COMMUNITY-BASED APPROACHES

Ending violence against women through community action

A REFLECTION ON RESEARCH, ETHICS, AND PRACTICE

SEPTEMBER 2017

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List of Acronyms

CBA — Community-based Approaches

CEDAW — Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women

CM — Community Mobilizer

CSO — Civil Society Organisation

EVAW — Ending Violence Against Women

FGD — Focus Group Discussion

JSMP — Judicial System Monitoring Programme

LADV — Law Against Domestic Violence

MSS — Ministry of Social Solidarity

OPS — *Ofisiál Polísia Suku* (Community Police Officer)

PDHJ — *Provedoria dos Direitos Humanos e Justiça* (Office for the Provedor for Human Rights and Justice

PNTL — *Polísia Nasionál Timor-Leste* (National Police of Timor-Leste)

RDTL — *República Democrática de Timor-Leste* (Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste)

SASA! — Start, Awareness, Support and Action

SEM — Secretary of State for the Support and Socio-Economic Promotion for Women

SEPI — Secretary of State for the Promotion of Equality (former name for SEM)

VPU — Vulnerable Persons Unit of the *Polísia Nasionál Timor-Leste* (National Police of Timor-Leste)

1. Introduction

The Asia Foundation is implementing the *Nabilan* Program in Timor-Leste under a Grant Agreement with the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. The *Nabilan* Program goal is to reduce the proportion of women who have experienced violence, and to improve the well-being of women and children affected by violence. *Nabilan* focuses on the three key areas of prevention, support, and justice. This report documents learnings from a pilot initiative called Community-based Approaches (CBA), an innovative approach to social change on violence against women and children, being implemented in Letefoho Village, Manufahi Municipality.

Since independence, Timor-Leste has made various efforts to reduce violence against women. Timor-Leste has ratified the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW); has a government institution dedicated to gender equity (currently the Secretary of State for the Support and Socio-Economic Promotion of Women, SEM); passed a Law Against Domestic Violence (LADV) in 2010;[1] ran public campaigns to reduce violence; and provides some funding to initiatives to prevent and respond to violence against women and children.

Despite these efforts, rates of violence against women and children remain high. Two-thirds of ever-partnered women (aged 15-49 years) have experienced some form of physical or sexual violence, or both, by a husband or boyfriend in their lifetime. Fifty-five percent of ever-partnered women have experienced emotional abuse from a male partner, and 43 percent have experienced economic abuse.[2] Fourteen percent of women aged 15 to 49 have been raped by someone other than an intimate partner in their lifetimes, with 10 percent in the past 12 months.[3] Sixty-six percent of women who experience violence from their male partners never seek help.[4] If they do, it is often from people close to them – friends and family. Shame, fear of bringing a bad name to the family, and fear of being blamed for violence, are the main reasons why women who had experienced violence do not seek help.[5] Eighty percent of women, 79 percent of men in Dili, and 70 percent of men in Manufahi believe that a husband is justified in hitting his wife under some circumstances.[6]

There are many organisations and networks in Timor-Leste doing vitally important work to support women who have experienced violence and to reduce violence against women. However, there is a low level of activism on gender equity beyond civil society, largely concentrated in the capital Dili. Programs often do not gain traction because they may not have sufficiently engaged with the

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[1] Law No.7/2010 of 7 July 2010, Law Against Domestic Violence (LADV) passed by National Parliament available via: http://mj.gov.tl/jornal/lawsTL/RDTL-Law/index-e.htm

[2] The Asia Foundation. 2016. Understanding Violence against Women and Children in Timor-Leste: Findings from the *Nabilan* Baseline Study – Summary Report. The Asia Foundation: Dili, p 49. Available at: http://asiafoundation.org/tag/nabilan/

[3] *Nabilan* Baseline Study, p63

[4] *Nabilan* Baseline Study, p110

[5] *Nabilan* Baseline Study, p110

[6] *Nabilan* Baseline Study, p83

community, or understand how to achieve genuine change in the community in which they are working.

In this challenging context, *Nabilan* began looking for a new way of programming to change social norms on violence against women. *Nablian* was already supporting institutional change, but without effective methods of social norms change, impact was likely to be more limited. This meant identifying new and different approaches, and potentially taking risks in ways of working, including being prepared to work in a more flexible and iterative way, to reflect on practice, and to change direction as required. One program in particular called SASA! (Start, Awareness, Support and Action) – which has been implemented in 10 countries – provided a model for consideration, largely due to its success in reducing violence against women and its use of evidence to inform programming.

Drawing on the SASA! model and evidence from Timor-Leste, *Nabilan* developed the CBA program, which seeks to identify and support men and women to become active change agents in their own communities. CBA moves beyond one-off or short-term efforts and, instead, is a long-term commitment to a single site.[7] It draws on a range of methods to create safe spaces for local community members to reflect on day-to-day challenges, including violence. CBA works with community members, through Community Mobilizers (CMs), and members of the *Nabilan* team who maintain an ongoing presence within the community.

There are many barriers to this way of programming. It can be difficult to enter communities to discuss problems that are treated as private. CBA seeks to reduce resistance by identifying and supporting local community members who prioritize violence against women and children to engage in dialogue about how change may be possible, rather than telling people how the program should be implemented.

This report documents what has been learnt to date through *Nabilan's* CBA program, about both key research questions on violence against women and about program implementation. The learnings contained in this report support *Nabilan's* evidence-based approach. Rather than research being 'one-off' interventions into communities to gather evidence at the outset of programming, CBA research is integrated into the program. Research and programming merge and program documents – such as key activity reports, minutes of meetings – become important sources for building evidence.

While The Asia Foundation's Economic Dimensions of Domestic Violence Report (2015) [8] and the *Nabilan* Baseline Study (2016) assisted in closing important knowledge gaps for implementing CBA, key evidence gaps in terms of programming remained. Three program questions were identified:

1. **Violence:** How is violence understood within the community context in which we have chosen to work?

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[7] See: *Community Based Approaches for Ending Violence against Women and Children: Nabilan Program Toolkit*, The Asia Foundation, Dili, Forthcoming 2017, 5.

[8] The Asia Foundation. 2015. Beyond Fragility & Inequity: Women's Experiences of Economic Dimensions of Domestic Violence in Timor-Leste. The Asia Foundation: Dili. Available at: http://asiafoundation.org/publication/beyond-fragility-inequity

2. **Change:** With regards to preventing the perpetration of violence against women, what factors enable men to change their attitudes and behaviours?

3. **Support:** What protective strategies do women utilize as part of everyday life so as to mitigate the risk and experience of violence?

These questions were integrated into programming activities, allowing for learning through implementation.

The report is structured around the program and practice questions. The first part of the report is structured around the three key program questions. The second part of the report responds to the practice question of how research can be undertaken in the context of community-based approaches. The report can be read on its own or in conjunction with the Community-based Approaches Toolkit that has been produced alongside it. It is meant to be a report that reflects on our own process, describing what we have learnt so far as well as the practical reasons why decisions have been made as they have. For this reason, the report is subtitled A Reflection on Research, Ethics, and Practice.

On behalf of all involved, *Nabilan* would like thank and show our respect to the women and men of Letefoho for their courage and willingness to work with us on the incredibly important issue of ending violence against women and children in Timor-Leste.

2. Methodology

Data Collection

The data used in this report has been drawn from program integrated as well as context driven research. This data is only a fraction of that collected in previous research efforts associated with *Nabilan*, though this report is a good opportunity to consolidate and analyse what is currently available, and to build on that at future intervals and as the program develops. The program chose not to use methods such as life history interviews that are often used in prevention, as this would have required a high degree of resourcing while only engaging a very narrow number of people.

Context Driven Research

For the three program questions:

1. **January 2016:** A first round of semi-structured interviews with civil society organizations (CSOs) in Dili in December 2015 and with CSOs in Manufahi in January 2016.

2. **September 2016:** A preliminary gathering of research data, to both pilot methods as well as initial work to understand where the community was situated in terms of discourses on gender equity. Five small focus group discussions (FGDs) were undertaken (three with men, two with women), four interviews (two women and two men), and four transect walk interviews with women.

1. Key Activity Records of events and activities in 2016 and 2017 in Manufahi.
2. Meeting notes, photographs, administrative documents, observation notes.

This report is also informed by other research undertaken as part of the *Nabilan* Program, such as the Economic Dimensions of Domestic Violence project, and the *Nabilan* Baseline Study.

Interviews

Nabilan conducted semi-structured, one-on-one interviews with different groups of men and women within Letefoho. Interview participants were grouped based on approximate age, i.e. 'younger women,' 'older women,' 'younger men,' and 'older men.' The purpose of the interviews was to facilitate understanding into the ways violence is experienced and perpetrated in Letefoho. Participants were presented with a hypothetical case study that detailed the experience of a fictional couple (the couple's age was altered to match the age of the participant) in a domestic violence situation. The case study was followed by a series of semi-structured questions. In the interviews with women, participants were asked about help-seeking strategies and how their responses would differ if the nature of the violence changed (i.e. if it became more severe and continuous). The interviews with men asked them to consider which types of actions constituted violence and how others in the community would view these actions.

Interviews were also conducted with community leaders including a *lia-na'in* (ritual elder). The justification for conducting these types of interviews was two-fold. *Nabilan* sought to understand more about the community in general (i.e. the strength of customary practices as well as information about marriage customs), whilst also gathering specific information about the issue of violence against women and children. Participants were asked about their role in the handling of domestic violence cases, the types of penalties that tend to be imposed, and the range of actors involved (i.e. the family, the police, health services). Research also focused on legislative changes (notably, the LADV) and whether community trends had subsequently changed.

Focus Group Discussions

FGDs were conducted in Letefoho with groups of men and women from the same four age categories outlined above, though FGD participants were not the same men and women as those who were interviewed individually. Most FGDs comprised of three to four participants, facilitated by two or three program staff and one observer. The discussions followed a similar structure to the individual interviews with slight adjustments to the case studies and questions. The objective was to examine how participant responses changed when they were asked to share and discuss their views with others present. The recorded information was then transcribed and assessed both on its own and in relation to the interview data.

Transect Walks

Nabilan piloted a transect walk technique that utilized a GoPro camera to elicit further information about women's mobility in Letefoho. The team was interested in the types of spaces that women considered to be safe or unsafe and why. A transect walk typically involves community members walking with researchers along a designated route. Instead of actively walking alongside community members in public, *Nabilan* recorded film of the walk (which involved team members recording their travel across a commonly used road in Letefoho). This footage was edited and shown to interviewees (either one or two women together, in or close to their homes), complemented with still photos shown on a tablet. The footage and photos were used to elicit information about the women's mobility as well as their perceptions of safety and security.

