



About SFCG-TL

Search for Common Ground Timor-Leste (SFCG-TL) is the Timor-Leste country office of Search for Common Ground, an international peacebuilding organization founded in 1982.

SFCG-TL is focused on improving public understanding of community development and conflict, using media as a tool for education and engagement in dialogue about issues that directly affect community members' lives. We work to increase youth political activism, demonstrating how youth can advocate for greater representation of youth issues in policy-making.

SFCG-TL began working in Timor-Leste in 2010, with a USAID-funded program entitled "Youth Radio for Peacebuilding." The project sought to improve the economic prospects of youth through skills building, media, and outreach activities. The long term objective was to equip Timorese people with the skills and knowledge they need to choose nonviolent approaches to resolve conflict—to create a culture in which people can overcome fragmentation to peacefully resolve their differences while building a more stable and prosperous Timor-Leste.

EDITORIAL

Dear Colleagues and Partners,

Welcome to the first edition of SFCG Timor-Leste's Quarterly DM&E bulletin for 2014! This bulletin has been prepared by the Design Monitoring and Evaluation (DM&E) team at SFCG TL to provide a summary of the District Youth Forum's results.

The Youth Community Peace Building (YCPB) and DM&E teams distributed evaluation forms at the end of each District Youth Forum (DYF) for participants to evaluate the DYF process. Both quantitative and qualitative questions were provided on the evaluation form, and participants were given 30 minutes to complete the survey. All participants in attendance completed the evaluation form, and most gave comprehensive responses.

The evaluation asked participants to rate the forum on relevance, content, format, speaker performance, and knowledge gained. They were presented with 9 statements and were asked whether they strongly agreed, agreed, didn't know, disagreed, or strongly disagreed with the statements.

In addition to the qualitative questions, participants were also given 5 subjective, open-ended questions, encouraging them to articulate what they got out of the forum, and to explain the reasoning behind their satisfaction or dissatisfaction. The survey results from the district youth forum showed some notable changes in the understanding and attitude of Youth and local government.

We hope you enjoy this issue of the DM&E quarterly bulletin. The DM&E team of SFCG Timor-Leste appreciates your feedback. Please send your suggestions to ddejesus@sfcg.org and udealmeida@sfcg.org

PROJECTS BACKGROUND

YEPS- Youth Engagement to Promote Stability

This three-year program, funded by USAID and due to complete in 2015, aims to transform the ways which youth engage with government and community leaders, to promote peace and reconciliation, and prevent election-related violence. YEPS aims to bridge the gap between Timorese youth, and social and political structures, and contribute to conflict prevention through the innovative use of media

DAME- Democracy and Development in Action through Media and Empowerment

This program, started in August 2012 and funded by the European Commission, through National Authorizing Office, aims to strengthen the democratization process in Timor-Leste and further stabilize the country by building NSA capacities and improving channels of communication between citizens and decision-makers. SFCG-TL hopes to accomplish this by working to enhance the effectiveness of engagement between both state- and non-state actors and their constituencies in the development process.



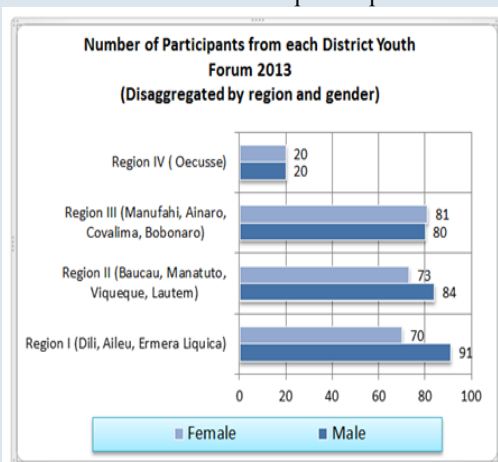
Open Space discussion group on identified youth and community issues

Youth Engagement to Promote Democracy and Stability Through District Youth Forums

District Youth Forums (DYF): Bridging the gap between youth, local government, and civil society in the democracy and peace-building process

Local and national government agencies, international and national NGOs, and other institutions have carried out numerous activities to support the peacebuilding effort in Timor-Leste. Questions have been raised such as: How does the public – youth and community see their roles in peacebuilding process? Is the wider community, including youth have been able to resolve local disputes and conflicts without violence? Are the male and female as well as other youth groups involved in decision-making? These were just some questions that SFCG - TL hoped to answer in conducting baseline surveys for YEPS and DAME projects. These surveys, conducted in August 2012, covered 6 districts, 12 sub-districts, and 24 villages. The results of the baseline survey have been used by SFCG to measure the impact of its activities.

