

BELUN'S 11th POLICY REPORT

EARLY WARNING, EARLY RESPONSE POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS 2009-2015: SUCCESSES AND CHALLENGES IN IMPLEMENTATION



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NGO Belun



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II. Introduction

Belun is an independent civil society organization and was established in June 2004. Belun's vision is an empowered, creative and critical Timor-Leste society which will strengthen peace for development. Its mission is to serve the society and prevent conflicts with integrity and innovation. In October 2008, Belun, with the Columbia University Center for International Conflict Resolution (CICR) established the "Early Warning, Early Response (EWER)" system. The goal of the system is to contribute to human security particularly by reducing conflict potential in Timor-Leste.

Through this system, and under Belun's "Research and Policy Development" pillar, this research project was designed to follow up on recommendations proposed in Belun's previous 10 policy reports submitted to development partners, and in particular to Timor-Leste Government, from April 2009 until October 2015. This report reviews all past reports and selected some recommendations from each past report to assess whether or not those recommendations have been acted upon or responded to.

III. Research Methods

This is a qualitative research and data collection was done through interviews and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), followed by data analysis and report writing in official Tetun orthography.¹

The interviews and FGDs were conducted with the view to achieve the following objectives: 1) review two to four recommendations from each policy report and convey them to relevant government, civil society, academic institution and development partners to see if there have been responses to many of the recommendations Belun put forward in the past and see if they have been successful or not; 2) conduct open discussion and note down constructive ideas from all involved, particularly from relevant competent institutions to find alternative solution to recommendations that have not been responded to until today; 3) to develop the eleventh policy report with ideas and suggestions from key partners before publishing the report.

¹ National Dictionary for Official Tetun, First Edition – INSTITUTO NACIONAL DE LINGUÍSTICA UNIVERSIDADE NACIONAL TIMOR LOROSA'E

Overall, the target groups were chosen in such a way to ensure that there is a geographical (east, center and west), ethnographical (Fataluku, Makasae, Mambae, Tokodede, Tetum-Terik and Prasa) and demographic (rural and urban) balance. Furthermore, locations were chosen where CPRNs existed that have experience responding to conflicts at the administrative post level.

Between June and August 2016, Belun's researcher² conducted Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) in 6 municipalities and administrative posts (Lautein-Tutuala, Baucau-Laga, Manufahi-Alas, Ainaro-Maubisse, Ermera-Letefoho and Likisá-Vila) with members of Conflict Response and Prevention Networks (CPRNs). The researcher then interviewed key actors in Dili, including some members of government, parliament, members of relevant state agencies and other development partners. The researcher interviewed and conducted FGDs with 60 FGD participants (M = 51; F = 9) and 8 interviewees (M = 7, F = 1).

On 18 October, 2016, Belun carried out a Round Table Discussion as a practical method to supplement data and information collected so that different key actors from government and development partners could assess the level success and challenges that the Timor-Leste government has achieved in responding to Belun's past recommendations.

IV. Successes and Challenges in Implementing Selected Recommendations from Each Policy Report

1. Reducing Community Tensions Through Housing (2009)

This report was published in April 2009. It noted that there was no legal system in place that could guarantee housing ownership, and that difficulty to ensure protection for those involved in housing ownership disputes increased conflict potential. Data collected showed that 35% of home sales in sub-districts being monitored by Belun were because other people were trying to take the home forcibly or others threatened them. 65% of those doing the monitoring said that many people in their sub-district, when they purchased a house, did it in a very informal way with no legal documents involved. Because of this, there are not many formal options available to provide supports to vulnerable groups to sort this problem. Housing issues include lack of housing facilities and lack of adequate housing facilities. In 73% of areas monitored, there were people who did not have a house and had to live in open areas or in the market. A house shared by two to three families was found to have the potential to create situations that could lead to conflict.

Priority policy recommendations from this research and their implementation

RECOMMENDATION 1: The Government should create a policy so that people who live in government-owned homes and can afford to pay, should be able to pay rent on those homes, until they eventually become owners of the homes after paying the value of the home. The government can use the income from the rent for social assistance.

The government responded to the above policy recommendation which Belun submitted pertaining to housing for poor and vulnerable groups. The government through the Ministry of Social Solidarity has provided social housing to poor people and these houses were built in locations where the beneficiaries' original houses were located. Identification of beneficiaries for poor people (elderly people or families) was done through a coordination or collaboration with suku and aldeia chiefs by making a list of people identified as poor and send the list to the ministry of social and solidarity for review and approval. Identified beneficiaries then receive material and financial supports after the review and approval in a program known as "Social Housing" (*Uma Sosial*).

²Researcher Constantino da Conceição Costa Ximenes Escollano Brandão – (Research and Policy Development Specialist) at NGO Belun.

The government continued to review these policy actions and found a new alternative policy called “Millenium Development Goals Housing”. Based on interview with the National Director for Social assistance, he said that the goal of the MDG housing program was to open up new settlement where communities in different aldeias can live side by side in harmony, in an organized and healthy environment. They identified areas for new settlement, built houses complete with all the interior needs, electricity, clean water, schools and churches. These public utilities are built to serve the needs of people in new settlements. The total number of MDG houses built throughout the territory is 3326 houses and they all have been verified. There is no MDG housing in Dili, but ADN or the National Development Agency under the prime minister office implemented a different housing project. The mechanism of support provided was through the provision of materials and didn’t include financial support. The materials provided were used to build 266 houses. Coordination was done with suku and aldeia chiefs to identify beneficiaries for these houses.

However, based on findings from FGDs with RPRK at post administrative level³ showed that identified beneficiaries didn’t want to occupy MDGs houses that have been built for them. For example 150 new houses in new bairro Mehara, Tutuala in Lautein Municipality, only 30 families have moved into the houses, and the remaining haven’t been occupied because the recipients are elderly and disabled people, and they think the location is too far from their families and if they found themselves in difficult situations, it would be hard for their children or families to look after them. Other reasons cited including the location is too far from their farms, there is not sufficient space to rear animals despite the existence of public utilities such as water, electricity, church and others). The researcher found these issues to be common in areas where the FGDs was conducted. They also informed that given this is a pilot project, they would like to recommend to the government to build these houses in locations where they traditionally reside. Until today, the public also thought that only the elderly and disabled people could live in MDG housing, but in reality the elderly and disabled people can live with their families in the house.

At the round table discussion, Mr. Filomeno Fuka commented that there is no need to write “SEFOPE-housing for the less fortunate” on top of the house, as that shames the people living there. Honorio from HAK said that the MDG houses are not adequate for people to live in and that some people who are not impoverished live in the houses, which has caused conflicts. It is recommended that the construction of MDG housing should use local materials such as rocks, woods, blocks, sands and these materials should be bought from the communities. Another recommendation is that MDG housing should be constructed based on Timorese socio-cultural values. For example, in Viqueque MDG houses are located far away from occupants’ sacred house, and this is why people won’t live in them because people prefer to live closer to their sacred house and closer to their livestock and farms.

A representative from Luta Hamutuk commented that for a total of 3326 MDG housing, we only talk of the number of houses but we forgot to talk about who deserve to live in them. There needs to be further study on facilities like churches, schools which have been built but nobody is using it. It is therefore, important to do a viability study before building a house in order to avoid wasteful spending.

The government acknowledges that the houses are small and cannot house many people and that’s why other family member didn’t live together in the house. This is a project that sees the possibility that one day all people would be able to own a house, and that no one would be sleeping in public spaces, in front of shopping stall or center, on the road and under the bridge. The government has policy to facilitate housing for all citizens.

