

# **Timor-Leste's Youth in Crisis: Situational Analysis and Policy Options**

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# Timor-Leste's Youth in Crisis: Situational Analysis and Policy Options

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"It is very appropriate now to give the new President and the new government ideas about how to deal with youth." Veteran, May 2007, Dili.

This report, and the comprehensive framework proposed therein, is meant to stimulate ideas on youth development in Timor-Leste. It is a work in progress that remains open to debate, new ideas, and hence change. It is hoped that the report would provide the beginnings of a combined effort of the government, Timorese youth, civil society and the international community to address youth development in the longer-term.

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# Timor-Leste's Youth in Crisis: Situational Analysis and Policy Options<sup>1</sup>

## Overview

1. **The crisis that erupted in May 2006 in Timor-Leste reflects larger tensions of a society that has undergone massive social change in the last 35 years, and where state institutions, formal sector employment and supra-local identities are all relatively new.** Having been the most far-flung and impoverished of Portugal's colonies, the Indonesian occupation further isolated Timor-Leste. In 1975, less than 10 percent of Timorese were literate, and tertiary education only became broadly available in the late 1980s. Formal sector employment was known only to a tiny elite during Portuguese colonial rule and expanded but was still very limited under the Indonesian occupation. Electricity reached most district capitals only in the 1980s. In 1965, Dili had c. 10,000 residents; forty years later, it had 167,000. Customary leadership, mechanisms for dispute resolution, and administration of land and other resources remain vibrant in rural areas but are unsurprisingly under strain in towns, particularly Dili. The institutions of the state are weak and poorly understood, and are therefore of limited relevance to most people.

2. **The effects and aftermath of last year's crisis can still be felt in Timor-Leste.** Numerous camps for the internally displaced still exist both in Dili and surrounds, and communities remain divided both mentally and physically along "east-west" lines. The causes of the crisis are complex. Generally, the sacking of one-third of the military (F-FDTL) in March 2006 is understood to have triggered the crisis. The underlying causes are widely thought to lie in past "battles and betrayals" between Fretilin and other parties, rivalries between the political elite, institutional flaws in the creation of F-FDTL, a very weak and politicized police force, deep disenchantment with the first government over issues ranging from poor communication to increased constraints on civil liberties, as well grievances over land and property rights, particularly in Dili.

3. **Among the most visible elements of the crisis in Timor-Leste last year was the involvement of youth in widespread violence.** Indeed, fighting amongst groups of youth is currently the most distressing manifestation of the ongoing crisis and instability. There have been some short-term attempts to address the problem of youth violence. For example, the government, working with the International Labour Organisation (ILO), rapidly launched a cash-for-work program that mostly benefited youth. Although such efforts are commendable, this report argues that the problem of youth violence is both deeper and broader—and that only a comprehensive understanding and strategy can address the challenge of the current youth crisis in both the short- and longer-term.

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<sup>1</sup> This report was prepared by Markus Kostner and Samuel Clark with contributions from Edith Bowles and Steffi Stallmeister. It is based on a visit to Timor-Leste in May 2007, which included numerous meetings with youth, government, donor, UN and NGO representatives in Dili and the districts of Baucau, Ermera, and Maliana. The report builds on the Bank's ongoing work on youth, labor markets, and social safety nets in Timor-Leste, the growing literature on youth in the country, and the Bank's experience with youth development. The authors recognize the important contributions made by the Government of Timor-Leste, youth organizations, NGOs and UN/donors (including UNICEF, ILO, AusAID, USAID, and WFP) in this field to date.

4. **Youth engagement in violent behavior is not new to Timor-Leste.** During the Indonesian occupation, the resistance leadership simultaneously encouraged and condoned violence as a legitimate form of resistance. Similarly, the Indonesian authorities used militia groups of young Timorese to intimidate the electorate and to implement a scorched earth policy in the lead-up, and in the aftermath of, the referendum of August 30, 1999. Thus, violent behavior amongst youth has been a prominent feature of Timorese life for the generation of those who lived through the resistance movement. It would be a mistake, however, to rationalize such behavior as inherent to Timorese (youth) culture and society, and accept it as inevitable. Rather, there are concrete economic, social and political factors that place Timorese youth “at-risk” of, and push them to engage in, violent behavior.

5. **The factors that put youth at risk of violent behavior are not new and remain persistent.** The Joint Assessment Mission (JAM), which took place after the referendum in 1999 and involved the World Bank, United Nations agencies, the donor community and the East Timorese found that a complex mix of economic, social and political factors placed youth at-risk of involvement in the pre- and post-referendum violence.<sup>2</sup> The report concluded that, “Many young people—uneducated, unoccupied, unemployed and excluded—became willful followers of the pro-autonomy militia and perpetrated violent acts and war crimes. The employment situation in East Timor’s private sector has never been very encouraging and is even worse now due to the systematic destruction of the economic base.” It also gave a prescient warning, “youth and adults alike are very much aware that continued unemployment and exclusion of youth may lead to their further militarization, forcing them to adopt violence as a coping strategy to post-conflict misery.”

6. **Indeed, since the end of Indonesian rule the risk factors youth face have progressively intensified.** The ILO estimates that youth unemployment currently runs at approximately 43 percent nationally and increases to a staggering 58 percent in Dili, the center of the crisis and current violence.<sup>3</sup> In addition to economic factors, youth have felt politically excluded from the nation-building process since the restoration of independence in May 2002. Social factors—such as the lack of family, school and community “connectedness” and cohesion—also contribute to putting youth at-risk. Needless to say, not all youth exposed to such risk factors engage in violence. The factors that push youth from being at-risk to being engaged in the current violence are therefore unique and require separate analysis. The interviews and reports on the crisis suggest there are two main views: politicization and opportunism.

7. **Although it is important not to overstate the role of direct political mobilization, reports suggest that, particularly in the initial stages of the crisis, political actors capitalized on youth grievances and vulnerability for strategic purposes.** There has not been overwhelming evidence of political actors and agitators directly mobilizing youth for political purposes. Indeed, the street violence in Dili has gone through clear phases: first implicating the “east versus west” divide; followed by

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<sup>2</sup> East Timor Joint Assessment Mission, Governance Background Paper, November 1999, Annex 25.

<sup>3</sup> For youth aged 15-19 as reported in the 2004 national census.

fighting between martial arts groups; and, more recently, as the parliamentary elections approached, between youth with differing political affiliations and identities. The more recent form of violent political mobilization, or what might be more appropriately termed “political identification”, is more a result of personal loyalties and assumed political identities amongst previously organized youth groups. It is important to recognize that this form of political mobilization is not necessarily grounded in formal organizational links, but is simply another manifestation of existing tensions.

8. **Timor-Leste currently offers an enabling environment for violence and crime.** Even prior to the crisis the police force neither commanded the trust and respect of the population, nor did it have the capacity to enforce law and order. The force is being reconstituted under the oversight of the United Nations (UN) mission, although some concerns remain. The judiciary is also extremely weak and is being dragged into political battles. Indeed, there is a current backlog in district courts of over 1,000 cases. These factors have contributed to the general breakdown in law and order, and led to widespread impunity.

9. **Initially youth, and many adults, capitalized on this impunity to loot businesses, and exact revenge for past grievances, real and imagined.** This has largely been brought under control, but even now instigators of violent or criminal behavior, leaders of groups committing such acts, or perpetrators of crimes are rarely brought to justice, in good part due to ingrained fear of reprisal. Without effective deterrents, which the international police force can provide neither fully nor in the long-term, civil disorder and youth violence are unlikely to stop. By the same token, given the weakness of the police force and justice system, creating effective deterrents in the form of functioning institutions will be a work of years.

10. **In addition to the lack of formal controls, the social fabric that binds young behavior is strained.** Those youths who migrate to Dili live without oversight from parents, and traditional and religious leaders and networks. Further, in parts of Dili community structures and the means for controlling youth behavior informally have all but disintegrated. Thus, idle and disconnected from social norms and structures, many young people join martial arts and other groups where they build social capital with equally unemployed and uneducated youth. Disenfranchised, they mistrust the older generation and seek new role models, which they find in individuals who they feel protect and support them. This environment is a fertile breeding ground for discontent that can be exploited easily by local strongmen and political leaders.

11. **The involvement of youth in the ongoing crisis, instability and violence has, once again, highlighted the need to address youth issues comprehensively and openly.** Despite the warnings of the Joint Assessment Mission, the UN administration and the first Timorese government did little to address youth economic, social and political grievances and exclusion.<sup>4</sup> Not only has this deepened the crisis and contributed

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<sup>4</sup> *Economic exclusion* entails a lack of access to land, credit, and/or employment, and often leads to poverty. Despite often overlapping and being inseparable from poverty, exclusion cannot be equated to being poor. *Social exclusion* can entail marginalization from relations within and between communities as well as from other social networks. The inability to participate in, or have access to, community- and state-level

to widespread youth violence and crime, but has also stifled youth self-confidence and initiative—disempowered, young people have come to expect that the government takes care of them.

12. **The problem of Timorese youth is the problem of Timorese society.** A concerted effort by a determined leadership can stem the tide of increasing insecurity and lawlessness. To be effective, this leadership needs to recognize that young people are victims of manipulation as much as perpetrators of violence, and that they need to benefit from, as well as contribute to, development of Timor-Leste. Equally important, the frailties of the justice system and other institutional mechanisms render the role of leadership crucial in stemming the culture of impunity. Under the right conditions, the young people of Timor-Leste have enormous potential to contribute positively to nation-building and the development process—they are the most educated Timorese ever,<sup>5</sup> they are driven, and many are organized into associations and community organizations.

13. **This report argues for a concerted, long-term investment in youth by the government and the international community.** The report consists of three chapters.

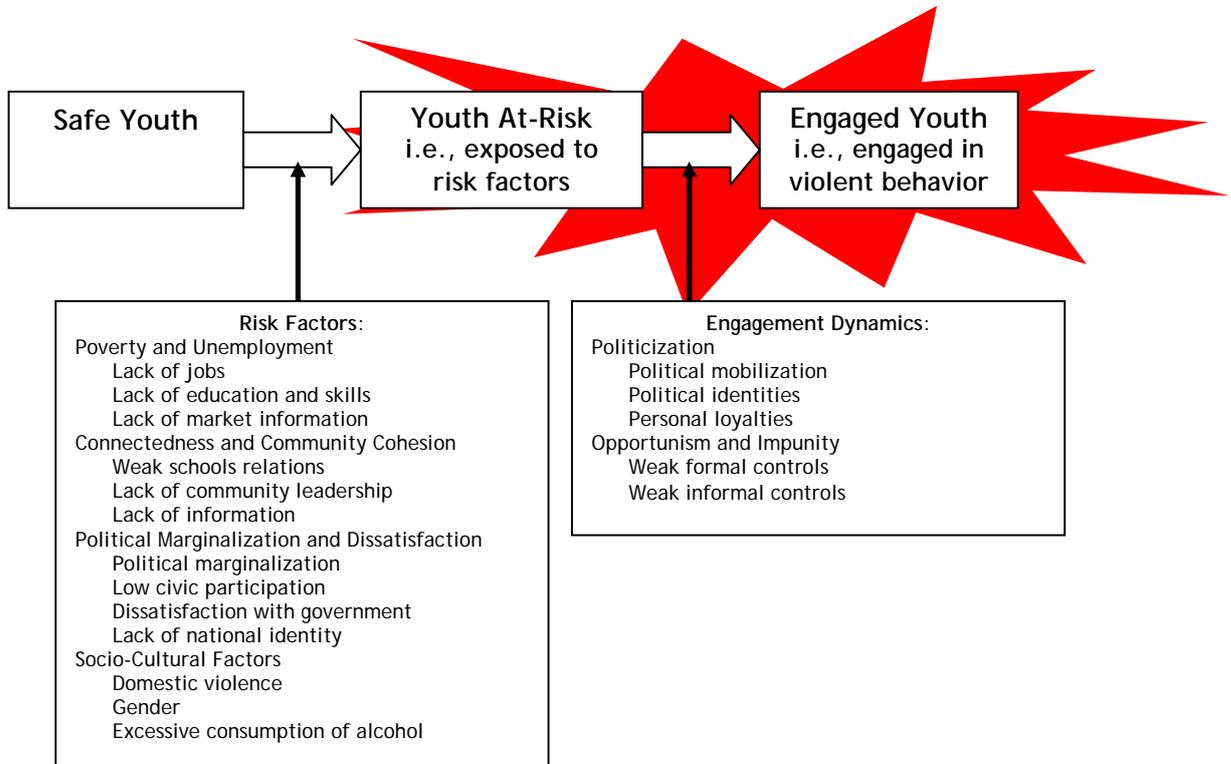
- **Chapter one** examines the factors that put youth at risk of violent behavior and that lead youth to engage in violence; the findings are summarized in Chart 1 below. The analysis in this chapter suggests the dire need for a comprehensive framework that tackles the economic, social and political predicament of youth in Timor-Leste.
- **Chapter two** presents an initial attempt to determine the broad contours of a comprehensive framework. The first section suggests eight principles that should guide youth development. The second section identifies five policy priorities for addressing the youth crisis, they are: 1) *Keep youth in school*; 2) *Increase youth employment opportunities*; 3) *Connect youth with community*; 4) *Empower youth to participate in nation-building*; and 5) *Strengthen formal and informal controls on youth*. The third section (of chapter two) provides a list of interventions and programs that could address these policy priorities. This is drawn from international experience and a range of contexts. Section four suggests a set of criteria for prioritizing programmatic interventions.
- **Chapter three** recommends six priority interventions. These are: 1) *Expand cash/in-kind school programs*; 2) *Re-establish youth centers*; 3) *Expand labor-intensive youth employment programming*; 4) *Re-establish community-driven development programming with a youth focus*; 5) *Support a youth-led communication program*; and 6) *Support a community justice and safety program*. Table 1 presents the policy priorities, intervention options, and recommendations.