In 2013, the SFCG-TL Youth Community Peace Building team held District Youth Forums in 13 districts, including districts that participated in the baseline survey. During each forum, the YCPB team held evaluations to determine the opinion of participants regarding the forum activities, and to measure their knowledge. From 601 youth surveyed in baseline; youth involvement in activities that contributed to peaceful resolution of conflict was very low; only 16% of males and 6% of females. Of the 253 youth forum participants in the same 6 districts (baseline area) assessed during the DYF series 1, 95% felt that they now have a voice to identify youth issues in Timor-Leste and coordinate solutions with other youth and relevant leaders, as well as an understanding of applicable government procedures.



District Youth Forum have a theme of “Personal Transformation,” that aims to provide youth with the opportunity to develop strong networks for coordinating to resolve issues affecting the young people—who are marginalized and less involved in activities. SFCG, in partnership with the National Youth Council Timor Leste / *Councilho Nasional Juventude Timor Leste* (CNJTL), has held youth forums in 13 districts. This activity’s specific objective is to build and strengthen working relationships between youth and local government institutions in discussing issues related to conflict and peace process. Representatives of the youth sub-district in each district attended the District Youth Forums.

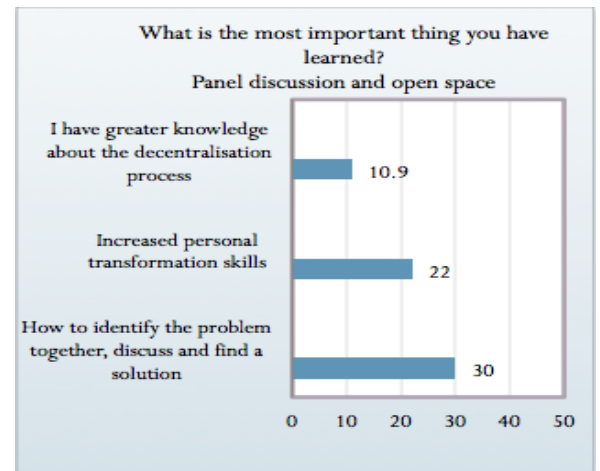
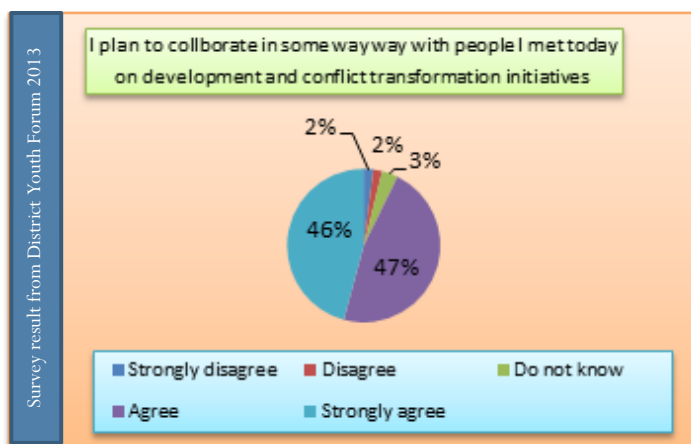
The purpose of the monitoring and evaluation of DYF activities was to determine how relevant the forum was to participants' lives and whether it addressed issues they consider to be important to them. In order to know how the activities of DYFs empowered youth for social change and transformation, the monitoring and evaluation focused on changes in knowledge, attitude, and behavior (KAB). A total of 519 of participants were involved in the district youth forum across 13 districts, 47% are female and 53% are male. All participants’ age group is from 16-30 years old.

