violence or sexual

## People Consulted for Evaluation

### Formal Individual Interviews (Chronological Order):

1.	Anne Finch	CEO	Fundasaun Alola	Dili	01/07/09
2.	Cecilia Fonseca	Manager Economic Development	Fundasaun Alola	Dili	01/07/09
3.	Teresa (Alita) Verdial	Manager Advocacy Program	Fundasaun Alola	Dili	01/07/09
4.	Regina do Sousa	Gender Focal Point	District Administration	Baucau.	09/07/09
5.	Madeline Ximenes Freitas	Chief, Vulnerable Persons Unit	Baucau Police Station	Baucau	09/07/09
6.	Maria Teresa Pereira	Women's Coordinator	Baucau Buka Hatene NGO	Baucau	09/07/09
7.	Augusto Pires	Director	Cailalu NGO	Baucau	11/07/09
8.	Beatriz Ximenes Sequiera	Progam Official Mother & Child Health	Fundasaun Alola	Baucau	11/07/09
9.	Fransisca Ribeiro Fraga	District Support Worker	Fundasaun Alola	Baucau	11/07/09
10.	Susan Kendall	International Advisor	Psychological Recovery and Development for East Timor (PRADET)	Dili	12/07/2009
11.	Adão Mendes	Sub-District Coordinator Same	Sub-District Administration	Manufahi	13/07/09
12.	Jacinta Jesus	Mother and Child Health Midwife	Same Community Health Clinic	Manufahi	13/07/09
13.	Mateus da Costa Noronha	Chefe Aldeia Susurai	Suco Betano , Same	Manufahi	14/07/09
14.	Jose D.Sarmento	Assistant Officer Vulnerable Persons Unit	Same Police Station	Manufahi	14/07/2009
15.	Lorindo dos Reis Fernandes	Chefe Suco	Suco Babulo Same	Manufahi	14/07/2009
16.	Argapito Soares	Chefe Suco	Suco Letefoho Same	Manufahi	14/07/2009

17. Fatima Estrela Soares	Manager	Concern Worldwide Same Office	Manufahi	15/07/09
18. Madre Gasparine CIJ	Religious Sister	Traditional Medicine NGO	Manufahi	15/07/09
19. Isabel Cepeda Costa	Gender Focal Point	District Administration	Manufahi	15/07/09
20. Ancelmo Tilman Soares	Director	Ba Futuro NGO	Manufahi	15/07/09
21. Eldina Inacia Tilman Pereira	District Support Worker	Fundasaun Alola	Manufahi	15/07/09
22. Ignacio XXXX	District Administrator	District Administration	Covalima	16/07/09
23. Amelia de Jesus Amaral	Chief, Vulnerable Persons Unit	Police Station	Covalima	16/07/2009
24. Sister Elisa Fernanades	Religious Sister	Canossian Sisters Suai	Covalima	17/07/2009
25. Maria Fatima Sarah & Marino da Cruz Jesus		FOKUPERS	Covalima	17/07/2009
26. Marcel de Araujo	Livelihood and Partner Coordinator	Oxfam Office	Covalima	17/07/2009
27. Jose Marcal	Activity Manager	Justice Facility	Covalima	17/07/2009
28. Maria de Jesus Pereira	District Support Worker	Fundasaun Alola	Covalima	18/07/09
29. Bente Mathisen	Coordinator	Network for Norwegian and East Timor Women (NET)	Norway	20/07/09
30. Florencio Gonzaga	Acting Director of National Directorate for Social Reinsertion	Ministry of Social Solidarity	Dili	20/07/09
31. Fransilino Sarmiento Martins	Position unknown	Ministry of Social Solidarity	Dili	20/07/09
32. Maria Jose	Director of Administration and Finance	Secretary of State for the Promotion of Gender and Equality		20/07/09
33. Adelia Caetano Conzaga dos Santos	Trainer Department of Planning and Programs	Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries	Dili	20/07/09

34. Luis Ximense	Director	Belun	Dili	20/07/09
35. Raimundo Caetano	IT Database Support	Belun	Dili	20/07/09

### District Support Worker Workshop

Held on 8<sup>th</sup> July, this workshop with all District Support Workers was held from 10am-3pm with one hour for lunch. The District Support Workers covered a few key activities being

- Presentation on the benefits and challenges each district offered women
- Listing activities completed with FA
- Voting and ranking the activities as a group
- Discussing why certain activities were ranked as the most important
- Completing a small survey in private.