3. Program question one: How is violence understood within a community context?

Understanding violence is a critical, though at times very difficult, analytical task. The definition is complicated by various factors, such as different forms of harm and justifications for violence (for example, violence being 'natural,' or tied to a particular gender). Violence may not be articulated in the same way by victims and perpetrators. Violence might be categorized as 'discipline' or 'teaching,' a discussion that was raised, for instance, in a Prevention Messaging Workshop held in Letefoho, where a man who was beating his nephew considered it to be discipline.

These dynamics set up a challenging programming environment, not least if the perpetrator does not see their own actions as violent. People may also recognise an action as violence in certain circumstances, but not view the same action as violence in another context. As such, research on violence should provide an important contextual basis for how it is understood within a community; the kinds of words used, the way people think, entry points for discussion, and what is considered as exceptional or normal.

The first program question is 'How is violence understood with a community context in Timor-Leste?' To try to understand how violence was defined in the Letefoho community, the question was divided into several aspects:

1. What is understood to be violence against women and children?

2. How is violence justified?

3. What are the social norms around violence?

4. How is violence defined differently depending on who commits the violence?

5. Do community conceptions of violence differ from those in Timor-Leste's law?

One place to start is the LADV which sets out measures that are "designed to ensure respect for human rights and integrity of the family as a fundamental social and cultural unit in Timor-Leste."[9] Article 2 (sections 1 and 2) of the LADV stipulates that domestic violence is:

> any act or result of an act or acts committed in a family context, [10] with or without cohabitation, by a family member against any other family member, where there exists influence, notably physical or economic, of one over another in the family relationship, or by a person against another with whom he or she has an intimate relationship, which results in or may result in harm or physical, sexual or psychological suffering, economic

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[9] LADV, Preamble, Paragraphs 2 and 4.

[10] In *Nabilan*'s 2016 Baseline Study, the authors recognise that the LADV limits the definition of domestic violence to the family domain and thus omits any reference to "sexual assault or other forms of sexual harassment outside family relationships" (p.28). For more see: Understanding Violence against Women and Children in Timor-Leste: Findings from the *Nabilan* Baseline Study – Main Report, The Asia Foundation 2016, 14-29.

abuse, including threats such as acts of intimidation, insults, bodily assault, coercion, harassment, or deprivation of liberty.[11]

As per this definition, as well as the second section of this legal article (paragraphs a, b, c and d), domestic violence is deemed as harm or physical, sexual, psychological suffering.[12] This is thus a broader definition of "violence," which is often seen only as physical harm.

In the interviews and FGDs conducted in Letefoho, short fictional scenarios with respondents were used as the basis for community discussions to better understand people's views of violence. In the story presented, a husband (Pablo) returns home drunk and hits his wife (Nela) because she has not cooked dinner. Depending on the age of participants, the story presented Nela and Pablo as a young married couple with children and Nela pregnant, or an older married couple with older children.

Table 1: Scenarios presented in individual interviews and Focus Group Discussions

Respondent(s)	Scenario
Younger women/ younger men	Pablo and Nela are living together. They are a young couple, Pablo is 25 and Nela is 23. The couple have a one-year-old child and Nela is three months pregnant. Pablo has been out drinking with friends. Nela has been feeling unwell and has been unable to prepare any dinner. Pablo returns home drunk and when he realises dinner is not ready, he hits her.
Older women/ older men	Pablo and Nela are living together. They are an older couple, Pablo is 40 and Nela is 35. The couple have three children aged 15, 17, and 18. Pablo has been out drinking with friends. Nela has been feeling unwell and has been unable to prepare any dinner. Pablo returns home drunk and when he realises dinner is not ready, he hits her.

The interviews with males (two interviews, three FGDs) focused on questions of how people spoke about and understood violence. The interviewers asked whether hitting Nela was an act of violence. Almost all participants stated that it was. Nevertheless, some responses were interesting in that they appeared to excuse the man's behaviour and suggested partiality towards Pablo's position.

> **Male Participant:** In my thinking, Pablo hits his wife because he is drunk, hits her until she bleeds, that is because he is drunk. When he sleeps it off and wakes up and sees things clearly, he will go back to his wife and ask her to forgive him. With this, his wife will accept him because she still loves him.[13]

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[11] LADV, Article 2, Section 1.

[12] LADV, Article 2, Section 2, Paragraphs a) – d).

[13] *Tuir hau nia hanoin tiu Pablo ne'e hemu tua lanu mak mai baku ninia feen, baku to'o kanek, ne'e nia hanesan lanu hela, se wainhira nia toba ba mak hader mai nia matan mos, nia sei husu diskulpa fila fali ba ninia feen tanba nia halo sala, nia halo sala ba ninia feen. To'o hanesan ninia ferik oan mos simu fali nia tanba nia hadomi hela.* (Male Participant, *Nabilan* FGD Group 1, 15 September 2016)

Here there is no sense that Pablo should be responsible for his actions, both with regards to drinking (which is treated as normal) or the violence enacted. The drinking provides the basis for abuse, not the man's own decision to use violence. It is also worth noting the expected sequence of events: a violent act, the request for forgiveness, its acceptance by the woman, and a continuation of the relationship. Another discussion led to a reflection on a real-life example.

> **Male Participant:** This happened to my neighbour, the husband went to the farm and told his wife to boil water so he could wash because he was sick. The wife said she was too tired and so the man hit her.[14]

While it is again agreed here that the hitting constituted violence, the story has been recounted in a way where there is a bias towards the man; it is from his perspective and reasons are given for his behaviour in that he is working, is sick, and hence needed the hot water. The participant did not share any details about the woman, except that she said she was tired ('said' is used for the woman, but the man's story is presented as fact). The participant also did not elaborate on the amount of work that boiling the water would have entailed (i.e. just lighting a gas stove in the house or having to go out to gather timber and build a fire) yet, given the gendered division of labour in most households, it is common for men in this context to have very limited awareness of the time and effort that women spend on housework. This short response was typical of a pattern of how men spoke in other interviews (albeit in the limited number collected), and gives a sense of the gendered dimensions of the relationship and particularly expectations about women's responsibility at home and as caregivers.

As the interviews progressed, the participants were asked about different examples of abuse (i.e. instead of hitting Nela, Pablo: verbally abuses her; forces her to have sex; slaps her and she falls down; or takes the money that Nela earned from selling vegetables). The responses to these alternate scenarios were less consistent on whether these constituted violence or not. On the question of verbal abuse, the following two responses were common:

> *Example 1:*
>
> **Male Participant:** From my view if the hand hasn't hit her then that is not violence. Because it is just swearing and no one hit each other.[15]
>
> *Example 2:*
>
> **Male Participant:** Yes, like beating or killing, well that is violence.
>
> **Interviewer:** Swearing, abusing?

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[14] *Hau iha esperiensia ida, akontese duni mai hau nia vizinu, tiu kan ba to'os nia haruka ba nono bee manas ba tiu atu haris, tanba tiu kan moras ida kona hela nia, tiu ne'e obriga los tia ne'e atu nono bee manas, tia dehan isin kolen, ne'e mak tiu mos nervosu baku ho ida ne'e. Hau iha esperiensia hanesane deit.* (Male Participant, *Nabilan* FGD Group 1, 15 September 2016)

[15] *Tuir hau nia hanoin hanesan liman la to'o/kona ne'e la tama iha violensia! Tanba tarata malu ne'e kan liman la kona malu ida.* (Male Participant, *Nabilan* FGD Group 1, 15 September 2016)
- *Ya tolok deit hanesan tarata deit ne'e la tama iha violensia.* (Male Participant, *Nabilan* FGD Group 1, 15 September 2016)
- Tuir hau nia hanoin ida ne'e laos violensia! Tanba nia laos uza forsa hodi foti osan ne'e! (Male Participant, *Nabilan* FGD Group 1, 15 September 2016)

> Male Participant: Swearing is bad behaviour but it is not violence, violence is the same as hitting.[16]

Participants did not mention the possible psychological impact on someone of swearing or abuse. Given the legal definition of domestic violence above, it would be important to follow up with more engagement on psychological abuse alone, such as understanding frequency and impact. Verbal abuse, in this context at least, was seen by most as not falling within the bounds of violence.

This pattern was repeated when the example of hitting Nela was switched to forcing her to have sex (including in the scenario with younger interview participants where she is three months pregnant). Participants' responses appeared to avoid laying blame directly on the man.

> Male Participant: Talking like this, Pablo and Nela are wife and husband right, so it depends on how each one is feeling, (but) this situation occurs because Pablo is drunk so that's why it is like this. If he wasn't drunk then I don't think he would be like this, as in forcing his wife to have sex when she is pregnant. The same as the problem when he hit her, don't you think so?[17]

In this participant's explanation, Pablo's intoxication is a justification for raping his wife. This implies an attitude that, at least in some circumstances, men should not be held responsible for their decisions and behaviours. A different participant agreed that this scenario was violence, but with a significant caveat.

> Male Participant: It's like this, if he forced her then that is violence, however basically she is the wife of her husband, when her husband talks she will accept it, especially because she cannot say to other people, 'Today my husband was drunk and forced me to have sex.' I don't think she is going to say that. As they are husband and wife and he is drunk then it's like that, is she going to say its violence?[18]

In this example, despite agreeing that Pablo's actions constituted violence, the participant reflected on the difficulty, in reality, for a woman to refuse the sexual advances of her husband and to seek help from others if her husband forces her to have sex. This is consistent with findings from the Nabilan Baseline Study that 66 percent of women who had ever experienced physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence had not told anyone of their experience.[19] The study also found

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[16] Mane: *Sim bainhira buat nebe violensia nene hanesan baku ka oho ne mak dehan violensia.*
Intervistador: *Tarata?*
Mane: *Tarata ne hanesan hahalok aat ne laos violensia, violensia ne hanesan baku.* (Male Participant, *Nabilan* FGD Group 2, 15 September 2016)

[17] *Ko'alia ba ida ne'e, Pablo ne'e ho Nela feen laen ne'e los, maibe buat hotu sentmentu ne'e ida idak nian, bele agora hanesane tanba nia lanu mak buat hotu hanesane, karik nia la lanu hau la fiar buat ida nia feen isin rua hela mos nia ba obriga deit! No baku tan deit ne'e mos problema ida ne'e ka lae?* (Male Participant, *Nabilan* FGD Group 2, 15 September 2016)

[18] *Agora hanesane, nia obriga ne'e violensia, maibe bazeia ba nia feto nudar ninia laen mak halo hanesane, nia kulia mos nia simu hela, tan nia labale dehan ema "ohin hau nia kataus oan hemu lanu mai obriga hau halo relasaun seksual, hau sente nia la hatete karik? Tanba feen ho laen tan nia lanu mak hanesane tan, atu hatete ne'e dehan violensia mos.* (Male Participant, *Nabilan* FGD Group 2, 15 September 2016)

[19] *Nabilan* Baseline Study, p110

high rates of sexual intimate partner violence, with 41 percent of ever partnered women reporting having experienced sexual violence from an intimate partner during their lifetime, and 31 percent in the last 12 months.[20] The example highlights the issue of gendered power dynamics of decision-making within many relationships in Timor-Leste and confirms anecdotal evidence from *Nabilan* program experience that there is very little recognition of, or discourse around, sexual consent, particularly within marriage. This is also confirmed by recent research by Marie Stopes International and La Trobe University on decision making in sexual and reproductive health focused in four municipalities, Dili, Baucau, Viqueque and Ermera. The study found that:

> Reproductive health decisions are perceived to be mutually made between husband and wife. Exceptions to this most notably include the decision to seek care during labour and birth, which is thought to be made by the husband or the woman's mother-in-law, and the decision to have sexual relations, which is perceived to be determined by the husband.[21]

Participants were also asked to comment on the following scenario, to better understand the effect of violence on women's mobility: Pablo takes Nela's money and, swearing at her, tells her that she cannot visit her parents the next day. Participants in one of the FGDs continued the pattern of delineating violence as a physical act only:

> **Male Participant:** For me that is not violence, violence is if he hit his wife, that is violence against women. If he only swears then that is not violence, it's a problem for their household.[22]

In a semi-structured interview, however, one man saw Paulo's abusive behaviour as both interlinked and constituting violence:

> **Interviewer:** He (Pablo) said you are lazy and because of that tomorrow you cannot visit your family, you cannot go and see your mother and father anymore! Because he was so angry, he started swearing at his wife. My question here then, is this violence or not?