The Ministry of Social Solidarity’s future plan is to open a center to put elderly people, disabled people and mentally-ill people whose families didn’t have the capacity to care for them on a daily basis. The center would prepare food, clothing, health facilities and other necessities. On day time, the center will

³FGDs with Conflict Prevention and Response Networks in of Tutuala-Lautein; Laga-Baucau; Alas-Manufahi; Maubisse-Ainaro; Letefoho-Ermera and Likisá Vila.

give its occupants the freedom to do what they want to do but, they will be returned to the center at night time. The center will treat them as human being and as regular citizens. MSS – DNSS or National Directorate of Social Development will coordinate with the ministry of health when they have or need health treatment.

Belun is requesting MSS to continue on with MDG project and continue to guide and raise communities' awareness to accept this program and they can be the target beneficiaries who can contribute to the maintenance of the houses for longer term. For those not wanting to settle in new MDG settlements, other solution could be that those unoccupied houses can be given to public servants seconded from other areas to work in the surrounding areas – cutting the need for government to rent houses for these public servants. This could save the government some money. Other alternative is to allow community members who live far from their workplace to live in unoccupied houses.

RECOMMENDATION 2: There needs to a clear legal system in place to determine whether a person occupying social housing is the house owner or is the owner of both the house and the land on which the house is built. By making this clarification through a stronger legal framework, the government can attract bank and private companies to invest in housing projects.

Based on research findings and direct observation, it found that although the definition of ownership to land is not clear, these houses belong to the state. But, according to Decree law no. 19/2004 December 29, article 6 “The renting of state’s property”, line a) facilitate a place of living temporarily for those not owning a house. Although there is no law facilitating people to become owner of state property, with the above decree law, people can live in state property or housing and pay rent to the state. Until today, banks, private companies and the government have no program to build social housing for communities.

RECOMMENDATION 3: Use public funds to provide subsidies to vulnerable groups, for example the social housing plan and housing for public servant or others who receive support from the government, by deducting from his/her salaries or pension until the amount reaches the house price.

Until today, there is no policy on building houses for public servants. The public service commission should have already developed a policy on this particularly, on building a housing center/complex in each municipality to allow for public servants seconded from one municipality to other municipality can live in social housing where communities didn't want to live in, which eliminates the need to rent houses for seconded public servants and will save money.

2. Religious Identity and Conflict in Timor-Leste (2009)

This report was published in September 2009. After Timor-Leste restored its independence, we have opened up to the world based on laws adopted from international conventions on human rights. With this, people from all over the world come to Timor-Leste with their own objectives and purposes. It is obvious that many different faith and religious denomination exist in Timor-Leste now. This has given rise to social concerns relating to new religions that come to Timor-Leste and influence and attract many long time Catholics (the predominant religion in the country) to covert and follow these new religions.

Belun's research showed that many religious-related tensions existed in Timor-Leste in 13 municipalities most notably, in Ainaro, Baucau, Covalima, Manufahi and Viqueque. Timorese traditional belief system remains alive and plays important roles in Timorese socio-cultural lives particularly, in those communities where traditional and customary law and values are still exercised (for example, *adat*) on top of modern religion. The research shows that, with new churches starting to do evangelization, often people don't really give importance to tolerance and living side by side. Communities experienced competition among religious organizations and felt this created tension that could lead to conflicts. The problem is compounded by the constitutional guarantee for religious freedom and freedom to choose faith and worship.

Religious-related conflict is a new thing, but there is no tension between the Catholic Church and new protestant churches themselves. This is a good indication to build on through dialogues and collaboration in social programs. On July 27, 2011, Belun collaborated with the Ministry of Justice and conducted a national seminar in Dili. In the event, the then Minister of Justice⁴ said that in the future the government will enact a decree law guaranteeing all, both Timorese or foreign nationals the freedom to establish, and to choose a faith or religion based on their conscience.

Priority policy recommendations from this research and their implementation

RECOMMENDATION 1: Establish a national council to deal with religious issues which will consist of leaders from all the existing religions to assist in dispute resolution between religious groups and possibly coordinate to contribute to better outcomes in other aspects of life

A national council for religion is yet to be established, but based on interviews with key informants and information from focus group discussion participants, they appeal to all religious leaders to remain united under the “Forum for Inter-Faith Tolerance”. This way, all issues that have the potential to lead to conflict can be solved in peaceful ways among all the religions in Timor-Leste. The research found that new religions (those that entered Timor-Leste after independence) have not been involved as members in this forum.

RECOMMENDATION 2: Create a decree law that guarantees all Timor-Leste citizens and foreign nationals the freedom to worship freely.

Based on interview with a National Legal Adviser, the Minister of Justice and National Parliament have not responded to the above recommendations because the constitution already guarantees the rights of all to worship in Articles 12 and 45. Provided that new religious groups abide by the two articles they are free to carry out their religious mission.

3. Access and Opportunity in Education (2010)

This report was published in August 2010. The research identified challenges and different issues facing Timor-Leste’s education, which will have direct impacts on the number of quality human resources in Timor-Leste in the future. It is important to have honest policy that should be able to provide equal opportunity and access to education to all. When the research was conducted, the Ministry of Education is still encountering many challenges for example language, curriculum, school facilities, and equal access for all to scholarship.

The education system did not have a formal mechanism to support groups lacking capacity or resources to complete their education. High school graduates who do not have the financial means to continue their study at university level have to settle for vocational training. Also, the formal system does not have many support mechanisms in place to help vulnerable people, for example disabled people, to continue their study in formal education system.

There remained many challenges and obstacles to accessing information and transparency, for example, people in municipality and administrative post had limited access to information about opportunities to study at universities and scholarships. Many people thought that the selection process was tainted with nepotism and corruption, and sometimes people felt that they were discriminated against people in the selection based on peoples ethnic and religious background when trying to get access to information about how to study at universities and how to get scholarships to study in Hawaii-USA, Norway, Indonesia, Philippine, Australia and others. If this continued, it was feared that this could create tension in community.

Priority policy recommendations from this research and their implementation

⁴ Minister of Justice, Sra. Lúcia Maria Brandão Freitas Lobato, Judicial Center Kaikoli, July 27 2011.

RECOMMENDATION 1: Disseminate information about scholarships in a transparent manner by collaborating with every school and do a national selection process with all students with high marks as potential candidates. It is suggested that this be done via a clear information line, from an Interministerial Working Group to potential students;

Lack of transparency in the Ministry of Education for organizing or sponsored scholarship remains an issue. Information about scholarship is only posted in the Ministry of Education Villa Verde office. The First Lady of Timor said, in an August 2016 workshop on pensions, that: "Status quo persists in some of the selection processes that opportunity are only shared among the elites, the children of member of government and parliament are the one who get access and opportunity for scholarships. There is strong evidence indicating that the children of members of government and parliament make up the majority of students awarded scholarships to study in some popular universities in Portugal. Once arrived there, many of them were found to be not smart enough and as a result, they had to be sent back. This is not good and they actually blocked other less fortunate Timorese who were interested and very committed and perhaps were more qualified to pursue higher studies through scholarships. We created a way for the rich to keep getting access to government assistance and at the same time distancing the less fortunate ones from getting this assistance. Over time, we will create new capitalism in our own society."⁵

RECOMMENDATION 2: Provide financial support to rehabilitate school buildings complete with utilities and sanitation (clean water, MCK) and provide annual maintenance budgets for schools.