Participants:

No	Name	District / Position	Contact Number
1	Fransisca Ribeiro Fraga	Baucau	7349305
2	Graciana da Silva	Liquica	7326317
3	Farrah Loundes M. Folrindo	Ermera	7471025
4	Joana da Silva	Manatuto	7349304
5	Luciana Guterres	Viqueque	7349301
6	Maria Adelaide Neves	Lospalos	7363145
7	Maria Monteiro	Oe-cusse	7465143
8	Eldina Inacia Tilman Pereira	Manufahi	7375043
9	Sanha Miis Salsinha	Atauro	7375044
10	Josefina Quintaon Pereira	Ainaro	7375045
11	Joanina da costa	Maliana	7375046
12	Maria de Jesus Pereiira	Covalima	7375047
13	Beatriz Sarmento Carvalho	Aileu	7375041
14	Paula Assis Belo	Project Officer	7245310
15	Joanico Oliveira	Project Officer	7374021
16	Cecilia da Fonseca	Project Coordinator	7274311
17	Teresa 'Alita' Verdial	Advocacy Program Manager	7239337

### Women's Groups Workshop

Workshops were held with the following groups. Participant lists were kept, and are available at FA if required.

District	Sub-District	Suco	Group Name	Number of Participants
Baucau	Baucau Kota	Tirilolo	Feto Forte Kulugisa	13
		Quelicaí	Feto Hasae Kapasidade	8
	Venilalae	Watu-haco	Feto Forte Venilale	10
Manufahi	Same	Letefoho	Grupo Hakfen	17
	Same	Betano	Grupo Soru Tais	14
	Same	Babulu	Grupo Haburas	12
Covalima		Suai Loro	Feto ba Futuro	12
Covalima		Suai Loro	Feto Haburas	8

## Methodology

The methodology for all workshops is based upon participatory evaluation principles, specifically targeted to Timorese women. The evaluation 'team' consisted of the international consultant, the District Support Worker Project team and a Research Assistant in each district.

One of the objectives of the evaluation was to improve the capacity of the DSW project team to facilitate workshops and undertake evaluations.

The analysis and report writing was carried out solely by the international consultant. The recommendations were discussed with FA staff prior to publication and a draft copy of the report was made available to FA, NET and FOKUS for comment prior to finalisation.

Prior to starting the workshops in the Districts, the Evaluation Team went through a series of questions relating to ethics<sup>10</sup> in conducting research and evaluations, and how these ethics might guide the way the evaluation was conducted. These ethical considerations were primarily focused on ensuring that the participants, i.e. women, were given space, time and opportunity to participate fully in the evaluation.

The two hour workshop was arranged in the following order

- Introductions and name games
- Separation into small groups of 3-4 people and a quick competitive brainstorm, firstly on why their sub-district was great for women, followed by a presentation and then secondly, why their sub-district was difficult for women, followed by a presentation from each group.
- Listing all activities that the group could remember completing with FA
- Voting on the activities 'most important' – based on individuals preference
- Separation into small discussion groups one the three activities receiving the most votes
- Focused discussion on why the activity was chosen as important, its impact and who it affected.
- Partner discussion on one strength and one weakness of the FA program
- Snacks

The evaluation team noted a number of key considerations, including but not limited to:

- **Time:** Women often had limited time that they were available to participate due to household and childcare responsibilities. The workshops were conducted during the day and planned for 2 hours duration.
- **Language:** Many women only spoke their local language, and therefore the facilitator needed to recognise when this was case, and adapt for local interpretation. This also meant encouraging group discussion in local languages and ensuring presentations in local language.
- **Illiteracy:** there is a high rate of illiteracy amongst Timorese women, so the workshop was designed in small group work with support from the facilitators to ensure that all discussions were 'captured' (that is, written down) but with no pressure on individuals to write.