> **Male Participant:** Yes, Pablo is being violent against women. Nela does not feel well, Pablo is gambling, leaves and gambles, comes back and does these things. Nela does not feel well because she is pregnant, so yes, Pablo is committing violence against women.[23]

The same participant continued, later in the same interview, to elaborate on economic violence:

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[20] *Nabilan* Baseline Study, p51

[21] Marie Stopes International, 2016, Reproductive Health Decision-making in Timor-Leste, p17

[22] *Ne'e tuir hau nia hanoin ne'e la iha violensia, violensia ne'e hanesan nia baku nia feen ne'e mak violensia, tan violensia kontra feto! Se nia tarata deit ne'e laos violensia, ne'e hanesan problema sira nian uma laran.* (Male Participant, *Nabilan* FGD Group 1, 15 September 2016)

[23] Intervistador: *Nia mos hatete ba nia baruk ten depois dehan "aban o labele ba visita o nia familia, la bele ba hare tan o nia inan aman ona"! Tan nia hirus los, nia komesa tarata ninia fen. Hau nia perguntas mak ne'e' ida ne'e violensia ka lae?*
Mane: *Sr. Pablo ne'e nia halo violensia kontra feto! Nela sente la diak, nia jogador, sai tiha ba joga tama mai nia halo asaun oin oin, I Nela mos sente ladun diak tan nia isin rua hela, ne'e Pablo halo violensia kontra feto.* (Male Participant, Semi-Structured Interview, *Nabilan* Group 2, 16 September 2016)

> Male Participant: For me personally, that is all violence because his wife is tired every day, grows and carries the vegetables to market and looks to make money, Pablo looks for the money and drinks and then takes the money, taking it all, and goes and gambles it then that is violence. You cannot say it is not violence because one goes to make money, one takes it, the one who takes it and drinks or gambles. For me, personally, that is violence.[24]

One compelling pattern that emerges across the interviews is the reluctance to admit that violence occurs within a community or family. While the *Nabilan* Baseline Survey demonstrated that 42 percent of men in Manufahi have used violence against their wives or girlfriends and 22 percent have raped a non-partner woman or girl[25] and local authority figures–such as the *Xefe Suku* and the *Suku* Council–readily acknowledge that violence against women is very common, many community members that we interviewed showed profound reluctance to admit that violence occurs. For example, in our research in September 2016, two interviews were taken on the same morning with men who live a short distance from one another. In the first instance, the respondent appeared to be strongly wanting to avoid any negative implication about his own community:

> Male Participant: I have never seen in person anything like a person being hit, from 2000 until now, before that I don't know about whether people hit each other here or not. However, from independence until now things like hitting each other or other activities that are considered by the police as crimes , then I will say that that has not occurred.[26]

In contrast, an interview with a different man who lived very close by drew the discussion from the scenario of Pablo and Nela into real life examples.

> Male Participant: Yes, right here in this place as well as in Manufahi, Letefoho I can say that this (violence) occurs.
>
> *Further into the same interview:*
>
> Interviewer: Has this (violence) happened here in this community?
>
> Male Participant: Yes, it happens!
>
> Interviewer: It happens a lot?

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[24] *Senhor ida, pesoalmenta ba hua ida ne'e violensia hotu tanba nia ferik oan lorloron kolen tutur modo lori ba faan iha merkadu nia buka osan senhor Pablo nia buka maka hemu I depois ferik oan ba buka osan lori mai nia mai foti hotu osan lori ba joga karta entaun ida ne'e violensia, la violensia labele tanba ida ba buka osan, ida lori mai, ida ne'e mai lori ba buka hemu tua joga karta ne'e pesoalmente ba hau ne'e violensia.* (Male Participant, Semi-Structured Interview, *Nabilan* Group 2, 16 September 2016)

[25] *Nabilan* Baseline Study, p57, p63

[26] *Hau hare buat ida baku ne'e sedauk akontese iha hau nia oin 2000 to'o agora iha uluk hau la hatene iha momentu ne'eba sira baku malu hau mos la hatene maibe ita ukun an 2000 to'o agora ne'e buat ida baku malu ho buat ida krime ba iha polícia mos la iha ida ne'e hau atu hato'o ba ita bo'ot sira.* (Male Participant, Semi-Structured Interview, *Nabilan* Group 1, 16 September 2016)

Male Participant: Yes, it happens a lot![27]

In light of the second response, one might assume that the first respondent was not telling the truth, however this may miss the value in listening to what is actually said. It may be that the first man has not seen, with his own eyes, violence in his community, or has not seen what he regards as violence. The second possibility is that he himself is a perpetrator of violence and is concerned about the ramifications of any admission, however, if that were the case, he may not have consented to an interview. On the other hand, it is possible that he cares how people see his community and he does not want them to focus on the negative aspects, or he may feel that there is no validity for others who are outside of his community to know or be involved in such issues. This tendency was also seen in some FGDs and interviews with women.

The research shows that some people are unwilling to speak about violence in ways that reflect badly on themselves or their community, even while others may speak openly about violence as a community problem. Programming in such a context may mean supporting leaders who can influence both what and how things are spoken about—in this case on ending violence against women—and others such as Community Mobilizers (CMs)[28] who can act as role models for others. Here, CBA has the advantage of engaging existing community members, rather than outsiders, to speak actively on the issue and, in doing so, disrupt the idea that violence is 'natural' and 'normal.'

The research in Letefoho observed, as per the example of Pablo being drunk, confusion over the cause of violence and its relationship with gender inequity. This was also the case in interviews conducted with civil society actors in Manufahi in January 2016, indicating that CBA needs to not only engage with the community but also with CSOs more broadly in the municipality. As the interview notes documented:

> There were no thoughts expressed that considered the relationship between gender inequality and violence against women. The "causes" of violence against women were mainly expressed as what are in fact considered to be "triggers" such as alcohol abuse, economic pressures, economic uncertainty, family arguments, mistrust, and infidelity. Some respondents referred to patriarchy as being the cause, however, their understanding of the meaning of patriarchy was unclear.[29]

Drawing together information from this research, the community in Letefoho clearly perceives of violence as mainly physical. Our findings also indicate that, at best, there is an uneven willingness to speak about violence within the community.

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[27] Intervistador: *Ne'e hanesane ne'e akontese ka lae iha ita nia sosiedade?*
   Mane: *Akontese!*
   Intervistador: *Akontese, iha barak mos?*
   Mane: *Iha barak maka akontese!*
   (Male Participant, Semi-Structured Interview, *Nabilan* Group 2, 16 September 2016)

[28] Community Mobilizers are members of the community in Suku Letefoho whom the *Nabilan* Program has engaged (including providing them with training and tools) to be agents of positive change in their communities with the objective of preventing violence against women and children.

[29] Notes from interviews with CSOs in Manufahi, 22 and 23 January 2016

4. Program question two: With regards to preventing the perpetration of violence against women, what factors enable men to change their attitudes and behaviours?

A key focus for the CBA research was to understand what factors enable men to change their attitudes and behaviours with regards to violence against women and children. In doing so, *Nablian* began asking men who and what influences them as individuals and to try to find the contexts that encourage positive behaviour change. While the program question above is simple to ask but very complex to answer, it is underpinned by a series of subsidiary questions that *Nabilan* is interested in understanding further, including:

- Who and what are the key influencers in changing attitudes and behaviours?

- What role does context play in changing attitudes and behaviour?

- What is the relationship between attitudes and behaviours and the use of violence?

- What challenges (i.e. personal, family, community) did men face when they tried to change their behaviour and become non-violent?

- What roles or strategies do men who do not use violence adopt to change other men's behaviours?

- What is the impact of some men going against the existing social norm and proactively deciding to treat women equally and to not use violence (positive deviance)?

- What conflict resolution strategies do non-violent couples/families use (to learn about the necessary conditions to move other men to non-violent practices)?

This report can only begin to answer some of these. Thus far, we have only spoken with men about their views more generally and, while engaging a broad range of men (with diverse lived experience, roles in the community, and age), we have not approached potential participants based on previous perpetration of violence. Overall, the research in Manufahi demonstrated at least two key dynamics relevant to male behaviour change: a) that help-seeking behaviours are linked to strategies for behaviour-change and, in turn, relate particularly to shame and; b) that, in these interviews, people tended to speak in highly-gendered terms, in which women and family members, rather than abusive men, are expected to take responsibility for the man's violence.

Here we consider several of the FGDs with women, and their insights in terms of attempts to change men's behaviour. A key dynamic in discussions revolved around the woman taking the problem 'out of the household' and, in effect, either using shame as a change device, or drawing on the moral authority of those who might influence him.[30] The responses here are still based on the scenario of Pablo hitting Nela, though in the case of interviews with women, the questions were focused on understanding what women would do following such abuse.

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[30] See also, Cummins, Deborah, and Maria Fátima Pereira Guterres. "*Ami Sei Vítima Beibeik*": *Looking to the needs of domestic violence victims*. The Asia Foundation. Dili. 2012.

Interviewer: When you say that some want to have a hearing/dispute resolution to just teach (the man a lesson). How does this teaching actually happen?