Since the publication of policy report on "Education Access and Opportunity" in August 2010, the government through the ministry of education has done a lot to improve or rehabilitate schools throughout the territory with purchases of tables and chairs for schooling. Challenges however, remain because in some schools, their conditions remain poor, they still have no tables and chairs, lack of sanitation facilities such as water and toilet. Another concern is the lack of budget for the maintenance of schools and their utilities.

4. Alcohol and its Links to Conflict (2010)

This report was published in October 2010 and showed that in general, people drank alcohol in many different contexts including in cultural events, family celebrations, in more formal social contexts and sometimes they used them at other times. Alcoholic drinking and drug consumption can have many positive and negative impacts, including socio-cultural, economic, security and health impacts. Data from this research indicates that alcoholic drinking is the number one factor that can contribute to conflicts and domestic violence in Timor-Leste.

In Timor-Leste the use of alcoholic drinks in cultural events is a long tradition. People consume alcoholic drinks in traditional parties, rituals and adoration ceremonies to their ancestors, during funeral ceremonies, harvesting season and cultural wedding ceremonies. People drink with traditional rules to create peace between the living and the dead. There are also challenges in these events, for example in fetosaa-umane event where members of either fetosaa or umane once drunk, challenges or demean the other and sometime this led to conflict particularly, when it comes to the dowry system. Some young people drink in groups when they win a competition or when they have accomplished a work or an activity (farming, planting vegetables, participating in sport events, etc.). There are also those who drink in parties for example in wedding parties, but given the lack of rules in place about how much anyone can drink, people get drunk and create trouble or conflict with other people.

Alcoholic drinks have economic value from a business perspective and alcoholic drinks imported to Timor-Leste need to pay taxes to the government. In Timor-Leste there are people brewing alcoholic drinks (tua

⁵ First Lady Dona Isabel da Costa Ferreira's speech, in a workshop on Pensaun Vitalisia no Despezas Estadu or lifetime pension and state expenditure, on August 24 2016 at NGO Luta Hamutuk.

sabu or traditional brewed alcoholic drink), sold in the market with affordable prices that can contribute to increasing families' income. On the other hand, looking at it from the perspective of individual spending, conflicts and domestic violence often arise because some family members (mostly husbands and sons) use family income to buy alcoholic drinks and not for family needs.

Legal and illegal drugs were also found to be circulating in the communities. People use drugs not in accordance with their medical needs. Parents are beginning to have concerns about this new issue, because some children consuming drugs don't listen to their parents anymore and started to create trouble in their families, which could harm them physically and mentally in the future. What is important is for all to understand how these two things can affect health, how they can adversely impact on peaceful and loving life and how their consumption can lead to unwanted conflicts and violence.

Priority policy recommendations from this research and their implementation

RECOMMENDATION 1: The Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Environment should put high taxes on imported alcoholic drinks and control companies distributing alcoholic drinks in order to limit the amount of alcohol that people can buy;

RECOMMENDATION 2: Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Environment should control local communities producing local-brewed alcoholic drinks and their qualities, and control sellers selling drinks freely on the streets and in small shops so that no children under the age of 17 can get access to and purchase them;

RECOMMENDATION 3: Border Police and Customs should have better control system in place to strengthen security to detect contrabands in ports, airport and in border to ensure that no illegal alcoholic drinks and drugs are entering into Timor-Leste. To achieve this objective, there is a need to provide training to migration police, quarantine staff as well as to custom staff stationed at the border area;

Based on Belun's research through interviews and FGDs, there hasn't been significant progress made on these recommendations. Many alcohol drinking induced conflicts is noted continue to occur. Until today, many alcoholic drinks brands are imported into Timor-Leste and sold in many different places in Dili, though the prices have gone up so not all young people and children can buy them, which is good.

Speaking at Belun's roundtable discussion about this report, the PNTL General Commissioner said, there is no law yet regulating the commercialization of alcoholic drinks and there should designated places for selling and drinking alcoholic drinks. This can help prevent young people drinking in any place they like, and this can also prevent them from getting drunk in public spaces He further said that there is an operational plan to arrest those selling tua-mutin and tua-sabu on the street. The commissioner also agreed with Belun's policy recommendation⁶ to raise the price of alcoholic drinks.

There is still a need to strengthen control and security to ensure that contrabands are detected in ports, airports and in the border. The Police Commander, also at the roundtable discussion, said that there are only 29 border posts located too far apart from each other, some 49 kilometer between two posts. He said the police were contemplating putting 10 more posts. These challenges however, are not in any way hindering the police to continue provide security at the border area. Police were able to arrest people in the border because they get information from TNI.

Until today, the national parliament hasn't shown their will to address drinking related problem and illegal drugs, Belun continue to ask key actor that Belun interviewed to consider these issues by developing a decree law to regulate those issues.

⁶ Conflicts induced by the use of alcoholic drink, October 2010

5. Culture and its Impact on Social and Community Life (2011)

This report was published in October 2011 and looked at important cultural and customary issues in Timorese communities. Different ethnic groups in Timor-Leste have used their own language and their customs in accordance with their traditional faith since the time of their ancestry. During colonial time and during independence, culture gives identity and stability to the Timorese. After Timor-Leste achieved its independence, Timorese appreciate even more their culture as their identity and the identity of the nation. While there are many customs in many different ethnic groups, they all follow the *fetosaa-umane*. When a couple get married, their families become one large family, or *fetosaa-umane*, and they need to support each other and share resources to enable them to hold wedding ceremonies, construct a sacred house, hold funerals, anniversaries and other cultural or family events. The sort of goods that they need to exchange among them will be decided by their tradition or *uma lisan*. The *fetosaa-umane* is very important in the life of communities because the system strengthens unity in families and strengthens solidarity and peace among community members.

Information obtained throughout this research however confirmed that some customs can create tension within the lives of a family and can lead to conflicts because members of families should contribute many things to satisfy cultural rites but sometimes they didn't have the means to do so. In spite of myriad of challenges, cultural practices are some of the means used to solve conflict and strengthen peace in communities. On the basis of cultural values and practices, the elder and community leaders mediate different disputes among community members with customary law or traditional justice practices. Peace accords through '*nahe-bitu boot*', cultural oaths and *tara-bandu* (traditional law-making ceremonies) are the traditional means applied to solve conflicts. These traditional ways will continue to play important roles because state institutions and especially the formal justice system does not have the resources and adequate capacity to benefit the communities.

Community leaders and communities in general acknowledge concerns that people have over cultural practice that have negative impacts on community's life economically. It is therefore, important to have further discussions to make changes to some of the practices adversely impacting communities' life. This is to lessen perception that dowry allows women to be treated as men's property. Community leaders and the elders can launch campaigns to promote respects for the values and dignity of women. Through this method, the existing cultural practices in Timor can be preserved and obtain legitimacy and importance as positive values for the promotion of human rights, social cohesion, respect and unity in societies within democratic state.

Priority policy recommendations from this research and their implementation

RECOMMENDATION 1: The National Parliament should initiate legislation to regulate cultural practices to minimize their negative impacts to families. The law should put limits to how much materials or goods or money can be exchanged in fetosaa-umane practices. Parliament can invite women's groups, local community leaders, elders and youth groups to express their thoughts and perspectives about this law.

Findings from interviews and FGDs with members of Conflict Prevention and Response Networks show that cultural practices *fetosaa-umane* have not always had positive impacts to family lives economically and socially. The dowry system often leads to conflicts between families of *fetosaa-umane* and to domestic violence between husband and wives.⁷

The above recommendation has not been acted upon by those receiving the recommendation. Belun continue to convey to the National Parliament, Secretary of State for Culture, and civil society organizations to continue consider this recommendation and develop relevant policy responses.

