

Annual Report 2023



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I. Introduction

With a dream to see "The woman of Timor-Leste lives in peace within the home, community and nation that respects gender equality." Fokupers will be committed and attributed to "Stop violence, starting at the individual level, home until institutional level, through movement to empower women in all aspects through integrated services. Therefore, women and men have the consensus, understanding and capacity to overcome the problems of injustice and gender inequality. "

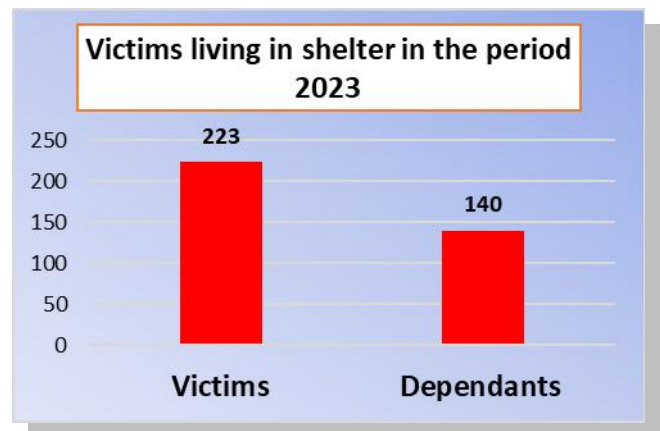
The following are the activities and progress of 2023, which Fokupers intends to share with all of you in order to accommodate all the programmes that Fokupers has carried out during the year (2023) in the implementation of the Strategic Plan Fokupers 2023-2027.

A. SURVIVOR EMPOWERMENT

During 2023, Fokupers registered and attended 563 victims of GBV, from this total number, victims who accessed the Fokupers selector.

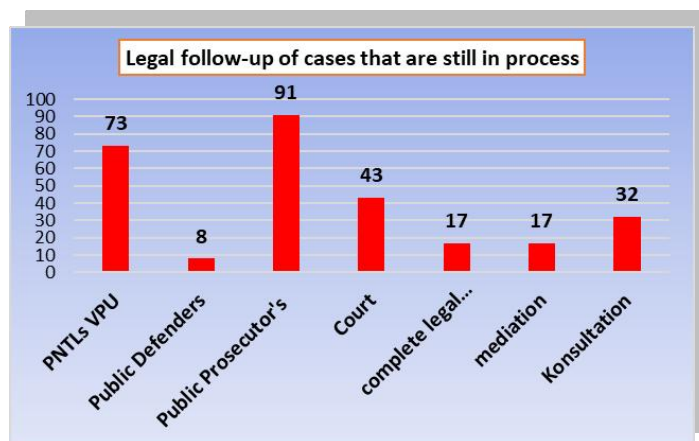
This total number, victims who had access to the shelter was 363 there are 4 shelter in Fokupers, including the Dili Adult's shelter (UMD, the Children shelter (UML) and in the UTS (Uma Transito) and in the UMMT (Uma Mahon Maria Tapo). Among them, the victims of the previous period who continued to live in the adult shelter were 7 victims and 4 dependants. 10 victims of the previous period who continued stay at the children shelter house. They have not yet returned home and the community due to security issues, with cases in which the family itself is not ready to ensure their presence to return home, because the cases have not yet been concluded and the crime actors are still freed in the community.

The details are presented in the graph right



Follow-up to the Legal Process

Fokupers provides safe shelter and legal support to victims from the start of their cases. This includes monitoring the justice process when information from legal institutions is lacking. In Dili, 2023 213 decided to process their cases through legal prosecution. 49 victims registered with PNTL's VPU, 8 cases with Public Defenders for mediation involving spouses and children, and 80 cases reaching the Public Prosecutor's Office.

