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Report

Evaluation of the Australian NGO Cooperation Program (ANCP) supported Women's Economic Empowerment Project – Timor-Leste

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1. Executive Summary

The Women's Economic Empowerment (WEE) project in Timor-Leste is a three year project from 2016 – 2019 that is going to be completed in June 2019. This project is funded by Action on Poverty (AOP) in coordination with the Psycho-social Recovery and Development in East Timor (PRADET) as the implementer of the project. A total budget amount of AU\$165,000.00 was allocated to PRADET by AOP since 2016 to implement this project to contribute to and respond to both women and men beneficiaries gender basic and gender strategic needs to be empowered to be economically independent. Before ending the project year, this evaluation aims to evaluate the performance of the project against intended objectives, outcomes and outputs' indicators of improving the quality of life for 150 female victims of gender-based violence and the lives of targeted beneficiaries' families. Questions related to the changes in lives of the beneficiaries and their families and challenges were asked to assess the positive impacts of this project on the targeted vulnerable women and girls, and women and men with psychosocial problems.

The methodology used including: desk review of available and related project documents; field visits and individual interview as well as focus group discussions, that came up with main findings and conclusions of a three year project implementation within three years that are presented in this report. The findings including the relevance of the project's objectives and outcomes planned and implemented are relevant to respond to women and men beneficiaries' basic and strategic needs to be economically independent and improve their and their family lives. At this stage there are 139 (131 women and 8 men) direct beneficiaries and 813 indirect beneficiaries composed by 429 in Dili, 203 in Maliana and 181 (95 women and girls and 86 men and boys) in Suai, who have benefitted from the WEE project in Timor-Leste.

PRADET has committed and dedicated their capacity and knowledge to implement this project in a very effective way. PRADET has a strong relationship with the Ministry of Justice in collaboration of the implementation of the project activities in the prison; and with *Empresa Diak* on providing and facilitating training on small business and marketing to all targeted beneficiaries and their families. This relationship and coordination came up with significant progress and results found in the implementation of the WEE project.

The achievement of this project without PRADET's commitment and dedication would be something else. Within limitation of facilities such as transportation, PRADET could manage the budget amount of AU\$165,000 to make great and significant achievements in the beneficiaries' lives.

Women prisoners, men and young men who benefitted from the WEE project demonstrated their experiences in learning and changes in their attitude and behavior after participating in this project implementations. Evidence of the success of the literacy activities is that, a woman **beneficiary 1** who is already in her 62 and never went to school proved that this project is well achieved. This **beneficiary 1** is now able to read and write easily. She was the winner of a quiz competition of Bible reading in Gleno prison. More evidence was also found in the notebooks of the male beneficiaries in Gleno and Becora prisons on their success and ability of reading and writing.

The WEE project outcomes of improving the quality of life for 150 female victims of gender-based violence and their families resulted in up-to-date 139 (93%) beneficiaries that were selected and established their livelihood activities. The evaluation team observed many different types of

livelihoods and small businesses including: kiosk, livestock (including goats, pigs and chicken raising), horticulture, buying and reselling vegetables, handicraft, second-hand clothes selling, selling of cookies and fried food, etc.

A total of 154 livelihood activities were supported; these are composed by: **1)** 47 (30.52%) are kiosks; **2)** 30 (19.48%) are livestock; **3)** 24 (15.58%) are selling fast food such as: rice, fried food and noodles, Satay sticks, canteen, etc.; **4)** 15 (9.74%) are selling second-hand clothes; **5)** 14 (9.09%) are horticulture and/or buying as well as reselling vegetables; **6)** 10 (6.49%) are petrol and kerosene; **7)** 9 (5.84%) selling cookies and bread; **8)** 3 (1.95%) *tais* weaving (traditional garments); and **9)** 2 (1.30%) are selling type of *three-wheel*¹ on the streets. The livelihood activities supported are exceeded to 154 from 139 beneficiaries is due to some beneficiaries received supports for two activities that take time to earn income such as animal raising; and activities for short time period to earn income to respond family basic needs. Hence, there are 15 (11%) out of 139 beneficiaries that received supports for two livelihood activities such as animal raising and horticulture; handicraft and selling fast food; selling food and livestock; etc.

