



Conducting a Census in Timor-Leste: a challenging affair



Quite a number of countries are conducting population and housing censuses in 2010. Populous heavyweights like USA, Brazil and Indonesia are all doing it this year, and so is Timor-Leste, with financial and technical support of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). Timor-Leste is facing a particular set of challenging census circumstances: a non-existent address system, a mountainous topography, hard-to-reach rural areas and extremely low media penetration are just some factors complicating the Timorese census operation. The census will take place between the 11th and the 25th of July, thus coinciding with the World Population Day, 11 July.

After more than 400 years under Portuguese colonial rule and 25 years of Indonesian occupation, Timor-Leste finally gained its long-awaited independence in 2002. The arduous and complex task of rebuilding the country has just started, and updated facts and numbers about the population are essential in order to plan and implement realistic public policies and development programmes.

"The 2004 Census proved to be very useful for the Government and its development partners, but Timor-Leste has changed a lot since then. Everyone involved in developing the country is eagerly awaiting a new snapshot of the country's demographics", says Antonio Freitas, Director-General of the Department of Policy, Analysis and Research (DGAP) of the Ministry of Finance.

In a gesture to emphasize the importance the Timorese Government attributes to the 2010 Census, H.E. Mr. José Ramos-Horta, the President of the Republic, launched the National Census Publicity Campaign on 14 May. To regulate the different aspects of the census, the National Parliament has also

approved a 2010 Population and Housing Census Law, making the participation in the census a mandatory civic duty.

The planning and preparations of the 2010 Population and Housing Census in Timor-Leste have been going on for more than two years. Counting the people living in a country with no real address system is a daunting task. Add the difficulties involved in promoting a census in a place where most people live in hard-to-access rural areas, where a large portion of the population is illiterate, where the population speaks more than 30 different languages and dialects and where the reach of mass media is extremely limited and the census challenge looms even higher.

Yet Fredrick Okwayo, UNFPA's Chief Technical Adviser of the Census Project, is optimistic. "With the help of aerial photos we have created a lot more than 2,000 maps of the Timorese territory, and the census field staff will be using GPS (Global Positioning System) equipment to make sure that every household is found and counted", he says.

The 2010 Census is estimated to cost USD 4.2 million and is jointly financed by the Government of Timor-Leste and UNFPA. Apart from assisting the census operation financially, UNFPA is also giving the Government technical, logistical and administrative support.

Approximately 4,000 people, including 2,630 interviewers and 615 GPS coordinate takers, will be working in the field to make the 2010 Census a successful one. Some key field staff members, like the Publicity Messengers, are already making their indispensable contributions in the 13 districts of Timor-Leste. Their task is to create census awareness in the country's many remote sucos, and there is only one way of doing it. "In some isolated places you can't even listen to radio, which means that the only way to inform the villagers is to go there and organize community meetings", says Antonio Freitas.

In 2004 Timor-Leste had 923,198 inhabitants. Six years later, the estimated population is 1,155,000, with 43.2 per cent being under 15 years old.

What everyone needs to know about the 2010 Census

- The Census Night is the night between the 11th and 12th of July. On that night, every household will have to keep a record of the names of every person who spends that night in their household, including any temporary visitor. Note that family members who are not at home that night should not be counted in their normal residence as they will instead be counted in the household where they spend the night between the 11th and 12th of July.
- Census interviewers wearing official census attire will visit every household of the country at some point between the 11th and the 25th of July. They will ask a number of questions about the households and their socioeconomic situation.
- Every person who is present within Timor-Leste's borders on the night between the 11th and the 12th of July will be counted and included in the 2010 Census. Tourists and foreigners who are working in and/or visiting the country will also be counted.
- It is a mandatory civic duty to participate in the 2010 Census and to answer every census question truthfully. To participate in the census is absolutely free of charge.
- The 2010 Census Law states that all information collected during the census is confidential and will be used for statistical purposes only. The 2010 Census Law also stipulates that any census staff member who breaches this rule of absolute confidentiality will be punished.
- Families/individuals that have not been counted by the 24th of July should report to their suco chief so that they can arrange with census officials to send an interviewer to that particular household.
- For more information about the 2010 Census please visit the local Census Office in your region.