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institutions in an effective way (i.e. participation in decision-making, voting) and a lack of civil and political rights are major factors in *political exclusion*. For a more detailed discussion, see Cullen (2003).

<sup>5</sup> According to the 2004 national census, about 60 percent of those aged 15-19 have some secondary education, compared to about 30 percent of those aged 25-29; 26 percent of the 15-19 age group is illiterate, compared to 54 percent of the total population above the age of 6.

**Chart 1**  
**Youth in Crisis: Risk Factors and Engagement Dynamics**



**Table 1  
Policy Priorities, Intervention Options and Recommendations**

Towards a Comprehensive Framework					
Policy Priorities	#1: Keep youth in school	#2: Increase youth employment opportunities	#3: Connect youth with community	#4: Empower youth to participate in nation-building	#5: Strengthen formal and informal controls on youth
Intervention Options	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Conditional cash transfers</li> <li>▪ Second-chance education</li> <li>▪ Improving the formal education experience</li> <li>▪ After-school youth centers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Cash-for-work</li> <li>▪ Labor-intensive public works</li> <li>▪ Labor market interventions</li> <li>▪ Employment skills and information</li> <li>▪ Self-employment programs, including micro-credit</li> <li>▪ Investing in agriculture</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Youth service</li> <li>▪ Community-driven development</li> <li>▪ Strengthening traditional leadership and culture</li> <li>▪ Youth-led anti-violence campaign</li> <li>▪ Life skills training</li> <li>▪ Early childhood development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Youth consultations</li> <li>▪ Civic education</li> <li>▪ Youth leadership and organizational capacity</li> <li>▪ International exchanges</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Political leadership initiatives</li> <li>▪ Mediation and paralegal training</li> <li>▪ Community policing</li> <li>▪ Reviewing and rethinking the justice and security reform approach</li> </ul>
Recommendations - 6 Intervention Priorities					
#1: Expand cash/in-kind school programs	<i>Directly affect economic incentives to stay in school</i>				
#2: Re-establish youth centers	<i>Improve the school experience by linking youth centers to local schools</i>		<i>Create a space and structure for facilitating youth-community relations</i>		<i>Indirectly strengthen informal social controls on youth</i>
#3: Expand labor-intensive youth employment programming		<i>Increase youth employment opportunities</i>		<i>Increase opportunities for youth to (re)construct the nation's infrastructure</i>	
#5: Re-establish community-driven development programming with a youth focus;		<i>Generate (short-term) employment opportunities for youth (and others)</i>	<i>Facilitate youth participation in community decision-making</i>	<i>Facilitate youth participation in nation-building at a local level</i>	
#6: Support a youth-led communication program			<i>Facilitate communication amongst youth, and between youth and communities</i>		<i>Strengthen non-violence beliefs, norms and leadership amongst youth</i>
#7: Support a community justice and safety program			<i>Connect youth with community leaders and authority</i>		<i>Strengthen the capacity of formal and informal intuitions and actors, including police, courts, community leaders and youth leaders, to exert appropriate authority over problem youth</i>

# 1 Situational Analysis: Youth in Crisis

"I have been in this country for 16 years. The behavior of youth today is so different from the past." Nun, Dili.

## 1.1 Background

14. **The effects and aftermath of last year's crisis can still be felt in Timor-Leste.** Numerous camps for internally displaced persons (IDPs) still exist both in Dili and surrounds, and communities remain divided both mentally and physically along "east-west" lines. The inability of the government to restore law and order has prompted the return of international security personnel, which currently consists of 1,600 UN police and 1,000 troops from Australia and New Zealand.

15. **The causes of the crisis are complex.** Much work has been done on analyzing the causes and consequences of "the crisis".<sup>6</sup> Generally, the sacking of one-third of the military (F-FDTL) in March 2006 is understood to have triggered the crisis. The underlying causes are widely thought to lie in past "battles and betrayals" between Fretilin and other parties, rivalries between the political elite, institutional flaws in the creation of F-FDTL, including vulnerability to regional divisions, a very weak and politicized police force, and deep disenchantment with the first government over issues ranging from poor communication to increased constraints on civil liberties.

16. **Youth quickly became implicated in the crisis, and remain deeply involved in the current manifestations of violence and instability.** Most accounts conclude that young people were not the instigators of the violence. Rather, youth were used as "political agitators" or "conflict entrepreneurs", but then later used the breakdown in law and order to loot businesses and exact revenge for past grievances. Regardless of their initial involvement, it is clear that youth constitute the main actors in the ongoing street violence.

17. **The crisis of 2006 and its ongoing manifestations of violence and political instability have drawn attention to the position and plight of youth in post-independence Timor-Leste.** Indeed, Timor-Leste's rapidly increasing population presents a serious challenge for current and future government policy. The World Bank estimates that 34 percent of the population is in the 12-29 age group and increasing rapidly thanks to a fertility rate of 7.8 births per woman. And while young people are the most educated group of the population, the 2004 national census indicates that 68 percent of youth aged 15-24 are literate in Tetum (in the sense that they can speak, read and write) and a measly 17 percent in Portuguese, the two official languages.<sup>7</sup> As widespread youth involvement in the crisis suggests, the current approach to youth is either misguided, insufficient, or both of these.

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<sup>6</sup> These include: United Nations (2006), USAID (2006), and International Crisis Group (2006).

<sup>7</sup> Sixty seven percent and 10 percent of the youth aged 15-24 is literate in Indonesian and English, respectively.

18. **Two lines of inquiry are followed in this situational analysis of youth in crisis in Timor-Leste.** One line of inquiry focuses on identifying and understanding the factors that have made youth particularly susceptible to involvement in the crisis as well as the ongoing violence and disorder. That is, the factors that have put youth *at-risk* of engaging in serious *risky behavior*. Such an analysis is considered crucial for thinking through youth policy holistically, particularly in the longer-term. The other line of inquiry focuses more specifically on understanding current youth violence. This approach is taken in recognition that not all young people are engaging in violence; that being at-risk does not automatically translate into involvement in violent behavior. An understanding of this violence is necessary for designing appropriate policy interventions, particularly in the short-term.

## 1.2 Factors that Put Youth At-Risk

19. **A “youth-at-risk” conceptual approach is used in order to help identify the factors that have made youth susceptible to crisis.** In recent years there has been a significant amount of work done on identifying those factors that influence whether or not youth engage in “risky behaviors”.<sup>8</sup> *Youth at-risk* are young people who have factors in their lives that increase their propensity to undertake *risky behavior*—including school absenteeism, listlessness, alcohol and substance abuse, crime and violence, early sexual initiation and unsafe sexual practices—relative to youths who do not have these factors present in their lives. The consequences of the “risky behaviors” are *negative outcomes* that are costly to the individual youth, such as school dropout, unemployment, alcoholism and drug addiction, incarceration, adolescent pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases. These behaviors and outcomes also result in large costs to the society and economy at large.

20. **In the Timor crisis context this conceptual approach requires some adaptation.** Thus, rather than focusing on the risky behaviors that can result in negative outcomes, this section draws on the at-risk literature more generally, as well as on fieldwork, to identify the key factors that have made youth susceptible to the ongoing crisis.

21. **Besides contextual considerations, there are a number of more general advantages and disadvantages to this conceptual approach.** The advantages of the “youth at-risk approach” are two-fold. First, working backwards from a concrete manifestation of “risky behavior” to the various factors facilitates a holistic understanding and hence approach to youth. Second, an at-risk approach helps to focus attention on the cost of risky youth behavior to both individuals and society more broadly. This latter advantage is strategic in the sense that it draws attention to the impacts of not addressing youth issues. In the Timor context these advantages are somewhat redundant, as the youth involvement in the crisis provides both a point of departure for analysis and flags the enormous costs of failing to address youth risk factors.

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<sup>8</sup> This includes, for example, the World Development Report 2007 (World Bank 2006e) as well as World Bank 2007, World Bank 2006c, Blum and Rinehart 1997, and Jessor 1998.

22. **Of course, there also are disadvantages to the at-risk approach.** And similar to the advantages, these can be both analytical and strategic. Analytically, the approach can “cast the net” too wide, i.e. look at youth in such a holistic sense that it becomes difficult to identify and prioritize the key factors contributing to risky behavior. Indeed, there is no shortage of information on problems and issues faced by youth. More strategic, another potential disadvantage is that the approach may implicitly blame the youth, with the word “behavior” implying a certain degree of agency to choose. There has been a tendency amongst informants to either exonerate youth for their actions (preferring to focus on political actors and structural issues such as unemployment) or blame them for their listlessness and participation in youth violence. Of course the answer is no doubt a combination of the two.

23. **Four broad factors that make youth susceptible to crisis and violent behavior can be discerned:**

1. Poverty and under-/unemployment
2. Lack of community connectedness and cohesion
3. Political marginalization and dissatisfaction
4. Socio-cultural factors.

Each district has a somewhat different mix of problems. However, all factors are pervasive throughout the country, with unemployment and the lack of skills generally considered the most pressing.

#### 1.2.1 Poverty and Under-/Unemployment

“Youth unemployment is now linked in a vicious circle. Youth violence results in poor security which discourages investment, which then means less jobs and leaves youth unemployed and susceptible to violence.” Youth leader, Dili.

“The problems here [for youth] are the same all over the country. The biggest problem is the lack of work, this makes people susceptible to political interests as well as personal interests.” Youth leader, Maliana.

24. **The links between poverty, low economic growth, youth unemployment and violence have been well documented.** For example, there is now a well developed literature that draws on statistical methods to indicate that civil war is more likely in low-income countries and where growth is slow or, worse, stagnating or declining.<sup>9</sup> A recent World Health Organization report on preventing youth violence identified unemployment as an important risk factor that increases the likelihood of interpersonal violence. More generally, the conflict literature proposes a link between unemployment and conflict. Urdal (2004), for example, points to high levels of unemployment, accompanied by an economic downturn, as increasing the likelihood of conflict. Noting the logical implication for policy, the former Secretary-General of the United Nations, Kofi Annan, suggested that youth employment offers, “the most obvious bridge between the development and security agendas embodied in the Millennium Declaration.”<sup>10</sup> Findings

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<sup>9</sup> See, for example, Collier and Hoeffler (2004) and Berdal and Malone (2000).

<sup>10</sup> United Nations (2005).

from the mission suggest that these broad economic issues are crucial risk factors in the Timor-Leste context.

25. **In Timor-Leste poverty is widespread and economic growth is negligible.** An estimated 40 percent of the population lives below the poverty line of \$15.5 per month. A recent World Bank report indicates that eight out of ten youth age between 15 and 24 are engaged in subsistence activities.<sup>11</sup> Economic growth since independence has been described as sluggish at best, and for 2006 the International Monetary Fund (IMF) expected the GDP growth to decline 0.9 percent even prior to the violent crisis. The causes of poverty and low economic growth are complex.<sup>12</sup> Some factors include a high population growth rate of 3.1 percent; increasing pressure on limited arable land; the use of low productivity traditional slash and burn agricultural techniques; limited credit access; a weak private sector; and, low government spending. Regardless of the causes, widespread poverty and the lack of economic growth contributes to placing “youth at risk”. Poverty and pressure on subsistence farming in the rural areas, coupled with the perception amongst youth that farming is not “real work”, is encouraging youth to migrate to Dili where risk factors are arguably even higher (i.e., social controls are weaker, and unemployment higher). In urban areas poverty and the lack of economic growth lowers the opportunity costs of engaging in violent behavior.

26. **As the above quotes testify, there is a widespread view in Timor-Leste that unemployment is the main economic factor putting youth at-risk.** There are very high levels of unemployment amongst youth in Timor-Leste. ILO estimates that youth unemployment currently runs at approximately 43 percent nationally and increases to a staggering 58 percent in Dili, the center of the crisis and current violence. The challenge of youth employment is compounded by the fact that an estimated 15-20,000 young people are entering the labor market annually. As a result, many have little or nothing to do; even four hours of school a day leave a lot of time to feel idle. Box 1 below highlights some of the reasons that are contributing to these high levels of unemployment amongst youth.

**Box 1: The Proximate Causes of Youth Unemployment<sup>13</sup>**

“For several years now there has been vocational training, but this has not translated into reconstruction and rehabilitation activity. Because there is no employment, there are no jobs available. Training programs need to align with realistic economic opportunities, for example, agriculture, coffee growing. For example, I know a group of youth that learnt carpentry, they made chairs and tables for schools but there was no market for their output.” Youth leader, Dili.

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<sup>11</sup> World Bank (2007f).

<sup>12</sup> They are the focus of a complementary report, World Bank (2007f).

<sup>13</sup> The mission did not focus on youth unemployment specifically. This analysis is mostly gleaned from various interviews conducted, as well as secondary materials consulted, during the mission.

*Box 1 continued:*

The causes of such high levels of youth unemployment in Timor-Leste can be divided into three:

1. Factors that reduce employment opportunities;
2. Factors that reduce the employability of youth; and,
3. Factors that mediate demand and supply of labor.

First, and most importantly, there are a number of factors that are significantly reducing employment opportunities in Timor-Leste. As the quote above suggests, even if youth complete schooling or skills training programs they are still unlikely to find jobs. Key factors impeding employment growth include: the low productivity of the crucial agricultural sector; the fact that the private sector, perhaps with the exception of those businesses serving the expatriate community, is largely negligible; government spending that is insufficient to generate significant employment; the lack of access to credit as well as domestic and international markets; a cumbersome regulatory environment—the 2006 *Doing Business* report ranked Timor-Leste second worst in the world for starting a business; and the import of foreign labor to work as both low- and medium-skill laborers. Indeed, there seems to exist a vicious circle whereby the lack of work experience and high reservation wage among many youth has engendered a mixed reputation for Timorese labor, leading some, even Timorese employers, to seek internationals for semi-skilled positions.