⁷ Policy report titled: *Impaktu Kostume Kultura Fetosaa-Umane ba Komunitade Nia Moris* or The Impacts of Fetosaa-Umane as cultural practice to communities' life, Dili October 2011- pájina (16, 17 no 18).

RECOMMENDATION 2: Support communities to renovate their sacred houses which were burned or destroyed during the Indonesian occupation. The houses need to be rebuilt as a first step to conserve cultural assets and values of Timor-Leste. Appoint one person at a local level to oversee all cultural related issues at the municipal levels;

In the roundtable discussion, panelists⁸ stated that this recommendation has been included in government program through the Secretary of State for Art and Culture. Panelists noted that it is not the government who should provide financial support to the communities to rebuild their sacred houses, but all members pertaining to each sacred house are the one who should, with their own efforts, rebuild or renovate their sacred houses. The government can provide some money in the amount of \$1000 to \$1500 to enable them to launch inauguration ceremony and document it for future generations. The researcher noted through his observations that some sacred houses were rebuilt by their own communities, for example in Baucau and Viqueque, and that other places were starting to rebuild or renovate their sacred houses as well.

RECOMMENDATION 3: To establish a cultural museum at the municipal level, which would allow people from the outside to understand the culture and would allow cultural assets from each sacred house or traditional practice from different groups in communities in Timor-Leste to be assembled in one place.

At the roundtable discussion, Ms. Cecilia Asis, National Director for Art and Culture added further, that the government planned to build a Cultural Library in Hudi-Laran, Postu Administrativu Dom Aleixo, Dili with symbols of Timor-Leste's cultural assets. This Cultural Library will be built to keep 8000 traditional goods or assets now housed in the Ministry of Education, including flags from past kings, cultural sword (*surik*), crown (*kaibau*), necklace (*morten*), very old tais and others. There is also plan from the government to build "a cultural center" in 13 municipalities. The director acknowledges existing challenges such as lack of human resources – no archeologists, anthropologists and others.

6. The Social Impacts of Veteran Payments Processes (2013)

This report was published in January 2013 and asked how best to recognize the contribution of people during the fight against occupation. This specific question is very sensitive and has a very broad significance in many post conflict countries. This is because these countries need to address many priorities and poor people need support, however many groups also demand attention from the state. Governments need to find a balance between providing social assistance to some people and acknowledge those who contributed to independence struggle against Indonesian occupation. Based on Timor-Leste's constitution – Article 1 'Valuing the Resistance' – the government has made progress in response to services members of National Liberation Combatants (the veterans⁹) through various phases of policy development.

The government's policy for veterans offers medal and pensions as a form of recognition. The majority of veterans who participated in the armed struggle for 15 years or more have received pensions and are the ones who make policy related decisions about war veterans. The government also gives pensions and medals to members of the clandestine movement and to other veterans based on the length of participation in the struggle. There are challenges however, in relation to the administration of payment and in relation to communities understanding of laws that affect them, including who qualifies for recognition.

There are also challenges relating to the perception that many veterans are yet to receive recognition, while some people have received pensions who are not considered legitimate veterans by their communities. These are both sources of conflict. Belun however believes that with some simple and practical

⁸Sra. Cecilia Asis – (National Director for Art and Culture) – The Ministry of Tourism, November 18 2016, in JL Vila Aimutin.

⁹ In this report, the term "veteran" is generic, does not refer to Law No. 9/2009 July 29, article 8 that says "National Liberation Combatants", because those interviewed and participated in FGDs identified themselves as members of veteran.

methods – including further socialization about veterans law – can help reduce tensions from arising in relation to administration of payment to veterans. This policy issue is very relevant as the number of veterans who will receive payment is likely to increase significantly over time, which will affect the state's overall budget.

Priority policy recommendations from this research and their implementation

RECOMMENDATION 1: Open bank branches (ANZ, BNU, Mandiri, BNCTL and government micro-finance system (SEFOPE)) at the municipality level allowing for veterans to deposit their money in safety;

Interviews with key actors and discussions with six Conflict Prevention and Response Members showed that they shared Belun's recommendation about the need for having bank branches at the municipal level. All respondents are grateful now that BNCTL have opened in each of the 13 municipalities to facilitate payment to veterans and elderly people. Although this is the only bank opened in all municipalities at the time of research, it goes long way to help the beneficiaries. In Dili, the bank has launched Automated Teller Machine (ATM) to facilitate beneficiaries draw their money out.

RECOMMENDATION 2: Establish a Veteran's Council in each municipality and a mediation team to allow people with issues or those lacking understanding about veteran law to lodge complaints or ask questions and get clarifications;

Some some veterans informed the researcher that there is now a council in every municipality to attend to claims and complaints from veterans and liberation combatants facing trouble with registration or data verification. Veteran councils have important roles and bis responsibilities to work and tend well to veterans and national liberation combatants starting from now and into the future. The veteran council are also starting to think about creating sustainable policy strategies.

RECOMMENDATION 3: Recognize the complexity of the history of the struggle and consider Jill Joliffe's 'Living Memory Project' and 'Post-CAVR programs in the Chega Report' to develop fair solutions for those Timorese who, while working for Indonesian government and military, continued to support and contribute to national liberation struggle;

RECOMMENDATION 4: In relation to women victims of war, there is already a law, but implementation has been slow. It is recommended to the Secretary of State for the Promotion of Equality and other women organizations throughout Timor-Leste, including OPMT, to become responsible for women victims of war, including by going down to the local level to identify women subjected to torture and sexual abuse, so that the state can provide the necessary assistance to them.

At the moment there is no policy in place to respond to the above recommendations. Belun therefore continues to ask the relevant bodies, including the *Komisaun Omenajen* (Veteran's Commission), to continue to prioritize this issue.

7. *Tara Bandu: Its Role and Use in Community Conflict Prevention in Timor-Leste (2013)*

This report was published in June 2013. Following the publication, Belun noted an increase in support from local and international organizations to *tara-bandu* initiatives in communities as mechanism to strengthen natural resource management and prevent conflicts. Through this policy report, NGO Belun and the Asia Foundation (TAF) considered various factors that influence the effectiveness of Timorese customary practices in conflict prevention in Timor-Leste. To this end, Belun held interviews with government officials and civil society organizations and conducted focus group discussions with target groups in 8 administrative posts which Belun and TAF have supported in the implementation of *tara-bandu* practices including; Aileu Vila, and Remexio in Municipal Aileu, Cristo-Rei and Metinaro in Dili, Ermera Vila and Letefoho in Municipal Ermera, Mor and Tutuala in Municipal Lautem.

There are 3 pillar of tara-bandu: (1) regulation governing relations between humans; (2) regulation governing relations between humans and animals (3) regulation governing relations between humans and nature. The third type has seen most positive feedback from key informants in interviews in this research. The practice of tara-bandu has also been tested recently, with new approaches in the second pillar from local leaders and organizations providing support (government institutions, NGOs local and international).

To ensure the effectiveness of tara-bandu, it is important to ensure initiatives come from the communities rather than from external actors. Tara-bandu in urban areas faces challenges related to the existence of different cultural identities among the communities which are different to their own customary practices. It is therefore, very difficult to design natural symbols and unique sacred location for each different ethnic group. Some processes nevertheless, are inclusive for all ethnic groups and they are based on cultural practices and use unified symbols (for example, the concept of nation, national flag, religious messages, etc). This has shown to be successful in urban areas or in crowded areas.

