



PHOTO: Emilio Dos Santos | USAID Health System Sustainability Activity

USAID HEALTH SYSTEM SUSTAINABILITY ACTIVITY IN TIMOR-LESTE PROMOTING UNIVERSAL HEALTH COVERAGE THROUGH A SUSTAINABLE AND INCLUSIVE HEALTH SYSTEM

OVERVIEW

Timor-Leste has shown significant progress in its commitment to establish a functioning and effective health system, exemplified by its pursuit of universal health coverage to ensure all citizens have access to the health services they need without financial hardship. In recent years, the Ministry of Health (MOH) has prioritized health system strengthening in collaboration with development partners. However, it faces multiple system-level challenges – such as the rapidly changing disease burden, the need for additional resource mobilization, and frequent changes in leadership – that impede its ability to deliver high-quality, affordable health services.

SUMMARY

The USAID Health System Sustainability Activity in Timor-Leste aims to strengthen health sector governance, develop mechanisms for sustainable health financing, strengthen health workforce management, promote healthy behaviors, and mobilize civil society. It collaborates with the MOH, the National Institute of Public Health, and civil society organizations in building a resilient and self-reliant health system that is well-governed, efficient, and responsive to the needs of the population. The Activity empowers Timor-Leste’s institutions and organizations to independently design, fund, implement, and manage their health system, thereby advancing sustainable gains.

KEY RESULTS

- Advanced health system governance and financing by supporting the MOH in launching a Health Financing Unit (HFU) to oversee the 2019-2023 Timor-Leste Health Financing Strategy. The Activity and MOH developed a staffing plan, finalized job descriptions, and conducted coaching sessions to strengthen HFU staff skills in data collection and cleaning. Concurrently, the creation of the Health Management Information System (HMIS) Technical Working Group (TWG) ensures ongoing data quality improvement, collectively advancing health financing in Timor-Leste.
- Improved data-driven decision-making by enhancing the MOH's capacity to produce and use quality data to inform decision-making through an in-kind grant. Within a year, rates of timeliness and completeness of data reporting in 13 municipalities improved by 48 and 21 percent, respectively.
- Strengthened health workforce management through the creation and institutionalization of over 40 co-developed job descriptions and performance evaluation manuals to institutionalize competency- and merit-based processes in human resources management and ensure that all candidates have equal access to employment, professional development, and promotion opportunities.
- Expanded community-based monitoring for health through establishing village health assemblies across 19 villages in partnership with the MOH and two local organizations, Sharis Haburas Comunidade (SHC) and Hamutuk Ita Ajuda Malu (HIAM) Health. These serve as forums for community dialogue and help communities develop local action plans for Social Behavior Change initiatives on best practices for inclusive reproductive, maternal, newborn, child, and adolescent health and nutrition programming.
- Mobilized civic engagement and advocacy by supporting the creation of the nation's first-ever health Civil Society Organization (CSO) network, Rede Ba Saúde Timor-Leste (REBAS-TL). The network of over 43 local CSOs has received training on foundational organizational management as well as health system strengthening and is now seen as one of the core partners of the MOH.
- Accelerated widespread and equitable access to and delivery of safe and effective COVID-19 vaccinations by partnering with the MOH and local organization Hamutuk Nasaun Saudável (HAMNASA) to support their administration of 80,302 COVID-19 vaccine doses to children aged 12–17 years and adults 18 years and over in six municipalities with low vaccination uptake.

PROJECT DETAILS

- **Name:** USAID Health System Sustainability Activity – Timor-Leste
- **Duration:** August 2020 – August 2024
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- **Activity Chief of Party:** Bhavesh Jain, bhavesh_jain@abtassoc.com

USAID OVERVIEW: The United States Government, through USAID, works in partnership with the government of Timor-Leste to support broad-based and effective development. Since 2001, USAID has provided more than \$323 million in development assistance to Timor-Leste. USAID supports Timor-Leste in its efforts to build a more prosperous, healthy and democratic country through programs that foster inclusive and sustainable economic growth, especially in the agriculture and tourism sectors; improve the health of the Timorese people, particularly women and children; and strengthen the foundations of good governance – all areas that are highlighted in Timor-Leste's Strategic Development Plan 2013-2030 and will serve to make the country more self-reliant in the future.

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