Second, there are a number of factors that reduce the employability of East Timorese youth. Although creating employment opportunities is crucial, ensuring that Timorese (youth) have the appropriate skills to fill new employment opportunities is also important. Indeed, and although today's youth is the most educated generation of Timor-Leste, many parents cannot afford to send one or more of their children to school, and many youths still do not complete basic schooling. This suggests the need for increasing education levels, providing skills training, and generally increasing the employability of youth. Another particularly controversial factor reducing the employability of youth is the government's insistence on the Portuguese language.<sup>14</sup> Of course, any interventions in this area need to take into consideration the current state of the labor market (i.e., where opportunities for employment growth lie) as well as the type of skills that the labor market is likely to demand in the future.

Third, and perhaps the least crucial in the current Timor-Leste context, are the factors that mediate labor demand and supply. The current lack of employment opportunities suggests that mechanisms for mediating labor demand and supply are not high on the list of priorities. Such mechanisms could, however, play an important role in setting employment expectations amongst youth. There is a complete lack of reliable information about what jobs are available and where. Arguably this has inflated the pull-factor of rural-urban migration to Dili and generated unrealistic employment expectations amongst youth. Further, lack of information has pushed youth into "popular" training programs, such as computers, for which there is low or limited demand.

The importance of the demand-side factors cannot be underestimated. Without efforts to stimulate the agricultural and private sectors, reduce bureaucratic red tape, and increase government spending any interventions targeted at youth employability or labor market efficiencies will have limited impact. That said, it is crucial that any analysis of youth unemployment approach the problem holistically and realistically consider the relative weaknesses and strengths of the Timor-Leste economy and labor market.

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<sup>14</sup> Arguably the insistence on the use of the Portuguese language is as much a factor reducing employment growth as a factor reducing youth employability.

### 1.2.2 Lack of Community “Connectedness” and Cohesion

“There are weak parent-teacher relations. Teachers are of the opinion that they have all the authority at school and have rejected my personal appeals for a non-violent approach to teaching in schools.” Youth leader, Dili.

27. **Longitudinal studies indicate that “connectedness” is an important factor in determining whether youth engage in risky behavior.**<sup>15</sup> These studies focus on connections with school and adults as well as parents. They conclude that the absence of these relationships in the lives of youth strongly correlates with increased risky behavior, whereas the presence of these relationships results in a greater likelihood of decreasing these behaviors and promoting positive youth development.

28. **Interviews with youth and youth leaders indicate that students rarely have strong relationships with their teachers or adults.** In Timor’s large families, parents often cannot devote enough time for the development of each child. If parents have authority, it is often because children fear them, not because they respect them. The pedagogical skills of teachers are also low, as is their level of technical expertise. Furthermore, there seems to be no sense of trust or relation between students and teachers at primary or secondary level.<sup>16</sup>

29. **In addition to a lack of school connectedness, the crisis damaged social cohesion and communities are no longer able to control their youth.** When asked whether communities maintain strong influence over youth, one respondent replied, “No, it is actually the other way around. Youth have a lot of influence over the community. This needs to be turned around. Communities cannot control their youth. Communities cannot provide a life path [for youth], and certainly the government cannot.” The lack of community cohesion is particularly a problem in Dili, where it has been severely disrupted by the crisis and east-west segregation. Indeed, youth most at risk of engaging in violence are those living in camps for the internally displaced or in *barrios* (neighborhoods) where formal and informal community structures have disintegrated, or have never been strong (such as in the newer neighborhoods).

“Constructive youth models are important. But more important is that change itself becomes a role model at all levels, rather than focusing on important popular figures. That way anyone who brings change can become a role model.” Youth leader, Dili.

30. **Furthermore, youth are in search of constructive role models.** In fact, youth violence can be viewed as an expression of youth dissatisfaction with current leaders, particularly political leaders. In some respects, youth are on a desperate struggle to find new leaders worthy of their trust and admiration. As the current idolization of some involved in last year’s political crisis attests, the exploits of popular political leaders are often as much the product of mythology and misinformation than actual heroism and good deeds. As one observant informant noted (see quote above), the real challenge is to

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<sup>15</sup> Blum (2005) and Blum and Ireland (2004).

<sup>16</sup> One informant noted that teachers predominately use fear and acts of petty violence to demand the respect of students.

facilitate constructive role models for youth at the community-level and to reduce the current preoccupation of youth with popular political figures. Such role models can be found in spiritual and traditional leaders, veterans and resistance leaders (especially from the youth resistance), church leaders who can guide youth (and communities) wisely, as well as other community members that contribute in a positive way to society.<sup>17</sup>

"Employment is only one part of the problem. For example, youth also lack information. They lack information about the government, the development process, what jobs are available." Youth leader, Dili.

31. **There is a significant lack of accessible and reliable information in Timor-Leste, which makes youth susceptible to rumor and manipulation, and prevents them from expressing their views publicly.** There is one national broadcaster with both radio and television as well as a handful of community radio stations, many of which are off-air and have very limited coverage. The national radio covers about half of the country, and the television only a few areas, although a large expansion is underway. The local radio stations that exist provide mainly entertainment and local stories; information on national news and government policies is very limited in rural areas. Newspapers are available in Dili but high illiteracy rates mean they are rarely read. Weaknesses in communication and information sharing contributed significantly to the unpopularity of the first government. There is also widespread distrust of information that comes from the media, as opposed to trusted personal channels. This means youth, like the rest of society, are dependent upon information passed through subjective informal communication channels and are, therefore, susceptible to rumor and manipulation. It also means that youth lack information about opportunities that are available as well as information on government and development processes.

### 1.2.3 Political Marginalization and Dissatisfaction

32. **There is some evidence to suggest that political marginalization and dissatisfaction increases the risk of violence.** For example, it has been noted that an increasing population of highly educated youth who are faced with limited opportunities to participate in politics can turn to political violence to obtain change (Goldstone 2002). Certainly in Timor-Leste youth feel that violence against authority is a legitimate form of protest and dissent, particularly amongst those who grew up during the Indonesian occupation. This belief can be used to legitimize indiscriminate community violence, as during the 2006 crisis when western youth targeted easterners in the belief that this constituted a strike against the (Fretilin) government. Some youth leaders believe that at least some of the current youth violence was legitimate political violence.

33. **There exists a feeling amongst youth that they have been explicitly excluded from the nation-building process.** This feeling of exclusion is often focused on the use of the Portuguese language in government. Youth interviewed felt, without exception, that this was a policy that significantly curtailed their ability to participate in government. Indeed, youth are provided with few opportunities to participate in civic life and the nation-

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<sup>17</sup> The reach of such role models may be local, and youth in different parts of the country may feel comfortable with individuals of different backgrounds, hence the focus on facilitation rather than prescription.

building process. Instead, the government's approach has been to treat youth, and communities alike, as subjects not citizens—such an approach precludes the views and needs as expressed by communities. Young people also feel that political leaders recognize youth only when they are making trouble, and that they do not consider youth competent enough to participate in running the country.

34. **There is strong dissatisfaction with the performance of government and political leaders.** This is in good part directed at the police, military and courts, as well as district governments. The main reason for this distrust and disrespect is the belief that these institutions are politicized and not neutral. The lack of information on, and understanding of, the form and function of governmental institutions also contributes to distrust of authority and institutions. But youth also hold grievances against the government; many believe that the government has done nothing for the ordinary Timorese since coming to power, and that it is only those with connections to those in power, as individuals or as groups, who reap benefits.

35. **The lack of a stable national identity compounds these political factors.** National unity in Timor-Leste has, in the past, been largely based on the independence struggle against the Indonesians and, before then, the Portuguese colonialists. Since independence, however, new forms of national identity and pride have not been found or created. In contrast, some independence groups have sought to monopolize certain national symbols and institutions, which has only had a delegitimizing effect and prevented such symbols from playing a unifying role in society. Conversely, there has been a tendency to discount and dismiss those indigenous Timorese cultural symbols and institutions that could, albeit through a process of cultural appropriation, form the basis of a national Timor-Leste identity. Further, where there have been attempts to fashion a Timorese identity, such as through the rejection of Indonesian and adoption of the Portuguese language, the result has been the exclusion of Timorese youth.

#### 1.2.4 Socio-Cultural Factors

"Yes [there is domestic violence], particularly against women and children. There are some small-scale parenting programs ... but there is a contradiction between strict family discipline and the explosive violence against their authority. To respect someone means to fear them. They [youth] are free, and they want to express their freedom against authority. [But] how can we channel this freedom into more positive activities?" Local aid worker, Dili.

36. **Often youth first see and learn to accept violence from their parents.** Research has shown that behaviors, such as violence, that are taught at an early age can increase levels of aggression amongst youth. Although incredibly difficult to verify and quantify, research suggests domestic violence is widespread in Timor-Leste yet is viewed as a private matter—although with some shift in attitudes as a trickle of cases are brought to the court system. Research in Maliana suggests that domestic violence is also linked to cultural norms: that it is more prevalent amongst patrilineal ethnic groups rather than matrilineal groups.

37. **The resistance movement and elements of Timorese tradition have fostered in (male) youth a highly masculine and militaristic gender identity, which acts to condone youth involvement in violence.** Youth in Timor-Leste have grown up idolizing

resistance fighters and their acts of violence. Indeed, symbols of the resistance are found in almost every household. Such (male) gender norms are unsurprising given that Timor-Leste only relatively recently emerged from a quarter century of Indonesian occupation and, before then, resistance to Portuguese colonialists.

38. **Excessive alcohol consumption contributes to both a cycle of unemployment and a cycle of violence.** Alcohol is a growing problem amongst youth in both urban and rural areas. The local palm liquor is easily available and cheap, costing \$1 for a half-liter bottle and \$2 for a 1.5 liter bottle in Dili. Informants indicated that excessive alcohol consumption is more common amongst the unemployed, and that the unemployed have nothing to occupy their time so they turn to drinking with friends, which in turns leads to late nights, late starts, and further unemployment and listlessness. Excessive alcohol consumption is also connected to violence, escalating often trivial conflicts. Groups of youth frequently drink together in the street and then engage in violent behavior. By contrast, whilst there are some reports of drug use by gangs, widespread drug use does not yet seem prevalent amongst Timorese youth.

### 1.3 Factors and Dynamics of Youth Engagement in Violence

39. As mentioned above, two lines of inquiry are pursued here. The first focuses on identifying the factors that place youth at-risk of becoming implicated in the crisis and subsequent violence. These factors were presented in the previous section. Needless to say, not all youth exposed to these factors do in fact engage in violence. Indeed, there are many countries in the world, such as neighboring Indonesia, where youth are exposed to similar at-risk factors but do not engage in such violence, particularly not on the scale currently being witnessed in Timor-Leste. Thus, there must be other dimensions of the situation in Timor-Leste. This section attempts to identify these factors.

40. The interviews and reports on the crisis suggest there are two main views on why youth have become involved in the current violence: that their involvement was political or that it was, and remains, opportunistic. These two explanations are difficult to separate in practice, as Box 2 below demonstrates.

#### 1.3.1 Youth Violence is Political

"The ILO [cash-for-work] programs are good, but they do not address the political issues involved in the violence, the mobilization of youth by political parties." Youth leader, Dili.

41. **Reports suggest that political actors, particularly in the initial stages of the crisis, capitalized on youth grievances and vulnerability for strategic purposes.** As highlighted in the previous section, grievances amongst youth were, and remain, widespread. Similarly, tensions between Timor's political elites were high, and it was increasingly clear that institutions lacked the strength and credibility to effectively resolve these tensions. However, as the conflict literature highlights, it is rare that grievances in themselves result in violent conflict. For example, inequality is often cited as an underlying cause of conflict, but there are degrees of inequality in all societies and violent conflict is the exception not the norm. It is therefore foreseeable that political elites played a role by

capitalizing on youth vulnerability. At least on one occasion youth groups or street gangs have reportedly been paid cash to participate in violence and create the current unrest; a number of youth arrested by the United Nations police late in 2006 have been found to have identical amounts of money, a single \$20 bill, in their pockets, suggesting one-off payments have been made. This is mobilization in its most basic form and helps to explain why youth became involved in violence initially.

42. **However, it is important not to overstate the role of direct political mobilization.** There has not been overwhelming evidence, such as the example cited, of political actors and agitators directly mobilizing youth for political purposes. Indeed, the street violence in Dili has gone through clear phases: first implicating the “east versus west” divide; followed by fighting between martial arts groups; and more recently, as the parliamentary elections approached, between youth with differing political affiliations and identities.

“It is not that the political parties have [formal] links with the youth, but what you have is two strong people, each has ‘backers’, my supporters will attack your supporters.” Veteran, Dili.

“There is no formal affiliation between Korka and Fretilin, but there are some important Korka leaders in Dili who are also Fretilin members. At the local level, there are also members of Korka who are members of Fretilin.” Youth leader, Maliana.

