

## **Government Within Reach**

A report on the views of East Timorese on local government

National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI)

TIMOR LESTE

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## TERMINOLOGY USED IN THE REPORT

Aldeia	Sub-village or hamlet [POR]
Bupati	District Administrator [IND]
Camat	Sub-district chief [IND]
CEP	Community Empowerment Program
Chefe de Aldeia	Sub-village chief [POR]
Chefe de Suco	Village chief [POR]
CPD-RDTL	The Committee for the Popular Defense of the RDTL
ETPA	East Timor Public Administration
FALINTIL	Armed Forces for the Liberation of Timor Leste [POR]
F-FDTL	FALINTIL-Timor Leste Defense Force
KKN	Corruption, Collusion and Nepotism [IND]
Kolimau 2002	Charismatic politico-religious group in western Timor Leste
PKF	United Nations Peace Keeping Force
PNTL	National Police of Timor Leste
RDTL	The Democratic Republic of Timor Leste
Suco	Village [POR]
UN	United Nations
UNAMET	United Nations Mission in Timor Leste
UNMISSET	United Nations Mission of Support in Timor Leste
UNPOL	United Nations Police
UNTAET	United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor

## **PREFACE**

This research was undertaken in November 2002 as part of NDI's ongoing efforts to better understand the attitudes and aspirations of ordinary East Timorese, particularly with regard to local government.

As deliberations get underway in 2003 about the future shape of local or sub-national government for Timor Leste, the voices of ordinary East Timorese can make a valuable contribution. Whatever the outcome, the lowest tier of government has the most profound effect on the lives of ordinary people. Despite its importance, it was the level of government that suffered the most neglect during the transition period. However, as increasing attention is paid to local government, the voice of ordinary citizens in this democracy should be heard. People whose lives depend on the quality of local government, not just the leadership, want to be given the opportunity to play an active role in consultations about the future of sub-national government.

We hope that this report and the research upon which it is based can be a useful contribution to this policy debate and encourage policy makers to undertake a much wider consultation process in the coming months. It is not meant to be definitive, rather it is hoped that it will be a catalyst for further discussion and debate.

NDI in Timor Leste has always released its research publicly and made it accessible to interested groups. Once again, we have published this report in four languages in order that its findings can be shared widely with East Timorese and the international community in Timor Leste. Those who participated in this research did so willingly knowing that their views would be conveyed to East Timorese policy makers at all levels. A full description of the methodology of this report can be found in Appendixes.

As in previous reports, we have attempted to take a measure of the national mood at the time. We have also deliberately focused on relationships between ordinary East Timorese and public officials, both elected and appointed, as this is an area of specific relevance to NDI's programs in Timor Leste. We believe that strong and regular interaction between ordinary people and public officials to be the foundation upon which a healthy democracy is built. We hope this report and its findings are also of interest to the general East Timorese political and policy-making community, non-government organizations and media as well as ordinary East Timorese themselves.

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January 2003

## INTRODUCTION

Since the last focus group report published by NDI, which was based upon research conducted in December 2001, the rate of political change in Timor Leste has continued at an increasingly rapid pace.

During 2002, Timor Leste's Constituent Assembly completed the country's constitution in March and the people directly elected their first president less than a month later. Timor Leste came of age as an independent country when the United Nations presided over the transfer of sovereignty on the 20<sup>th</sup> of May. Shortly after, *Timor Leste* - as the country is officially known - became the 191<sup>st</sup> member of the United Nations as well as a member of other key international organizations such as The World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

However, with a government dependent on significant donor support, the country's journey to full independence continues. The energy once committed to the struggle for independence is now largely being redirected towards the fight against the reduction of poverty in Asia's poorest nation. The democratic institutions upon which self-government is founded are still young and the work of developing the structure of formal laws as well as the political culture that will guide their implementation is ongoing.

Timor Leste's transition is not without challenges. The country also grapples with a violent past and many unresolved tensions in the society. The independence struggle was bitter and hard fought, sometimes creating ruptures in the community as different political and military paths were seen to be the most effective way to achieve the ultimate prize of self-determination. Independence appears to have re-opened some of these old wounds rather than healed them. The period since the 20<sup>th</sup> of May has witnessed rising civil disturbances across the country as well as more frequent conflict between ordinary citizens and the police. There is also growing disenchantment among veterans of the struggle, as so few of them have received much in the way of a material independence dividend. There have even been clashes between the East Timorese police and military. The increasingly frequent pattern of violence climaxed dramatically on 4 December 2002 with the parliament attacked during a protest, businesses looted and the prime minister's residence burnt and destroyed. It has continued in the New Year with the mobilization of fledgling military to deal with disturbances in the Atsabe sub-district.

The people and government of Timor Leste have begun 2003 inspired by the great hopes of independence, but more than ever alert to the multitude of challenges that still face the world's newest nation.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As East Timorese policy makers begin to debate the future shape of sub-national government, this report draws the following general conclusions from its focus group research:

- East Timorese almost unanimously support directly elected local government officials at the village level.
- They see a strong representative role for their village level office holders and their primary interaction with government is through these local government officials.
- Village level officials seem to be overburdened with expectations from ordinary East Timorese that cannot possibly be fulfilled.
- There is a belief that village level officials should have strong and mutually supportive roles with sub-national officials above them.
- East Timorese want sub-national officials to be vested with the authority and resources to promote development as well as directly solve a wide range of problems at the local level.
- While they themselves do not use the word, the conclusion could be drawn that ordinary East Timorese support a significant level of decentralization.
- There is significant support for elected officials at all sub-national levels as well as a process of vetting appointed officials at the district and sub-district level by elected village level officials.
- Ordinary East Timorese desire stronger and more direct relationships with their national level elected officials.
- Almost all communities have poor access to information about government activities.
- Frustration and dissatisfaction with government services is growing.
- There are strong concerns about the lack of jobs, the high cost of education, poor government services to rural areas and a perception that corruption, collusion and nepotism (KKN) are rampant.

## TIMOR LESTE'S LOCAL GOVERNMENT DEBATE

At the end of 2002, local government or sub-national government in Timor Leste is based around 13 districts. This is a structure created during Indonesian and Portuguese times, was inherited and kept running as the skeleton of local government during the UNTAET transition. UNTAET's pillar of local government went little deeper than the 13 district administrators it appointed. Initially, these were international staff, however, by the end of 2000 UNTAET began a process of "Timorization" that saw East Timorese fill all 13 positions of district administrators by independence on May 2002.

The 13 districts are divided unequally into 65 sub-districts, sometimes known as "posto" in Portuguese or "kecamatan" in Indonesian. While during Indonesian times, this unit of government was closely controlled by a "camat", UNTAET only appointed poorly resourced coordinators for these positions with loosely defined and unevenly implemented roles. Once again, these positions were initially filled by internationals and later replaced by East Timorese.

At next level, there are 442 Suco or villages headed by a Chefe de Suco or village chiefs. This was a traditional structure used by the Portuguese and reinforced by the Council for National Timorese Resistance (CNRT) during the independence struggle and immediate post-independence period. Below each village chief are a number of Chefe de Aldeia or hamlet chiefs. Almost of all East Timorese, perhaps excluding recent internal migrants, can name their Chefe de Suco and Aldeia. Timorese talk of a paternalistic relationship with their village chiefs. It is a close and personal relationship; vastly different from the distant one they had with sub-district coordinators or district administrators during the transition even though these were once influential local figures under Indonesian and Portuguese rule.