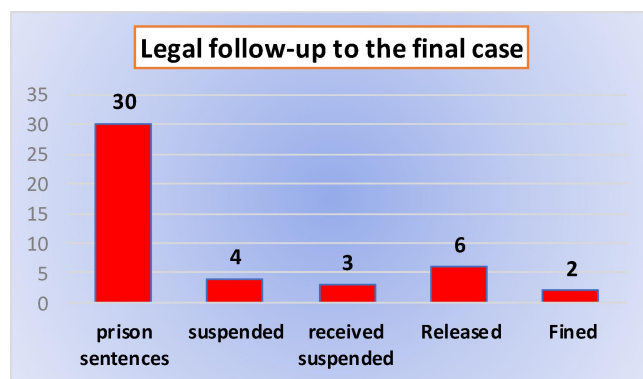


Among 213 victims, 13 needed documentations to complete legal requirements. Eight victims returned to their families after Fokupers explained the process, while one was referred to another organization due to ineligibility. Additionally, 30 victims chose not to pursue their cases, deterred by the lengthy civil process, transportation challenges, and lack of family support.

In 2023, a total of 69 victims were legally represented by UMMT, with 24 registered with the PNTL. Out of these, 13 victims successfully filed cases with the Public Prosecutor's Office, including 6 that went before mobile courts.

One victim required assistance with documentation for their child to fulfill case requirements.

Additionally, 9 victims returned to their families after deciding there was no imminent risk, and mediation was conducted due to the civil nature of their cases involving child neglect by parents and spouses.



Of the 24 court-registered cases from 2022, 17 resulted in prison sentences, 4 were suspended, 2 received suspended sentences, and 3 were released

In terms of court outcomes, 13 defendants were charged in 2023 across 6 cases originating from 2022. Of these, 6 defendants received prison sentences of 6 months,

while 2 were fined \$25 for VD cases. Another defendant faced a 1-year suspended sentence in a VD case, and a civil case resulted in a \$50/month fine for neglecting parental responsibilities.

Some cases were dismissed based on the victims' decisions and consent. There are 29 cases still requiring monitoring due to a lack of information from legal institutions in 2023: 19 cases with the Police, 4 with the Public Prosecutor's Office, and 6 with the Court.

In 2023, the legal proceedings involving 28 minor victims included 10 cases handled by the PNTL-VPU. Of these, 5 were under the care of the Ministry of Justice due to allegations of sexual abuse and domestic violence. Additionally, there were 6 cases of sexual abuse and domestic violence that were postponed to 2024, originating from 2021, 2022, and 2023.

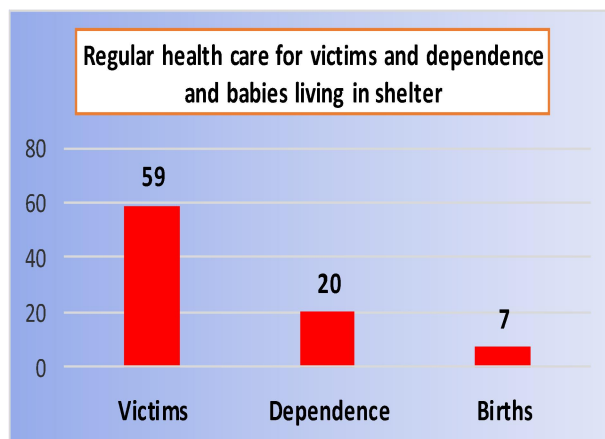
Overall, there were 5 cases of sexual abuse and 1 case of domestic violence involving a child. The outcomes included prison sentences for 12 defendants related to domestic violence, fines for 2 defendants, and a \$25 fine for one. One defendant received a suspended sentence of 6 months, while another was fined in a civil case at a rate of \$50 per month. The court acquitted 3 cases of minor offenses against physical integrity, aligning its decisions with the wishes of the victims and survivors.