Film on hope and determination enthusiastically received by audience



» UNICEF Photo/M. Maglipon

The movie, 'A Barefoot Dream', premiered at the Dili Convention Center, on 24 June with an enthusiastic audiences of around 300 people, ranging from the Vice Prime Minister, key UN officials, Timorese parents and the Timorese children who appeared in the Korean-produced movie. The audience could not help but clap and cheer every time familiar

scenes and faces appeared on the screen – including when Prime Minister Xanana appeared in his role as President of Timor-Leste.

'A Barefoot Dream' is a full length Korean film based on the real life of a young Korean and Timorese children who achieved their dreams through hard work and commitment. A Korean football player, who has failed in many businesses in the past, comes to Timor-Leste in the hope of having better opportunities for work. He sees children without shoes playing football and thinks he can sell football shoes to the children. Soon, the pressure of his past debts and the realization that the children do not have enough money to buy his shoes, make him decide to close his small store. But since he has started teaching kids how to play football, he eventually decides to stay. Within a year, through their commitment and hard work, the Timorese team will go on to win an international youth soccer event in Japan. Both the Korean coach and the children realized their dream.

The film premiere with English subtitles was sponsored by the Secretary of State for Youth and Sports, in cooperation with the Embassy of the Republic of Korea and UNICEF.

MTV EXIT rocks Dili



» UNMIT Photo/Rohit Kohli

With the support of the local government, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), Indonesian rock stars 'Superman is Dead' delivered an unforgettable performance in Dili on Friday to thousands of screaming

fans, kicking-off the "MTV EXIT Live in Timor Leste" tour.

It was one of the largest crowds ever to attend a concert in Timor-Leste's capital city. The event was produced by MTV EXIT to raise awareness about human trafficking, a crime that affects millions of people worldwide. The concert provided youth with the key information and tools necessary to help protect them from being exploited. The event was also an opportunity to sensitize the local youths on HIV/AIDS prevention and raise awareness against domestic violence.

Support to flooded areas



» UNMIT Photo/Bernardino Soares

More than 230 families in Viqueque, Uatulari and Uatucarbu have been affected by the heavy rains, with some communities cut off by flooding. On Saturday, 3 July, UNMIT helicopters helped support relief efforts by the Timor-Leste National Disaster Centre. Four UNMIT flights delivered 4.1

metric tonnes of vital supplies to the districts for onward distribution to the affected areas. The supplies were contained in individual family packs, each made up of approximately 25kg of rice and 4 kgs of cooking and household items.

In Memoriam



» Master Sergeant Hermenegildo Almeida Marques 17 August 1963 - 21 June 2010

UNMIT announces with regret the untimely death of Master Sergeant Marques as a result of a car accident.

Sergeant Major Marques was the Team Leader of the Equipa de Inactivacao de Engenhos Explosivos, (Explosives Ordnances Disposal Team), responsible for identifying and disarming explosive ordnances.

He is survived by his wife Helena do Carmo Almeida de Jesus Marques, a daughter Andreia Filipa and a son Marco André.

Maritime security

Timor-Leste's unprotected coastal borders leave it vulnerable to offshore threats such as smugglers, illegal immigration, illegal fishing, human and drug trafficking, piracy, and money laundering. Enforcement is a challenge in Timor-Leste's Exclusive Economic Zone due to a lack of resources. The UN Police are advising the national police coast-guards to strengthen their maritime security capacity.



» UNMIT Photo/Martine Perret

Timor-Leste economic growth

Countries in the Pacific region are expected to post overall average economic growth of 3.7 per cent this year, according to a forecast by the Asian Development Bank (ADB). The ADB attributes this increased growth rate to resource-rich Papua New Guinea and Timor-Leste. Other island nations, including Fiji, Solomon Islands and Samoa are still feeling the impact of the economic slowdown.



» UNMIT Photo/Antoninho Bernardino



Listen to Futuru Nabilan

UNMIT's regular radio programme every Saturday at 5:30pm and Sunday at 6:00pm on RTL and 15 community radios

Watch ba pás

UNMIT's regular TV programme every two weeks on Monday at 7:30pm on TVTL