Exploring the complexities in relation between the nascent formal justice system and tara-bandu, most informants of this research showed that the benefits of tara-bandu can help to solve many cases, for example low level social conflicts which often take longer for formal justice system to respond to. Most research participants however, agree that formal justice system should be called upon to respond to serious violence, including domestic violence cases.

Priority policy recommendations from this research and their implementation

RECOMMENDATION 1: Establish a “working group” from all the ministries, to develop high level policy and legal frameworks to review and determine the role and mandate of customary law. It can also consider the existing draft law for customary law and policy framework for administrative development;

RECOMMENDATION 2: The Ministry of Justice should establish one unit for ‘customary practices’. This unit has a role to distribute clear manual to communities developing tara-bandu initiatives to ensure that their rules and regulations are in line with that of the RDTL constitution and any international conventions to which Timor-Leste is a signatory.

The above two recommendations have been included in the Ministry of Justice’s plan. Based on an interview with national legal adviser Sr. Jose Edmundo Caetano, law on customary practices, in civil code article 2 states “customary law should not contravene the constitution and law”, meaning that we cannot discriminate one person especially to women in marriage arrangement. The government’s draft law to regulate customary laws to ensure that their practices are compatible with the formal law has not yet been approved and is still under public consultation Suai, Maliana and in Oekusi.

From FGDs in six locations RPRK members said that tara-bandus have already been implemented, but sometimes conflicts continue to occur. Local authorities said that young people do not want to be involved and they do not understand the law. Sometimes young people know the law applied in tara-bandu practices but they pretend not to know. In light of this, Belun continues to request support from the government and relevant state entities to pay closer attention to the issues such as raising young people’s awareness about traditional methods of conflict resolution.

8. Dynamics of Martial Arts Related Conflict and Violence in Timor-Leste (2014)¹⁰

This report was published in May 2014. While martial art groups played important roles in the clandestine front during the struggle against Indonesia, many years after independence, some of these organizations have become public concerns due to members or the organization’s frequent involvement in violent incidents in the country.

¹⁰ This report was supported by the Search For Common Ground and European Union-supported DAME Project within NGO Belun, and not the Early Warning, Early Response Program.

In Timor-Leste, the term Martial Art Group (MAG) is not clearly defined due to complexities that come with their long and rich history. The estimate number of MAGs in Timor-Leste is between 15 to 20 groups. Some MAGs were suspected of involvement in violent incidents, while others are known for their discipline and their sporting activities. Members from three martial art groups particularly, KeraSakti, KORKA and PSHT, are infamous for their involvement in violence and their never ending rivalries and were banned in 2013.

This research identified that banning MAG is not a unique solution to eliminating martial arts related violence. The source of this violence may be from tension related to inequality, lack of access to quality public services (for example, education and security), strong competition and unequal distribution and access to resources and opportunities (for example land and employment), and discontent arising out of these social and economic conditions.

While the government has taken action on the MAG issue through the creation of Martial Art Law 10/2008 and government resolution in 2013 to suspend the activities of certain MAGs, there needs to be bigger consensus on the issue and more dissemination of the law and the resolution. Belun also appealed to the government, civil society, MAG, community leaders and donors to work together in a holistic and constructive approach to respond to the root causes of the violence, which are symptoms of much bigger tensions among young Timorese.

Priority policy recommendations from this research and their implementation

RECOMMENDATION 1: The Ministry of Education should take strong action to stamp out corporal punishment which normalizes violent behavior to students. This should be included within the Code of Conduct for Educators across all levels of schooling, which should be finalized and enforced immediately. Non-violent methods of discipline should be employed, and non-violent engagement should be promoted through the school curriculum in conjunction with civic education on conflict transformation. This could include speakers from government, civil society, and community leaders;

RECOMMENDATION 2: The Ministry of Education, civil society and community leaders should continue to raise awareness and understanding of conflict transformation methods, particularly targeting students by building these programs into the school curriculum.

The results of the current research show that the government has not acted upon the two recommendations above.

It was noted during the research that despite government resolution No. 16/2013 to shut down Martial Art Groups (MAG) such as PSHT, IKS and KORKA, their respective activities including training have continued to be carried out in many locations secretly. Some respondents in this research said that this continues to occur because many youths are unemployed. Other said that the leaders of these organizations are making profits through these sorts of activities. They also said that other parties including some political parties use these groups to agitate and create propagandas that could give rise to conflicts among young people for political parties' interests.¹¹ On one hand, a number of civil society organizations have carried out civic education program but this has not changed young people's mindset. Given the lack of policy action to recommendation above, Belun continues to appeal to relevant government and state entities to implement the above recommendations and others.

During a round table discussion held by Belun, PNTL general commissioner commented that Martial Arts related violence continues to exist, leading to many commenting that the police is not executing the resolution of the government. However, the resolution is not a law. Whenever there are violent incidents between these groups, the police would immediately arrest the perpetrators involved, but they were then released, because the resolution alone is not adequate to indict them. The commissioner said that the

¹¹Findings from FGD discussion held at postu Administrativu Laga Baucau, July 2016.

government is currently working on a law that allows for taking tougher measures against members of MAGs involved in committing violence against others.¹²

According to the president of the Commission for the Regulation of Martial Arts (KRAM), the body's role is simply to regulate legal groups. The closed groups do not fall within KRAM's jurisdiction. He further said that the Timor-Leste unemployment rate is high and the number of new graduates continued to rise but there was no work to absorb these fresh graduates. Unemployment is at the heart of the problem. Conditions must be created for young people so that they can feel dignified.

9. Elderly Pensions and Conflict in Timor-Leste (2014)

This report was published in December 2014. The payment of subsidies in the form of cash money to elderly people can pose security risks to the elderly because the payment center is too far from the residence of the beneficiaries, and the trip is made even more difficult due to poor road conditions. Other concerns are related to lack of transport as some elderly people sometimes were carried by family members to get to payment center. Safety of the elderly people is not the only concern, as Ministry or Social Solidarity staff was assaulted a few times by unknown groups as they travelled to local places to make payment.

One of the shortcomings in the administration system of payment to elderly and disabled people is the absent of fixed date and time for beneficiaries to receive payment. Elderly people sometimes rested in open spaces for example in park, under the shade of a tree or other places close to payment spot, and the payment team had no rest and felt exhausted because they worked overtime. The availability and reliability of the complaints process was cited as another challenge, especially for rural elderly.

The government through Banco Nacional Comercio Timor-Leste (BNCTL) established a system as solution to some of the above problems. BNCTL implemented a pilot program in four administrative posts in Dili to facilitate payment of subsidies to elderly people in suku and in their houses (this applies only to those unable to walk or sick) to eliminate security risks of having them come to payment center. In Dili, BNCTL continued to provide direct payment service in BNCTL office in Mandarin Dili. During payment time however, Belun noted that many problems remain, for example, people pushing one another, long queues under the hot daylight from morning to noon. This can lead to some elderly people collapse or faint. BNCTL therefore needs to create proper condition and much better processes to help dignify the beneficiaries.

Priority policy recommendations from this research and their implementation

RECOMMENDATION 1: Integrated work between the Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Social Solidarity, Ministry of Justice, Central bank and BNCTL is needed for accounting reconciliation purposes, and for discussions about payment to deceased beneficiaries and beneficiaries not meeting criteria, and how the money should be returned to state coffers with justifiable and transparent reporting;

In an interview, Mr. Leonito, a National Director at the Ministry for Social Solidarity expressed his gratitude to NGO Belun for its collaboration so far in developing appropriate policy and recommendations. Belun's recommendation on regular meeting has seen major progress. In the past coordination meetings only met once every six months. However, due to many issues and challenges involved in the making of payment to the elderly people, regular meetings are now held every three months to evaluate and discuss with BNCTL issues and challenges in the making of payment to elderly people at the local level.