As an East Timorese Inter Ministerial Technical Working Group on sub-national government observed:

*"During the UNTAET period, the major concentration was on strengthening central institutions necessary for the establishment of a new State; this resulted in little or no attention being paid to sub-national units - either at District or at sub-district level."*

In fact, the only vigorous active at this level during the transition was the creation of the village and sub-village development councils supported by The World Bank's Community Empowerment Program (CEP) and reluctantly given legal sanction (UNTAET Regulation 2000/13) but little else by the UN administration.



Future debate about the shape of local government in Timor Leste stems from the country's Constitution that came into force on 20 May 2002. Specifically, from Article 5 on Decentralization:

1. *On matters of territorial organization, the State shall respect the principle of decentralization of public administration.*
2. *The law shall determine and establish the characteristics of the different territorial levels and the administrative competencies of the respective organs.*
3. *Oecussi, Ambeno and Ataúro shall enjoy special administrative and economic treatment.*

And Article 72 on Local Government:

1. *Local government is constituted by corporate bodies vested with representative organs, with the objective of organizing the participation by citizens in solving the problems of their own community and promoting local development without prejudice to the participation by the State.*
2. *The organization, competence, functioning and composition of the organs of local government shall be defined by law.*

President Xanana Gusmao has also shown concern with the issue of local government, identifying its absence as causing a vacuum in rural areas that must be filled by representation at local level. In his speech to mark 100 days of independence on 30 August 2002, he said:

*"...there is no mechanism of communication with the grassroots and therefore they are easily manipulated by third parties .....some district administrators and some sub district coordinators also reveal lack of direction and do not know what they should do and should not do."*

More recently, he raised the issue of local government in his New Year's address to the diplomatic corps on 13 January 2003, linking it to the need for the government to communicate better with the community. President Gusmao stressed there was a clear need to have better information flows to the local communities so that they might receive basic information about what was happening at the national level and in different regions of the country:

*"I insist on the need to hold local government elections. Obviously, as soon as such an issue is raised, arguing on lack of funding will be immediately presented. I believe we will not need millions of dollars. If the population is not given the chance to elect their own leaders, there*

*will be no order, there will be no stability, there will be no sovereignty by the people. The population is confused and the current leaders are confused.*

*It is necessary to break away from this, for it is perilous for democracy and dangerous for stability.”*

In addition to this expressed political concern and the articles of the Constitution, the Timor Leste National Development Plan of May 2002 on the issue of Decentralization and Participation commits the Government to:

- Study and introduce an optimal sub-national configuration conducive for development as well as service provision in conjunction with stakeholders;
- Study and delineate the levels of administrative hierarchy down to the community that will facilitate cost effective and efficient service delivery and enhance community initiative and participation;
- Study options for effective decentralization that clearly define the role of central, regional, local and community, and civil society organizations and entities; empowers communities and strengthens transparency and grass roots democracy.

With both the Constitution and the National Development Plan requiring further legislation to define local government, the Government of Timor Leste committed to completing a study by 30 June 2003 that will:

- Propose the introduction of an optimal sub-national configuration of local authorities to maximize development potential and effective service delivery;
- Clearly delineate the levels of administrative hierarchy down to the level of the community which are consistent with efficient service delivery and which enhance community participation, initiative, commitment and involvement;
- Outline a series of options for this effective decentralization;
- Clearly delineate the role of the different levels of government proposed;
- Present a clear number of alternatives for greater community empowerment and the strengthening of grassroots democracy.

Some institutions, such as The World Bank, in its 2002 publication “*East Timor: Policy Challenges for a New Nation*”, have expressed strong views of the future of local government in Timor Leste.

*“In a small country like East Timor, there would appear to be little justification for more than two levels of government, a central administration and a strong local government, perhaps consisting of community councils at the current suco level.”*

While international institutions, experts, academics, consultants and policy makers all have distinct views on this subject, the position of the ordinary East Timorese citizen in the local government debate has been under represented. With this research, we hope to start a process to redress this imbalance by giving space to the opinions to those for whom good local government matters most.

## CURRENT THINKING

### ***East Timorese see independence as meaning freedom***

East Timorese across the country in November 2002 said that independence means to them, first and foremost, that they had left behind the fear and restrictions of the 24 years of often-brutal Indonesian occupation.

*I felt very happy and proud after Timor Leste became independent. Our long 24-year struggle was bought with the blood and tears of the oldest person to the youngest child. [Female, 21, Cova Lima]*

*After Timor Leste became fully independent, I felt very joyful and happy because what we had hoped for had been achieved. We had struggled for 24 years to oppose the violence committed by the Indonesian state against us and we won. [Male, 23, Manatuto]*

*The situation is better as our lives are calm and the ordinary people are not subject to violence and killings. [Male, 65, Ermera]*

*During the 24 years under Indonesian colonialism we suffered a lot and we were not free, but after independence we became free, which means we can freely go where we want without terror and intimidation anymore. [Male 22, Baucau]*

### ***In the wake of the destruction of 1999, life remains difficult***

However, independence did not come without a high cost, including significant loss of life, displacement and widespread physical destruction of the country's infrastructure by Indonesian forces as they withdrew from the country following the August 1999 referendum. Six months after independence had been realized with the transfer of sovereignty on the 20<sup>th</sup> of May 2002, participants in this research say not much has changed for the average East Timorese since "full independence". In fact, some ordinary citizens see things getting worse.

*There haven't been that many changes in our lives, but I am happy that those governing this new nation are people who were born here. [Female, 27, Cova Lima]*

*After Timor Leste's independence on the 20<sup>th</sup> of May, as villagers who have experienced much suffering, we thought that our lives would be better; in fact it's the opposite. [Female, 30, Liquica]*

*We know we have democracy and we are happy that we are free, but schools are expensive and produce in the market is not affordable, so our experience of independence is a hard life. [Female, 38, Viqueque]*

*It's good that Timor Leste has become fully independent, however, we want our leaders to sit with us to help us first with food, money, electricity, clean water, repair the roads, etc. [Female, 32, Bobonaro]*

### **The UN brought peace, but not everything**

The UN's role in bringing peace to Timor Leste and guiding the country to independence is respected, although perceptions of its record as an administrator and government are mixed.

*Because of the assistance of the UN, the people of Timor Leste received fresh air in September 1999. [Female, 21, Cova Lima]*

*Their work was good enough because the UN already helped us until we could stand as our own nation, besides that as part of their mission they helped with the needs of the people such as food, clothes and other essentials. [Male, 45, Liquica]*

*The work the UN did here was very good, but there was a little problem as to work for them you needed to speak English and have computer skills. [Male, 23, Baucau]*

*Despite the work of the UN during the transition, the lives of the ordinary people are still difficult. With regard to administration, education, agriculture and everything else, there were still deficiencies during the transition. The UN gave the opportunity for the people to be free but it was not open and transparent with us. [Male, 23, Manatuto]*

*While the UN's military activities were good, their civilian work was less so, especially in this district because their allocation of jobs was full of KKN, either with the recruitment of day laborers, ETPA civil servants or the TLPS. [Male, 27, Cova Lima]*

*The UN was successful as they formed the FFDTL and TLPS but they did not take to court the [Indonesian] war criminals from the post-referendum period in Timor Leste such as General Wiranto, Kiki Syahnakri, Tono Suratman, Timbul Silaen and others. [Male, 43, Dili]*

### **Worried about the economy**

Ordinary East Timorese are preoccupied with providing for their families. Employment is scarce, particularly for those without a good education or who are illiterate. For those on the land, the long dry season was

of grave concern and the threat of hunger looms. Goods are expensive in the market and returns of harvest are low. Government intervention is seen as necessary to provide jobs.