43. **The more recent form of violent political mobilization, or what might be more appropriately termed “political identification”, is more a result of personal loyalties and assumed political identities amongst previously organized youth groups.** As the above quote attests, it is important to recognize that this form of political mobilization is not necessarily grounded in formal organizational links, but is simply another manifestation of existing tensions. Fighting amongst youth groups/gangs has a long history in Timor-Leste. Indeed, youth violence amongst youth groups or “gangs”, such as martial arts organizations, occurred regularly prior to the crisis. Generally, martial arts groups and other youth groups/gangs are not formally linked to political parties. However, members of martial arts groups are permitted to join political parties. Thus, when high profile members of martial arts groups join a political party, and given the emphasis on personal relationships and loyalties in Timorese society, the assumption is that institutions, and hence their members, also support the political party. The implicit (or sometimes explicit) understanding on both sides is that the political party will benefit from the group’s network and membership base, which, in the current context, translates into their street power and ability to threaten and provoke the opposition.

44. **Indeed, material benefits for affiliating with political parties are sometimes also offered to key youth leaders.** For example, one youth leader in Maliana noted that he has on a number of occasions been offered a motorbike as well as the chance to enter parliament if he backed a certain party (and brought supporters from his youth organization). In this way youth organizations have become politicized, and the fighting that once went on between different rival groups takes on a political character. Indeed, informants in both Dili and the districts visited observed that in the past few months fighting between martial arts groups has decreased but that there has been a recent increase

in fighting amongst the politicized factions of martial arts groups and other youth groups/gangs.

### 1.3.2 Youth Violence is Opportunistic and the Result of Impunity

“There are no serious tensions here. When I returned I had a dialogue with my neighbors. ‘Westerners’ were afraid to go to the local hospital as there were internally displaced from the east there. We went on television to say the hospital was for everyone, not westerners, not easterners, but all Timorese. This resolved the problem. There are still some small problems; youth from the east and west getting drunk and fighting one another, for example.” Veteran, Dili.

“There are lots of youth in the IDP camp near Hotel Timor. They are well organized, and there are allegations that they are collecting ‘protection money’ from local businesses.” International aid worker, Dili.

45. **The breakdown in formal and informal mechanisms of social control has created conditions of impunity.** Since the political crisis last year there has been a general breakdown in law and order, particularly in Dili. There seem to be two parts to this breakdown. The first part is the general breakdown in the formal state institutions, notably the police as well as the courts and prosecutorial services. Indeed, the police and the military as formal state institutions not only proved unable to resolve the crisis, but were in fact deeply implicated in the conflict and precipitation of the larger social crisis.<sup>18</sup> The second part of the breakdown is the weakening, and in some Dili neighborhoods the complete disintegration, of informal community mechanisms of social control. The weakening and discrediting of these institutions and mechanisms has created a situation of impunity and opportunity, which youth (and others) have used to their (short-term) advantage.

46. **The informal mechanisms of social control are particularly important in the Timor-Leste context given their central role in managing disputes and grievances over land and other resources.** Informal mechanisms are important because they manage the vast majority of disputes and grievances in Timorese society. Thus when large sections of the population were forced to flee and community leaders with connections to political power were discredited, not only did this loosen social controls on youth but it also facilitated the reopening of past grievances that these previous power relations had held in place, particularly those relating to land and property. Box 2 below highlights these complexities.

47. **The breakdown in social control has also encouraged youth to become involved in various types of opportunistic activities, including crime, illegal activities, and vigilantism.** Although widespread looting of businesses was brought under control with the arrival of the international police and military, there are indications that petty crime and thievery are on the rise. For example, youth in IDP camps have reportedly began extorting and extracting “protection money” from local businesses (as have gangs and reportedly the police already for years). In addition, youth have become involved in inter-community conflicts, particularly with regard to land and property disputes between “easterners” and “westerners”. Similarly, youth have used the impunity to extract revenge

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<sup>18</sup> International forces from Australia, New Zealand, Malaysia, and Portugal were called in to separate the fighting army and police but soon found themselves confronted with a law and order situation with which they were ill-equipped to contend. A UN police force started to deploy in September 2006.

for personal or group grievances. And finally, the general impunity has increased the intensity of fighting amongst martial arts groups and politically linked violence, with participants or bystanders occasionally killed. Almost twice as many people have been killed since September 2006 as the 37 killed during the initial crisis in April/May 2006.

#### Box 2: Combining Factors—Land Grievances, Politics and Youth Groups in Ermera

Politicization, land grievances and changes in power relations combine themselves in complex ways to encourage youth violence, as a case of fighting between groups of youth in two villages in Ermera district attests. The underlying cause of the recent violence is a long-standing land conflict between two villages. One village (Village P) owns and controls a plot of land in neighboring village (Village T). Land in Timor-Leste is largely managed by informal mechanisms. Such mechanisms are highly dependent on local power relations and are therefore highly susceptible to changes in political winds. The villages are also split politically, with Village P supporting the then incumbent government and Village T the main opposition party. This has been a political asset for Village P in the past few years. However, this has changed since the presidential election in May 2007, which demonstrated a dramatic decrease in support for the incumbent (Fretilin) government both in Ermera as well as across the country. Thus, the power relations between the two villages have begun to shift and the status of the contested land has been re-opened. Making relations even worse, there are also some grievances in Village T over the way members of Village P conducted their campaign for the incumbent government. Reportedly supporters of the government in Village P used threats and in one case physically hurt a woman from their neighboring village. This all culminated and resulted in violence a few weeks after the presidential election. The brothers of the threatened woman traveled to Dili and brought a group of fellow martial arts members to Ermera to seek revenge. Although there were mixed views of whether the youths were in fact acting in the name of the martial arts organization and defending their political supporters, the group attacked the incumbent government supporters and destroyed the houses built on the land owned by Village P but located in Village T. This case illustrates the complexity of current youth violence; that politicization, impunity as well as longstanding grievances might form two sides of the same coin to encourage conflict and youth violence.

#### 1.4 Implications for Policy Formulation

“Reducing violence in this society will take a long time. My neighbor chained his son to the house, in order to ensure he did not become involved in street fights while he was working in the fields.” Youth leader, Dili.

48. **Youth in Timor-Leste can be categorized into three types: “safe”, at-risk, and engaged.** Youth are exposed to each of the factors identified above to different degrees. “Safe youth” are those who are not excessively exposed to risk factors; “youth at-risk” are those who are exposed to risk factors but have not yet engaged in violence and other negative behaviors, such as crime and extortion; whereas “engaged youth” are those who have become implicated in violence and crime. The above analysis indicates that the situation and needs of each type are significantly different. This suggests the need for a targeted approach to youth.

49. **A range of economic, social and political factors currently put youth at-risk in Timor-Leste.** The first line of inquiry above quickly determined that there is no single factor that increases youth risk. Similarly, the case from Ermera indicates that when

youth become involved in violence it is often the result of political factors and opportunism as well as of personal and group grievances. This suggests the need for a holistic and comprehensive framework, which needs to be relevant to all youth types. Interventions aimed at reducing risk and the incentives to engage in violence need to address the broad range of factors. As a number of quotes above suggest, simply providing jobs or skills for youth might reduce the risk of engagement for some but it is not going to connect young people to their families and communities, integrate them in nation-building, reduce political incentives to mobilize youth or reduce impunity for violence and crime. Figure 1 (overview section) above combines the three types of youth and the different economic, social and political factors.

50. **The factors that put youth at-risk, and the factors that push youth into violence are significantly different.** The second line of analysis identified factors and dynamics that are vastly different from those identified in the previous section on risk factors. The key difference is that not only do the former implicate youth themselves, but political actors and specific formal state and informal institutions also play a crucial role in controlling youth decisions and behavior. This suggests a very different set of policy interventions than those aimed at tackling risk factors.

51. **Factors that affect youth risk operate in both the short- and long-term.** The first analysis above identified factors that place youth at-risk in the immediate term, such as unemployment, whereas other factors can increase the likelihood of youth engaging in risky behavior in the future, such as domestic violence. Policy interventions targeting youth must therefore begin early in a person's life as events and experiences that occur early in life can increase or decrease the likelihood that young people will engage in risk-taking behavior. Consequently, an effective youth development portfolio needs to include both short run policies—to help those immediately at risk and those who are already engaged in violent behavior—and long run policies for the youth of the future.

## 2 Towards A Comprehensive Framework for Youth in Timor-Leste

"The state has forgotten to deal with youth during the past five years." Youth leader, Dili.

"Including youth activities in various sectors is not enough. The government needs to have a youth perspective for development." Youth leader, Dili.

### 2.1 Basic Principles

52. **This section identifies eight principles that should guide the development of a comprehensive framework for youth.** These principles should inform the identification of policy priorities, the search for intervention options, the adoption of criteria for prioritizing interventions, as well as the design and implementation of interventions.

### Box 3: Summary of Basic Principles

1. Adopt a holistic and multi-sectoral approach
2. Treat youth as active citizens, not beneficiaries
3. Focus on youth participation and involvement
4. Focus on gender equality
5. Ensure government ownership and leadership
6. Consult all stakeholders
7. Recognize implementation constraints
8. Support development effectiveness

#### 2.1.1 Adopt a holistic and multi-sectoral approach

53. **The previous situation analysis indicated that a range of economic, social and political factors put youth at-risk.** As discussed above, *economic factors* include employment, market information, skills, training and access to capital; *social factors* pertain to the family and community in which a young person grows up, and include life-skills, community connectedness, as well as peer and gender relations; *political factors* shape the role that youth play in political and government affairs, and include leadership, participation, as well as law and order. These factors are mutually reinforcing and work together to impede the fulfillment of young people's potential. In order to tackle such a wide range of factors, a comprehensive framework for youth must therefore adopt a holistic approach—and acknowledge that a focus on only one area (such as on employment and employability) will not be nearly as effective both in the short- and longer-term. Tackling such a broad range of factors requires, by default, working with multiple sectors, including education, labor relations, justice, as well as social and community affairs.

#### 2.1.2 Treat youth as active citizens, not beneficiaries

54. **The latest World Development Report, titled *Development and the Next Generation*, makes a strong case for the recognition of youth as active citizens in civic and political life.**<sup>19</sup> Active citizenship improves development outcomes for it allows youth to act as agents of change. Rather than wait for what the government (or others) provide, youth can voice their needs as well as the needs of others. Preconditions for successful youth involvement in decision-making include commitment from the top leadership, strong advocacy for youth participation on their behalf, as well as pressure and interest from young people themselves. Active citizenship and encouraging civic engagement among young people is also a long-term investment in social and political stability. As the previous analysis indicated, young Timorese are alienated from the post-independence government, disillusioned with today's political leaders and disconnected from the nation-building process. Consequently many show disrespect for elected

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<sup>19</sup> World Bank (2006e).

institutions and democratic processes; while a smaller group have expressed their frustrations violently.<sup>20</sup>

#### 2.1.3 Focus on youth participation and involvement

55. **Youth need not be considered recipients only; they can play an active part in policy making as well as the design, implementation and evaluation of interventions that target young people.** Creating space for youth participation is closely related to the previous principle. In Timor-Leste, the national youth council and attendant district youth councils have shown their capacity to participate in policy dialogue and hence contribute to the policy making process. Some youth have also shown their ability to organize youth groups and arrange social events. Indeed, if provided an opportunity and the right incentives, youth can make important contributions to community development as well as nation-building.

56. **International experience demonstrates that many effective youth development interventions draw on participatory methods in their design and implementation.** Such an approach helps to encourage citizenship, builds linkages between communities and the state, helps youth gain leadership and life skills, and builds community cohesion and social capital. In this way, young people can overcome the sense of alienation that they feel, and can develop a common vision and sense of belonging. Furthermore, participatory monitoring and evaluation methods can be used to assess project effectiveness, including, for example, through the use citizen and community scorecards.

#### 2.1.4 Focus on gender equality

57. **The differing positions, needs and perspectives of male and female youth should not be forgotten in the development of a comprehensive framework.** This is not necessarily to suggest that different interventions be developed for men and women. Rather, the policy priorities should capture the needs of both, and interventions should achieve a balance in their targeting.

#### 2.1.5 Ensure government ownership and leadership

58. **The government should take the lead on developing and coordinating the comprehensive framework for youth.** Government ownership and leadership of any youth development policy making and activities are crucial. Ultimately it is the government who should take responsibility and who has sufficient funds to implement youth development activities on a nationally relevant scale. As outlined in the draft National Youth Policy for Timor-Leste (see observations in Box 3), the State Secretariat for Youth and Sport should coordinate youth policy and interventions. The Secretariat should not, however, be responsible for implementation. Instead, various ministries should lead the implementation of youth activities under their respective portfolios.

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<sup>20</sup> Also, Scambary (2006).

#### Box 4: Observations on the draft National Youth Policy and Compact

A draft National Youth Policy (dated October 17, 2006) is before the Council of Ministers for consideration and approval. The draft policy has important principles, vision and policy objectives and contains various economic elements. One critique, however, is that it does not pay sufficient attention to the social and political dimensions of the proposed comprehensive framework. The draft acknowledges the role of youth, youth-based NGOs, sports organizations, ministries, and international agencies. It also considers voluntary youth service, for instance, for education, health services, agriculture. The draft policy also stresses the importance of monitoring and evaluation although the proposed monitoring focuses on macro indicators (millennium development goals) in the areas of health, education and poverty reduction only; it does not consider the impact of individual interventions on youth, or their effectiveness. The draft recognizes the importance of *suco* youth representatives but assigns them a possibly too extensive role (including the prevention of conflict and financial oversight of funds channeled through youth organizations). The need to strengthen the Secretariat of State for Youth and Sports is evident. However, the purpose of the Secretariat should be coordination, not the management of funds or projects.

