



- USAID helped boost the measles vaccination rate among children in Timor-Leste from 62 percent to 80 percent between 2011 and 2013.
- Farmers in USAID's horticulture project have boosted their incomes by up to 300 percent, helping improve their families' nutrition, send children to school and teach new skills to their neighbors.
- Timor-Leste is deploying USAID-trained community police officers to all 442 villages for the first time since its 2002 independence, contributing to post-independence stability.

Photo credit: Cristovao Guerres, USAID/Timor-Leste

Country Profile

Located between Indonesia and Australia, Timor-Leste is one of the world's newest countries, gaining independence in 2002 after decades of conflict. Its population is one of the world's poorest, and the country is working to build its new democracy with still-nascent institutions and limited human capital. The United States is committed to helping Timor-Leste realize its development goals and emerge as a strong, regional partner.

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 sector; improve the health of the Timorese people, particularly women and children; and strengthen the foundations of good governance.

OUR WORK

Timor-Leste is a small, half-island nation home to a young and culturally diverse population of just over 1 million. While the economy has expanded recently with revenue from its petroleum resources, Timor-Leste has nascent state institutions, limited human and organizational capacity, and poor infrastructure that constrain broad-based economic growth. Nearly 40 percent of Timor-Leste's people live below the poverty line of 88 cents a day. A lack of non-farm employment opportunities contributes to high rates of extreme poverty, food insecurity and chronically poor nutrition.

Since independence more than a decade ago, Timor-Leste has committed itself to establishing strong, democratic institutions and a viable economy. As a result, Timor-Leste plays an important role in the region and world, helping to lead the way to more effective engagement between developed and developing countries. For example, currently Timor-Leste chairs the g7+ Group of Fragile and Conflict-Affected States, an association of countries that are or have been affected by conflict now working to transition to the next stage of development.

In support of continued growth and progress, USAID works closely with Timor-Leste to improve agricultural productivity and performance; encourage private-sector competitiveness; tackle Timor-Leste's serious health challenges, particularly those affecting women and children; strengthen sub-national, democratic institutions and good governance mechanisms, including anti-corruption systems; protect the natural environment; and help at-risk populations adapt to climate change.

DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS AND GOVERNANCE

Timor-Leste has conducted seven free and fair nationwide elections since independence in 2002, and recently completed another successful democratic transition of power after presidential and parliamentary elections in 2012. Yet the country still lacks some of the democratic and governance systems needed to adequately respond to unemployment, socioeconomic inequality and unresolved conflict. USAID works with Timor-Leste to strengthen the foundations of the country's democratic systems, promote stability and further consolidate good governance. We partner with justice, accountability and security institutions to better meet the needs and aspirations of Timor-Leste's citizens. For example, support from USAID and the Millennium Challenge Corporation to watchdog and justice organizations has facilitated successful anti-corruption investigations, prosecutions of senior officials and strengthening of anti-corruption laws.

ECONOMIC GROWTH AND TRADE

USAID works with Timor-Leste to address the root causes of poverty and food insecurity by promoting broad-based economic growth. Our assistance extends economic opportunity to all segments of society, including women and those living in remote, rural areas. We help small farmers expand their agricultural enterprises and foster a business-friendly environment where all forms of small- and medium-sized enterprises can flourish. USAID support for the country's largest agriculture cooperative reaches more than 10 percent of the population, mainly in remote highland areas. With our New Zealand Aid Programme and ConocoPhillips partnerships, we are helping farmers boost their yields and incomes by as much as 300 percent and increasing the availability of nutritious food to their families.

GLOBAL HEALTH

Health indicators are improving in Timor-Leste but are still among the worst in the Asia-Pacific region, especially for women and children. High maternal and child mortality rates persist. Low immunization coverage, neonatal complications and prevalence of pneumonia, diarrhea and malaria are compounded by high rates of malnutrition and contribute to high under-5 mortality rates. However, progress is being made: Timor-Leste achieved the biggest under-5 mortality rate reduction in the world between 1990 and 2010, according to the 2011 Child Mortality Report. USAID works with Timor-Leste to build on this progress. With significant funding from our partner, AusAID, USAID's health improvement program strengthens health services, particularly in rural areas, by training and supervising Timorese health workers in maternal, neonatal and child health, and reproductive health. Since 2006, USAID has trained more than 10,000 health workers. In addition, USAID activities funded through the Millennium Challenge Corporation are boosting child immunization rates. Immunization rates for children in focus districts now average just over 80 percent, up from 50 percent in 2009.

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With USAID support, health workers can now bring a wide range of health services to the most remote villages. Photo credit: Mauricio Borges, USAID



At-risk youth gain new skills for communicating their views and finding cooperative solutions with USAID's youth engagement program. Photo credit: Bret Saalwaechter, USAID