Female Participant: The teaching is like this; (the woman) will go and report to the sub-village chief and say: "My husband just gets drunk at night, he hits me and he never understands my condition. He and I don't want to separate but I want his continuous hitting of me to end."[31]

Thus, in such a situation, the woman is engaging in help-seeking behaviours to create a pathway for male behaviour change, while also continuing in the relationship. 'Love' was discussed on several occasions by women. For example, women in a FGD explained that the decision to stay or leave largely depended on whether the woman still loved the man or not. If she did still love him and wanted to continue the relationship—despite his violence—then the woman could tell others in the community to 'teach' the man to stop using violence.

Female Participant: Like if she has a serious injury when he hits her, that's not just playing, he has caused a (serious) injury. If the woman loves her husband she will be patient, she will not go and make a problem (*the participant uses 'ba halo problema ida' which implies taking the problem to others outside of the relationship*). If she feels a lot of love for her husband she will not say anything (report the violence). But many women are irritated, compared with me if I was hit constantly every day, it's better to separate, and for which you must go to the sub-village chief.[32]

It is notable that the problem in this scenario is the woman taking the issue to others, rather than the man's behaviour itself, a point we explore in more detail below. Love was discussed by other women in the FGD as a key reason as to stay in the relationship. And again, help-seeking behaviour is linked directly to attempts to change the man's behaviour via finding authority figures who can influence him. In the following example, however, the use of 'everybody' is suggestive of a more broadly framed shaming process.

Female Participant: If the woman wants to divorce, she will just say she wants to divorce. [If] (she) truly wants to resolve (the problem) to eliminate this (violent) behaviour, everybody will know already. If the woman still loves (her husband) she will say it (report the violence), to teach him a lesson, it just depends.[33]

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[31] Intervistador: *Se karik mana dehan balu hakarak tesi lia para hanorin deit? Hanorin ne'e hanesan ne'ebe?*
Feto: hanorin ne'e hanesane, nia ba kesar iha Xefe aldea dehan hanesane hau nia katuas oan ne'e loron kalan hemu lanu hela deit, nia baku hela deit nia nunka komprende hau nia kondisaun. Nia hau lakoi ami rua fahe malu maibe bele Evita ninia hahalok ida baku bebeik hau ne'e. (*Nabilan* FGD Female G1 14.09 - (4))

[32] Feto: *Hanesan nia sente aleza todan bainhira nia baku ne'e nia laos halimar, nia baku ne'e halo aleza ona, se feto balun hadomi nia laen nia sei pasiensia, ne'e nia la foti ba halo problema ida se nia sente hadomi nia laen barak liu ne'e nia la hatete, mais feto balun barak mak nervosu ten, do que (compare) hau han purada (hitting constantly) loron loron, diak liu mak soe malu, ne'e tenke ba iha Xefe Aldeia.* (*Nabilan* FGD Female G1 14.09 - (4))

[33] Feto: *Se karik nia (feto) hakarak fahe malu (divorce) ne'e nia dehan hau hakarak ami rua fahe malu deit, hakarak resolve duni, resolve para nia halakon nia hahalok ida ne'e, I ema barak mak hatene ona. Se karik nia (feto) sei hadomi entaun nia ba dehan ba para hanorin deit depende deit.* (3)

'Everyone will know' is an important factor identified through this discussion, as from the women's view this appears to be the key dynamic in being able to create an avenue for male behaviour change. Men, however, in interviews and FGDs, displayed the view that a man should try to limit the discussion of violence to within the household, to try to maintain control over the woman.

> **Male Participant:** Perhaps, in some instances some people tell others, but others won't tell anyone. However, for me I don't think I can tell other people. We need to resolve this only in the house. For example, we can't go to the market and tell people, we need to gather our parents to resolve the problem in the household, there is no need to take this beyond that and make it public.

> **Interviewer:** Can I ask why can't you tell anyone from outside? Why do need to resolve it within the family only?

> **Male Participant:** You cannot because you would not feel good about it. That is the same as us telling our personal lives (from within the family). For example, we tell other people, then sometimes people will say that those people have a problem, maybe there is something absent or missing with them? Perhaps they don't have enough food? That is what I think.[34]

Here we see the importance of CBA as it stands a greater chance of breaking apart the control of space than the typical approach to date (for instance 'socialization'). People deemed to be from outside a community can be easily dismissed, as locally irrelevant, lacking in understanding, and not primarily committed to that community. However, people from within the community—who know the history, geography, language, political systems, and people—have more local credibility and are, thus, much harder to dismiss, whether they are a CM or program staff who live in that village.

While shame may be a powerful device, the question is not just how to encourage help-seeking behaviours to change male behaviour, but also examine very basic questions of gender norms. As with the interviews with men, a constant theme in the interviews with women is the way in which women are subjected to abuse, and yet are also the ones held responsible for the next course of action; to stay or leave, to seek help or be silent, to find others to influence her husband to change his behaviour, and so on. The implication is that men, while being the ones who perpetrate the violence, have no responsibility either for themselves or for their families in terms of their behaviour.

> **Female respondent:** (We) would tell this man: "You can't get drunk again. Before you drink you need to check and see if dinner is fully prepared, then you can get drunk." Now

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[34] Mane: *Karik iha balun fohatene, maibe balun la fohatene! Maibe ba hau ne'e hau sente ida ne'e la fohatene ema! Presiza ita resolve iha uma laran deit, por ezemplu ita ba merkadu sira ne'e ita fohatene ema, ne'e labele, ita presiza halaibur ita nia katuas ferik sira atu resolve iha uma laran deit, la presiza lori sai ba liu.*
Intervistador 2: *Hau bele husu? Tanba saida mak labele fohatene ema iha liur? Tenke resolve iha familia laran deit? Tanba sa mak labele?*
Mane: *Labele tanba ne'e sente ladun diak. Ne'e hanesan ita konta fali ita nian vida uma laran, ezemplu ita konta ba ema, dalaruma ema dehan sira ne'e problema hela deit, buat ruma menus karik? Hahan mak la iha karik? Ne'e hanesan tuir hau nia hanoin.* (*Nabilan* FGD Male G1 15.09)

(in this example) the food is not yet ready, the auntie with the young child as well has not cooked yet, he hits her until she bleeds.[35]

The man is not expected to truly take responsibility for his actions, let alone reflect on the power dimensions in his behaviour. He can still go and get drunk, and the only demand here is that he checks that his wife (who is caring for children) has cooked first. This underlying message is consistent across different interviews, meaning that there are many complex factors that need to be considered in programming; that violence is considered natural and normal, particularly to men, suggesting a non-reflexive concept of gender as being necessarily bound to biology (i.e. a man is violent because he is a man); that men have few role models that provide alternative patterns of masculinity that celebrate non-violence; that women and men do not have either space or time for reflection on either the harm caused by men's violence against women or men's own responsibility for it; and there is little consideration of the impact of violence on others. These final two points are well-captured in a Key Activity Record on a workshop on Power, Gender-based violence, and Change held in Suku Letefoho.

> **Key Discussion Points** (simple notes of discussions, key observations)
>
> **Male participation:** on the first day, when we spoke about VAW, they were laughing but by the 2nd and 3rd day they were taking it seriously.[36]

The initial laughter indicates that the men were not used to, and not comfortable, discussing this topic. The fact that the laughter diminished through the duration of the training illustrates that starting by even just providing a space or opportunity for people to discuss violence against women can help to shift men's attitudes. This and other points mentioned have been frequent topics for discussion within the CBA team.

These discussions of behaviour change, and how they relate to CBA as an approach, gives a sense of why it is so important to have community buy-in and engagement, and to apply constant repetition and saturation, particularly from within, to disrupt the patriarchal control over space.

5. Program question three: What protective strategies do women utilize as part of everyday life to mitigate the risk and experience of violence?

Complementing the findings on male behaviour, the third program question aims to understand what protective strategies women use to reduce violence in their daily lives. The key objective is to seek insights into how women make decisions and choices over the kinds of protective measures, mechanisms, and strategies that mitigate the risk and prevalence of violence. This includes undertaking research with women who do not seek support and examining the day-to-day strategies that they utilize. The research also examines patterns of familial support and intervention,

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[35] Feto: *Dehan maun ne'e labele lanu tan ona, antes atu ba hemu tenke hare tia tein tasak hotu mak bele ba hemu lanu, agora hahan sidauk tasak, tia ho labarik nurak tan la tein nia (mane) baku tan tia ne'e to'o ran tiha.*

[36] Key Activity Record, Foundational Training on Power, GBV, and Change, Suku Letefoho, Municipality of Manufahi, 25-27 January 2017.

engagement with local leadership, and help-seeking behaviours that extend to service providers, police, and the modern justice system.

In the longer-term, the aim is to understand, within the more immediate space of the household and the local community, how women attempt to reduce violence as well as the forms of help and care they seek. This fits with CBA's strengths-based approach by identifying and in turn supporting those strategies of risk mitigation that are immediately available and known to women. As with the prior two program questions, this overarching question has associated sub-questions which will orient the discussion that follows. These include:

- What protective strategies do women utilize as part of everyday life to mitigate the risk and experience of violence?

- When and how do women decide to ask for help? Where do they look for help?

- What does it mean when women ask for "help"?

- What are the shifts in the women's everyday context that result in a change in help-seeking behavior?

- For women who have accessed service providers or sought judicial intervention, what kind of support would they have liked to receive?

Several factors limit the pursuit of assistance or justice by women who have experienced violence (and only a very small percentage do seek help). These include shame, fear that seeking help will bring a bad name to the family, tolerance of violence against women among both women and men, lack of trust in justice processes, lack of resources to engage with services and court systems, shame, hope for change, social pressure to preserve the family unit, a continuing love for the abusive partner, and economic dependence. [37]

In recent years, these barriers have been identified in a range of studies, including The Asia Foundation's reports 'Ami Sei Vítima Beibeik': Looking to the Needs of Domestic Violence Victims (2012) and Between fragility and inequity: Women's experiences of the Economic Dimensions of Domestic Violence in Timor-Leste (2015), the former on justice systems and the latter on economic activity, as well as the aforementioned *Nabilan* Baseline study. A deeper understanding of the subjective and personal views of women and the pathways they use is needed, not least of those who experience ongoing violence but who do not separate from their husbands.

There are various reasons why this is an important area of focus for CBA. More generally, low levels of reporting can perpetuate violence against women and impunity. The *Nabilan* Baseline Study found that only 34 percent of women who had ever experienced physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence had sought help from any source.[38] Of those who sought help, most did so with parents, siblings, or other family members. Eighty-six percent did not report to any agency or organisation.[39] The mode of CBA engagement in Manufahi is unique in that it links primary

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[37] *Nabilan* Baseline Study, p 114

[38] *Nabilan* Baseline Study, p 112

[39] *Nabilan* Baseline Study, p 113

prevention with services and support, with the possibility to extend into justice programming. Where SASA! has focused on prevention in its work on violence against women and HIV, *Nabilan*'s efforts with CBA integrate in significant ways two of its three focus areas—prevention and services. This means that, as reporting increases, there is the scope to meet this demand, drawing on relationships built with other local actors.