#### 2.1.6 Consult all stakeholders

59. **Whilst government needs to assume overall leadership and coordination responsibilities, the development and implementation of the comprehensive framework should involve consultations with all stakeholders.** This should include youth groups and organizations, civil society groups and non-government organizations, local communities as well as community leaders, private sector forums and associations, as well as the international donor and NGO community. For a comprehensive framework to be successful it requires a shared understanding of the problem, the adoption of common strategies, as well as a sense of solidarity and cooperation. To these ends, one option might be to create a national youth forum (potentially under the auspices of the President's Office) that would bring together Timorese stakeholders with the objective of reviewing the situation and progress and proposing policy adjustments where necessary.

60. **The international donor and NGO community can play an important supporting role; donor harmonization should be prioritized.** The international community, including both donors and NGOs, can provide technical assistance, share experiences and best practices from around the globe, and assist with capacity building of national and local government and non-government entities. More than elsewhere, donor coordination and harmonization in Timor-Leste are critical to the success of a comprehensive framework. One option might be to have the State Secretary for Youth and Sport chair regular coordination meetings with the international donor and NGO community.

#### 2.1.7 Recognize implementation constraints

61. **The comprehensive framework must recognize implementation constraints, and design policies and interventions accordingly.** There is limited implementation capacity in Timor-Leste, particularly when it comes to implementation on a national scale. In contrast, a comprehensive framework for youth, given its ambitious outlook and

holistic approach, is likely to require, indeed, rely upon, an army of implementing actors. This might include young people themselves, youth groups and organizations, communities, traditional and church leaders, local administrations, national government agencies, local civil society groups and NGOs, as well as the international donor and NGO community. Needless to say, not every actor will need to play a role in every activity; and neither will every actor be immediately able to contribute. Successful youth activities require not only a good policy strategy and intervention design, but also an effective implementation mechanism. For this reason, good design must take into consideration, and adapt to, local capacity constraints.

#### 2.1.8 Support development effectiveness

62. **Common monitoring and evaluation mechanisms ought to be established in order to ensure development effectiveness.** Ensuring development effectiveness is a process that aims to capitalize on success, identify shortcomings, and correct failure. Generally, the operational approach to achieve this is to link research, monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to design and resource allocation decision-making processes. In the case of youth development interventions, there is little documented evidence on what works, in what contexts, and why. Ensuring interventions supported under the comprehensive framework are effective, whether they are pilots or national programs, requires the development and implementation of a rigorous monitoring and evaluation system. Although technically (and politically) difficult, it would be advantageous to develop a common monitoring and evaluation framework so as to facilitate comparative impact evaluation.

## 2.2 Policy Priorities

63. **This section suggests five policy priorities for tackling the current “youth in crisis” situation in Timor-Leste; these priorities aim to cut across both the *risk factors* and the *engagement dynamics* identified in the situational analysis.** The previous situational analysis highlighted a number of economic, social and political factors that have put youth at-risk of engaging in risky behavior and as well as the factors that facilitate youth actually crossing the line and participating in violent behavior. Thus, this section attempts to expound five key policy priorities for addressing this current crisis situation.

64. **These five policy priorities identified here are preliminary in nature.** Indeed, they should be dissected, debated and adjusted through a process of peer review and stakeholder consultation. These policy priorities are not presented in any order of precedence.

### Box 5: Summary of Policy Priorities

1. Keep Youth in School
2. Increase Youth Employment Opportunities
3. Connect Youth with Community
4. Empower Youth to Participate in Nation-Building
5. Strengthen Formal and Informal Controls on Youth

#### 2.2.1 Policy Priority #1: Keep Youth in School

65. **Keeping youth in school can address a number of the risk factors identified in the situational analysis.** The positive effects of keeping youth in school include: that youth who complete secondary education are much more likely to avoid falling into poverty; that, similarly, primary and middle school is estimated to increase income to the tune of 27 and over 50 percent, respectively;<sup>21</sup> that the longer male students stay at school past the age of 15 the less likely they are to engage in criminal activities;<sup>22</sup> that every one year of school increases agricultural output by 4 percent;<sup>23</sup> that better educated youth are more trusting of others and that increasing education contributes to social capital;<sup>24</sup> and, that increased education increases participation in elections, charitable giving and volunteerism.<sup>25</sup>

66. **Keeping youth in school requires understanding and changing incentives.** In all contexts, including Timor-Leste, many factors determine the incentive to remain in school. These include: parent attitudes, community and cultural norms, economic pressures, peer pressure, the quality of education, the perceived benefits of education, as well as the education experience more generally. While significant progress has been achieved in the education sector over the past five years, particularly with regard to physical infrastructure, the continuing high school dropout rates suggest that the incentives of the end-user (i.e. youth) are not yet optimized.<sup>26</sup> Although further research is necessary before a well-targeted program can be designed, the key factors in Timor-Leste are likely to be economic pressures, perceptions of benefits, and the fact that an extremely weak labor market does not sufficiently reward educational attainment.

#### 2.2.2 Policy Priority #2: Increase Youth Employment Opportunities

67. **Increasing youth employment can decrease risk factors and help mitigate engagement dynamics.** As noted in the situational analysis earlier, the literature on conflict has shown that high levels of unemployment, accompanied by a downturn in the

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<sup>21</sup> Psacharopoulos and Patrinos (2002).

<sup>22</sup> Henry, Caspi, Moffitt, Harrington and Silva (1999).

<sup>23</sup> Foster and Rosenzweig (1995).

<sup>24</sup> Brehm and Rahn (1997).

<sup>25</sup> Karp and Banducci (1999), Riddell (2004).

<sup>26</sup> According to data from the Education Management Information System, in the school year 2005/06, the dropout rate at the primary level was 18 percent. No such data are available for the secondary school level.

economy, significantly increases the likelihood of conflict.<sup>27</sup> Furthermore, behavioral research has shown that increasing the time youth spends at work significantly decreases levels of criminal activity.<sup>28</sup> Increasing employment is also likely to decrease incentives for engagement in violent behavior, as well as decrease the current disillusionment amongst youth in Timor-Leste.

**68. The importance of demand-side factors (i.e., increasing the number of jobs) cannot be underestimated.** As noted above (see Box 1), high youth unemployment is the result of demand-side factors, supply-side factors, as well as factors that mediate the demand and supply of labor. Demand-side factors in the Timor-Leste include: low agricultural productivity; a negligible private sector; insufficient government spending; a lack of credit and market access; and, a cumbersome regulatory environment. Supply-side factors reducing the employability of youth include: low education and skill levels; language issues; and, a high wage threshold. The main factor affecting the mediation of supply and demand is the lack of information. In the Timor-Leste context, addressing the demand-side factor is most crucial; there will be no incentive to invest in training and skills (as well as education) as long as the labor market does not reward such an investment.

### 2.2.3 Policy Priority #3: Connect Youth with Community

**69. (Re)connecting youth with community can bring benefits to both youth and communities.** Generally, increased connectedness or social cohesion makes the community more robust and more capable of handling adverse events such as poverty, vulnerability, and conflict.<sup>29</sup> As noted in the situational analysis, longitudinal studies indicate that a sense of “connectedness” is an important factor in determining whether youth engage in risky behavior.<sup>30</sup> This can be between youth and parents, youth and teachers, youth and adults, as well as youth and community leaders. Connecting youth with parents strengthens the institution of the family. Connecting youth with community also has a link with policy priority five, in the sense is that it can facilitate the networks necessary for communities to regain legitimacy and (re)assert informal authority over youth.

**70. Building social cohesion and capital requires changing practices through the introduction and/or strengthening of processes and relationships.** Social capital refers to social networks and the informal norms that facilitate connections among individuals. Although there are different perspectives on social capital, most often the aim is to build relationships between a range of actors including community groups, civil society, private companies, and the state.<sup>31</sup> Policy prescriptions vary, but can include increasing participation and (formal and informal) linkages between groups as well as the state, enhancing capacity of local organizations or associations, generating interactions between different groups, as well as recognizing social assets of communities.

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<sup>27</sup> Urdal (2004).

<sup>28</sup> Henry, Caspi, Moffitt, Harrington and Silva (1999).

<sup>29</sup> See Narayan (1995), Varshney (2000), Isham (1999).

<sup>30</sup> Lidry (2003), Blum (2005), and Blum and Ireland (2004).

<sup>31</sup> See Woolcock and Narayan (2000).

#### 2.2.4 Policy Priority #4: Empower Youth to Participate in Nation-building

71. **Empowering youth to participate in nation-building could help to address youth disillusionment and bring wider benefits to the country.** The situational analysis observed that there are strong feelings of disillusionment with the post-independence government and of exclusion from the nation-building process. It is likely that these feelings help to propel youth into violent protest, a form of civil disobedience that has strong legitimacy given the history of independence fighting. In contrast, the nation-building task in Timor-Leste is huge and the Timorese youth of today are well equipped to contribute at a range of levels.

72. **Empowering youth to participate in the nation-building process can occur through a number of channels.** Youth can participate in politics and government through their involvement in the youth cadres of political parties; they can contribute at the community-level through participation in community development projects; they can contribute through the arts and sport; as well as economically through the private sector. Similar to policy priority three, empowerment requires a focus on processes and relationships. It is a policy objective that can thus cut across many interventions.

#### 2.2.5 Policy Priority #5: Strengthen Formal and Informal Controls on Youth

73. **Strengthening formal and informal social controls on youth is crucial to addressing the engagement dynamics.** As noted in the situational analysis, although almost all youth are exposed to risk factors the vast majority has not participated in risky behavior, notably the street violence over the past year. Indeed, without the simultaneous (re)introduction of formal and informal social control mechanism, it is unlikely that policies and interventions focused on risk factors only will effectively mitigate those directly engaged in the current ongoing violence (and crime).

74. **This requires strengthening formal mechanisms (i.e., police, courts), informal mechanisms (i.e., community and youth leaders), as well as linking formal and informal mechanisms.** The management of crime and conflict often relies as much on informal mechanisms as it does on formal systems of the state. Further, these two are at their weakest when they are in contradiction, i.e., when perpetrators of violence can play the two institutions against each other to their advantage. Indeed, this is probably a significant weakness of the current international policing effort. Although undeniably essential in the recent context, the international police are largely disconnected from informal mechanisms of social control (as are in many ways the government's formal institutions). The presence of the international police can also abdicate both the formal and informal mechanisms of responsibility, which can weaken the determination and the incentives of these local institutions and actors to resolve social conflict themselves.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> See, for example, Weinstein (2005).

## 2.3 Intervention Options

75. **This section has two aims: 1) to provide a list of intervention options for addressing the policy priorities suggested above; and, 2) to take stock of youth interventions and programs currently being implemented in Timor-Leste.** This section can only partially fulfill these two enormous aims. The list of interventions is not exhaustive and there are sure to be interventions and programs in Timor-Leste that have not (yet) come to our attention. However, the purpose is not to be exhaustive, but, rather, to facilitate a gloves-off discussion on how best to address the youth crisis in its entirety. Indeed, it is expected that additional interventions and initiatives will become apparent through a process of peer review and stakeholder consultations. Furthermore, one would expect that the list of interventions to be considered under a comprehensive framework would require updating over time and as the policy priorities for youth shift. Box 5 below lists the intervention options presented in this section, categorized by the policy priority they primarily address. Again, like the five policy priorities, these intervention options are not presented in any order of precedence.

### Box 6: Summary of Intervention Options (categorized by policy priorities)

1. Keep Youth in School
  - Conditional cash transfers
  - Second-chance education
  - Improving the formal education experience
  - After-school youth centers
2. Increase Youth Employment Opportunities
  - Cash-for-work
  - Labor-intensive public works
  - Labor market interventions
  - Employment skills and information
  - Self-employment programs, including micro-credit
  - Investing in agriculture
3. Connect Youth with Community
  - Youth service
  - Community-driven development
  - Strengthening traditional leadership and culture
  - Youth-led anti-violence campaign
  - Life skills training
  - Early childhood development
4. Empower Youth to Participate in Nation-Building
  - Youth consultations
  - Civic education
  - Youth leadership and organizational capacity
  - International exchanges
5. Strengthen Formal and Informal Controls on Youth
  - Political leadership initiatives
  - Mediation and paralegal training
  - Community policing
  - Reviewing and rethinking the justice and security reform approach

### 2.3.1 Conditional Cash Transfers (Policy Priority #1: Keep Youth in School)

76. **International experience suggests that conditional cash transfer (CCT) programs are an effective tool for changing incentives for the end-user as well as the delivery of services.**<sup>33</sup> Conditional cash transfers in the education sector generally work by providing poor families with school-age children a monthly payment conditional upon the children attending school regularly.<sup>34</sup> The intervention is extremely flexible, in that payment can be linked to a wide range of conditions and can be easily modified. For example, payment can be conditional upon formal school attendance, participation in second-chance education (see below), early childhood development activities (see below), as well as health checks for children. Conditions for good behavior can also potentially be considered. Special emphasis needs to be placed on targeting vulnerable families who would benefit from such payments; the involvement of the communities has proven effective in this regard.

77. **There are a number of existing CCT-type programs operating in the education sector in Timor-Leste, albeit mostly providing in-kind support rather than cash.** The World Food Program (WFP) is in the second and final year of implementing a school feeding program, a form of conditional in-kind transfer. Similarly, UNICEF currently offers a therapeutic feeding program that reaches over 66,000 primary school children in seven districts. Again along similar lines, the government is about to launch a school-feeding program in the four districts not covered by the WFP program. However, the government's design varies significantly, relying on locally produced rather than imported food and preparing meals at school rather than at home. Although such design changes are theoretically commendable, they have made implementation more difficult and costly.<sup>35</sup> Given these implementation constraints, launching a pilot CCT program in a limited number of districts could be considered in order to test the effectiveness of this approach in the Timorese context.