¹²Sr. Júlio da Costa Hornay – (Komandante Jerál Komisariu PNTL General Commissioner) at DMK or Round Table Discussion held on October 18 2016 at JL Vila, Dili Timor-Leste.

In 2015, BNCTL presented payment report to MSS showed that the total budget for payment of elderly people including payment that has been paid, the amount remains to be paid, and the amount which were not released because respective beneficiaries have passed away or whose documents were cancelled and therefore, respective beneficiaries could not receive the payment, have been returned to state coffer through report produced by BNCTL and which has been presented to MSS. In this regular meeting BNCTL presented money in the amount of \$42, 840.00 from 238 unclaimed payments whose beneficiaries passed away. The latest data which has been distributed until October 17 2016 shows that a total of 1400 beneficiaries have passed away, and the money which they were entitled to would be returned to the state coffer.

RECOMMENDATION 2: MSS-SESS and BNCTL should develop a claim and complaint mechanism system, strengthen its monitoring and evaluation system and continue to socialize the payment process directly and through media, such as TVTL and radio;

In their regular meetings BNCTL updates MSS on the results of payment processes to elderly people and budget execution and presents them in a powerpoint format. There were indeed some failures. However, now MSS has an office in every municipality and focal points at the administrative post level working to receive complaints and forwarding them to the national level. However, they can also intervene immediately to resolve cases at the local level if possible.

RECOMMENDATION 3: MSS-SESS need to identify elderly and disabled people who live far from payment center to find other alternative ways to pay them, either through Village Chiefs or through direct payment at their homes. Furthermore, BNCTL should continue to facilitate mobile banking in seven other districts such as Ainaro, Bobonaro, Ermera, Lautem, Likisa, Manatuto, and Manufahi.

The government acknowledges the lack of capacity to make payments in all 442 suku, however MSS together with BNCTL, always tries to find ways to overcome these challenges. In some places for example in Municipal Ainaro where some of suku are difficult to get to by car, BNCTL team accompanied by the police went to elderly and disabled people's house to make payment, and for those sick and in hospital, BNCTL team went to where they were hospitalized to make payment.

Belun policy recommendation requested the government to complete the number of cars needed for operationalizing mobile banking in 2017 in 7 municipals. This has been well received by the government and now 12 municipals including Oecusse have mobile banking to facilitate payment in post administrative level and suku level to disabled and elderly people who are sick or those who cannot walk. A branch of BNCTL at every municipal including Oecusse that Belun recommended have been established to facilitate payment closer to elderly and disabled people. FGD participants in six administrative posts said that they appreciate BNCTL's efforts. They however, continue to have concern, for example, in an FGD in Administrative post Laga-Baucau, Tekinomata suku chief said that the payment is not implemented according to rules and that sometimes elderly people's bank account would be empty despite the fact that the payment was supposed to have been made. They said that there was a lack of transparency and that some implementers were not being honest.

With regard to the security of beneficiaries and the payments teams, the PNTL General Commander said at the roundtable meeting that relevant government agencies didn't inform police in advance of any payment to be made but that the police remain supportive and stand ready to provide support nonetheless.

10. The History of the CPD-RDTL and its Implications for the Future of the Democratic State (2015)

This report was published in November 2015. The existence of Concelho Populár De Defesa – Republica Democrático Timor-Leste (CPD-RDTL) has had an impact on the political stability of the nation. This group came into existence because of failures in the political system which gave rise to some people's perception about the legitimacy of the state. CPD-RDTL and other groups, such as the Concelho Revolução Maubere

(CRM) and others, grew out of a sentiment of marginalization. Discontent started to grow as opposition to the existing system of governance in Timor-Leste, which led to various polemics in the public.

Given all these concerns, former Prime Minister Mr. Xanana Gusmao raised issues related to CPD-RDTL in the National Parliament to debate on decisions about the life of the organization. The debate resulted in the national parliament resolution No. 5/III/2014 to close down CPD-RDTL and other smaller and similar groups and their activities. A Council of Minister Resolution no. 8/2014 gave a mandate to the F-FDTL and PNTL to conduct a joint operation called "HABELUN" in March and April 2014 to end the activities of the organization and confiscate the organization's attributes such as military uniform, documents, flag and other attributes.

Some academic literatures states that any nation attempting to create unity by utilizing coercive force against its own citizens would undermine its own legitimacy. A more persuasive approach to solving the root causes of conflicts is a better solution to lasting peace.

Priority policy recommendations from this research and their implementation

RECOMMENDATION 1: His Excellency, President of the Republic should hold a national event inviting former members of CPD-RDTL who have yet to hand over attributes such as military outfits, hat, and other attributes to officially hand all attributes they used during the national liberation struggle over to the national museum;

RECOMMENDATION 2: Considering the potential impacts of these groups, there is an immediate need to create dialogues to respond to situations to maintain national stability;

There has been no progress on the first recommendation. However, regarding the second recommendation, the President has visited nearly all of the villages in Timor-Leste since assuming office. During his visits to certain villages, he met with CPD-RDTL members along with other community members to hear and respond to their thoughts about the development of the country.

RECOMMENDATION 3: The Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries and the Ministry for Commerce, Industry and Environment (MKIA) should provide continued support to cooperative activities which have been implemented by former members of CPD-RDTL together with regular communities;

The government is committed to continue to support cooperative groups involving former members of CPD-RDTL together with regular citizens. The MKIA is finding ways to ensure that cooperative activities can continue and achieve successes in growing the economy through agriculture production and direct income for those involved in the activities of the cooperative.¹³ During the roundtable discussion, an MKIA representative said that the Ministry approached CPD-RDTL members returning from Welaluhu, Manufahi two years ago to raise their awareness and provide subsidy if they wanted to implement community cooperatives. A total of 38 groups were approached by MKIA to implement cooperatives. The subsidy was not only provided to CPD but to Bua Malus and other groups as well. The cooperative is to operate in such business field as carpentry, farming and others – a total of 13 business fields. The decision on which business field each group wanted to involve in was left to each group to decide. Through this approach and awareness raising, members of this group implemented the cooperatives in accordance with the existing legal standard.

¹³ Policy Report - "Istória Ezisténsia CPD-RDTL no Implikasaun sira ba Futuru Estado Demokrátiku or The history of the inception of CPD-RDTL and its implications to the future of Democratic State" November 27 2015

V. Conclusion

Based on the findings of this research, there are indications that some recommendations past Belun policy recommendations have been acted upon by the government and development partners and progress was notable, especially with regard to social assistance policy for elderly people and war veterans, access to education, social housing for marginalized people and others.

It was also noted however, that many recommendations have not yet been responded to by the government, state and development partners. All ministries in the government need to work together with civil society organizations as a means to mitigate tensions, allow for the country to pursue its development goals and allow all citizens to live in peace and prosperity. Given the challenges identified above, Belun continues to appeal to the government, relevant state institutions and development partners to consider some policy recommendations cited in this report which until today remain unimplemented.

VI. **Annex A: Further policy recommendations and their progress**

Recommendations are in bold, followed by updates on their implementation.