Given this, it is important to understand where response interventions, resources, and other efforts should focus (for instance, what support families currently provide and how). It should be noted here that members of the *Nabilan* team considered it likely that women may not have any pathways to support. In such circumstances, *Nabilan* would need to then work to enable new pathways. This is a difficult place to start from in terms of programming, however, it needs to be accounted for, in that the lack of support—formal or otherwise—is an argument for integrating prevention, services, and finally justice, as CBA gains more traction.

The research in Letefoho suggests an intersection between prevention and help-seeking whereby women seek to draw those from outside the family in to help—often in terms of either shaming or giving moral instruction to the man—while men avoid changing violent behaviour by controlling that space in the name of privacy and reputation. In interviews with women and men where there were questions of help-seeking behaviours, there were several key dynamics that factored in the discussions.

There was, as discussed above, the possibility that women who have experienced violence have few pathways to support available to them. Interviews mentioned such instances, including what appeared to be homicides caused by severe and constant violence, as well as the lack of recourse available to women. While evidence shows that Timorese women experiencing violence are more likely to reach out to their own family members than anyone else, families may not always provide adequate support. Marriage into the male's household, as tends to be the case in Letefoho, may mean, for instance, that parents of the wife are reluctant to become involved.

> **Female Participant:** If there are some wives and husbands who have many problems, do their parents get involved? Can the mother help and give advice to her daughter, or is it that the parents will not see their children and will just say: "You are married now, the man takes care of you now, you can't come here to us."[40]

Parents' unwillingness to provide support can stem from a range of reasons, such as, the marriage occurred without their sanction, or fear of reprisals from the violent husband. This is illustrated below, where the story of Nela and Pablo was used to ask participants what would happen in such a situation.

> **Male Participant:** Yes, it needs to go via Nela's mother and father, because as for the man's mother and father, if Pablo is a big man and he is drunk, then his parents will also fear him, then they must go through his mother in law. If he hits Nela until she is bruised, then

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[40] Feto: *Se karik iha balun hanesan feen ho laaen iha problema barak ne'e inan aman tama? Se karik hanesan inan bele (ajuda) nia oan feto entaun nia sei fohatene nia oan feto, mais se kaundu inan aman ne'e mak la hare oan, ne'e sira dehan deit "o hola ona mane ne'e, mane mak atende o ona, labele mai tuir hau ona. (Nabilan FGD Female G1 14.09)*

people will already know and people such as the sub-village chief and elders will share their thoughts with him to stop him from acting in this way.[41]

The significance of the above should not be understated. If the husband's parents refuse to intervene, the risk is shifted onto the women's family, which will likely bring familial pressure back onto her. Moreover, if the woman moved into the man's household, then the woman's parents have much less authority to get involved. Pressed on what women do in such instances, some respondents answered that the only thing they could really do was withdraw and distance themselves as a risk strategy.

> **Female Participant:** We don't really have a strategy. Like if he comes home drunk, we just disengage. Our male cousin married a woman that lived in Simpang Tiga. Now they live in Simpang Tiga and she is four months pregnant. He gets drunk, the pregnant wife just walks back and forth, if he comes home drunk and angry, she just disengages and walks away from him and then he doesn't want to beat his wife anymore.[42]

Comments in the same FGD:

> **Interviewer:** In connecting back to today's story (about Pablo and Maria), what methods can she use to protect herself? Because in this situation (he) just punches and hits (her)?

> **Female Participant 1:** If the husband comes back very irritated and the woman doesn't want to be hit, she will just withdraw/disengage to reduce his irritation so that he does not hit her. If she talks then she will be hit, she needs to withdraw, she will be hit for sure because she is talking.

> **Interviewer:** (Speaking to another woman in the FGD) Okay, so in your opinion, if the man is irritated when he comes, the women should just be quiet and disengage/withdraw?

> **Female Participant 2:** Yes, just withdraw![43]

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[41] Mane: *Ya tenke liu husi Nela nia inan aman, tanba ba mane nia inan aman, se Pablo ne'e hanesan mane boot ida nia lanu tan hanesane ne'e ninia inan aman mos tauk nia, entaun tenke liu husi ninia banin (feto nia inan aman) se nia baku Nela oin sira ne'e metan ona, ema hatene ona inan aman hanesan Xefe Aldeia sira katuas sira para fo hanoin nia, hodi halakon hahalok sira ne'e.* (*Nabilan* FGD Male G1 15.09)

[42] Feto: *Ami nian la iha ida, hanesan hemu lanu mai, ami lao ses tiha, ami nia primu ida hola bin ema hela Simpang Tiga, agora sira hela Simpang Tiga bin ne'e isin rua hela mais fulan 4 ona, maun ne'e hemu lanu ona, bin ne'e isin rua hela nia lao ba mai deit, maun ne'e mai ho lanu hanesan atu nervosu ba la diak nia lao ses tiha, nia lakoi baku nia ferik ona ida.* (*Nabilan* FGD Female G1 14.09)

[43] *Diak hau liga fali ba istoria ohin ne'e, nia uza cara (metode) oinsa para nia bele protégé ninia an. Tanba iha kondisaun ida ne'ebe baku hela deit no tuku hela deit?*
Feto: *Se nia (mane) tama mai mak nia nervosu liu ita feto ne'e lalika simu hasoru se nia baku ita hases an tiha deit ne'e para ninia nervosu ne'e tun hodi ninia liman ne'e labele kona ita, se karik nia ko'alia mak ita simu hasoru ne'e ninia liman, tenke ses, kona duni tanba nia ko'alia mai ita simu!*
Intervistador 1: *Ok ne'e tuir mana nia hanoin dehan katak sekarik nia nervosu mak tama mai feto tenke nonok deit no hases an deit.*
Feto: *Sim hases an det!* (*Nabilan* FGD Feto G1 14.09)

This strategy of distancing was also found in the interviews of the earlier Economic Dimensions of Domestic Violence research. In those interviews, women who sensed a risk of violence sought to remove themselves from their husband's company for the period the violence seemed likely.[44]

The CBA research further explored the protective strategies women employ and to what extent these strategies involve local authority. The *Nabilan* Baseline Study found that only 3 percent of women who had experienced intimate partner violence had reported to the police in the first instance, with only 2 percent seeking assistance from a customary leader, 1.6 percent seeking assistance from a village chief, and 0.8 percent from a sub-village chief.[45] The CBA interviews in Letefoho confirm this data. While some respondents in Letefoho discussed reporting to police, this was not usually the first course of action, and in some interviews, police were not mentioned at all. In Letefoho, there could be numerous reasons people do not call the police. One reason is the authority of local leaders within the community, as the following notes from a Key Activity Record suggest (when the CBA Team asked the chiefs how they are currently resolving problems):

- They said they are wise about how to operate in their own context: ". If we waited for the Court to settle issues, they would never be settled." "We resolve issues as a way of anticipating and avoiding problems."

- A written agreement is developed after a resolution. The agreements are stored in each sub-village and in the village chief's headquarters. If the agreement is broken, there will be a fine or the issue will be taken to the court.[46]

While such mechanisms can provide some protection to women, very few women are involved directly in the mediation process in a position of authority.

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[44] See review notes of Economic Dimensions of Domestic Violence project by Saturnina Freitas Belo (2016).

[45] *Nabilan* Baseline Study, p 113

[46] Key Activity Record, Meeting of Suku Council, Suku Letefoho, Manufahi District 12 May 2016.

PART TWO

Practice questions, aimed at understanding how best to implement the program, were also identified and integrated into program inquiry. The six practice questions were:

1. How can research be undertaken in the context of community-based approaches?

2. With regards to foreign and national staff, as well as CMs, what are the key skills and attitudes required to work towards positive and sustainable social change in local communities in Timor-Leste?

3. How can programs draw from international learnings while at the same time developing relevant local approaches?

4. How can the program enable and encourage members of the community (mobilizers and key stakeholders) to work on an issue of difficult social change in new ways and that accounts for competing interests?

5. How can programs engage different actors, including CSOs, state institutions, referral networks, local governance actors, and CMs, to enable work within a local community? How does this change according to a person's relationship to a community?

6. What are the ethical and safety concerns around supporting a process of community based approaches to social change and how can these be mitigated?

6.1 Practice Question One: How can research be undertaken in the context of community-based approaches?

Since its inception, the *Nabilan* Program has identified the need for evidence to be drawn from research, with evidence-based practice closing the feedback loop between research, activity design, monitoring results and impact, and design revision. Before the CBA research began, *Nabilan* identified that we needed to draw from the work of Raising Voices, an organisation established in 1999 in Uganda, and specifically their community mobilization approach, SASA!. SASA! documents (*SASA! Tips Booklet* 2013; *SASA! Mobilizing Communities to Support Social Change* 2013), as well as a series of articles published by the Lancet journal on the SASA! approach showed that one of the best ways of reducing the prevalence of violence in the longer-term was through community mobilization.

Nabilan decided to take an integrated approach, combining planned research projects and initiating these alongside programming interventions that would be targeted at a particular village. A process of site selection began, balancing programmatic needs with existing knowledge and capacity, and the willingness of communities to be part of the program. The program considered two sites, in effect replicating the sites of the male surveys undertaken as part of the *Nabilan Baseline Study*, one each in Dili and Manufahi. A team of eight visited Manufahi in October 2015 to undertake a series of meetings with local civil society organisations (CSOs), existing networks, and

local governance. The team visited different villages in the municipality to understand local dynamics, how research methods could be adapted to the social terrain, and what reception our efforts might receive. In Dili, engagement also began in the neighbourhood of Beto (with the Community Policing Council, for instance) to advance the program there as a comparative site anchored back to the Baseline Study.

The intention at the end of 2015 was to facilitate initial research in both Manufahi and Dili sites to lay the groundwork for more general awareness about the program and its objectives. The findings of the research would then feed into programming. In early 2016, budget constraints and difficulties in finding available researchers with the necessary skills in prevention led to the decision to integrate research into programming and not to undertake any stand-alone research. The team also decided to focus the research in Suku Letefoho in Manufahi, where *Nabilan* was also supporting programming.

Research in Community-Based Approaches

To make the research efforts sustainable, the research was broken into two types. The first type is what we have called Context Driven Research, the more conventional form of data collection such as through interviews, Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), and other methods. This research was used to gather important information for programming on the three program questions laid out in Part One of this report. It also played a key role in in identifying people within the community who would be good to work with, and in providing a safe space for community members to reflect on violence in their lives, and in doing so, help to raise awareness about violence against women.