Follow-Up on Health Access

During victim staying at safe house , Fokupers provided essential health services, including regular consultations for victims and their children, such as pregnant mothers and those experiencing illness. Vaccination services for infants were also offered. In 2023, there were seven births among victims, with two babies born in Uma-Mahon: four from Uma-Mahon Dili, two from UTS, and one from UMMT

Psychosocial Support

Fokupers has delivered psychosocial support to victims residing in the safe House as well as



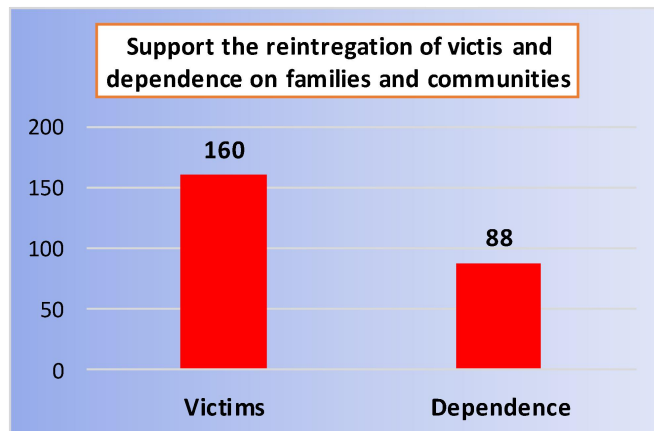
to those reintegrated into family. A total of 315 victims received this support across Uma-Mahon Dili and UTS. And there were 59 Uma Mahon Maria Tapo`.

The psychosocial activities included individual counselling, group therapy, and various healing modalities to help victims recover. Individual counselling is mandatory for all shelter residents, while group counselling sessions are held less frequently. Therapy activities, such as yoga and Zumba, often take place outside the shelter, including visits to the beach. Creative activities like cooking, gardening, and farming are also utilized.

Additionally, Fokupers offers unique activities such as painting, writing, and dancing, which allow victims to express their emotions. These experiences help build connections with counselors and social workers, providing a safe space for victims to share their stories when they feel ready.

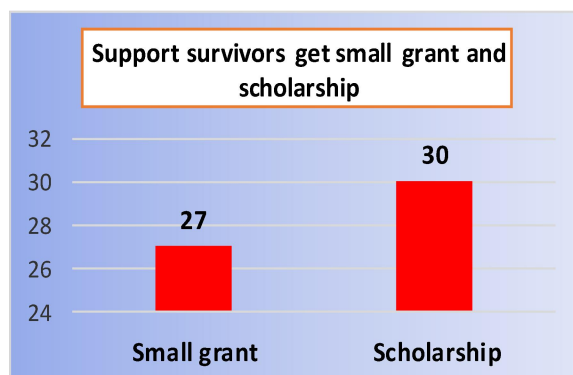
Reintegration Support

Victims returning to their families from safe House undergo careful evaluation of their cases, weighing potential risks and their own readiness to reintegrate into their communities. This process is especially relevant for those with ongoing legal matters that do not pose significant risks. Currently, 160 individuals have successfully reintegrated into their families and communities: 46 from the adult safe house in Dili, 8 from the Children's safe house in Dili, 73 from UTS Covalima, and 33 from UMMT Bobonaro. Additionally, 88 dependents, mainly children accompanying their mothers, have been reintegrated, 64 from Dili and Covalima and 24 from UMMT Bobonaro. The choice of reintegration location is determined by the victim's preferences and is assessed by the Fokupers team, which considers security and family support factors. Decisions are made through case management meetings and may involve case conferences with partner organizations, particularly in cases involving children



Economic Support

In 2023, Fokupers identified and provided small grant support to 27 survivors who have reintegrated into their families, including training aimed at improving their economic situation. These survivors are distributed across various regions: 1 from Ainaro, 1 from Baucau, 4 from Bobonaro, 6 from Covalima, 6 from Dili, 6 from Ermera, 1 from Liquica, 1 from Manufahi, and 1 from RAEOA. The economic activities they have pursued include opening kiosks, selling second hand clothes, tailor shop, planting and selling vegetables, and selling fried foods along main roads.



The program offers scholarship support to 30 young survivors and girls at the university level in Dili, including one from the Catholic School of Timor-Leste and another from UNPAZ. The remaining 23 beneficiaries are at the secondary and pre-secondary levels, hailing from various municipalities: Aileu (1), Bobonaro (1), Covalima (1), Dili (8), Liquica (2), and Manufahi (10).