*Nothing much has changed for me, as since independence our leaders have not yet created job opportunities for Timorese. [Male, 24, Cova Lima]*

*We want jobs to be found for the ex-clandestine operatives as before all of us struggled together but now we can't find work. We know we are not all smart enough to work in offices, but there should be projects in our district so we are not unemployed and stressed. [Male, 52, Manufahij]*

*During the struggle it wasn't only the clever people who fought for 24 years. What about the destiny of the illiterate? What will be done for them by the government? We hope jobs can be created and markets can be found for our produce. [Male, 29, Bobonaro]*

*After independence, if you're a young person looking for work it's difficult as there are many criteria like knowing English, Portuguese or computers as well as having graduated. We feel there's nothing for young people. [Male, 20, Aileu]*

### **Concerned about access to education**

For young people and their parents alike, education is seen as the key to a better life. Like employment, it is an issue of concern across the country. The growing expense of education is seen as putting it out of reach of many who want it. Once again, the people are calling for government action.

*The future for our children will be better if the government of Timor Leste looks after children and pays attention to educational institutions in Timor Leste. [Female, 16, Oecusse]*

*The future for our children will be better, but now it's expensive to send them to school and this is making it difficult for us to educate them. [Male, 59, Lautem]*

*We ask our leaders to pay attention to children who want an education but who are not able to pay for school and to give assistance to these children in order that their futures are not destroyed. [Female, 17, Baucau]*

*I worry about the future for my children as in Ainaro the schools are far and there is no hospital. With such deficiencies, I feel there are*

*obstacles in the way of the happiness of future generations. [Male, 31, Ainaro]*

### **Increasingly critical of government**

Given the difficulties faced by the country, among participants there appears to be growing criticism of and impatience with the government and its perceived inability to deliver services demanded by ordinary people. There are general perceptions that the government is increasingly corrupt (KKN) as well as distant and insensitive to the needs of ordinary East Timorese.

*Since independence there's been no change as there has not yet been any development. We hope the government will pay attention to the district and build schools, hospitals and main roads so development will benefit us all as well as future generations. [Male, 28, Ainaro]*

*If they are eating rice, we all should eat rice. If they are eating sweet potatoes, we should all be. Up until now, they have dollars and good food, while the ordinary people are ignored. Those who sit up there, we choose them, but not for their own interests. [Female, 32, Aileu]*

*If we still have corruption, nepotism and collusion (KKN) in this country, I am certain many problems will arise and our children's lives will not be calm. We ask the leaders of our government to make an enemy of KKN in Timor Leste for the sake of the welfare of our children. [Female, 20, Baucau]*

*I'm not so satisfied with the government we have now and they've never come to where the ordinary people live to tell us what the government is doing. [Male, 27, Ainaro]*

*My feeling is that after Timor Leste became fully independent, good or bad, its just the same because after the flag was raised on the 20<sup>th</sup> of May 2002 there has been no leader who has come to our district to find out about our suffering. [Female, 31, Liquica]*

*Independence is good, but as villagers we hope that those sitting above us will take notice of us so we feel that we also can share in independence. Don't let us live in misery while they come and go on overseas trips spending money. [Male, 32, Aileu]*

### **Unsettled by the security situation**

This research was largely completed prior to a number of high profile security incidents. Police shot dead a protestor during an attack on the Baucau police station in late November, followed by rioting in the capital Dili in early December (in which two were killed and two dozen wounded.) Four

villagers were killed in fighting in the Atsabe district blamed on “militia”. These incidents were the climax in 2002 of a growing pattern of violence in Timor Leste since independence. At the time of the field work for this research, there had been increasing crime, social disturbances and clashes between police and army as well as the police and the community.

*I don't feel safe because of things we all know about such as vehicles being held up and robbed. This makes ordinary people scared. [Female, 28, Ainaro]*

*I feel safe as we no longer have informers or intel spying on us. [Male, 20, Aileu]*

*I feel safe enough in the town, but the people in the villages and up on the border feel exposed. I hope that a unit of the F-FDTL will soon come to guard the community living on the border and fill the gaps of the PKF forces. [Male, 15, Oecusse]*

*The situation is better now but a few small problems have appeared because there are people who don't understand each other and much unemployment, so there are thieves, fights and the like. We hope our leaders can create jobs to lessen unemployment and theft. [Male, 22, Baucau]*

*The situation now is not good because although we have independence, we do not have peace between Timorese. We still have disturbances such as fistfights and scuffles and in my opinion this nation is not yet safe. [Female, 24, Manatuto]*

*I don't think the situation is safe either in the city or town. I just heard that PNTL and F-FDTL were fighting in Dili. This shows that they are unable to overcome problems and need much more training to truly become professional and advance the security of Timor Leste. [Male, 15, Oecusse]*

*I can't say whether it is good or not as sometimes we are living calmly and sometimes we have fights and commotion that scare us such as the fighting between the police and F-FDTL. [Male, 23, Manatuto]*

### **Looking back favorably on Indonesian times**

Increasing uncertainty and growing difficulties appear to have merged with the growing realization that independence will not be the solution to all of Timor Leste's problems. There is a tendency that has appeared for the first time in the focus group discussions in the post-independence period, to look back and compare the Indonesian period favorably, in some regards, with the present.



*I felt that KKN during Indonesian times was not so visible, however, KKN nowadays is conspicuous and transparent. [Female, 28, Ainaro]*

*I think the situation is worse than the Indonesian period because now KKN is more visible, for example, there's one office that is staffed all by the same family. In the Indonesian times, there was corruption, but it was not that evident. [Male, 35, Dili]*

*While Indonesia was still here we received enough attention, but since we've been independent the ordinary people have been ignored and our community has received nothing. [Female, 32, Aileu]*

*The situation is worse if compared to Indonesian times as goods for sale in the market are not affordable and earning dollars is very difficult compared with rupiah. [Male, 45, Dili]*

## **PARTICIPATION IN A DEMOCRACY**

Timor Leste is unique among almost all nations having been created through an act of self-determination exercised at the ballot box through a universal franchise. As a result of making three landmark trips to the polling station in three years, East Timorese have a strong sense of living in a democracy.

*Timor Leste is a democracy, so we as citizens have a right to participate. [Male, 31, Lautem]*

*I participate because I feel as a citizen of Timor Leste I have a right to participate in a democracy. [Male, 22, Manatuto]*

*As a citizen I have the right to express my opinion and give my thoughts to the government about the development of the nation and state. [Male, 27, Ainaro]*

*In order for someone to participate, citizens must be active so that they can know about the local and central government's programs as well as the wheels of development for the long term. [Female, 30, Cova Lima]*

Despite a referendum as well as Constituent Assembly and presidential elections since 1999, the link between participation and elections is not always clearly made. Where participation and elections are linked, the idea that citizens participate in elections to influence decisions made over their lives is not strongly asserted.