### 2.3.2 Second-chance education (Policy Priority #1: Keep Youth in School)

78. **Many illiterate young people see merit in learning how to read and write, and these youth should be afforded the opportunity to continue their education regardless of the reason for having left school.** Second-chance education helps bring school drop-outs up to an overall academic level equivalent to what they have missed. In so doing, second-chance education activities need to address the causes of early school leaving through either providing financial assistance to attend and/or making the education more relevant to the youth (see above).

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<sup>33</sup> See, for example, Skoufias and di Maro (2006) and de Janvry and Sadoulet (2004).

<sup>34</sup> Evidence from previous donor programs (such as the USAID funded Transitional Employment Program) suggests that the cash is spent on household necessities, especially when payments are made to the mothers.

<sup>35</sup> Preliminary evidence from the government's effort shows that problems were encountered as the price of the local produce differs by locality. Furthermore, it has been proven difficult to purchase local produce as the prevailing subsistence agriculture leaves little surplus for sale. It also seems that the school feeding program may be more relevant in remote areas where families live far away from the schools. The government is considering these lessons in its future plans regarding this program.

79. **Other elements of a successful second-chance education program include:** flexible schedules, practical curricula and selected skills training (linked to the labor market), adapted methods of instruction, accelerated programs, minimal fees for textbooks, the incorporation of life-skills (see below), and proper targeting. Helping second-education graduates find a job (for instance, through the youth career centers ILO aims to set up in cooperation with MOLCR; see below) is equally important. The Ministry of Education is already carrying out youth and adult literacy and distance education activities. These should be reviewed against the aforementioned elements.

### 2.3.3 Improving the formal education experience (Policy Priority #1: Keep Youth in School)

80. **Although more a policy priority than strictly an intervention, “improving the formal education experience” is crucial to changing youth (and parent) incentives to stay in school.** As noted above, many children drop out of school because they (and their parents) do not see the value of continued education. We highlight four potential interventions that broadly aim to improve the formal education experience: the establishment of parent-teacher associations; the establishment of “youth friendly” schools; a fund for school maintenance and extra-school activities; and, the establishment of school-tertiary-service pathways.

81. *Establish parent-teacher associations.* Involving parents in the management of schools can improve teacher attendance and teaching quality.<sup>36</sup> Similarly, increasing informal interactions between parents and teachers can lead to an increase in teacher quality.<sup>37</sup> UNICEF, through its 100 Friendly Schools Project, has piloted parent-teacher associations in a number of locations. Such interventions warrant a thorough examination with a view to scaling these up.

82. *Establish “youth friendly” schools through investments in teacher training and a new curriculum.* As mentioned above, there is a high degree of violence in classrooms in Timor-Leste. To counteract this and to establish safe and youth friendly schools requires investment in teaching methods and a new curriculum. Topics could include: peace education, conflict management, selected skills training to facilitate the school-to-work transition, HIV/AIDS, and life skills. Indeed, CARE, with funding from USAID, is launching a project to develop and introduce peace education in pre-secondary schools. Other measures to create youth friendly schools might include: improving security; screening services to identify youth at-risk; increasing counseling services; and generally expanding the knowledge base of school staff.

83. *Establish a school maintenance and extra-curriculum activity fund.* The establishment of a fund to cover, for example, school maintenance and extra-curriculum activities, could assist to increase the general attractiveness of school and hence provide incentives to participate in schooling. Students could be involved in school improvement activities, such as gardening or decorating classrooms.

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<sup>36</sup> Jimenez and Sawada (1998).

<sup>37</sup> Suryahadi, Suryadarma, Sumarto, and Rogers (2004).

84. *Establish a national merit and needs-based scholarship and government internship program in the field of community and national development.* Not only can youth contribute to growth in Timor-Leste as skilled workers, they are also the future government and business leaders of tomorrow. The establishment of a national merit-based scholarship program focused on community and national development can increase incentives to stay in school, and also contribute to the nation-building process.

#### 2.3.4 After-school youth centers (Policy Priority #1: Keep Youth in School)

"Youth need an open space to have a dialogue and undertake other productive activities." Youth leader, Dili.

"Most youth interventions today are short-sighted; building youth centers is not enough". International aid worker, Dili.

"Young people like the youth center in Comoro. While all schools were damaged here last year, the center was not." Youth worker, Comoro.

85. **Although again not specifically targeted at keeping youth in school, youth centers can facilitate the productive use of after-school time, can augment school activities, and encourage communication amongst peers.** Indeed, since independence there have been a number of attempts to establish youth centers in Timor-Leste. Generally these centers have failed once (external) funding ran dry. Furthermore, some interventions overly focused on the hardware at the expense of the software. However, often the physical structure is of secondary importance. If the will exists, youth centers can be housed in any number of spaces, including community centers, schools, existing public buildings, as well as dedicated youth centers. More often lacking are financial and management skills, as well as creativity.

86. **To maximize their impact on the aforementioned risk factors, youth centers should offer both serious and fun activities.** The former can include: life-skills, vocational and skills training, language tuition, psychological support, employment information, and instilling values such as gender equality, non-violence, and healthy living. The latter can include: sport, music, theater, painting and poetry, as well as access to media and computers. The Comoro Youth Center in Dili is a promising example that provides both skills training to large groups and organizes regular sporting activities and tournaments.

#### 2.3.5 Cash-for-work (Policy Priority #2: Increase Youth Employment Opportunities)

87. **Cash-for-work programs are perhaps the quickest and easiest method for rapidly increasing employment opportunities.** Indeed the international community, reacting swiftly to last year's crisis, rapidly launched a number of cash-for-work schemes. This not only provided employment for thousands of unskilled workers, including many youth, they successfully injected much needed cash into the local economy. The ILO program, for example, ran from April to December 2006 and generated over 465,000 workdays, and provided employment to 37,000 people (44

percent youth, 48 percent women, and 19 percent IDPs) for 15 days each.<sup>38</sup> Similarly, the Ministry of Public Works has been providing temporary employment under its roads maintenance program, although implementation has reportedly been lagging.

88. **Needless to say, cash-for-work programs can only be a temporary solution.** Indeed, in recent months the government and international community have been shifting away from traditional emergency cash-for-work programs and heading towards labor-intensive public works programs. However, under its Youth Employment Project (YEP), ILO intends to maintain a system for the flexible and rapid implementation of cash-for-work activities in response to adverse situations in specific districts.

#### 2.3.6 Labor-intensive public works (Policy Priority #2: Increase Youth Employment Opportunities)

89. **Against a background of continuing social and political fragility, there is widespread consensus that labor-intensive public works projects could be very beneficial in the medium-term.** The aim of such programs is not only to provide (temporary) employment and to stimulate the economy, but also to provide on-the-job skills training and generate productive outputs. Indeed, public infrastructure improvements are much needed in post-independence Timor, including road maintenance, village electrification, irrigation construction and maintenance, as well as water and sanitation improvements.

90. **Although significant and certainly more productive than cash-for-work programs, ultimately labor-intensive programs will not in themselves generate sufficient employment to absorb the huge number of unemployed youth, let alone the unemployed population.** ILO has, in collaboration with the Ministry of Labor and Community Reinsertion (MOLCR) and funding from the European Commission, prepared a large labor-intensive project (“Servisu ba Dame”) that envisages the creation of 23,000 temporary jobs for infrastructure rehabilitation and development. USAID is also currently preparing a labor program, titled JOBS, which aims to provide a smaller number of youth (approximately 2,500 over three years) with a more intensive training and job experience. Lastly, the government plans to establish a youth employment promotion fund under the Youth Employment Project. This would link to the existing Education and Vocational Training Fund under MOLCR.

91. **Consolidation and scale-up is possible; but ultimately such programs can only really function as a (useful) social safety net.** To reach scale on a nationally relevant level, the various labor-intensive public works and cash-for-work interventions would need to be consolidated and scaled-up under the auspices of the government. Even then, however, such programs can only really function as a social safety net, especially for the unemployed with low a skill-base.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> ILO and UNDP (2006).

<sup>39</sup> See World Bank (2007e) for a more detailed description.

### 2.3.7 Labor market interventions (Policy Priority #2: Increase Youth Employment Opportunities)

92. **Labor market interventions can stimulate much needed economic and employment growth.** The situation analysis and policy priorities earlier noted the importance of addressing demand-side factors. Concrete interventions that address this situation could include: simplifying labor market regulations, which currently resemble those in developed not comparable East Asian developing countries; stimulating private sector employment growth through an employment wage subsidy or tax exception; as well as stimulating private sector investment and growth more generally.<sup>40</sup>

### 2.3.8 Employment skills and information (Policy Priority #2: Increase Youth Employment Opportunities)

"Skills training needs to be coordinated with the private sector so that youth can find a job afterwards."  
Youth leader, Dili.

"Training needs to be practical, not just English or computers, but also water, sanitation, and so on."  
Local researcher, Dili.

93. **Employment skills and information programs can assist to match labor market demand and supply.** Such programs can work in different ways, including training and apprenticeship subsidies, workplace internships in the private and public sector (including with skilled craftsmen), vocational training programs, job search and information services, and training vouchers. Indeed, experience from Latin America suggests that emphasis should be placed on comprehensive programs that combine technical skills training with some of the other interventions suggested above.

94. **There are a number of initiatives currently focused on providing skills training.** ILO, in cooperation with MOLCR, has developed a comprehensive program to support youth employment in Timor-Leste. The Youth Employment Project (YEP) aims to strengthen the network of district employment centers, which provide decentralized enterprise development and skills training services. It is designed to also strengthen the capacity of the existing training providers and deliver demand-driven micro-enterprise and skills training through an improved Education and Vocational Training Fund. Furthermore, YEP aims to establish a competency-based training system and assist MOLCR to establish a labor force development institute that would determine training standards and certify training centers. A number of church and NGO groups also provide a range of courses in a number of sectors. In general, the scale of these civil society programs is insignificant on a national level.

95. **Efforts should focus initially on improving existing training centers rather than establishing new centers.** Although a more in-depth review is necessary, existing training centers could be improved in a number of ways: expanding their scale and scope, improving registration and tracking of students in order to evaluate effectiveness, and linking course material more closely to labor market demand. Reflecting as much the lack

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<sup>40</sup> See World Bank (2007f) for an extensive discussion of this issue.

of demand in the labor market as training appropriateness and quality, current estimates suggest that only a small percentage of graduates of these centers find work.

2.3.9 Self-employment programs, including micro-credit (Policy Priority #2: Increase Youth Employment Opportunities)

96. **Self-employment programs could assist to stimulate employment given that labor demand is so low in Timor-Leste.** The self-employment sector is often an important one in situations where labor demand is low. It is not, however, a sector that normally attracts large numbers of youth, given the knowledge required as well as the risks involved. That said, self-employment programs for youth are worth further exploration, for instance, as part of broader small enterprise development activities. Assistance could include: the provision of market information, business establishment and management skills, general life skills, technical assistance on a personal basis, the provision of micro-credit, as well as professional mentoring.

97. **The international donor community is currently supporting a range of self-employment and entrepreneurial programs.** ILO (as part of the Skills Training for Gainful Employment [STAGE] project) has been supporting Business Development Centers in five districts. These centers offer self-employment, entrepreneurship, and micro-enterprise development training courses for youth with upper secondary and tertiary education. They also provide links to microfinance organizations. Similarly, ILO's Youth Employment Program aims to provide entrepreneurship training, and UNIDO is contemplating entrepreneurship education in junior secondary schools and for entrepreneurs. USAID is also supporting a number of Business Development Centers as well as micro-credit through women groups, such as Forum Peduli Wanita Oecusse.

98. **Experience worldwide suggests a high failure rate of micro-credit activities for youth if the beneficiaries are not well selected, and their cost-effectiveness is still to be tested.** Access to credit for Timorese youth is severely constrained, and youth consider credit too complicated to apply for and very risky to manage. Instead, youth could be familiarized with the use of money, including basic financial education, training in money management and the formation of savings groups.

2.3.10 Investing in agriculture (Policy Priority #2: Increase Youth Employment Opportunities)

"Government needs to show youth that there is pride in agricultural work, that there is no shame attached to it." Youth leader, Dili.

99. **Investment in agriculture is a priority for employment and income generation, particularly in rural areas.** Agriculture will remain the mainstay for a major part of the Timorese population for a long time to come. An estimated 80 percent of the rural population is food insecure for some period during the year as farmers work on low-productive land. In order to reach its potential, youth need to appreciate the importance of, and opportunities in, the agricultural sector.

100. **The international donor community is currently supporting a number of important but relatively small-scale efforts.** For example, USAID is supporting the Coffee Cooperative Timor while GTZ has a program in two districts, Baucau and Manatuto. Overall, there are no donor- or NGO-supported projects that directly target young people's agricultural skills. A number of informants suggested that youth should form the backbone of a large-scale government supported agricultural extension program. In addition, there is a real need for complementary investments in roads, irrigation infrastructure, as well as facilitating access to markets.

#### 2.3.11 Youth service (Policy Priority #3: Connect Youth with Community)

"Youth service is an interesting idea, but youth need skills to provide the services." Youth leader, Maliana.

"We would participate in youth service, but it needs to be linked to training. We can give service to the community, which we know and with which we can communicate." Young people, Baucau.

101. **Involving youth in the delivery of services is an effective way of gaining experience, encouraging active citizenship, and linking youth to communities.** Robert Putnam, a renowned academic who writes on social capital notes, "All our societies need more social capital ... and in my view the single most promising area of initiative is youth service."<sup>41</sup> Usually, youth service involves young people in the delivering of public services, such as basic health services, childcare, community housing, literacy programs, environmental protection, small-scale infrastructure construction (such as for rural electrification), agricultural extension and animal husbandry services, youth and child activities in youth open spaces, as well as monitoring and evaluation of service delivery.