To ensure effective use of small funds and scholarships, assessments and evaluations are conducted at the recipients' locations. Prior to fund disbursement, training on financial management and planning is provided. In October, Fokupers conducted a three-day training on Micro-Enterprise for 24 women survivors, covering business plans, product promotion, and market analysis.

Home Visit

In 2023, Fokupers continued its support by visiting households of the reintegrated victims. They monitored the situations of 20 victims from safe house in Dili, noting that five have become economically independent and as family heads in the household. The UMMT also visited 23 households, identifying three that have achieved economic independence and leadership within their families. The victims supported by Fokupers come from 12 municipalities, including RAEOA.

II. Advocacy

In 2023, the Advocacy Programme undertook various initiatives to enhance public awareness of the GBV (Gender Based Violence) and to ensure the government's commitment to gender equity. These efforts aimed to persuade the government to sensitively and inclusively draft and approve laws, secure budget allocations, and implement gender-responsible practices. Key activities included:

Research on the Implementation of the LADV

Fokupers conducted its first comprehensive study on the implementation of the LADV (Law Against Domestic Violence) after 12 years. This research assessed both the progress and the gaps in the law's execution, particularly its impact on women in Timor-Leste, especially survivors of domestic violence (DV). The findings aimed to identify barriers to effective implementation and propose recommendations for improving the LADV.



The research was conducted over five months across the municipalities of Baucau, Covalima, Dili, Ermera, Maliana, Viqueque, and RAEOA. It targeted four judges, five prosecutors, four defenders, four NGO directors, and 50 survivors. The findings were launched in January 2023, attended by government members, judicial actors, relevant ministries, civil society partners, and donors. Research was conducted over 5 months and was launched in January 2023 with the presence of several parties such as members of government, judicial actors, relevant ministries, civil society partners and donors. Please visit the link below to learn more about the content of the 12-year LKVD implementation report.



[Implementasaun LKVD durante tinan 12.](#)

Gender-Sensitive Budget Training for the Civil Protection Authority (APC)

In February and May 2023, Fokupers delivered a three-day training on gender-sensitive budgeting for 20 APC leaders. The curriculum focused on gender and humanitarian issues, emphasizing the SEAH and Child Protection policies. The goal was to equip APC leaders with the knowledge necessary to address gender-related violence during emergencies and to foster gender-sensitive budgeting in their programs.



Training on the GBV, Referral Mechanisms, and Legal Framework

From February to April 2023, Fokupers provided training for social institutions, including religious organizations and colleges, such as Canossiana Baucau College and Nuns in Tibar. Nuns in Tunubibi, Maliana, Ahisaun Foundation, and PwD center in Becora. The training engaged Nuns, officials, and students to enhance understanding of the GBV and referral mechanisms. Total participants 250 people (183 female and 67 males). Community outreach in Dili, Baucau, Bobonaro, Lospalos, and Manatuto targeted local leaders to improve their capacity to handle cases of violence. These activities participated by 330 people (210 males and 120 females).



The main objective of this activity is to raise the knowledge of Nuns, school officials, youth and the general community about the issues of the GBV and referral mechanisms so that if any violence occurs both at the social institutions and in the community, they

know how to help to refer these cases to relevant organisations so that they can promote non- violence education in the family and in social institutions.

Discussion and Workshop on Women's Land Rights

Land rights are a significant issue in Timor-Leste, often leading to violence and conflict. Fokupers facilitated discussions with vulnerable groups and victims to understand their perspectives and share information on legal protections for women's property rights. Many victims, after experiencing domestic violence, lack access to land and housing despite their contributions. These discussions aimed to empower women with knowledge of their rights and available legal frameworks.



According to Fokupers research, many victims of domestic violence and unjust treatment—often supported by their families—have never had the right to own their property or land that they have invested and taken care of. This discussion attended by 139 people, 127 females and 12 males.