*Democracy needs participation because without participation democracy cannot work. We can directly choose our representatives who sit in the government. [Male, 20, Baucau]*

*As citizens of Timor Leste we must participate because through participation we can understand the problems that this nation faces. [Female, 20, Baucau]*

*As citizens of Timor Leste we must participate, as this is a democratic nation, which means government by the people. [Male, 23, Baucau]*

*As a citizen I can actively participate in various ways either at the local or national level. We can jointly organize to see and to know what work is being undertaken in this district. Besides that the government can also organize to meet to discuss the various problems faced by the community. [Male, 35, Liquica]*

While some do see elections as the primary act of participation for ordinary citizens, a smaller group sees beyond elections to the need to express the views and influence decisions through discussions with elected or public officials and even protests.

*The people have already participated in the democracy through the elections for the Constituent Assembly and President. [Male, 35, Dili]*

*Choosing the Chefe de Suco and Chefe de Aldeia is form of participation. [Female, 32, Liquica]*

*I can participate through elections, expressing my ideas in discussions and giving constructive criticism to improve the situation. [Male, 32, Ainaro]*

*We can meet with members of parliament so that we can directly convey the problems we face in the district. [Female, 32, Liquica]*

*The way in which I would be happy to participate is to ask the government officials to come to the field to see the suffering of the people. If this happens then all people can participate in a democracy. [Male, 22, Manatuto]*

*Citizen participation in a democracy means that we contribute our aspirations. If things are not okay between our political leaders, the people have the right to protest against their leaders. [Male, 23, Manatuto]*

*To participate in a democracy is for me the ability to channel my aspirations and to have the right to say what is good and bad. [Female, 24, Manututo]*

There does appear to be a clear connection between the aim of participation being to influence the decisions made by their leaders in their democracy. However, a key disincentive to future participation is seen to be a lack of responsiveness to people's aspirations on the part of the government. An unresponsive government is seen producing negative consequences such as apathy or opposition. One participant saw future support for fringe political groups as a reaction to a lack of concern by the government towards the problems of the ordinary people.

*As citizens we have already participated by taking part in elections on a number of occasions. We have made many proposals to the government but the government has taken no notice of them. Our lives are belittled, but we always hope to give a helping hand to the government. The government must take notice of the little people who are still in a difficult situation. [Female, 26, Ainaro]*

*We will stop participating if the government does not listen to the aspirations of the people and the government opposes democracy. [Female, 24, Manututo]*

*Whether people will participate or not depends on the program of the government and whether they pay attention to the people. If not, so they will form groups like CPD-RDTL or Kolimau 2000. [Male, 45, Dili]*

## **VILLAGE LEVEL GOVERNMENT**

### ***Chefe de Aldeia***

Participants in the focus groups see the *Chefe de Aldeia* or sub-village or neighborhood chief as simultaneously the lowest level of representation as well as the lowest ranking government official. There are many, often contradictory, dimensions to this role, generally agreed to be quite burdensome for those who fulfill it. However, in the post-independence vacuum of local government inherited from UNTAET's administration, focus group participants saw this role as important and extensive. The *Chefe de Aldeia*, they say, has been a provider of government services, representative of the people's aspirations, distributor of aid, overseer of development, keeper of law and order, village arbiter and the person everyone turns to first with their problems. All this, in a position that has been neither paid nor prescribed by law.

*The role of the Chefe de Aldeia is to serve and guide the community. They must be close to the people, know their situation and their problems. [Male, 37, Oecusse]*

*The Chefe de Aldeia looks after the kampung [neighborhood] in order that it is prosperous. [Female, 20, Baucau]*

*The role of the Chefe de Aldeia is to receive problems and solve them. [Male, 22, Manututo]*

*The Chefe de Aldeia only does his duties in accordance with the orders from the central government. [Male, 45, Liquica]*

*[The Chefe de Aldeia] must lead the people in activities such as community self-help as well as solving land problems and individual matters and the like. [Male, 28, Ainaro]*

*The Chefe de Aldeia is trusted and is responsible for our neighborhood. He must know, for example, who gets jobs and who is sent overseas for education. [Male, 26, Manufahi]*

*If there's a problem in the kampung [neighborhood] or community as the leader he has to solve it. [Male, 20, Aileu]*

*The role of the Chefe de Aldeia is to channel the aspirations of his kampung [neighborhood] to the Chefe de Suco. [Male, 23, Baucau]*

*They are representative of the people, they have authority to govern and regulate as well as handle all things connected with government and the administration of the village. He is responsible for all problems that happen in his village. [Male, 35, Cova Lima]*

*As the elected leader of the kampung [neighborhood], he must carry out the duties in accordance with the wishes of the people. [Male, 42, Aileu]*

*The job of the Chefe de Aldeia is to control the people in his Aldeia. [Female, 24, Manatuto]*

The existing structure of village level government was based on traditional structures and reinforced by the CNRT in the vacuum left behind in the wake of the violent Indonesian withdrawal and the return of the displaced population. The CNRT disbanded in July 2001 and UNTAET never formally incorporated these positions into any government structure, using liaison with Chefe de Suco on an ad hoc basis. The Community Empowerment Program, working at the sub-village, village and sub-district level, was kept at a distance by the formal UNTAET structure that barely extended to the sub-district level.

The CNRT based its resistance structure on traditional local structures to enhance its appeal and reach. There seems to be mostly high regard for those occupying these positions, due to their closeness with the people during the struggle, but there remains a desire, first detected in focus group research in February 2001, to have their status clarified by law.

*We see that up until now, the Chefe de Aldeia and the Chefe de Suco have given much attention to the welfare of the people and without receiving any wages they have been faithful to the people. We ask our leaders in government to give some attention to paying wages to the Chefe de Suco as well as the Chefe de Aldeia and the staff in the village office. [Female, 20, Baucau]*

*If they are to have new duties assigned to them they must come from the central government. [Male, 32, Liquica]*

*The duties and responsibilities [of the Chefe de Suco and Chefe de Aldeia] are very heavy. We ask the government to pay attention as to whether their positions will be temporary or permanent. [Female, 25, Bobonaro]*

*Our Chefe de Aldeia has been with us since the early days of the struggle. He is a good person and has done his duty well. The community wouldn't agree to change him as he has lived with us and struggled with us since the early days. [Male, 32, Aileu]*

*During 1999 and 2000, the Chefe de Aldeia was under the CNRT and his activities went ahead smoothly. But since we've had a definitive government, his activities haven't gone well as the government doesn't recognize the Chefe de Aldeia or Chefe de Suco. [Male, 45, Dili]*

### **Chefe de Suco**

Similarly, for the Chefe de Suco, the job description is long with some differing view of the position being a representative of the people looking up and out or a civil servant from the government looking inwardly. There was very little distinction seen between the positions of Chefe de Aldeia and Chefe de Suco with the obvious exception being the hierarchical relationship, that is the Chefe de Aldeia, as the person responsible for the hamlet, neighborhood or sub-village sits below in the hierarchy. The Chefe de Suco oversees the larger community of the village. There is no question that the Chefe de Aldeia reports up to the Chefe de Suco and vice versa.