102. **Youth service brings benefits not only to the individual youth but also to the community, especially given the fact that many rural areas in Timor-Leste lack basic public services.** Activities should be agreed with the communities and include youth in the design. Minimal monetary compensation (for instance, for transport or food) may be provided. Youth service could also help rehabilitate youth by offering intensive counseling and productive activities outside of their own communities or peers who may exert a negative influence.

103. **Youth service programs are increasingly popular around the world; indeed, they are under consideration in Timor-Leste.** Examples from around the world include: the Umsobomvu Youth Fund and groundBREAKERS programs in South Africa; the United States Service and Conservation Corps; the Jovenes Constructores program in Mexico as well as other housing programs in the United States, Canada, Serbia, and South Africa; the Pakistan National Youth Service program, which recently launched a literacy campaign for women; as well as the Palawan Conservation Corps in the Philippines.<sup>42</sup> In Timor-Leste youth service is foreseen in the draft National Youth Policy, and a recent law provides for mandatory military service beginning in 2008, albeit with selective conscription given the army's limited capacity to absorb large numbers of volunteers.

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<sup>41</sup> Cited in World Bank (2005b).

<sup>42</sup> For more details, see World Bank (2005b).

### 2.3.12 Community-driven development (Policy Priority #3: Connect Youth with Community)

104. **Youth involvement in community-driven development (CDD) programs is an effective way to include them in community decision-making, provide them with voice and the opportunity to influence local affairs, as well as develop their social and technical skills.** CDD can foster social cohesion, support participatory local planning and resource allocation, as well as planning and decision-making skills. Such a program can serve as a foothold to engage youth in local affairs, link them to the community and build their life skills.<sup>43</sup>

105. **There are numerous entry points for engaging youth in CDD programs.** Examples include: participation in community meetings; as elected community representatives responsible for implementation or other tasks; as targeted beneficiaries, including dedicated financing; as part of the implementation team, thus gaining employment and skills; as community facilitators; communication and outreach activities; and, as program monitors and evaluators.<sup>44</sup>

### 2.3.13 Strengthening traditional leadership and culture (Policy Priority #3: Connect Youth with Community)

106. **Programs that strengthen youth relations with traditional leaders and culture can facilitate cohesion between youth and their communities.** Although not as strong as in the past, youth still maintain connections with spiritual (*lianain*) and traditional (*liurai*) leaders, particularly in rural areas. *Lisan* (traditional religious practice) seeks a balance between the spiritual world/ancestors and the physical world and is centered, and hence most effective, at the community-level. The government made at least one attempt to promote peace and reconciliation after last year's crisis through the involvement of *lianain*, but poor implementation meant it did not achieve its objective. If properly facilitated, *lianain*, *liurai* and *lisan* could assist to connect youth with communities, particularly in the rural districts.

### 2.3.14 Youth-led anti-violence campaign (Policy Priority #3: Connect Youth with Community)

107. **Local and national anti-violence campaigns have proven effective in reducing negative behavior and improving inter-communal relations.**<sup>45</sup> The key to such campaigns is to involve youth themselves both in the development and dissemination of peace and anti-violence messages. In this way youth can engage in a dialogue with both their peers as well as the wider community. This method is particularly useful if influential youth and community leaders, particularly those who may have previously been sympathetic to violence, publicly renounce and discourage violence through a youth-led campaign. In contrast, if an external party, such as an international donor,

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<sup>43</sup> See generally, Barron, Diprose and Woolcock (2006).

<sup>44</sup> For more details, see World Bank (2006c).

<sup>45</sup> See, for example, Paluck (2007).

produces an advertisement and airs it on media then the message (or opinion) is likely to be considered irrelevant and disregarded.

108. **Of course, media sources are limited in Timor-Leste, and virtually non-existent outside Dili** (with the exception of Indonesian satellite television). There are some community radio groups, a school distributed newspaper (*Lafaek*), and a national broadcaster in the pipeline. Consequently, alternative channels of communication therefore merit consideration, such as social drama and puppet theater. More general education programs targeting children, youth and adults could also make use of these popular folk media.

#### 2.3.15 Life skills training (Policy Priority #3: Connect Youth with Community)

109. **Research shows life skills can help youth at-risk to more effectively integrate into education, the economy as well as their community.** Programs that provide life skills training for young people can help them to overcome social skill deficiencies that they often adopt at an early age. Forcing young people to change will not, however, deliver expected results. Indeed the basic premise of life-skills programming is that youth understand the reasons for, and merits of, change. Life skills can be context-specific and may include problem solving, workplace behavior, conflict management, job search techniques (see above), communication and decision-making, and self-esteem. Currently in Timor-Leste, there are number of skills and vocational training programs, such as those supported by UNICEF, SOLS and World Vision, that integrate life-skills activities.

110. **Mentoring programs are another, similar intervention option.** These programs can help youth at-risk to navigate the choppy waters of adolescence. They typically consist of matching a caring adult with a young person, and aim to provide teaching, coaching, as well as a role model. The level of organization required for large-scale mentoring programs, however, surely surpasses the capacities currently available in Timor-Leste.

#### 2.3.16 Early childhood development (Policy Priority #3: Connect Youth with Community)

111. **Investing in early *child* development—and the parenting skills that necessarily accompany it—may be one of the most effective means to reduce youth risk-taking behavior.** Three preventive measures in particular have been demonstrated to have a positive effect: (1) providing quality early childhood right from the start by offering parental education and support activities as well as quality preschool education and activities; (2) providing parenting skills support for at-risk parents and first-time mothers to prevent child abuse; and (3) helping teachers identify problem behaviors at an early age and provide adequate support. Immunization, prenatal care, nutrition education and micro-nutrient supplementation also contribute to healthy childhoods.<sup>46</sup>

112. **Early childhood development (ECD) activities can be implemented through a range of methods,** including the use of media, home visitations (for instance, through

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<sup>46</sup> See World Bank (2006a) and also World Bank (2007f).

youth service programs; see above), and counseling classes at school or in community centers (whereby a cash transfer to the neediest and most at-risk families could be conditional upon attendance). A few related activities have been undertaken, including parenting training by UNICEF.

#### 2.3.17 Youth consultations (Policy Priority #4: Empower Youth to Participate in Nation-building)

"There has been a lot of consultation in the past, but government never followed up on what it had written down." Youth leader, Maliana.

113. **Consultations with youth are a first step to engaging them in the country's future as well as their own future.** Indeed, and as the quote above suggests, there have been many government consultations with youth in the past. However, such activities are only a beginning, and unless action or more substantial participation follows they run the risk of only increasing dissatisfaction and disillusionment. Ultimately, consultations and dialogue are about building relationships as well as a common understanding and vision. This cannot be achieved with one or two sessions. Instead, a more sustained process is necessary.

#### 2.3.18 Civic education (Policy Priority #4: Empower Youth to Participate in Nation-building)

114. **Civic education can provide a basic understanding of the concepts necessary for more meaningful participation in nation-building.** Increasing knowledge is probably the first step of any empowerment process. Similarly, empowering youth to participate in nation-building requires they have a basic understanding of civics, including theoretical concepts such as democracy, the separation of powers, public versus private matters, rights, the arms of government, but also a more practical understanding of how these concepts operate in the Timor-Leste context. Indeed, one can learn these concepts as much through training as practice. In this way, civics can be taught in schools as well as in the family, community, church, the media, at youth centers, as well as on election day.

#### 2.3.19 Youth leadership and organizational capacity (Policy Priority #4: Empower Youth to Participate in Nation-building)

"It is difficult for youth to come up with a proposal; they do not have the skills and face a language barrier." Youth leader, Dili.

115. **Increasing youth leadership and organizational capacity is crucial to their participation in nation-building.** Most, if not all, youth groups and organizations in Timor-Leste have low human resource capacity and poor financial conditions.<sup>47</sup> These groups, whether formal or informal, would be able to better serve and represent their members if they were well led and run. Training and capacity building programs could be offered to leaders of youth groups in urban and rural areas. Indeed, there are a number of such programs operating. The World Bank and AusAID, for example, have worked with

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<sup>47</sup> See Ostergaard (2005).

the District Youth Councils. Such programs, pending an evaluation, could potentially be scaled-up to cover a wider range of youth groups and organizations.

#### 2.3.20 International exchanges (Policy Priority #4: Empower Youth to Participate in Nation-building)

"It is important to send youth to other countries so that they can appreciate the experiences of others, and gain a vision for their own country." Veteran, Dili.

**116. International exchanges, particularly to countries with a similar historical legacy as Timor-Leste as well as in the region, could provide youth with a new perspective on the nation-building task at hand, and their role within it.** Indeed, a number of youth leaders suggested that international exchanges to other countries could teach participants how a nation-building process might apply to Timor-Leste. In order to be successful, these exchanges require clearly defined objectives, careful selection of participants, and a plan to ensure participants can follow through with concrete action. They could also be complemented by periodic national culture and sport events (for instance, youth festivals) for young people to exchange views with and learn from youth from other parts of the country.

#### 2.3.21 Political leadership initiatives (Policy Priority #5: Strengthen Formal and Informal Controls on Youth)

**117. Initiatives from political leaders have an important role to play in rejecting violence and coming down hard on those who provoke trouble.** There is a common perception that political leaders, for political purposes, implicitly condoned the escalation of youth violence during last year's crisis. This sanctioning of violent behavior has, arguably, contributed significantly to the situation of impunity and opportunism. There have been some recent efforts to send a non-violent message. For example, the President and government have launched several initiatives before and after the crisis of 2006 to reduce community tensions, including a national forum for communication between martial arts groups,<sup>48</sup> and *Simu Malu*, the government's policy framework for the safe and sustainable reintegration of people displaced by conflict. For a number of complex reasons these activities have been largely ineffective, including weak coordination, low trust of government institutions, and the lack of acknowledgement of responsibility for past individual or collective actions.

#### 2.3.22 Mediation and paralegal training (Policy Priority #5: Strengthen Formal and Informal Controls on Youth)

"I received training on conflict resolution, which the district youth council organized. I used these skills on a number of occasions to diffuse tensions. *Chefes de suco* need support to resolve problems." *Chefe de suco*, Baucau.

**118. Mediation and paralegal programs, including training, could potentially play an important role in rebuilding informal community mechanisms of social control.**

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<sup>48</sup> Including a code of conduct by martial arts groups and attendant declaration pledging to resolve conflicts peacefully.

Above we noted the breakdown in formal and informal controls on youth, as well as the need to strengthen these institutions as well as their links with each other. Indeed, the Asia Foundation and the World Bank have been supporting conflict resolution at the local level, the former focusing on marital arts groups and the latter on youth groups more broadly. Such efforts could be linked to paralegal training, which can facilitate access to formal justice mechanisms, and be expanded to cover community as well as youth leaders.

#### 2.3.23 Community policing (Policy Priority #5: Strengthen Formal and Informal Controls on Youth)

119. **A concept used successfully in other countries is investment in “safe neighborhood” or community policing programs.** Generally these programs adopt a holistic approach to high-violence communities, and emphasize a combination of “problem-solving policing” (engaging in preventive rather than reactive policing, including improved accountability and police-community relations) and improved basic public services (such as education, health or water). The feasibility of this approach in the Timorese context should be assessed and, if considered pertinent, integrated into training activities of UNPOL.

#### 2.3.24 Reviewing and rethinking the justice and security reform approach (Policy Priority #5: Strengthen Formal and Informal Controls on Youth)

120. **Systemic weaknesses and the centrality of the justice and security institutions in maintaining law and order, suggests a fundamental rethink on how to approach the strengthening of the justice and security sectors.** Again more a policy priority than a specific intervention, “strengthening formal controls on youth” essentially translates into strengthening the judicial and security sectors. The establishment of rule of law, including the justice and security institutions, is probably the biggest challenge of development policy. It is even more of a challenge in post-conflict contexts and where traditional informal rules and norms are prevalent. In Timor-Leste, despite significant progress being made in the establishment of a legal framework and training personnel, the demand for justice and security services far outstrips the ability of the state to supply it. Indeed, the recent violence is largely due to their failure and has highlighted the continuing weakness of the justice and security sectors. This suggests a comprehensive review of justice and security reform, as well as the development of new tools for supporting such reform.

## 2.4 Criteria for Prioritizing Interventions

121. **This section proposes several criteria for prioritizing interventions based on two sets of factors: impact factors and feasibility factors.** It is unrealistic to assume that the two dozen possible interventions presented above can be implemented in Timor-Leste. To assist in the selection of priority interventions, six factors should be considered:

#### Box 7: Summary of Criteria

1. Impact:
  - A. Impact on the problem
  - B. Timeframe
  - C. Scale
2. Feasibility:
  - D. Implementation capacity
  - E. Availability of funds
  - F. Political space

122. **There are three key *impact factors*:**

- A. *Impact on the problem*: In the situational analysis earlier, we presented a number of factors that put youth at-risk of engaging in risky behavior as well as the dynamics that push youth to actually participate in risky behavior. Therefore, in prioritizing interventions, we must consider their potential to directly and indirectly impact on these factors and dynamics.
- B. *Timeframe*: Some of the interventions presented above can produce immediate impacts, whereas others can produce impacts over a much longer timeframe. In prioritizing interventions, it should be considered how long programs would take to establish and generate impacts on the ground.
- C. *Scale*: In the presentation of intervention options above we noted that many activities are currently taking place. However, these activities are, more often than not, operating on a scale that is insufficient given the extent of the current youth crisis and its consequences for the future. Thus, in prioritizing interventions, their potential to operate on a nationally relevant scale and reach a broad range of beneficiaries should be considered (this closely relates to the feasibility factors, particularly capacity).