'Reducing Community Tensions Through Housing' (2009)

- **The government should provide vocational training to youth and other Timorese:** The government through the Secretary of State for professional training and employment is indeed providing vocational trainings to Timorese to empower them and enable them to have access to employment opportunities, and to be able to establish small businesses in their localities through, for example, the Tibar Training Center.
- **The government should build housing for those less well off:** The government through the Ministry of Social Solidarity's Millennium Development Goals have built 5 houses in each aldeia in many areas throughout Timor-Leste but some families rejected to live in these new developments.
- **The government should address issues related to non-occupancy by communities in MDG housing:** The Government has planned to send public servant including teachers who live too far from schools to reside in MDG housing built for less well-off members of communities.¹⁴
- **The Government should holding dialogues between IDP and recipient communities:** The government carried out dialogues with IDPs on IDPs returning to their homes. Prior to holding dialogues with IDPs, MSS reintegration team and home owners met with local communities, encouraging/appealing local communities to welcome back IDPs to their homes;
- **The Government should repair/rehabilitate houses damaged or destroyed during the 2006 crisis:** The government through MSS with their MSS reintegration program provided funds to families whose houses were damaged or burned to rehabilitate or rebuild their houses, funds handed out were given according to the level of destruction for example category – (A=\$4,500.00; B=\$3,400.00; C=\$2,500.00 no D=\$1,500.00);

'Religious Identity and Conflict in Timor-Leste' (2009)

- **The government, particularly the Ministry of Justice, should create a decree law to guarantee the freedom of national citizens or foreign nationals to observe and practice their faiths:** The Constitution "Freedom for everyone to practice their faiths"; article 12 states (state and religions) line 1), state recognizes and respect all faiths and their organizations have the freedom to practice their religious activities provided they are in line with the constitution and other existing legislations. Further to the preceding articles, article 45 (freedom of conscience, religious and cults, and as such religious denominations are separate from the state; 2). Terror, intimidations and discrimination against another based on their faith or religious affiliations is therefore, prohibited; 3). There is a guarantee for objection based on conscience, as stipulated in the law; 4). There is a guarantee for freedom to educate people about religion provided it is not imposed upon others. These two articles adequately and sufficiently guarantee to all people, and therefore, there is no need to create new decree law. In Timor-Leste, everyone is guaranteed the freedom to start and practice their faiths or religious beliefs regardless of their nationalities.¹⁵

¹⁴ Interview with Sr. Mateus da Silva (National Director for Social Assistance – Ministério Solidariedade Social, República Demokrátika Timor-Leste (RDTL)

¹⁵ Interview with National legal Adviser at the Ministry of Justice, Mr Edmundo Caitano, Dili 2016.

'Access and Opportunity in Education' (2010)

- **In all high schools, all subjects should have textbooks with Portuguese language to fulfil textbooks need for natural science and social science:** After this report was published, guidebooks for teaching in tetum, Portuguese and English were made available along with appropriate standardized curriculum;
- **Many teachers didn't have adequate level of Portuguese language, despite the demand from the Ministry of Education that the language of instruction be Portuguese.** Many teachers have attended numerous trainings in teaching skills with Portuguese language since the report was released;
- **The scholarship mechanism should be improved:** Despite its shortcomings, the Ministry of Education has provided scholarship to Timorese students via testing at the national level, however high schools graduates and other higher education graduates from each municipality had to travel to Dili to search for information and fulfill the selection processes;
- **The information dissemination mechanism for scholarships should be improved:** Methods to find scholarship applicants is improving but is not optimal. The US embassy and NGO Belun worked together in disseminating information about scholarships to communities at the grass-root level.
- **The Ministry of Education should create a national school uniform:** after this recommendation was presented, the Ministry of Education created school uniform for all high schools throughout the territory both in private and public schools to show our nationalism after Belun's advocacy for a single national uniform;
- **Schools should have libraries and be stocked with relevant reference materials:** While not all school have access to library facilities, some schools already do have libraries.
- **All schools should have extracurricular activities (for example, sports, arts, journalism and liturgies), to harness students' talents and skills and improve education quality:** Nearly all schools have extracurricular activities allowing students to harness their talents and skills in arts, sports and others.
- **The Government should rehabilitate school buildings damaged or destroyed during the 1999 crisis and during the 2006 crisis and provide a maintenance budget for each year to each school, include private catholic schools, Islamic schools and others. Clean water and sanitation facilities should be provided in all schools throughout the territory so that students can study in healthy environment because often students have to go to the forest to defecate and this is particularly difficult for girls:** The government through the Ministry of Education has rehabilitated many schools in Timor-Leste.
- **Students should be compelled to memorize the national anthem:** Based on observation, nearly all schools required that students and teachers should memorize the national anthem.

'Alcohol and its Links to Conflict' (2010)

- **The border police, military and naval detachments should ensure rigorous control in border areas, coasts and the national airport, to control drug trafficking with detecting machines or x-ray machines:** Despite many challenges, security system in the border, airport and security

personals have detected many people who smuggled illegal drugs into Timor-Leste. The national police detained Indonesian nationals smuggling illegal drugs who were then deported back to Indonesia.

- **The Ministry of Tourism, Commerce and Industry should find alternative uses for traditional palm wine, such as using it in other products like anti-septic alcohol to be used in hospitals and others, so that people can get economic benefits out of selling alcohol without it being drunk:** Indeed, currently the government through MTCI has established ethanol producing plant in Laclubar Administrative Post, Manatuto Municipality. This is a good preliminary initiative that should be expanded;
- **Communities should reduce the amount of alcoholic drinks given out to party attendants, provide more soft drinks and monitor how much each party attendant drinks:** It was observed that in many parties for example in wedding, baptism and other parties, many hosts didn't prepare alcoholic drinks but soft drinks or juices to reduce the chance of alcohol related violence from occurring.
- **NGO Belun and other relevant partners should do further research on the context of illegal drugs which are now spread in Timor-Leste:** In relation to this recommendation, please refer to NGO Fundasaun Mahein's Voice publication #100 (May 2015) titled "Drugs a threat to Timor-Leste?".
- **Organizations working or dealing with young people should provide training to young people about life skills and this should also include people's attitude about alcohol and drug consumption and their effects on mental and physical health:** NGO Belun has carried out many trainings about "Conflict Transformation", which include the impact of alcohol and drugs consumptions, for Conflict Prevention and Response Networks across the country.

'Culture and its Impact on Social and Community Life' (2011)

- **The Secretary of State for Culture should recruit an adviser from the elders in each districts to discuss issues related to culture at national level:** The government through Ministry of Justice, National Directorate for legislation travelled to local level to carry out socialization about this issue. A decree law will be enacted in the near future to regulate this issue;
- **The government through the Secretary of State of Culture, the Ministry of Tourism, Commerce and Industry and Secretary of State for Youth and Sports should continue to carry out cultural programs in all areas in the country and not only confined to Ramelau Mountain:** The government has a plan for this once the national cultural center is established. The government through the Ministry of Tourism and Culture has a program related to this subject. As recently as October 2016, they held a cultural festive in Maubisse Administrative Post;
- **The Government should hold a national cultural festival:** The government through the ministries has held many cultural festivals at the municipal level, though not yet at the national level. However, these are a good starting point to allow communities to become owners of their own culture. There are many groups training in traditional dance and using traditional objects such as tais, crowns, necklaces, swords, drums and others, including groups such as Lee Ziaval, Arte Moris and others;
- **The Government should provide support to guardians of sacred houses so that they can rehabilitate houses damaged or destroyed during the war:** Guardians of sacred houses, with their own initiatives started to build or rebuild their sacred houses, which the Ministry of Tourism and Culture supported by broadcasting the rebuilding processes through TVTL and other media;

- **The Government should establish cultural centers:** the government through the Ministry of Tourism and Culture have established “Cultural Central” in Lautem as a pilot project. The initiative however, will be expanded to include other municipalities in the future and there is a plan to establish cultural center at national level.
- **The Government and civil society organizations should work together to develop traditional law for processes involved in tara bandu practices:** NGO Belun facilitated Conflict Prevention and Response Network in some administrative post to enable them to create some traditional or customary norms related to tara bandu program which were being implemented in their respective localities with the support from Belun’s small grant initiative. For example tara bandu traditional law in Ermera, Maubisse, Alas and other places throughout Timor-Leste;
- **Communities should minimize spending in cultural ceremonies of fetosaa-umane:** In Ermera, Oecusse, Maubisse there have been Tara Bandu ceremonies to reduce cultural payments made during various cultural ceremonies, which has reduced conflict around this issue.