*The Chefe de Aldeia and Chefe de Suco are the heads of village security. If something happens in their kampung or village it is they who should tell the government, security forces or police. [Male, 15, Oecusse]*

*The role of the Chefe de Suco is to organize his village in order that it is prosperous and to serve the people. He is responsible to the sub-district chief. [Male, 23, Baucau]*

*The role of the Chefe de Suco is to look after the welfare of the people and to serve the people. He is responsible to both the sub-district chief and the people. [Male, 20, Baucau]*

### **The people's choice**

Across all districts and demographics there is unanimous support for Chefe de Aldeia and Chefe de Suco to be directly elected by the people. Ordinary Timorese see themselves as the people best qualified to choose their village level government.

*The Chefe de Suco and the Chefe de Aldeia must be chosen directly by the people through an election. We are happy with the process of electing the Chefe de Suco and the Chefe de Aldeia because they are chosen directly by the people, unlike the District Administrator or Sub-District Administrator who we have no idea who chose them. [Female, 20, Baucau]*

From focus group research since the beginning of 2001, East Timorese have always demonstrated an understanding of the principles of representative democracy. They understand the contract between elected officials and constituents in much the same way as citizens in mature democracies. They are acutely aware and very critical of their elected representatives when the latter do not represent their interests. There is a strong sense of betrayal and frustration that their government is not reflecting the interests of ordinary citizens. They want elected officials who are within their reach. This is perhaps reinforced by the unanimity of support for village officials to be elected and to be representatives of their constituents. They distrust government appointees and are concerned that those who were not active in the struggle are reaping the most benefits from independence. Once elected, they believe the Chefe de Aldeia and Chefe de Suco should be paid a wage from the public purse. This set of comments from Liquica is illustrative of the active role citizens see for themselves and reflects comments from around the country in these focus group discussions.

*The Chefe de Suco carries the aspirations of the people as from the clandestine times until now they struggled in the interests of the people. [Male, 29, Liquica]*

*The community must choose the Chefe de Aldeia and Chefe de Suco because it's not an administrative office. The person we choose must*

*be able and we must see if the person is suitable to lead the community. [Male, 32, Liquica]*

*Before we choose a Chefe de Aldeia or Chefe de Suco we want to see what his behavior was like during the clandestine period. The people have the right to choose and we must be satisfied with the election process. [Female, 31, Liquica]*

*As a Chefe de Suco I support elections through the ballot box. Whoever receives the most support is chosen in order that the community is satisfied with the results of its choice. [Male, 45, Liquica]*

*Should the Chefe de Aldeia and Chefe de Suco become civil servants? I don't know the process, however, they must receive a wage from the government. It's better they be representatives of the people and not become civil servants. [Male, 35, Liquica]*

Participants in the focus group research show a distrust of appointed office. The sense of the ordinary East Timorese that they live in a democracy would be reinforced by the election of this most vital position.

*We would feel happy if there were direct elections for the two Chefes by the people. We don't want a system of appointment. They wouldn't be doubtful in carrying out their duties if they were chosen based upon the highest number of votes. [Female, 25, Bobonaro]*

*The Chefe de Aldeia and Chefe de Suco must be chosen through a general election process, which is directly chosen by the people and not appointed, as our nation is a democracy. [Male, 45, Dili]*

### **Relationships with other levels of government**

Reinforcing the representative nature of the position, East Timorese see the Chefe de Aldeia and Chefe de Suco as their key link with the government and world at large.

*If there is problem that appears in the community the Chefe de Suco or the Chefe de Aldeia must quickly take that matter to the Sub-District chief and if it cannot be solved then take it to the district administrator who must solve it. [Male, 23, Baucau]*

*There must be a working relationship between the government and either the Chefe de Suco or Chefe de Aldeia. They are the staff from the government who should pay attention to the welfare of the people. [Female, 19, Baucau]*

## SUB-DISTRICT LEVEL GOVERNANCE

During the UNTAET period, the focus group respondents described the gap between village life and government as most obvious in terms of the poorly articulated and inconsistent operation of sub-district officials. The contrast with the often interventionist Indonesian government structure has been stark.

*The sub-district officials haven't really functioned. I think the sub-district coordinators could be eliminated as you already have officials at the sub-district level handling agriculture and we have a direct relationship with them. [Male, 37, Oecusse]*

*We don't know what the duties of the sub-district coordinator, we know only about the Chefe de Suco and the Chefe de Aldeia. [Male, 23, Baucau]*

*The role of the sub-district coordinator (camat) is to receive the problems that exist in the community that are passed on by the village or sub-village chief. The Camat must work together with the Chefe de Suco and Chefe de Aldeia to go to the field to directly see the problems faced by the ordinary people. If they cannot be solved at the sub-district level then they must be brought to the district or to the (national) government to be overcome as quickly as possible. [Male, 20, Manatuto]*

Above the level of Chefe de Suco and Chefe de Aldeia, there seems to be greater differences on whether this level of officials are necessary and whether these higher level officials should be appointed or elected. Within the focus group discussions, participants often disagreed on the status and method of appointment of this mid-level of official whereas they had been unanimous on the need to directly elect village and sub-village chiefs. Focus group participants also perceive the role of the mid-level officials to be wide, with both service and representative functions seen as important parts of this person's job description.

*The best way to choose the officials is through an election. [Female, 22, Manututo]*

*At least the sub-district coordinator should be chosen in accordance with his origins in order to make easy communication between the coordinator of the sub-district and the people and vice versa. [Female, 32, Liquica]*

*The sub-district coordinator doesn't need to be elected, however, the community must be shown the candidate after he is selected. The*



*government must only select people who would be the choice of the people. [Male, 32, Liquica]*

*He is a channel for the aspirations of the community about what they are experiencing as relayed by the Chefe de Suco. [Male, 28, Bobonaro]*

*Our elected representatives can choose the official. We hope the person would be someone from our area. The sub-district coordinator should be a civil servant. [Male, 28, Bobonaro]*

*We can choose via a direct election from four or five candidates who have been selected through an interview. This is a career position and not a political office and we must truly be able to see their ability and professionalism. [Female, 25, Bobonaro]*

*Sub-district officials are representatives of the people and must be chosen through an election. They work for the people in carrying out their government duties undertaking development programs in the sub-district and are a representative of the people to the upper levels of government. [Male, 24, Cova Lima]*

*[The sub-district coordinator] must be chosen through the people's representatives such as the Chefe de Aldeia and Chefe de Suco because they will always have a two-way relationship to implement village development programs in the village. [Male, 24, Aileu]*

*There must be a number of candidates presented for the sub-district coordinator and the people must chose them and they should not be appointed by the central government. [Male, 45, Dili]*

## **DISTRICT LEVEL GOVERNANCE**

The further removed from their daily lives, the less articulate were the views of ordinary Timorese about the role of government officials. The District Administrator, still often referred to using the Indonesian term Bupati, is seen to be responsible for the development of the district and having direct links with the sub-district coordinators, village and sub-village chiefs. While somewhat ambiguous, there is still strong support for this office to be an elected one.