This discussion aims to educate victims and women about their fundamental rights, including how to identify the laws that protect them. To support the Suco Chiefs, Sub-Village Chiefs, and the Suco structure, Fokupers has decided to provide specialized basic counselling training, in addition to the foundational training on GBV, referral mechanisms, and legal frameworks already offered within social institutions and village structures. The basic counselling training is



conducted in Palaka, Bobonaro Municipality, to improve sensitivity and responsiveness to GBV issues, and attended by 65 youth (34 women and 31 men).



In addition to the discussions, Fokupers organized a seminar with civil society partners to promote women's rights to land in Bobonaro municipality, coinciding with the National Women's Day celebration in honor of the women's hero, Maria Tapo. The event was attended by a senior activist and representatives from the President of Committee F of the

national parliament. Following the ceremony, participants issued a joint statement expressing their concerns to national and municipal leaders, urging them to address the challenges faced in Bobonaro. Please visit the link below :



[Bele asisté video deklarasaun konjunta husi feto munisípiu Bobonaro iha ne'e.](#)

Couple Discussions

Fokupers organized couple discussions focusing on addressing the root causes of GBV within families. Collaborating with community leaders, these discussions aimed to foster dialogue, improve communication, and encourage families to resolve issues collaboratively. This activity was carried out in collaboration between Fokupers and community leaders, especially in Manleuana, Vila-verde and Madohi villages, to identify families who are considered vulnerable



to information and who need to listen to information.

This activity begins by explaining the importance of family values and communication within the family, we also ask them to identify their own problems at home and then find ways to solve the problems they face with healthy communication without the intervention of others.

Play and Learning Activities

Recognizing the challenges families face in participating in community activities, Fokupers initiated play and learning sessions for children. This initiative aimed to create a safe environment for children while encouraging mothers to engage in community events. In 2023, the program involved 560 children (262 girls and 298 boys) and significantly increased parental participation.



Comprehensive Reproductive and Sexual Education

To combat gender-based violence and related issues among youth, Fokupers launched comprehensive reproductive and sexual education programs in Bobonaro, Ermera, and Viqueque. Collaborating with the Ministry of Education, Fokupers trained facilitators to deliver lessons in 28 schools, reaching 2,696 students. Educator training sessions were also conducted to equip teachers with the necessary knowledge to address sensitive issues.



At the school level, Fokupers has partnered with the Ministry of Education to implement educational activities in classrooms from 7th to 12th grade across three

target municipalities. Fourteen facilitators—seven women and seven men—were selected from the municipalities and trained as youth facilitators through a specialized training program.

In April, the facilitators underwent a week-long training to familiarize themselves with effective teaching methods using the Fokupers Women and Men Cycle module, which aligns with the Ministry of Education's guidelines. This module covers ten key topics, including Human Rights, Gender and Gender Equality, Communication, anger Management, Gender-Based Violence, Sexual Violence, and Early Pregnancy.

The trained facilitators successfully applied their skills in 28 schools—seven in Bobonaro, nine in Ermera, and twelve in Viqueque—reaching 2,696 students between June and July. This included 1,521 female students and 1,155 male students.

Recognizing the importance of equipping educators and school directors with knowledge on these issues, Fokupers also conducted a two-day training for teachers and school leaders in June. The training involved 29 participants, including one woman and 28 men, with eight serving as school two principals from Bobonaro , three from Ermera, and three from Viqueque.

In addition to school-based activities, Fokupers organized community workshops and a seminar for World Youth Day in August. This event, coordinated with the President of the Municipal Authority, brought together youth from various sectors, including state institutions and civil society, to discuss issues related to GBV, reproductive health, early pregnancy, and educational reintegration. The seminar attracted 377 attendees—15 women and 223 men—with participation from all three municipalities: 118 people in Bobonaro (55 women and 64



men), 147 in Ermera (50 women and 97 men), and 112 in Viqueque (49 women and 63 men).

Fokupers hosted community workshops and seminars during World Youth Day to engage youth and various stakeholders in discussions on reproductive health and gender issues. Community theatre initiatives further disseminated knowledge on these topics, reaching over 1,300 participants.