‘The Social Impacts of Veteran Payments Processes’ (2013)

- **The Government should improve the Veteran verification process and database:** During the fourth constitutional government, a number of revisions were done to data that to show which people were receiving benefits but who were not compatible with the criteria, and a large number of people were removed from the database.
- **The Government should provide security to recipients or beneficiaries during payment by opening bank branches at the district level to allow people, particularly war veterans to deposit their money more securely and easily:** In relation to this issue, BNCTL has opened up its branches in 12 municipals and in Oecusse enclave to respond to this issue.
- **Veteran’s Councils should be established to receive claims from war veterans and to respond to issues that beneficiaries face:** These councils have been established in all districts.
- **The Government should raise awareness among war veterans and their families about scholarship programs and vocational training from the national to the local level.** There is already a policy in place to provide scholarships to the children of war veterans but, the mechanism used to identify those who are entitled remains an issue and should be improved into the future.

‘Tara Bandu: Its Role and Use in Community Conflict Prevention in Timor-Leste’ (2013)

- **Establish a “working group” from all the ministries, to develop high level policy and legal frameworks to review and determine the role and mandate of customary law. It can also consider the existing draft law for customary law and policy framework for administrative development:** the Ministry of Justice has a plan in place to draft a law on customary or traditional law which is important as traditional means to address social issues. This draft law aims to regulate customary or traditional law to align it with the formal law and is currently being consulted widely in Suai, Maliana and in Pante Makassar.
- **The National Directorate for Community Conflict Prevention at the Ministry of Interior and National Department for Peacebuilding and Social Cohesion at the Ministry for Social Solidarity should provide support to tara bandu activities to prevent conflict:** Both ministries have supported tara bandu programs on many social issues and outcomes from this support have been

positive. A Civil Society Adviser supported a tara bandu program in Alas Administrative post in relation to the creation of specific regulations regarding building a fence to prevent animals wandering into one's farm area or land and other assist in developing other social regulations. Their impacts so far have been significant.

- **International Development Partners should ensure that funds are not channeled directly to tara bandu and other customary justice initiatives that aren't compatible with the Timor-Leste national law, the constitution and other existing conventions from the government:** The GIZ Peace Fund supports tara bandu programs through Belun, but prior to implementation, balancing the proposed tara bandu against the formal justice law was always emphasized to avoid potential conflicts between norms in customary law with that of the formal justice system.
- **The police should attend tara bandu events from beginning to end. During this engagement, PNTL should work with communities and understand problems the community faces.** The Police commander involved directly in tara bandu program in Ermera to carry out socialization about tara bandu throughout the villages in Ermera. The police also guided civil security organization *Kablehan* whose members were available and ready to support police in responding to incidents. Violent incidents with strong indication involving crime, PNTL municipal would refer to court, but for smaller incidents, cases could be referred to tara bandu council together with *Kablehan* security to solve. Belun also facilitated in guiding in processes for developing regulations to find people with expertise in law to provide legal perspective about the legality of traditional law which was being used or applied.
- **All institutions should strengthen coordination between the government and civil society organizations to support tara bandu activities and avoid duplication of financial support to activities in the same place or areas:** Belun's advocacy to government is done through cooperation with the Secretary of State for the Environment, the Ministry for Social Solidarity, and the Ministry for the Interior to support the implementation of Tara Bandu in communities.

'Dynamics of Martial Arts Related Conflict and Violence in Timor-Leste' (2014)

- **Belun should continue to advocate through national seminars and round table discussions to discuss Martial Arts-related issues, with the intention of finding a just solution for the existence of martial art groups in Timor-Leste:** Belun is collaborating with the Office of the Prime Minister to assist in enacting law about regulating martial art groups (MAGs) and how MAGs can play their roles in creating national stability and in national development. Government has issued a resolution to close down MAG such as KORKA, Kera Sakti and PSHT to reduce tensions, but it is only a resolution and not a law that can regulate these groups.

'Elderly Pensions and Conflict in Timor-Leste' (2014)

Based on Belun's recommendations to improve the payment processes for elderly pensions:

- MSS and BNCTL have set a fixed time and day for beneficiaries of social benefits to come and collect their entitlements. They also shared information to suku and aldeia chiefs to inform elderly people of payment schedule despite the fact that beneficiaries are only paid once every six months;
- MSS and BNCTL have identified elderly people who live in very remote areas and for beneficiaries with illness or debilitating conditions, BCNTL team travelled as far as their home to pay them;
- Based on interview with Director Leonito, MSS-SESS has established a service center to tend to and answer claims made by elderly people. The center would sort smaller issues raised or presented while leaving bigger issues to be addressed by MSS-SESS at national level;

- MSS- SESS and BNCTL always coordinated with PNTL to ensure security during the payment of welfare payment to beneficiaries;
- A big success in cooperation between the Ministry of Finance, MSS and BNCTL so far. The government remains faithful to BNCTL to make welfare payment to elderly people and complete the number of cars acting as mobile banking throughout the 12 municipals including Oecusse;
- A system or mechanism is already put in place enabling BNCTL to bring back funds meant for elderly people who passed away or who until today haven't come forward to claim their entitlements. The amount of money returned to state coffer, according to a presentation by BCNTL in a regular meeting was \$42,840 – representing the amount which should have been paid to 238 elderly people if they hadn't passed away. The latest data as of October 17 2016 shows that 1400 beneficiaries have passed away and the money which was meant for them will be returned to state coffer or account;
- The minister has established a center in each municipal to tend to all citizen's need for citizenship identity card.

'The History of the CPD-RDTL and its Implications for the Future of the Democratic State' (2015)

- **Government and state institutions should pay more visits to areas where the presence of CPD-RDTL is strong to encourage their collaboration in the national development process:** NGO Belun also facilitated and collaborated with local government in Ossu, Vikeke by way of holding meetings with local members and leaders of the organization in Uaibobo. A significant impact of these efforts was that now CPD-RDTL members are making efforts to have acquire their electoral cards, which will allow them to vote in the upcoming 2017 presidential and parliamentary elections;
- **The Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries and the Ministry for Commerce, Industry and Environment (MKIA) should provide continued support to cooperative activities which have been implemented by former members of CPD-RDTL together with regular communities:** The government through the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and the Environment has consistently been supporting cooperative organizations whose members were once members of CPD-RDTL. The Ministry provided grants to each group in the amount of \$10,000.
- **His Excellency, President of the Republic should hold a national event inviting former members of CPD-RDTL who have yet to hand over attributes such as military outfits, hat, and other attributes to officially hand all attributes they used during the national liberation struggle over to the national museum:** After members of CPD RDTL were approached by the government and the state led by President Taur Matan Ruak and civil society organizations, they now realize that they need to be good citizens to get involved in Timor-Leste development process. This was evident in members of the organization beginning to process their electoral cards.