*The role of the Bupati is to receive all the aspirations from the sub-districts to the village and run the district in order that it is prosperous. [Female, 17, Baucau]*

*Timor Leste is a democracy which means that the Bupati, Camat and Chefe de Suco must be chosen through elections and they should not*

*only be chosen from civil servants but anybody who has the ability can become a Bupati. [Male, 18, Baucau]*

*The duty of the Bupati is to control the community in his district and channel the aspirations of the people. [Male, 20, Manatuto]*

*The duties of the district coordinator cannot be separated from those of the sub-district coordinators down to the Chefe de Sucos and Chefe de Aldeias. There must be coordination between them all. [Male, 32, Liquica]*

*They must be chosen through an election and come from our own district. [Male, 35, Liquica]*

*They must be chosen through a FRETILIN commission in the district and presented to the central government. After they pass the selection process, they can become a civil servant. They must come from this district. [Male, 45, Liquica]*

*The Bupati must not work on his own but communicate with the sub-district heads about the government structure, the decisions he takes and must be responsible with those under him. The Bupati must come from the district. [Female, 26, Bobonaro]*

*This person should be chosen through an election that is tight and democratic with support of the majority of voters. [Male, 24, Cova Lima]*

*The Bupati must listen to the Chefe de Suco and Chefe de Aldeia in order that the development program that is being implemented is truly in accordance with the interests of the community. [Male, 24, Aileu]*

*A Bupati should have a high level of ability and be chosen through an election that is free and secret. [Male, 35, Dili]*

## **LOCAL-NATIONAL RELATIONSHIPS**

While central government remains distant for most East Timorese, it does not mean they do not want to interact with public officials. If public officials come to them, East Timorese seem ready and willing to engage in constructive dialogue. The District Administrator is seen as a key link between national and local government.

*It's the duty of the Bupati to have the relationship with the national level government. He must know what is going on in his district and have the authority to convey the people's aspirations to the center based upon the realities in the field. [Male, 37, Oecusse]*

The distance between the government and the people appears to be the foundation of growing disillusionment, particularly among young people. It can also encourage disregard for rule of law as well as compliance with government regulations.

*The relationship between the government and people has never been close as the people do what they do and the government does what it does. [Female, 20, Baucau]*

*Our relationship with the government is very minimal because our leaders feel that they are big people, so they never come to see the ordinary people so that we've never had a relationship with the government. [Male, 22, Manatuto]*

*We don't yet have any direct relationship with the national government because they have not yet visited our area since independence six months ago. The people of this district need their presence so they can tell them their problems and complaints. [Male, 24, Bobonaro]*

*Members of parliament don't come to the districts. Government officials only pretend to work and receive their wages every month. Government officials here don't care about agriculture, but agriculture is very important for the farmers in our community. [Male, 19, Manufahi]*

The obvious benefit for national level officials to regularly consult with ordinary East Timorese is to provide input for policy making, however such meetings can also be important for providing information. One outcome of such dialogues can be the venting of frustration. They can also be beneficial as a conflict prevention measure by encouraging patience among ordinary East Timorese.

*Recently, the Minister of Education visited our school and had a dialogue with us. We conveyed our problems to him and he politely received our proposals and opinions as well as our requests. These haven't yet been realized, but we are certain that with time our requests can be fulfilled. [Female, 17, Oecusse]*

## **ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES**

Focus group discussion participants express frustration with elected representatives on similarly high levels as they did a year ago, although those who had met members of parliament in dialogues seemed more content. The general complaint of participants was that people have never met members of parliament and as a result they feel that their interests are not being represented.

*The role of the elected representatives is to sit in the Assembly to channel our aspirations, but there are those who have never channeled our aspirations and just remain quiet. We ask that they come here in order that we can tell them our problems, as it's very difficult to meet them in Dili. [Male, 23, Baucau]*

*What needs to be done about our representative in parliament is that he must be aware that the people chose him and he must speak of the aspirations of the community. [Female, 24, Manatuto]*

*The people feel disappointed with the work of the Constituent Assembly that now has transformed into the National Parliament, as the district representatives have not yet become a vehicle for discussing matters that are specific to each district at the national level. [Male, 32, Liquica]*

*The representative who I voted for must truly carry the aspirations of the people in their work in parliament to make laws that respond to the people's needs. [Female, 26, Bobonaro]*

*Our members of parliament should go back to their districts every month to socialize the constitution and to make sure that as far as possible what is legislated by the parliament represents the aspirations of the people. [Male, 27, Cova Lima]*

*Our elected representatives must apply themselves to socializing the results of their work in the capital to districts right down to the village level. [Male, 28, Ainaro]*

*We've never had a member of parliament visit us. Last year they came and made promises that they would come to the grassroots but since they were elected we've seen nobody who could take our concerns from the bottom to the top. [Male, 52, Manufahi]*

*It's difficult to contact them directly. If we write a letter it will take a long time. If they cannot come to the villages, they should at least come to the sub-district towns so that we can have direct interaction with them. [Male, 22, Aileu]*

The demands on elected representatives to come to the field to understand the situation of ordinary East Timorese extend up to the president, one of the nation's harshest critics of the performance of the members of parliament. Demands for dialogue are made to all elected officials, without exception.

*Before he became president he promised that if he became president he would live together with the people. He promised we would have*

*electricity, clean water and toilets. It was only a promise. [Male, 19, Manufahij]*

*Our relationship with the president is directly through the advice of our elected representatives from this district, otherwise we as ordinary people can have a relationship with him through letters or verbally if he is invited to our district to speak with the community. Our elected representatives can arrange this. [Male, 24, Cova Lima]*

## **INFORMATION**

Outside of Dili, even in the second city of Baucau, access to print and electronic media is sporadic due to illiteracy, preference for local languages, varying work schedules, signal strength, distance and poor electricity.

*As an ordinary person, working everyday in the fields and gardens, I don't receive much information and I don't have enough money to buy a newspaper. The money I make from the fields is just enough for our daily needs. [Male, 23, Baucau]*

*We receive information about political activities from friends or from the radio, but we hear most from people who come from Dili. [Female, 20, Baucau]*

*We very much want to receive information via the radio or television, but here the electricity is always out. [Male, 23, Baucau]*

If properly incorporated, the Chefe de Suco and Chefe de Aldeia could be a suitable and trusted way to convey information to the people.

*Information that is important must be given to the Chefe de Suco and Chefe de Aldeia because as the village leaders they must know about information from the government, parliament and political parties in order that they can pass this on to the community. [Male, 23, Baucau]*

*The Chefe de Suco and Chefe de Aldeia have not yet provided information to the people because from what I see they themselves have never received any information, newspapers, magazines from the local government. [Male, 20, Manatuto]*

*We are waiting for information from the government about the development process in the future and besides that information about the process for the election of Chefe de Suco and Chefe de Aldeia. [Male, 35, Liquica]*

## **APPENDICES**

### ***Appendix A - Notes on methodology***

#### **Focus groups**

Focus group discussions are semi-structured discussions on specific topics conducted by a trained moderator with a group of approximately of between six and 15 participants. The discussions generally last around two hours.

#### **NDI's focus group research in Timor Leste**

This is the fifth time since January 2001 that NDI has used focus group research techniques to gather information about the attitudes of ordinary East Timorese, although only the third time a report has been published on the findings. The first report, *Timor Lorosae Is Our Nation*, was published in February 2001 in conjunction with the East Timor NGO Forum. The second, *Carrying the People's Aspirations*, co-written by Alacrico Da Costa Ximenes, was published in February 2002.