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<sup>10</sup> Based on the document XXXXX Research in Indigenous communities

- **Men's Participation:** In mixed groups, men tend to dominate the discussion and 'workshop' space- physically and mentally. The facilitators considered how to ensure that the men were able to participate without affecting women's participation or dominating the workshop. This was done by encouraging men to formally join rather than 'hang around' the workshop space and passively dominate by adding comments and being spectators. The men were then separated during discussion groups and given different topics to workshop on. This kept the men engaged, valued their contribution but ensured they did not dominate.
- **Physical Space:** The workshops were conducted in homes, on verandas', under specially constructed bamboo and tarp pergolas and in Suco headquarters (Tetun: *Sede de Suco*). The Facilitators controlled the arrangement of chairs to ensure everyone sat in a circle at the beginning, and then moved around in groups as appropriate. During group work, each group was encouraged to sit some distance from the other groups as the physical space allowed.
- **Mental Space:** It was recognised that some women would feel nervous about the evaluation and their participation. Particularly about speaking in front of a group and whether their responses would be 'right' or 'wrong'. The facilitators dealt with this both by the design of the workshop (starting with easy confidence building discussion topics) and by positive reinforcement during the workshop, including ensuring participants laughed and regularly applauded each other for group presentations. Facilitators did not correct spelling mistakes, mis-planted comments or feedback.
- **Reflection:** There was a varying degree of skill and experience amongst the evaluation team. The international consultant facilitated two workshops, one at the beginning of the Baucau visit and the second at the beginning of the Manufahi-Covalima visit. This was so that the DSW project team could become familiar with what was expected from the workshop and to allow time to learn the methodology. The team took turns in facilitating workshops, sometimes sharing the role in the same workshop. The most important component was the daily reflection sessions. The entire team sat together and each individual reflected on the days process, following the ethical guidelines and noting what they would improve the next day. The reflection process allowed the team to take responsibility for their actions (e.g. everyone had to note something that was weak in the workshop) and to learn together as a team.

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## **Annex 1: Ethics in Evaluations (Tetun language version)**

Based on

Australia Government National and Medical Research Council 2005 *Exploring what ethical research means* Canberra Australia

“Nanti Dulu dong.....”

### **Etika iha Evaluasaun**

#### **Saida mak Etika?**

Lia fuan ‘Etika’ nia definisaun hanesan ‘saida mak Ita fear’ – no mos oinsa Ita nia hanoin, oinsa Ita nia hahalo. Etika iha ligasaun ho diak/aat no mos justisa /laiha justisa.

#### **Tamba sa Etika importante bainhira Ita halo Evaluasaun?**

Evaluasaun neebe involve **ema** sempre iha ligasaun ho etika. Etika bele fo mata dalan ba evaluator hodi halo ‘peskisa evaluasaun’ neebe seguro, ho respeito, responsavel (tanggung jawab) no qualidade aas.

#### **“Lao ho Etika durante evaluasaun”**

##### **1. Relasaun entre Evaluator ho Komunitade**

- a. Iha relasaun entre Evaluator ho komunitade? Fiar malu?
- b. Evaluator iha respeito ba protocolo no valor lokal?
- c. Evaluator fo tempo suficiente ba komunitade ka ema bele involve 100%?

##### **2. Hanoin “Awal”**

- a. Saida mak objektivo husi evaluasaun?
- b. Ema hatene tamba-sa Ita atu halo evaluasaun?
- c. Ema precisa interpreter? Includi lian-lokal (keta hanoin tetun/bahasa/port/eng deit!)
- d. Saida mak beneficio ba participante husi evaluasaun?
- e. Saida mak beneficio ba Alola husi evaluasaun?
- f. Saida mak risiko asosiado ho evaluasaun nee?

##### **3. Hanoin “lanjut”**

- a. Metode neebe hili tuir cultura no mos neccesidade ema?
- b. Iha explicasaun claro ba partipate kona-ba metode, proceso no mos resultado?
- c. Oinsa data, resultado, entrevistas dll bele rai ho seguro?
- d. Data, resultado, entrevistas dll atu rai ba tinan hira?
- e. Ba futuro, se mak bele aceso ba data evaluasaun nian (laos relatorio maibe data)
- f. Se nian data husi evaluasaun? Komunitade ka participante iha direito acesu ka lae?
- g. Oinsa resultado husi evaluasaun atu fahe ba publico?
- h. Oinsa resultado husi evaluasaun atu fahe ba participante sira?

##### **4. Gestaun Prosesu Evaluasaun**

- a. Iha oportunidade rona hanoin ema neebe involve durante prosesu evaluasaun? (Evaluador / peskisor / staff/ participante /komunidade)
- b. Evaluasaun lao tuir planu? Tempo suficiente?
- c. Oinsa atu identifika difikudade neebe hetan? Prosesu resolve oinsa?
- d. Participante sira fo sira nia 'lisensa' atu hasai sira nia foto, usa sira nia naran?
- e. Foto neebe hasai mostra ema ho dignidade no respeito?
- f. Ema suficiente involvido? Se lae, se tan precisa involve?
- g. Hetan hambatan saida? Precisa halo mudansa ba planu evaluasaun?