The second form of data collection is what we have referred to as Program Integrated Research, undertaken as part of the overall engagement with the community. Activities such as workshops, activities by partner organisations, community discussions, meetings, and events all became treated as research events in addition to their own objectives. Details of discussions, who attended, words used, debates, how things were organised, and who did what, all provide important moments for research and learning. The program has developed and adapted certain tools (see the *Nabilan* CBA Toolkit) towards this end, including Key Activity Records, as well as research uptake tools, to help coordinate the flows of research. The Key Activity Records are designed to be used in multiple ways (see information flow diagrams in the Toolkit) so that the team facilitating learns, the broader programmatic team (including those not involved in the activity) have a chance to share in the information, and what is captured is then able to be taken back to the community. This of course requires a strong programmatic culture around the storing, sharing, and dissemination of information.

Nabilan's approach is for research to be integrated into programming to the extent that it moves well beyond what is commonly regarded as 'Action Research' or participatory forms of research. It does not, for instance, rely on outsiders being located within the community or organisation where research is undertaken. Given that the research is intended to serve programmatic needs, much broader, multi-dimensional, and diverse research is distinguished in a range of ways. These are outlined in the four key points that follow:

1. The research is broken down and integrated into programming. This means that activities that are part of programming, from Referral Network meetings to workshops, partner activities to community discussions, become research moments in and of themselves. Ideas generated within a workshop are not only used towards outcomes for that activity (for instance, to raise awareness or provide support) but the discussion is tracked and becomes part of the research findings. Meeting minutes, attendance lists, photos, as well as records of events, all become used for their original purpose (such as compliance, reporting, and budgeting) and the research data itself. Records of meetings are kept not only for accountability (as might be conventionally the case), but to work out who was talking about what, where there was interest, silence, conflict, and tension in a discussion, what words were used, and so forth.

   > Staff reflection: My point is that at the base of CBA is the community and because of that we need to go to the base to hear and look to the qualities of the people that are there, to learn from them and to build our program based on what they need.

2. Rather than focusing primarily on long reports full of analysis, this approach produces smaller pieces of research–such as Key Activity Records–that are informative in themselves and undertaken by program staff rather than external researchers. These records can be used as the basis for further analysis (i.e. this report) and as a way of drawing the programmer into the same process of self-reflection as that of the participant (what were your assumptions, what do you learn, what changed for you and what did not?). The information is used to develop short, practice-oriented reports that are integrated into programming and uptake strategies.

3. The process of research becomes increasingly less associated with technical knowledge and expertise, and more allied with participation, self-definition, and iterative social change. Undertaking research, particularly what has been referred to as context driven research, still occurs in alignment with the larger CBA objectives so that it is about mobilizing the community and providing safe spaces.

4. Lastly, the more the program is drawn into and is undertaken by the community, the more the research findings will be shaped by local contours and values. The research is not endeavouring to produce generalizable evidence. The research that is developed is directly relevant to the community from which it was derived, and its value beyond that should be seen more in terms of being able to provide ideas, starting points, and possibilities for other communities, rather than pre-determined answers.

In summary, research conducted in the context of CBA is focused on a single defined community, exercised over a long period, works iteratively by taking both programming events as well as stand-alone research engagements to develop community and organisational understanding, and is part of the activity of social change, not a prior stage nor addendum to social change. Research on violence against women and children is a form of consciousness raising where all involved become a researcher.

6.2 Practice Question Two: With regards to foreign and national staff, as well as Community Mobilizers, what are the key skills and attitudes required to work towards positive and sustainable social change in local communities in Timor-Leste?

Working on questions of violence, both in research as well as general programming, puts a team under considerable pressure, given the sensitivity of the topic and the various ethical and practical challenges involved. Questions of what skills and attitudes were required by a CBA team, as well as balancing evidence from Ending Violence Against Women (EVAW) programs in other countries with locally generated ideas, have come to the fore in the process of designing CBA.

For a program, such as *Nabilan,* that is driven by conventional programming logics with an emphasis on formal expertise, CBA requires staff to work in a new way and to draw on different skill sets. This has been a challenge for both foreign and local staff. For the former, many development style programs are very often premised on expert knowledge, stacked as they are with expert advisors, technical assistance, and capacity building. For the latter, the experience of teaching and training in Timor-Leste has frequently been didactic in approach and undertaken with a clear hierarchy established between the expert and the participant. In terms of such an approach, trainings are 'delivered' (typically via workshops), people are told what is right and wrong, and the measure of success is their ability to repeat back what they have learnt. There is little space for self-identification of problems and of pathways to solutions that may already exist within the community.

The basics of CBA—to identify, facilitate, and support community members to act on ending violence against women and children—require a different skill set and approach. While a good team is typically made up of people with complementary skill sets, for those working at the interface of the community (which is much of the team at some point or another), the approach needs to break down hierarchies of knowledge. While other skills are required—logistics, event management, training, research, gender equity programming, financial management, and so forth—CBA necessitates a certain ability to work in a way that encourages inclusion, mobilization, and empathy. This is more of an approach than a technical skill set, and it includes at least three interlinking dimensions.

Firstly, CBA requires staff that are willing to facilitate a space for other people to find their own thoughts and voices—and to communicate these to each other—rather than teaching towards a predetermined set of values. Some *Nabilan* staff reflected, for instance, on how development programs often frame discussions about communities in terms of what the community doesn't know or what the community lacks. CBA aims to create a space for reflexive learning where people can think about foundational aspects of social life, such as power, violence, discrimination, and rights. To reflect on the question above of 'what is violence' requires both a high degree of trust and, considering the likelihood of perpetration by those involved in the discussion, an ability to

facilitate without passing judgement. Supporting CMs to come up with solutions in a way that does not tell them what is right or wrong has been identified as a challenge for the CBA team.

Secondly, programming staff need to be able to adapt to the community and its reception of the program, rather than keeping to a set trajectory. They need to be open to engaging and learning step-by-step, alongside the community. *Nabilan* CBA's positive framing and strengths-based approach meant that community ideas could significantly inform the development of programming along the way, even though this was quite a departure from many other development programs. To be successful, the CBA team also needed people who were flexible enough to test out an approach and drop it, change it, or try another approach if it didn't work, listening to feedback from the community and constantly reflecting as a team.

Thirdly, the ability to genuinely value the opinions of the community, even when they are very different to what the staff members themselves think, was necessary. Intersecting with the prior two points, *Nabilan* CBA requires people to be treated as possessing equal value and ability to change their situation. Referring to the research above, people in interviews spoke in terms of actions and attitudes that were completely contrary to the objectives of *Nabilan*, not least in terms of what they saw as constituting violence and how conflicts should be handled. Members of the community need to be partners in the process so that the skills and opportunities already present can be used to make change. This process requires people who can engage and talk with community members in a way that encourages action in their everyday life, rather than waiting for something to be done for, or given to, them.

> **Staff reflection:** For so long, so many development programs come in telling people what to do and giving them things and then leaving. That is what people are used to, that is what the community is used to, both the people delivering the programs and those receiving them.

In terms of other skills and attitudes required to successfully undertake CBA, the ability to take advantage of all kinds of situations to advance the program was cited, including making use of informal spaces, such as breaks in activities, to connect with people (on sensitive topics such as violence, informal discussions can yield great understanding). Further, understanding how people are connected to one another in an East Timorese context (political, familial, resistance, school, and work connections) and the significance of local political contours (such as village elections) is another important skill set for the overall sustainability of the program.

6.3 Practice Question Three: How to draw from international learnings while at the same time developing relevant local approaches?

In development programs, there is frequently contrast between external or foreign and local sets of ideas and knowledge. This has occurred in *Nabilan*, as while the funder, the host organisation, and the management team are all comprised of foreigners, the CBA element is being implemented in largely isolated and rural communities. Tension between international best practice, and

attempting to translate that locally, appeared frequently in practice as well as discussions between staff. In the following section, this local-foreign dynamic is considered in three different ways: donor-program, internal program dynamics, and program-community relations.

The *Nabilan* Program logic promotes learning from sites around the world. A very significant one, as discussed above, is the SASA! approach, which started in Uganda, but has since been replicated in more than 10 countries around the world. However, this use of global best practice, and the shaping of CBA in Manufahi accordingly, met with calls for the program to be more locally driven. 'Why are you bringing all these things in from outside?' has been asked by the donor, even when those ideas are very much about integrating practice at the community level.

The initial phase of CBA created a base for activities and awareness-raising rather than tapping into an existing active network, because the September 2015 *Nabilan* engagement in Manufahi showed very low levels of community action on gender equity or EVAW. Further, existing programming showed little evidence of traction. The limited precedent for this kind of program in Timor-Leste, as demonstrated by initial mapping by *Nabilan*, meant the vast majority of work conducted under the banner of prevention was socialization of the LADV.

> **Staff reflection:** People are comfortable with the socialization route, and donors will continue with that into the future, especially where they are unwilling to take risks with funding environments.

These kinds of factors mean that, while community mobilization as a prevention strategy has shown good results elsewhere, in Timor-Leste there is not necessarily a social movement or activist base at the community level to immediately engage. Deeper initial engagement, including by foreigners, has been required to find potential points of support and activism, and to bolster the awareness of potential supporters within the community. The program must communicate clearly that, in the case of Timor-Leste, prevention and services require 'deep reach' into communities, and to draw on experience from other contexts, in conjunction with discussion and reflection at the local level.

Internal Team Dynamics

The tension between drawing from international learnings while developing relevant local approaches, has been felt perhaps most acutely within the *Nabilan* team itself. Some staff saw new approaches as a risk and a challenge, in terms of their own careers and job security, and in terms of trying something different in a community on an already sensitive topic. There was recognition that foreign staff could carry more risk than national staff, and would be less affected if something did not go well. The CBA team were asking very serious questions about people's views and behaviours and it did not take long for some participants to begin to recount experiences from their own lives. The team recognised that if there was a stronger activist base or broader social movement on women's rights, the program would have more allies, points of support, and avenues for disseminating program messaging. Without a strong independent women's movement to engage with on social norms change, the program's CBA work has in the first phase, instead, focused more on awareness-raising about violence against women and children.

International ideas were also seen to be a challenge for a team that already felt overburdened work-wise. Some staff felt that new ideas meant more work, and, in some instances, this led them to

just use international tools without taking the time and effort to think critically about how to adapt them to the Timorese context. The team needed to learn to work together, particularly to avoid staff feeling disempowered or overwhelmed by new or different approaches. The team has learned from this experience, and now uses an approach based on SASA! workshops for staff, combined with monthly internal discussions about gender and power, and regular technical assistance from Raising Voices.

The team initially found SASA! challenging to translate into practice 'because the entry points are different in Timor'. For instance, SASA! concentrates on a particular concept of power that needed to be adapted to the local context. In Timor-Leste, it needs to start with how people talk about everyday problems. *Nabilan* concentrated on adapting activities to focus on the 'everyday' and then explored from there.