General Findings

Results show the 1st series of District Youth Forums, conducted between April and October of 2013 in 13 districts, were widely appreciated by participants for both their content and format. The majority of participants praised the forums for addressing relevant content and providing useful information. The forums were also appreciated for promoting networking, and connecting youth with community leaders and local government.

The section on take-away and what participants learned showed that the forum had managed to drive home a few very crucial points. Almost all respondents stated the forums helped them to gain a better understanding of the decentralization of government, the devolution of responsibilities from national to local government, and highlighted the significance of personal transformation to address issues of conflict in Timor-Leste.

The theme of the 1st round of district youth forum—Personal Transformation—was successful, as it brought forward important issues related to youth in Timor-Leste. 96% of participants believed or strongly believed the forum addressed important youth issues. 97% participants from 519 who participated in 1st series of district youth forums found the topics discussed in their forum relevant and informative.



Behavioral Changes

93 per cent of participants have a future plan to collaborate with people they met at the forum on development and conflict transformation initiatives.

“Participating (in the district youth forum) has helped me to express my opinions, whereas before I felt like it was not worth it because there was no one there to hear them”

—Nilton Galuxo,

Ermera Scout Group member and Ermera District Youth Forum participant

Knowledge Changes

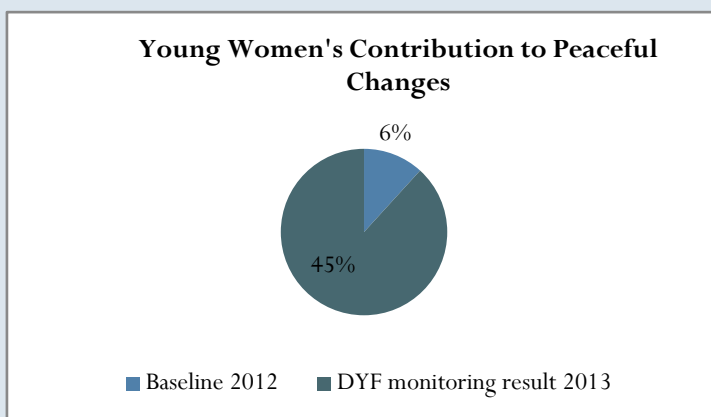
30 per cent of respondents to the question ‘What was the most important thing you learned?’ stated ‘How to identify the problem together, discuss and find a solution’, while 22 per cent of respondents stated ‘Increased personal transformation skills’. 10.9 per cent of responses stated ‘I have greater knowledge about the decentralization process.’ 4.2 per cent of respondents stated ‘How to motivate and inspire others to transform themselves’. Other responses included ‘Through this forum we can maintain peace, stability and unity in Timor-Leste’ (4.2%), ‘Increase capacity to contribute to the community and become leaders’ (6.1%) and ‘I can understand the role of local leaders and youth in the district development process and share experience between speakers and young people’ (4.3%).

Comparative baseline (2012) and DYF activities evaluation 2013

Young Women Participation

The results of the baseline study of 6 districts (Aileu, Baucau, Dili, Ermera, Liquica, and Manatuto) pointed out that the participation of women was very low. Only 6% admitted that they contribute to peaceful changes.

The results of monitoring during the DYF activities in the same six districts show that 45% of the 235 participants were women. From the results of the evaluation of District Youth Forums, 97% of the 105 female participants admitted that they feel that they have a voice to identify issues in Timor-Leste and coordinate solutions with other relevant youth leaders.



“Now I feel that I have an opportunity to engage directly in dialogue with the district administrator to express my opinions, which I used to keep to myself before”

-Alcina Eco, Member of District Youth Council in Oecusse

Future Changes to the District Youth Forum Format

SFCG plans to conduct a ‘wrap-up’, in which participants identify how they will use the knowledge they have gained

The youth team plans to expand the DYF format, for future projects, by adding a new element at the end of the forum focused on having youth identify how they will share the knowledge they have gained from the event with their friends, family, fellow students, coworkers, and peers. It may be more appropriate to have this in a formal ‘implementation plan’ for participants to take home with them, or it could be an informal discussion in which it is emphasized that sharing information is one of the best ways to increase knowledge in the community.

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