123. **There are three key *feasibility factors*:**

- D. *Implementation capacity*: Some of the intervention options presented above require quite sophisticated implementation capacity. However, implementation capacity in Timor-Leste—amongst government, civil society, youth groups and organizations, as well as the private sector—is weak. Indeed, in the principles section above, we noted the need to “recognize implementation constraints”; this is so important it is worth repeating and including as a specific criterion. Prioritization must take into consideration what is technically feasible.
- E. *Availability of funds*: The government’s gas revenues notwithstanding, development funds in Timor-Leste are limited, particularly if one anticipates operating any of the above interventions on a *scale* that is relevant at the

national level. The prioritization of interventions needs to consider how each program would be funded in the short-term, as well as in the longer-term.

- F. *Political space*: In addition to development capacity and funds, political will and space are a scarce resource. This is particularly the case in Timor-Leste given that youth violence, to various degrees, involves political motivations. In this context, like in all post-conflict or post-crisis contexts, a comprehensive framework and its programs must take into consideration the political reality and capitalize on what political space exists.

### 3 Recommendations: 6 Priority Interventions

124. **This chapter recommends six interventions for implementing the five policy priorities identified in the previous chapter.** In the previous chapter we identified some principles of a comprehensive framework for youth, five policy priorities, listed over 20 interventions that might address these priorities, and suggested criteria for selecting priority interventions. In light of the principles, priorities and criteria, we recommend the following six interventions summarized in the table below. These are not listed in any order of precedence.

#### Box 8: Summary of Recommended Interventions

1. Expand cash/in-kind school programs
2. Re-establish youth centers
3. Expand labor-intensive youth employment programming
4. Re-establish community-driven development programming with a youth focus
5. Support a youth-led communication program
6. Support a community justice and safety program

125. **These recommendations are a first attempt to identify priority interventions for addressing the current youth crisis and future challenges of youth development in Timor-Leste.** Again, we expect these recommendations to be subject to a rigorous process of both peer review and stakeholder consultations, involving government, civil society, as well as the international donor and NGO community. For the sake of convenience, this chapter captures the salient points of the preceding analysis.

#### 3.1 Priority Intervention #1: Expand cash/in-kind school programs

##### *Policy Objective:*

- Policy Priority #1: Keep Youth in School

##### *Rationale:*

- Directly affect economic incentives to stay in school

126. **An expanded cash and/or in-kind school program would assist to address the incentives that prevent youth from staying in school.** Keeping youth in school can address a number of the risk factors identified in the situational analysis, including community cohesion, “connectedness”, as well as youth employability. In addition, the research indicates that keeping youth in school has a range of positive benefits for individuals and society, including lower chances of poverty, higher incomes, lower chances of participating in criminal activity, higher agricultural output, as well as higher levels of trust, social capital and political participation.<sup>49</sup> As we noted above, keeping youth in school requires addressing incentives for participation and perceptions of benefits. An expanded cash/in-kind school program, would directly affect youth incentives to stay in school.

127. **That there are a number of existing school programs providing in-kind support suggests that an expanded intervention would be feasible.** WFP, UNICEF, and the government are all in various stages of implementing school feeding programs, a form of in-kind support. Although these programs all have their operational challenges, the presence of these programs suggests that all three of the above feasibility factors are manageable, including implementation capacity, funds, and political space.

128. **In addition to expanding geographical coverage, an expansion should seek to introduce more sophisticated support that goes beyond, for example, the provision of lunches.** Current programs focus on in-kind support mostly in the form of food and meals. Alternative support for staying in school can include, for example, conditional cash transfers as well as the establishment of savings accounts accessible to youth upon graduation and to assist their school-work or school-tertiary transition. To this end, an expansion might perhaps begin with in-kind support to youth and/or their parents and transition to more sophisticated approaches and mechanisms.

### 3.2 Priority Intervention #2: Re-establish youth centers

*Policy Objective:*

- Policy Priority #1: Keep Youth in School
- Policy Priority #3: Connect Youth with Community
- Policy Priority #5: Strengthen Formal and Informal Controls on Youth

*Rationale:*

- Improve the school experience through the establishment of youth centers linked to local schools
- Create a space and structure for facilitating youth-community relations
- Indirectly strengthen informal social controls on youth

129. **The re-establishment of youth centers would assist to keep youth in school, connect youth with community, and strengthen informal social controls.** Youth centers could indirectly assist to keep youth in school by facilitating the productive use of after-school time and by linking school and youth center activities. They can also assist to

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<sup>49</sup> For references to this research, see section 2.2.1 above.

connect youth with community by providing youth with a resource to engage in community affairs and by linking activities to community events. Finally, the reestablishment of youth centers could indirectly strengthen informal controls on youth; they would help to keep youth off the street, bring them under the influence of more moderate leadership, and help to build links and networks (i.e., social capital) amongst disparate youth gangs/groups.

130. **Ensuring feasibility will require building management capacity, securing long-term government funding, and maintaining political neutrality.** Since independence a number of youth centers have been established in both Dili and at the district level. This suggests that implementation is possible. Generally, these centers have failed once (external) funding ran dry. Furthermore, some interventions overly focused on the hardware at the expense of the software when often financial and management skills, as well as creativity are lacking more than physical space. To secure long-term government funding it will be necessary to build such capacity as well as to guard against the youth centers becoming overtly associated with certain political parties or figures. This is easier said than done, however, given that personal rather than institutional loyalties dominate politics in Timor-Leste.

131. **The youth centers would establish a national infrastructure for future youth art, music, sport and cultural programs.** In the longer-term, and given the negligible presence and capacity of local government, the youth centers could establish a national infrastructure capable of implementing more sophisticated youth programs that focus on supporting young artists, musicians, sportsmen and women, as well as cultural events. Indeed, popular folk media, such as social drama and puppet theater, could be used to raise awareness about the causes and factors of violent behavior and violence prevention and reduction measures. This would necessitate that district-level youth centers develop mechanisms for reaching down to the sub-district and *suco* (village) level.

### 3.3 Priority Intervention #3: Expand labor-intensive public works employment programs

*Policy Objective:*

- Policy Priority #2: Increase Youth Employment Opportunities
- Policy Priority #4: Empower Youth to Participate in Nation-Building

*Rationale:*

- Increase youth employment
- Increase opportunities for youth to (re)construct the nation's infrastructure

132. **The expansion of labor-intensive youth employment programs would assist to address the crucial policy priority of increasing youth employment opportunities.** The situational analysis determined that high levels of youth unemployment are a significant risk factor and affect youth incentives to engage in violent behavior. Indeed, research has shown that high unemployment can increase the likelihood of conflict and criminal activity. The above analysis also determines that demand-side factors are the key

obstacle to youth employment in Timor-Leste, which includes low agricultural productivity, a negligible private sector, insufficient government spending, a lack of credit and market access, and a cumbersome regulatory environment; there are simply not enough jobs available. Although labor-intensive youth employment programs are not a panacea for these demand-side factors, in the current crisis context such programs are perhaps the most efficient method for rapidly increasing youth employment opportunities.

133. **That a number of programs are currently being implemented indicates their feasibility; the challenge is to ensure such programs operate on a sufficient scale and produce relevant outputs.** Since the crisis struck last year, ILO and MOLCR have operated a cash-for-work program. They are currently in the process of establishing a more ambitious labor-intensive employment program that envisages the creation of 23,000 temporary jobs for infrastructure rehabilitation and development. Whereas the earlier programs focused almost exclusively, albeit strategically, on employment the newer programs will focus on ensuring quality outputs.

134. **There are a number of key design features of a good public works program that should be taken into consideration.** These include: the wage rate should be set at a level no higher than the prevailing market wage for unskilled labor; eligibility restrictions should be avoided; rationing, if required, should be pro-poor; although labor intensity should be prioritized other inputs are required to ensure quality outputs; programs should be reduced when labor demand in the agriculture sector is high; alternative wage mechanisms (for instance, task-based wages) can encourage female participation; and, transactions costs should be kept to a minimum.<sup>50</sup>

#### 3.4 Priority Intervention #4: Re-establish community-driven development programming with a youth focus

*Policy Objective:*

- Policy Priority #2: Increase Youth Employment Opportunities
- Policy Priority #3: Connect Youth with Community
- Policy Priority #4: Empower Youth to Participate in Nation-Building

*Rationale:*

- Generate (short-term) employment opportunities for youth (and others)
- Facilitate youth participation in community decision-making
- Facilitate youth participation in nation-building at a local level
- Overcome implementation constraints through the establishment of an infrastructure for delivering development funds to the community level

135. **The re-establishment of a large-scale community-driven development program would help to create employment opportunities, connect youth with community, and empower them to participate in the nation-building process.** Youth

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<sup>50</sup> For a more comprehensive discussion of the social safety net policy options in Timor-Leste, see World Bank (2007e).

involvement in community-driven development programs is an effective way to include them in community decision-making, provide them with voice and the opportunity to influence local affairs, as well as provide them with employment and develop their social and technical skills. As identified above, there are numerous entry points for engaging youth in CDD programs including: as participants in community meetings; as elected community representatives responsible for implementation or other tasks; as targeted beneficiaries, including dedicated financing; as part of the implementation team, thus gaining employment and skills; as community facilitators; communication and outreach activities; and, as program monitors and evaluators.

136. **The successful implementation of community-driven development programs in the past suggests their feasibility.** There is very little government capacity to deliver development programs and benefits down to the district-, let alone the village-level in Timor-Leste. CDD programs can operate in such low capacity conditions, however, as they tap into community knowledge, decision-making and know-how. Indeed, communities are frequently lamenting the fact that the Community Empowerment Program (CEP) was not continued, as it was almost the only program operating at the village-level on a large-scale. Reestablishing such a program with a design that ensures a high-level of youth participation would benefit youth as much as the wider community.

137. **The establishment of a strong CDD program would generate a platform for future community development programming.** For example, in Indonesia the Kecamatan Development Program (KDP), which operated in Timor-Leste prior to independence, has been augmented with additional programs, including a reintegration and conflict victims program in Aceh, a peace socialization campaign, a women's empowerment program, and a legal aid pilot. Furthermore, the development of a common platform for resource allocation at the village-level can function as an interface between modern state structures and community structures and norms.

### 3.5 Priority Intervention #5: Support a youth-led communication program

*Policy Objective:*

- Policy Priority #3: Connect Youth with Community
- Policy Priority #5: Strengthen Formal and Informal Controls on Youth

*Rationale:*

- Facilitate communication amongst youth, and between youth and communities
- Strengthen non-violence beliefs, norms and leadership amongst youth
- Increase information on opportunities for youth

138. **A youth-led communication program could help to connect youth with community, particularly their peers, and strengthen informal social controls.** Indeed, research and experience from other post-conflict contexts indicates that local and national anti-violence campaigns can be an effective tool for reducing negative behavior and

improving inter-communal relations.<sup>51</sup> Conversely, and as noted in the situational analysis above, the lack of reliable information can make youth susceptible to rumor and manipulation. The key to such campaigns is to involve youth themselves both in the development and dissemination of peace and anti-violence messages. In this way youth can engage in a dialogue with both their peers as well as the wider community. This method is particularly useful if influential youth and community leaders, especially those who may have previously been sympathetic to violence, publicly renounce and discourage violence through the youth-led communications campaign.

139. **A communication program would need to deploy alternative means in order to overcome the limited coverage and distrust of information from the media.** As noted in the earlier analysis, there is a significant lack of accessible and reliable information in Timor-Leste. There is one national broadcaster with radio and television, a handful of community radio stations, plus some newspapers in Dili. The national radio covers about half of the country and the television only a few areas, although a large expansion is underway. Alternative channels, such as social drama and puppet theater, should therefore be considered.

140. **Communication programming should not only focus on non-violence messages, but also provide information on new programs and opportunities for youth.** Indeed, all development programs, and particularly those specifically targeted at youth, should develop socialization and communication strategies that clearly articulate eligibility, selection criteria, benefits and complaints handling mechanisms. This will ensure not only that youth are aware of these opportunities, but also transparency and accountability.

### 3.6 Priority Intervention #6: Support a community justice and safety program

*Policy Objective:*

- Policy Priority #3: Connect Youth with Community
- Policy Priority #5: Strengthen Formal and Informal Controls on Youth

*Rationale:*

- End impunity and reduce incentives to engage in opportunistic violent behavior
- Increase the capacity of formal institutions, including police and courts, to investigate and prosecute youth violence and crime
- Strengthen informal actors and mechanisms, including community and youth leaders, to exert appropriate authority over youth

141. **The general breakdown in law and order control requires programming that strengthens formal mechanisms (i.e., police, courts), informal mechanisms (i.e., community and youth leaders), as well as the linkages between formal and informal mechanisms.** As noted above, the management of crime and conflict often relies as much on informal mechanisms as it does on formal systems of the state. Further, these two are

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<sup>51</sup> See the discussion above at section 2.3.14.

at their weakest when they are in contradiction, i.e., when perpetrators of violence can play the two institutions against each other to their advantage. Potential interventions might include mediation and paralegal programs, which could help to rebuild informal community mechanisms of social control, and “safe neighborhood” or community policing programs.

142. **Besides reiterating the importance of this area, this report on youth suggests that further analytical and assessment work be undertaken.** Supporting justice and security reform is incredibly complex in any context, let alone in a post-crisis situation and where non-state justice mechanisms remain prevalent. Indeed, if we consider our feasibility criteria there are both considerable political hurdles as well as implementation capacity issues. However, this area is crucial to not only resolving the youth crisis but also creating justice and security conditions for development more generally. Thus we suggest further analytical work is necessary in order to identify appropriate and strategic opportunities for engagement.

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