In total, 80% (111) of beneficiaries who received support of livelihood establishment and implementation are successful. The majority of the beneficiaries are categorised at medium degree of success which is 53 (38%); 21 (15%) are at the advanced degree; 37 (27%) are not moving; and 28 (20%) have failed due to many reasons. The successful beneficiaries used the income that they earned to respond to their family basic needs, medical cares, investing in their children's education, repairing their house, buying a motorbike to facilitate their small business, buying accessories for the house and saving in a box, at the bank as well as at the existing cooperatives such as LANAMONA² in Maliana.

The livelihood beneficiaries that are still doing their activities but are not moving or saving any income for their future, and those 28 (20%) beneficiaries that are failed, these are due to many reasons. The reasons are including: beneficiary passed away, for instance a male **beneficiary** who had mental deficiency; lack of family support and continue experiencing bad treatment of their husband, in-laws, etc. that stopped beneficiaries to continue their livelihood activities that was supported by the WEE project; security concerns and bad living conditions that led to products and income being stolen; bad conditions of places where they do their activities that led to destruction; physical and mental conditions of the beneficiaries that led them to not being able to continue their livelihood activities; not enough consumers to buy their products or food, etc.; animals received through the project died due to an epidemic and climate reasons; the beneficiaries moved to another country or municipality that led to loss of contact to be monitored; lack of management skills that led to the beneficiary using all income to pay debts instead of managing it to have more income; the income was used to resolve issues including paying debts or contributing to traditional events; etc.

¹ The types of selling three-wheel on the streets, normally, sellers use bicycles to transport their products. This is another way of selling vegetables, goods, products, drinks, and fast food such as noodles. This type of selling is found in Dili but rarely seen in the municipality.

² *Lakon Nakukun, Mosu Naroman* (**LANAMONA** or the Darkness had been Disappeared, Shining has been Arrived)

There are significant changes in the beneficiaries' lives. The successful beneficiaries stated that, before receiving support from PRADET, their lives were in misery, as they had to depend on their husband, family, relatives, in-laws, etc. who were often the perpetrators of violence. Many of the beneficiaries who run small businesses stated that, when they started with their activities they earned US\$15 a day. Today, they earn about US\$25 –US\$180 a day to respond to their and their family's needs.

Moreover, learning from all processes of the project implementation cycle, this project was very well planned and designed to contribute to gender equality achievement in the sectors of women's economic empowerment, decision-making and ending of violence against women, and eradication of illiteracy for women and young men as planned. The WEE project very much contributed to gender basic and immediate impacts that raised vulnerable women and girls, and women and men affected by Psycho-social problems from poverty; that the WEE project is investing in the economics of many women and girls to respond to their basic needs including having enough income for food, medical cares, children's schools fees, etc. The WEE project also contributed to the gender strategic needs that impacted on women's capacity on making their own decisions and managing their own lives to be better. Strategically, the WEE project provided opportunities for women to be raised up from their vulnerability caused by a lack of education and decision-making experience. Many women and girls that were not able to make their own decisions on income management or participate in family decision-making, are now free to manage and make their own financial decision for a better life.

For better results and changes in the future, the evaluation proposed some recommendations including: 1) Increasing project staff team at national office, composed by: one Project Manager/Coordinator; one Monitoring Officer; one Field Officer; and one Driver; 2) providing facilities such as transportation and driver to facilitate the WEE project implementations; 3) strengthening information sharing of project management team; 4) strengthening collaboration opportunities with key stakeholders; 5) consistency in selection of the WEE project targeted beneficiaries based on the project design and plan; 6) consistency in the equal distribution of materials to the beneficiaries based on the budget approval; 7) Establishment of sex-disaggregated data of indirect beneficiaries; (8) Increase support to women and young men in the prisons.