Here’s a table summarizing the participation data from the community theatre across the three municipalities:

| Municipality | Total Participation | Women | Men |
|--------------|---------------------|------------|------------|
| Bobonaro | 214 | 127 | 87 |
| Ermera | 612 | 344 | 268 |
| Vikeke | 519 | 246 | 273 |
| TOTAL | 1,345 | 717 | 628 |

Evaluation of Gender-Based Violence Referral Mechanisms

Fokupers evaluated the existing GBV referral mechanisms in schools, addressing the lack of policies for reintegrating survivors into education. This evaluation involved 108 participants and aimed to provide data to inform the development of a Return to School Policy, responding to recommendations from the CEDAW committee.



As an organization committed to advocating for critical issues, Fokupers has prioritized the policy of reintegrating survivors back into school, particularly those returning from safe house. These individuals face numerous challenges, as schools lack mechanisms to support students who have dropped out due to sexual violence, abuse, or incest. The

absence of governmental policies addressing the reintegration of youth and children after such traumatic experiences further complicates this issue. Additionally, many education personnel lack the necessary knowledge and sensitivity regarding these matters.

This concern has drawn the attention of the CEDAW committee, which, in its recommendations to the Timor-Leste government from 2015 to 2023, has urged the development of a Re-entry Policy. In response, Fokupers conducted an evaluation in August to assess the "GBV Referral Mechanism in Schools and the Return to School Process," aiming to provide data and evidence to support the government's efforts in developing this policy.

The evaluation sampled 108 participants, including students, educators, and parent associations, across four municipalities: Bobonaro, Dili, Ermera, and Viqueque. Among them were 59 women and 49 men. Additionally, a focus group discussion with key partners in the GBV Referral Network—including VPU, ALFeLa, JSMP, PRADET, and Uma-Mahon—was held, involving 23 participants (13 women and 10 men). The findings of this evaluation have launched in February 2024.

National and International Advocacy

Fokupers actively engaged in advocacy efforts at both national and international levels to improve victim-sensitive frameworks, including:

- Coordinating with the Ministry of Justice on birth certificate processes for children born in Safe houses.
- Collaborating with ALFeLa and JSMP to draft the LADV review.
- Developing investigation guidelines for gender-based violence offenses in partnership with key stakeholders.
- Providing feedback on the draft Law on the Protection of Children and Young People at risk of danger.
- Advocating for a gender-sensitive budget for safe houses.
- Engaging with the President of the Republic on public transfer issues and Gender Responsive Budgeting for Social Solidarity Institutions including shelters.
- Preparing and presenting a shadow report for CEDAW in Geneva, focusing on gender-based violence survivors.

III. Early Education for Children

The Early Child Education Program in Knuab Labarik (KBL) aims to provide a safe, child-friendly environment that promotes cognitive development through age-appropriate learning and play activities. This initiative also helps children exercise their rights and enjoy their early years.



A key objective of the program is to support women, particularly those who are victims of violence, single mother and women living with low incomes. By offering a reliable space for their children, these women can work in the public sphere, contributing to their household's economy without worrying about their children's safety.

economy without worrying about their

The program operates regularly in KBL and is recognized by the Ministry of Education, staffed by qualified teachers. Activities run Monday through Friday, allowing children to learn and socialize with their peers. Each year, KBL accommodates 60-70 children aged 2 to 6 years, preparing them for basic education. This year, 66 (28 girls and 38 boys) children are enrolled, including 2 with autism and others from vulnerable backgrounds. Beyond traditional learning, children explore nature and engage in creative activities, guided by a flexible teaching plan.



Fokupers KBL also extends its reach to the community level, offering activities at village level across two municipalities: Dili (Becora, Mota-ulun, Kaikoli) and Bobonaro (Manleu, Madohi, Ritabou, and Tunubibi). These activities, held twice a week, aim to bring children together for play and learning in a community setting.



Regular meetings with parents provide a platform for discussing their children's progress and development. These gatherings also cover important topics like gender equality, gender-based violence (GBV), and child protection, empowering parents to apply the values promoted by Fokupers at home. Additionally, the Learning and Play in the Village initiative serves as a complementary program, encouraging mothers to engage in community activities and focus on their roles effectively.

Fokupers 2023

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