#### **5. Analisa**

- a. Oinsa atu analisa data neebe iha?
- b. Iha oportunidade ba comunidade sira halo analisa ka fo sira nia hanoin kona-ba data neebe iha?
- c. Participante sira concord ho analisa husi evaluador /staff?
- d. Saida atu kontese se participante / comunidade laconcordo ho evaluador /staff?

#### **6. Relatorio**

- a. Relatorio saida atu produz husi evaluasaun? (hakerek, presentasaun, radio, CD, encontru ho comunidade, workshop)
- b. Se iha acesu ba relatorio no tamba-sa importante sira iha acesu?
- c. Se atu involve fo comentario kona-ba relatorio?
- d. Saida Alola atu halo se participante ka comunidade "lae puas" ho relatorio?
- e. Oinsa Alola atu identifika, ka proteje identifikasaun, ema neebe participa?
- f. Foto neebe usa, iha lisensa husi ema?
- g. Alola iha responsabilidade saida ba organisasaun/doador produz relatorio ida?

#### **7. Fahe Resultado**

- a. Precisa halo 'pengumuman' iha media? Tamba-sa?
- b. Husi rekomendasaun, saida mak Alola atu halo?
- c. Oinsa bele garantia 'follow-up' husi rekomendasaun?
- d. Ema neebe importante simu resultado? Oinsa atu komunikar resultado ba ema nee?

#### **8. Lisaun neebe hetan**

- a. Saida mak diak husi prosesu lao evaluasaun?
- b. Saida lta aprende hamutuk?
- c. Saida lta mesak aprende?
- d. Saida lta bele hadia aban bainrua ho evaluasaun?

**Annex 2: Agenda for Workshop with District Support Workers (Tetun language version)**

**Workshop Evaluasaun**  
**DSW**

1. **Start**
  - a. Bem-vindo husi Staff Alola
  - b. Introdusaun Sarina / Lazaro /Elisa
2. **Game**
  - a. Hau nia naran..hau gosta...Hau nia kolega..
3. **Evaluasaun**
  - a. Objetivo
  - b. Prosesu
  - c. Resultado no aban bainrua
4. Actividade 1: Hau nia distritu kapas ba feto tamba ..
5. Actividade 2: Hau nia distritu desafio ba feto tamba...

**Group Work:**

6. Actividade 3: DSW nia knaar kapas tamba ....DSW
7. Actividade 4: DSW hetan dificulde hanesan ....(ranking most important-least important)
8. Actividade 5: Hau nia visaun (recursos hotu)
9. Actividade 6: Hau nia visaun (recursos zero).

**Individual Reflection**

10. Survey DSW
11. Sumario
12. End

**Annex 3: Survey for District Support Worker (Tetun language version)**

Distritu: \_\_\_\_\_

Fulan/tinan neebe hahu hanesan DSW	Fulan:	Tinan:
Tuir treinamentu saida durante tempo neebe sai hanesan DSW?		
Fatin Kantor		
Dala hira tama ba kantor semana ida?	Loron 5 (Segunda too sexta) <input type="checkbox"/>	loron balun <input type="checkbox"/> loron ida/semana ida <input type="checkbox"/> Ladun tama kantor <input type="checkbox"/> tuir neccesidade <input type="checkbox"/> seluk <input type="checkbox"/>
Semana ida usa horas hira hodi halao knaar DSW?		
Desafio sai DSW iha Ita nia distritu saida?		
Ita nia actividade saida neebe han tempo mak-barak hanesan DSW?		
Alola forte suporta DSW ho....		
Alola fraku suporta DSW ho....		
Tuir hau nia hanoin, tinan 1 ba oin, DSW bele ....		
Tuir hau nia hanoin, tinan 5 ba oin DSW bele.....		
Grupo neebe besik ho DSW		
Grupo neebe hasoru dala ruma		
Grupo neebe susar atu hasoru malu		
Hanesan DSW, fo treinamentu saida tihaona? (se sidauk fo, hakerek deit sidauk)		
Iha hau nia distritu, fetu sira haree mai DSW hanesan....		
Iha hau nia distritu, mane sira haree mai DSW hanesan		
Komentario		

*Please note: This is not the original size. It has been reduced to be included in the Annex.*