Program – Community

The tension between foreign and local has also been felt between the community and *Nabilan*. As the program gains traction in Manufahi, the differences between inside and outside ideas will come to the fore more often. On an area of contentious social change, the program will likely only be able to build trust with portions of the community and, as that occurs, the program might more acutely sense resistance, as power relations shift and some groups (for instance perpetrators) feel threatened. Change in communities is rarely even, and although the community's understanding might generally increase, resistance can also gather momentum.

Thus far, the program has focused on power and equality as a mechanism for various parties—partner organisations, communities, and the program team—to find a point of common understanding, reflection, and agreement. This was a way to 'jump-start' a process of social change in the absence of activism. It will always be a balancing act and a dynamic that needs to be approached as a productive way of exchanging ideas rather than building resistance, as implied by one *Nabilan* staff.

> **Staff reflection:** I think time is needed to study the experiences from other countries, but it is good to collaborate with some local ideas that link to the experiences of other countries to achieve change. This is because sometimes experiences from other countries, while good, don't take account of the fact that the (local) community is not ready to promote such change on its own.

6.4 Practice Question Four: How to enable and encourage members of the community (CMs and key stakeholders) to work on an issue of difficult social change in new ways and that accounts for competing interests?

Given the challenges of working towards male behaviour change outlined here, a key strategy for CBA has been to find different groups of people within the community who have an affinity with *Nabilan* objectives. Firstly, this meant identifying and working with the village chief and village

councils who were open to thinking on these issues. One reason the chiefs in Suku Letefoho gave for being interested in the CBA work is the level of time and resources that they spend mediating domestic violence cases. Establishing a strong basis for cooperation at this level has been a priority for *Nabilan* from the outset. The support of local authorities also grants legitimacy to the program within the community, which is part of creating the necessary space for engaging CMs and giving them the confidence to participate.

> **Staff reflection:** I think for the sustainability of the CBA program, a key motivation for local engagement comes from authority figures such as local government, church, customary leaders, the involvement of women on the program, youth, and so forth... In addition to this, other important things include the need to follow up (following activities) and sufficient funds for activities.

Secondly, the participation of CMs is important as it ensures that people from within the community have a central role in raising the issue of violence against women and children. In turn, and along with program staff from that village, their presence means that there are people in the program who know, and are known very well by, the local community (See *Nabilan Discussion Series No. 2 on Community Mobilizers*). Moreover, engaging CMs means that there is continuous community presence as opposed to only those occasions when the program team is running activities.

An important question, however, is how a CBA program can encourage these people in the context of competing interests and social norms that normalize violence and deprioritize gender equity. Community members, and the people selected as CMs, are expected by community leadership and other development programs to work on other activities. As aforementioned, one reason why *Nabilan* selected Suku Letefoho was because the community expressed interest in ending violence; this does not mean, however, that the community does not have other interests and priorities which take up time and energy. By promoting equality between men and women and by attempting to open a space in the community to speak about violence, they are going against the norms and expectations of their community. It is important for the CBA team to be conscious of the challenges this may cause for the CMs, and to support and guide them. Facilitating people to engage with the program, especially as CMs, has not always been an easy or straightforward task.

> **Staff reflection:** We are trying to create an enabling environment in an environment that is not enabling.

One of the challenges in engaging people to become CMs is that it is different to other development programs that have run in the community in the past. People are used to engaging where there are clear financial incentives. This is reasonable, as people very often struggle to meet basic needs, but raises questions around the long-term sustainability.

Nabilan has tried to constrain how incentives work in terms of people's participation with the view that activism must come from an affinity with program objectives and not from paid inducements. *Nabilan* has also, however, had to balance community expectations by recognising that program staff who work locally need strategies to connect people with the program.

> **Staff reflection:** That things fall over after a project or a program is not just because money for transport is no longer provided. It is also because people don't do anything

because people don't ask them to, or help facilitate something. This is the difference between the facilitation of a program and its actual orchestration/running/etc.

Key to encouraging participation is to find out what motivates people to work on the issue, what drives them and what is important to them. Unless people can see that the work is of benefit to them and addresses their interests, CBA will not gain the traction it needs. To this end, the best CMs have tended to be people already working within the community—for instance, those who are already mediating cases, advising people, and providing support—who are influential or are somehow engaged in the area in a way that is recognised by others. Nevertheless, there has still been the need to find other ways to encourage participation and widen the groups of people involved.

One way to encourage people to participate in the program—even when many others in the community may not feel that such work is a priority or appropriate—has been to help CMs feel that changes in power, and thus levels of violence, will benefit them as individuals, families, and a community. This involves enabling people to imagine a different kind of community. This may involve support to make connections, for instance, that gender equity can have a positive impact on people's standards of living. In other words, the program should help people recognise that violence is interwoven with other factors such as health, disability, and child abuse, and that the more violence is reduced, the greater the chance of improved quality of life in general.

Activities of this kind provide a basis for motivation. In one instance of dedicating time and space to this activity, people's articulations tended to be very similar, with emphasis on wanting their children to succeed in life. Additional community workshops addressed how people could work to move the community closer to this positive future. In one activity, the diagram of a bridge was used, with one side of the bridge signifying the current situation, and the future depicted on the other side. On the bridge people listed what they could do themselves to create that future (i.e. participants were asked questions such as, 'what was needed to construct this bridge?' and 'what can you do to construct this bridge?). The notes below show how the current context, and hoped for future, were mapped out by CMs in a Prevention Messaging Workshop.

Notes from Key Activity Record

- Women's situation in the community now:

    - Women have bigger responsibilities in the house because they must breastfeed but, otherwise, they can do men's work and vice-versa.

    - Women experience violence.

    - Men have more power than women: women and children are dependent on men, therefore, men have more power. Also, some women's power is dependent on men's power.

- Women's situation in the community in the future (what CMs hope):

    – Whole of community is happy.

- Men and women have the same rights, same power, the same access to information, and the same access to health and to finishing their education.

- People know about the LADV.

- Good economic situation.[47]

The *Nabilan* team felt that these activities worked well, though other activities (such as asset mapping, explained below) would have been an advantage if undertaken prior, as people were not yet consciously thinking of themselves as possessing the skills to resolve these kinds of problems.

Linked to this visioning, a third way the *Nabilan* team encouraged community participation was to enable people to see themselves as agents for change by facilitating a process of asset mapping with the CMs. Here, the ecological model was used to help guide people to see how their roles in life can assist in the prevention of violence. This approach focused on using opportunities and groups that already existed within the community—for instance a vegetable growing group could sit together and talk about violence prevention. This also helped CMs recognise that interactions in their daily lives could be used for change, and has made it more feasible for CMs, as people who are engaged in many community activities and who have multiple responsibilities and roles in the community, to manage their time and still fulfil their role as CMs.

At the time of *Nabilan* staff interviews, it was too early to determine the success of the CMs. A review of this element of the program will occur later. The other area identified as requiring greater engagement regards CSOs in Manufahi. The CBA team recognised the need to encourage CSO participation in the program in different ways, perhaps not via a grant or by contracting them, but by providing avenues for support and work. As these are people living in the community, it is vital to engage them in ways that ensure they do not feel diminished, particularly as *Nabilan* sends existing prevention partner organisations to Manufahi from Dili to implement some prevention activities.

6.5 Practice Question Five: How to engage different actors, including CSOs, state institutions, referral networks, local governance actors, CMs, so as to enable work within a local community? How does this change according to a person's relationship to a community?

Engagement with referral networks is important to ensure CBA addresses services and support as well as prevention. This approach recognises that by facilitating open discussion of violence against women, and the realisation that such violence is not acceptable and should be reported, *Nabilan* will create demand for services and support. The *Nabilan* team stressed that it would be

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[47] Prevention Messaging Workshop 1, October 19-20, 2016, Suku Letefoho, Municipality of Manufahi. See also Key Activity Record from Prevention Messaging Workshop 1, November 19-20, 2016 for an equally valuable list.

unfair to build demand without building the associated systems, including, for instance, referral networks.

In response, the program has focused on the referral network. *Nabilan* cannot be across all networks, but will work to see what needs there are and support as necessary in focus areas like Manufahi. The referral network meetings are normally convened by the Ministry of Social Solidarity (MSS), and *Nabilan* attends to show support, learn about activities, and to assist with problem solving. Engaging in the referral network includes sharing information, such as experiences from other municipalities.

The importance of engaging other actors in, for instance, the referral network meetings, is evident in *Nabilan's* Key Activity Records. Meeting notes confirm the range of attendees, from different Government Ministries to police, health workers, and others. The notes also reinforce the research's observations (for instance, the popular idea that violence against women is essentially a private problem).

> **Meeting Notes:** The Community Police Officer (OPS) for Letefoho said that in one year he has not received any cases of domestic violence and no cases of sexual violence. He feels "sad" about this. People feel that it is a private problem (in the household). There have been some cases of abandonment. The challenge in these cases is that there is no one to look after the children. He is grateful that the *Nabilan* Program is working in Manufahi. He suggests that there should be a visit to OPS every month to find out about cases they are facing.

The need for support as well as coordination is clear, especially in cases where children have been 'abandoned' (and experiencing increased vulnerability).[48] In addition, engaging in such meetings provides opportunities for understanding, for instance, if local government agencies are working together and how they respond to cases as they arise.

> **Meeting Notes:** The Vulnerable Persons Unit (VPU) said that they had one case of domestic violence during the period. There was another case, but it was not serious and so MSS and VPU consulted about how to handle the case. Said that as police they cannot force the victim to pursue a case. If the violence is '*grave*' they take the victim for examination. If it is not '*grave*', for example slapping but no swelling (to slap but without leaving a mark) they don't do anything. If the victim wants, they will support her to take the case forward.

Finally, *Nabilan*'s involvement in such activities enables the CBA team to identify where resources need to be focused to increase reporting rates and create an environment in which people feel more confident to report. The following relates to a meeting attended by the representative of the national human rights institution, *Provedoria dos Direitos Humanos e Justiça* (PDHJ):

> **Meeting Notes:** The PDHJ representative said that many victims don't report because they don't know the process, or they don't have confidence. When PDHJ is doing

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[48] See also Key Activity Record, Meeting of *Suku* Council Date of Activity, 12 May 2016, for discussions of abandonment. In the context 'abandoned' often means that a man does not take financial or social responsibility for children he has fathered, rather than the children having no parents at all.

socialization, there are many questions about sexual violence. Points out that just because there aren't many cases, it doesn't mean that there are no problems, but it means that people don't want to talk about the problems, or that there is not enough coordination. [49]

All of this speaks to the value of both participating with such networks, as well as the value of recording details to share and reflect on more broadly with the team. There can be a strong culture of inclusion and participation in East Timorese society, particularly around organisational networks.