On the other two occasions, the research transcripts have been used for NDI's internal planning and programming with limited distribution upon request to other researchers. An East Timorese academic will shortly publish his own analysis of NDI's focus group research conducted in May 2002 on security issues.

#### **This report**

This report was written in English from Indonesian transcripts and based upon 13 focus group discussions conducted in various local languages between 16 – 29 November 2002. One focus group discussion was conducted in each of Timor Leste's 13 districts.

The profile of participants in these focus groups is summarized in table form in Appendix D. All those who participated in these focus groups had participated in NDI's Civic Forum Program.

One problem with the recruitment of participants was the gender imbalance in this research. Only 32 percent of the 105 participants in the discussions were women. This problem will need to be redressed in future research.

The type of participants is meant only as a general description. Without conducting detailed interviews of all participants, it is difficult to properly classify their occupations as a number of terms could apply to the same person. For example, while a person may join in a Civic Forum discussion as

part of a church youth group, they would also conduct some agricultural work growing crops to support themselves and their family. The same person might also regard him or herself as being unemployed and would seek regular paid employment if it were available.

### **Aim of the research**

In addition to the previously stated aims, an additional purpose of this research was to gain more information about the attitudes of participants in NDI's Civic Forum program that has been running throughout Timor Leste since June 2001. Civic Forum is an ongoing program funded until March 2004. Therefore, all the participants in the research have also taken part in Civic Forum discussions. To protect their anonymity, participants are only identified by their gender, age and district.

### **Transcripts**

Each focus group was recorded on audiotape and a verbatim transcript produced by the facilitators. There are 270 pages of transcript in Indonesian for the 13 focus group discussions held as part of this research.

### **The Facilitators**

Six teams of facilitators conducted the focus groups. In alphabetical order, the facilitators were Santiago Freitas Belo, Deolindo Borges, Carolina Do Ceu Brito, Palmira Guterres, Manuel da Silva Guterres, Marcelina Liu, Carmensita R. Machado, Antonio Cristanto Mota, Maria Lindalva Parada, Angelmo Soares, Cesaltino B. Ximenes and Juliana Do Rego Ximenes.

### **Thanks**

This report would not have been possible with the support of NDI Timor Leste's Dili-based staff, in particular Office Manager Elsty Davidz Morato, as well as the NDI Asia Team.

Ongoing funding of NDI's programs in Timor Leste by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) was essential for the production of this research.

## **Appendix B - About NDI and Civic Forum**

In Timor Leste, NDI conducts a nationwide long-term civic education and grassroots advocacy program, known as Civic Forum, in all 13 districts. Civic Forum began in June 2001 and is currently funded by USAID to run until March 2004. Civic Forum over a long-term period works with the same pre-existing and organized groups to provide information on the transition as well as support democratic values of participation and develop skills necessary for future advocacy. Civic Forum has worked with more than 220 groups and at its peak involved more than 3,200 participants every month.

The National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI) is a nonprofit organization working to strengthen and expand democracy worldwide. Calling on a global network of volunteer experts, NDI provides practical assistance to civic and political leaders advancing democratic values, practices and institutions. NDI works with democrats in every region of the world to build political and civic organizations, safeguard elections, and promote citizen participation, openness and accountability in government.

In many countries, however, advocates of democracy lack both the institutions and the experience with democratic practices. They have turned to NDI for assistance in addressing the difficult task of building their democratic structures. These include: national legislatures and local governments that function with openness and competence; broad-based political parties that are vehicles for public policy debates; election commissions that administer transparent and fair balloting; and nonpartisan civic organizations that monitor elections, and promote democratic values and citizen participation.

While NDI puts much effort into the consolidation of new democracies, elsewhere autocratic political regimes persist. And, in other countries, democratic gains have been reversed. In these situations, NDI works with advocates of democracy who courageously struggle against tremendous odds to end conflict and promote peaceful, political change.

Headquartered in Washington, D.C. with field offices in four continents, NDI has conducted democratic development in more than 40 countries. Currently NDI's largest office outside of Washington is located in Jakarta, Indonesia where NDI works with political parties, civil society organizations, parliamentarians, academics and journalists.



**Appendix C – Facilitator guide**

**NDI TIMOR LESTE**

**Facilitator Guide for Focus Group Discussions (FGD)  
Citizen participation and local governance  
November 2002**

**Approximately 120 minutes**

## INTRODUCTION

[10 MINUTES]

WELCOME THE PARTICIPANTS, INTRODUCE YOURSELF AND HAVE THE MEMBERS INTRODUCE THEMSELVES TO EACH OTHER. EXPLAIN THE RESEARCH PROJECT'S OBJECTIVE:

The aim of these focus group discussions is to collect ideas and aspirations of East Timorese regarding various issues connected with citizen participation and local governance from several locations and social classes. The information will be collected and analyzed in one report, which it is hoped will have an impact and influence on government policy and also assist local and international organizations such as NDI with their programs, such as Civic Forum.

ASK THE PARTICIPANTS IF THEY UNDERSTAND THE PROGRAM OBJECTIVES. IF NOT, EXPLAIN THEM AGAIN USING DIFFERENT WORDS.

EXPLAIN THE FORMAT OF THE DISCUSSION:

EMPHASIZE ANONYMITY

EXPLAIN THE USE OF THE TAPE TO RECORD THEIR WORDS ACCURATELY

ASK PEOPLE TO SPEAK CLEARLY SO THEIR VOICE CAN BE HEARD

REMIND PARTICIPANTS:

THERE ARE NO RIGHT OR WRONG ANSWERS  
PARTICIPANTS SPEAK AS INDIVIDUALS  
PARTICIPANTS ARE REPRESENTATIVES OF THEIR COMMUNITY  
RELAX – THIS WILL BE AN INTERESTING EXPERIENCE.

THE DISCUSSION HAS THE FOLLOWING NINE PARTS:

MOOD

PARTICIPATION

VILLAGE LEVEL GOVERNANCE

SUB-DISTRICT LEVEL GOVERNANCE

DISTRICT LEVEL GOVERNANCE

LOCAL – NATIONAL RELATIONSHIPS

ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES

INFORMATION

CIVIC FORUM

WARM UP, STARTING WITH YOURSELF, GO AROUND THE GROUP ASKING PREFERRED NAME, AGE & OCCUPATION.

MOOD

[10 MINUTES]

How do you feel now that Timor Leste is fully independent?

DISCUSS. ASK EACH PARTICIPANT FOR THEIR THOUGHTS.

What has changed in your lives now that Timor Leste is governed by East Timorese?

DISCUSS.

Do you see the situation as getting better or worse? Why? Do your children have a good future as East Timorese?

DISCUSS. ASK EACH PARTICIPANT FOR THEIR THOUGHTS.

Do you feel secure and safe? Why?

DISCUSS. ASK EACH PARTICIPANT FOR THEIR THOUGHTS.

What is your opinion of the performance of the United Nations in Timor Leste?

DISCUSS. MAKE SURE EVERY PARTICIPANT MAKES A CONTRIBUTION.

PARTICIPATION

[10 MINUTES]

How should citizens participate in a democracy?

LIST & DISCUSS

In which ways, have members of the group participated?