> Staff reflection: For me, when strengthening community networks to prevent violence against women and children it is very important to always collaborate and involve all the people (parts) in CBA activities, especially participation from local government, which has great value.

In addition to participating in regular meetings with government representatives, the program also directly engages with other CSOs in Manufahi who are working in the same communities. Limits on what government actors are able to do creates a need for collaboration, and CSOs have an important role to play even when their core focus area is not gender. Please see the *Nabilan* CBA Toolkit for more discussion about strategies of engagement. *Nabilan* has, for example, set up regular bi-monthly meetings with other CSOs in Manufahi across multiple sectors. The CBA team have provided training on power and violence against women to other CSOs in Manufahi and these other CSOs have also provided training to our staff and CMs on diverse topics, such as nutrition and sexual and reproductive health. The opportunity to gain capacity in other areas through such trainings is also a motivating factor for CMs to be voluntarily involved in the CBA work.

6.6 Practice Question Six: What are the ethical and safety concerns around supporting a process of community-based approaches to social change and how can these be mitigated?

In CBA, and in working on EVAW, the *Nabilan* team has experienced various ethical and safety challenges. Some of these relate most obviously to engagement with the community, but others relate to staff and donor engagement. *Nabilan* staff have discussed the effect that the program has on team members, as they encounter new ideas and practices that have transformed their own thinking. This has created tension in people's private lives as it is difficult for them to discuss these ideas (for example, appropriate disciplining of children) outside of the program. In some instances, attempts to introduce such ideas in a home environment has meant risking an abusive response, and causing female staff to adopt, as discussed in the research findings above, strategies of silence to avoid potential violent responses.

> Staff reflection: What sets us apart is that our program sees itself consciously as part of the process of change. We are impacted and have responsibilities. [This] goes back to

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[49] Referral Network meeting, MSS Office, Manufahi, 28 April 2016.

why it was stressed that we have to work on gender equity internally. Not many programs are that self-reflexive.

A different ethical challenge has come with the donor and other actors, raising questions of who should be the authors of social change. For example, the CBA program has been asked if it is ethical to advocate for changes in people's behaviour—in this case to be non-violent—if they themselves do not see that as a priority? Should *Nabilan* be active in setting an agenda, as it has been with CBA, or is it only ethical for *Nabilan* to wait for community requests and respond to those?

One answer is that the very purpose of a program such as *Nabilan* is to set an agenda, and that ending violence against women and children necessitates a shift in attitudes and behaviours, irrespective of whether they are a priority or not. With regards to CBA, staff expressed the view that they are not forcing people to change, but are trying to advocate that change is possible and that there are significant benefits. To return to earlier discussions on the LADV, evidence shows that simply telling people what they must do—for instance, to obey the law—is rarely effective.[50] Laws are necessary but, on their own, not sufficient to change behaviours and norms.[51] Social norms are more likely to shift when a critical mass of people believe in the benefit of the positive behaviour that the law encourages (in this case, not using violence against women and children).

The third dimension relates to the ethical and safety concerns of program staff as well as CMs who are situated within the community. Given the high prevalence of violence against women, any team will likely include women who have experienced violence, and potentially men who have committed violence. Almost everyone would have experienced violence in childhood. Everyone involved in *Nabilan* is at risk of vicarious trauma, and the program should provide support to staff. At times, those who work with *Nabilan* and are based in the community must deal with cases of abuse, and require resources that are beyond the scope of the formal program (for instance, familial authority, private resources, and so forth). To assist staff and CMs to understand what may be required of them in CBA, *Nabilan*'s Access to Justice team created a list of different scenarios, and what a staff member was allowed and not allowed to do in different cases.

Finally, and reflecting one of the key reasons for this report, staff strongly emphasised always trying to learn, listen, and respect, not least where difference was key in program-community relations.

> Staff reflection: For me, to say again, we need to learn the social norms and values that already exist here, because in Timor-Leste there is great diversity and different kinds of ways of living, and we need to think and see deeply about this topic (that we work on).

Recognising difference is critical in understanding how programs on ending violence against women and children can gain traction. CBA is established in one community, and thus, while taking lessons from Timor-Leste or beyond, CBA is designed to adapt to local needs with the understanding that change cannot occur without 'thinking and seeing deeply' about this topic.

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[50] Alexander-Scott, M. Bell, E. and Holden, J. (2016) DFID *Guidance Note: Shifting Social Norms to Tackle Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG)*. London: VAWG Helpdesk, p35.

[51] Alexander-Scott, Bell, and Holden (2016), p26.

7. Conclusion

The *Nabilan* CBA pilot initiative has been underway for a year and a half. In that time, the program has developed primary points of connection within the community, engaged 14 CMs who are conducting advocacy on a bi-weekly basis, developed positive and contextual prevention messaging with the CMs, and enabled a safe space for discussions with men and women during which gaps in information about violence against women and children and program implementation are being filled.

Key themes are emerging from discussions around what constitutes intimate partner violence and the cycle of violence, providing vital information for program implementation. Violence against women is seen largely by male participants in program activities as physical violence. Emotional abuse is not seen as constituting violence, in contrast to its inclusion in the national legal definition of domestic violence. Similarly, sexual violence by an intimate partner is not seen by some participants as constituting domestic violence. How participants speak about violence against women is highly gendered. Male participants identified the women who spoke out about violence from a partner as creating a problem, rather than the male behaviour as being problematic. There is also a reluctance from some men and women participants to admit that violence is occurring within their community or family.

CBA activities are gleaning information about women's coping strategies and factors motivating change in men, with a key finding being that women's help-seeking behaviours are linked to strategies for behaviour change in men. Women are seeking help to create a pathway for male behaviour change, while staying in a relationship. Disclosure of domestic violence outside the immediate family unit appears as a key dynamic for women in creating an avenue for male behaviour change, while men try to maintain control by keeping any information about violence within the household. Discussions with women also confirm a pattern of women at risk of violence of removing themselves from their husband's company for the period in which they feel violence is likely.

Several lessons emerged on program implementation. Despite an unwillingness of both men and women participants to recognise specific violence within their own communities, the program provided a space for them to talk about violence against women and children, and to reflect on their own attitudes and behaviours. Use of positive approaches with both CMs and in community discussions–for example identifying what is a 'good' man and a 'good' woman–is proving a fruitful strategy for engagement. While the key entry point for this work is individual men and women, engagement with other actors, such as government and CSO members of the referral network, validates research and enables the program to assist local stakeholders to support women and children experiencing violence.

CBA has required the team to be innovative, flexible, and self-reflective. It has required a different skill set and approach, and requires that the team receive adequate training and support, as well as be willing and able to test out an approach and drop it, or change it to another approach, based on feedback from the community.

The careful selection of CMs has proven effective, with the CMs feeling supported by local authorities and appearing to have gained the trust of the community. Not paying the CMs–while leading a few to drop out–resulted in a highly committed and increasingly articulate group of CMs who recognise that their lack of financial compensation is a unique and positive feature of the program.

Feedback from CMs highlights the need for the program to have a strong local identity, rather than simply reflecting an international model, and that it may be useful to frame research as documentation of program learnings.

CBA has many ethical and safety implications for *Nabilan*. These require careful consideration and organisational support to ensure that program activities do no harm to members of the community or the team. CMs are provided with training and materials to enable them to refer cases to service providers as needed, and this will be regularly monitored by CBA staff. In other ways, the program seeks to minimise risk while supporting team members in a challenging implementation environment. This will be an ongoing need and must be adequately supported.

Finally, in moving forward, there are lessons on the sustainability of the CBA approach. The key actors, the CMs, are embedded in the community with skills and knowledge to support social norms change. They are implementing the program without requiring to be paid, doing so because they have a desire for change in their community. Considering how this work could be scaled up, then, is the next step.

8.   Recommendations

Implementation of CBA requires an ongoing process of learning and reflection. The findings highlighted in this report provide guidance for continuing to engage with the community in the current site on violence against women and children and for developing the work further in that site. The recommendations are also relevant in considering scaling up the work to other locations. The recommendations identified here should be read in conjunction with the CBA Toolkit.[52]

Violence against women and children

- Continue to document and draw on learnings from the key program questions - how the community understands violence, what motivates men to change, and what are women's coping strategies.

- Explore with the Community Mobilizers how to engage with community members in relation to emotional and sexual violence, given the lack of recognition of both forms of violence as domestic violence. This should include understanding the frequency and impact of both forms of violence.

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[52] In articulating these recommendations, the program is also aware of – and faithful to – the recommendations of the SASA! Program Brief on Fidelity.

- Ensure that future programming takes into account the fact that many people are unwilling to speak about violence in any way that may reflect badly on themselves or their community, even while others may speak openly about violence as a community problem.

- Continue to use case studies or scenarios as a way to open up discussions about violence, without asking people to talk about violence directly in their own lives or community.

Implementation approaches

- Ensure that CBA staff are those who are willing to facilitate a space for other people to find their own thoughts and voices, and that they are flexible and able to adapt to the community in which the program is being implemented.

- Ensure that there is adequate support to staff based in the field and that there are at least two staff based in the municipality in which the program is being implemented.

- Recognizing that bringing field staff and those based in headquarters together provides valuable opportunities for support, debriefing, and learning, ensure that visits to both headquarters and the field are adequately supported (including being programmed in work plans and budgets).

- Continue the approach of voluntary Community Mobilizers, with reimbursement of only small agreed costs, such as phone credit, or transportation money when attending mandatory program trainings or meetings.

- Ensure that Community Mobilizers are selected following a very deliberate search engaging local authorities and stakeholders and also through observation of their engagement in the program issues to ensure their interest and enhance their legitimacy in the community.

- Ensure that Community Mobilizers are active participants in key program agreements.

- Ensure that the program continues to adapt and develop its community mobilization methodology for the local context. It is important that the program is both informed by international experience (such as the SASA! approach), and also contributes to international experience by sharing learnings.

- To ensure that learnings are connected to programming, ensure that any CBA research is framed as building evidence pathways, learning, and reflections on programming.

- Ensure that program resources are allocated not just to analyzing learnings from new program documentation but also to existing CBA program documentation, to allow the program to compare changes in key areas over time.

- Develop alternative ways of documenting learnings that take into account challenges faced by Community Mobilizers and program staff in written documentation.

- Continue to engage with local authorities and stakeholders to support implementation.

- Ensure there are detailed and up to date plans and allocated resources to support team members (including Community Mobilizers) who may be affected by vicarious trauma.

- Ensure that there are detailed and up to date plans, allocated resources, and protocols to support any team member directly affected by violence, including as a result of their facilitation/engagement in CBA activities.

- Ensure that there are detailed and up to date plans, allocated resources, and protocols to address the risk of violence to participating community members through their engagement in CBA activities.

- Building on successes and program learnings, identify how the program could be scaled up to other locations and what level of resourcing is likely to be required to do so.

Acknowledgements