GO AROUND THE GROUP.

Why should you participate?

ASK EACH PARTICIPANT TO EXPLAIN THEIR MOTIVATIONS.

What stops members of the group from participating?

DISCUSS. DO ALL THE MEMBERS OF THE GROUP AGREE?

How would you like to participate in the future?

GO AROUND THE GROUP. DISCUSS. DO ALL THE MEMBERS OF THE GROUP AGREE?

VILLAGE/NEIGHBORHOOD LEVEL GOVERNANCE

[20 MINUTES]

What is the role of the Chefe de Aldeia (sub-village chief)? What duties and responsibilities do they have?

DISCUSS. GO AROUND THE GROUP. CAN PEOPLE AGREE ON A ROLE?

Would you like to see a new or different role for the Chefe de Aldeia in the future?

DISCUSS. GO AROUND THE GROUP. CAN PEOPLE AGREE ON A ROLE?

What is the role of the Chefe de Suco (village chief)? What duties and responsibilities do they have?

DISCUSS

Would you like to see a new or different role for the Chefe de Suco in the future?

DISCUSS

How should your Chefe de Aldeia and Chefe de Suco be chosen?

ASK EACH PARTICIPANT. THEN ASK ONE PERSON TO EXPLAIN EACH POSITION OR SIDE. THEN ASK OTHERS IF THEY AGREE OR NOT.

How does this vary from the current situation?

DISCUSS

How should the Chefe de Aldeia and Chefe de Suco relate to the government?

DISCUSS.

How should the Chefe de Aldeia or Chefe de Suco represent the people's interests?

DISCUSS

What has been the impact of the Conselho de Suco (CEP) in your village?

DISCUSS

How do the Conselho interact with Chefe de Aldeia/Suco?

DISCUSS & EXPLAIN

SUB-DISTRICT LEVEL GOVERNANCE

[10 MINUTES]

What should be the role of sub-district officials?

DESCRIBE. ASK ONE OR TWO INDIVIDUALS. THEN ASK OTHER GROUP MEMBERS IF ANYONE HAS ANY DIFFERENT EXPERIENCES OR OPINIONS.

How should they relate to the Chefe de Suco and Chefe de Aldeia?

DISCUSS

How should these officials be chosen?

DISCUSS.

DISTRICT LEVEL GOVERNANCE

[10 MINUTES]

What should be the role of District Administrators in your community?

DESCRIBE. ASK ONE OR TWO INDIVIDUALS. THEN ASK OTHER GROUP MEMBERS IF ANYONE HAS ANY DIFFERENT EXPERIENCES OR OPINIONS.

How should they relate to the Chefe de Suco and Chefe de Aldeia?

DISCUSS.

How should this person be chosen?

DISCUSS.

LOCAL-NATIONAL RELATIONSHIPS

[10 MINUTES]

As an ordinary East Timorese, what should be your relationship with the national government?

What should be your relationship with the president?

What should be your relationship with the prime minister?

What should be your relationship with the ministers? [Give a relevant example]

What should be your relationship with members of Parliament?

ASK EACH IN TURN. DISCUSS. ASK EACH PARTICIPANT TO RESPOND. ASK OTHER PARTICIPANTS IF THEY AGREE WITH OTHER VIEWS. WHY OR WHY NOT?

How should you as an ordinary East Timorese interact with the government?

DISCUSS. ASK EACH PARTICIPANT TO RESPOND. ASK OTHER PARTICIPANTS IF THEY AGREE WITH OTHER VIEWS. WHY OR WHY NOT?

### ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES

[15 MINUTES]

What should be the role of elected representatives?

DISCUSS. ASK EACH PARTICIPANT TO RESPOND. ASK OTHER PARTICIPANTS IF THEY AGREE WITH OTHER VIEWS. WHY OR WHY NOT?

What should your elected representative be doing for you as an ordinary East Timorese?

DISCUSS. ASK EACH PARTICIPANT TO RESPOND. ASK OTHER PARTICIPANTS IF THEY AGREE WITH OTHER VIEWS. WHY OR WHY NOT?

How should ordinary East Timorese people interact with elected representatives?

DISCUSS. ASK EACH PARTICIPANT TO RESPOND. ASK OTHER PARTICIPANTS IF THEY AGREE WITH OTHER VIEWS. WHY OR WHY NOT?

### INFORMATION

[15 MINUTES]

What information are you as an ordinary East Timorese person most interested in receiving from government? Why?

LIST AND DISCUSS. IS THERE AGREEMENT AMONG THE GROUP?

How should you receive information about government activities?

How should you receive information about the activities of the Parliament?

How should you receive information about political parties?

LIST AND DISCUSS.

What role should your Chefe de Aldeia or Chefe de Suco play in providing or organizing the provision of this information?

DISCUSS.

What role should other local government officials play in providing information?

DISCUSS. ASK EACH PARTICIPANT TO RESPOND. ASK OTHER PARTICIPANTS IF THEY AGREE WITH OTHER VIEWS. WHY OR WHY NOT?

### CIVIC FORUM

[5 MINUTES]

What role should Civic Forum play in providing you with information?

DISCUSS

What role should Civic Forum play in assisting you with the interaction between ordinary East Timorese and public officials?

DISCUSS.

How has your participation in Civic Forum changed the way you relate with elected or public officials?

DISCUSS.

CONCLUSION

[5 MINUTES]

THANK PARTICIPANTS FOR THEIR PARTICIPATION.

EXPLAIN AGAIN THAT THIS INFORMATION IS TAKEN IN CONFIDENCE AND THEIR NAMES WILL NOT BE REVEALED.

EXPLAIN THIS INFORMATION WILL HELP WITH THE FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OF CIVIC FORUM PROGRAMS.

TELL THEM THE INFORMATION FROM SIMILAR GROUPS IN 12 OTHER DISTRICTS WILL BE SUMMARIZED IN A REPORT THAT WILL BE PROVIDED TO MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT, GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS, LOCAL NGOS AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS.

IT IS PLANNED THAT RESEARCHERS WILL COME BACK AND SPEAK TO THE SAME GROUP AGAIN IN 15-18 MONTHS TO SEE HOW THINGS HAVE CHANGED.

OBRAGADO BARAK.



**Appendix D – Participant profile**

<b>Date</b>	<b>District</b>	<b>Group</b>	<b>Participants</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Age Range</b>
23 November 2002	Aileu	Villages	7	6	1	20 -42
21 November 2002	Ainaro	Villagers	8	4	4	26 -32
19 November 2002	Baucau	Church Youth	10	6	4	17 -23
21 November 2002	Bobonaro	Town Dwellers	8	2	6	20 - 33
17 November 2002	Cova Lima	Unemployed	7	4	3	24 -35
18 November 2002	Dili	Villagers	8	8	-	26 -32
14 November 2002	Ermera	Community Leaders	6	6	-	25 -35
29 November 2002	Lautem	Farmers	8	7	1	25 -60
25 November 2002	Liquica	Town Dwellers	7	4	3	29 -45
17 November 2002	Manatuto	Church Youth	12	10	2	20 -25
16 November 2002	Manufahi	Villagers	6	4	2	19 -52
23 November 2002	Oecusse	Students	10	7	3	15 -37
17 November 2002	Viqueque	Students/farmers	8	3	5	19 -38