



**BERDAYA:
EMPOWERMENT FOR WOMEN & GIRLS THROUGH TIMOR ZERO HUNGER**

Final Report | Submitted October 2019

SUMMARY

Timor Zero Hunger (T0H), which Week of Compassion has supported since 2015, is designed to help families in remote and impoverished southeast Indonesia face the complex challenges of hunger and malnutrition, especially for young children. To broaden the T0H approach to sustainable change for women and teenage girls, CWS has pioneered the *Berdaya* (Empowerment) initiative with WOC support.

Through this initiative, 350 women farmers in nine villages have formed 35 saving groups, improved their knowledge of household and business financial management, started saving and lending small sums to group members, and started micro-businesses like selling such diverse products as homemade snacks, traditional woven scarves, phone credits and gasoline from roadside kiosks. One woman started a tire repair shop. In addition, 637 adolescent girls, ages 14 to 19, and 24 village Health Post volunteers learned about adolescent sexual and reproductive health, and six girls were chosen as new peer educators on the subject.

BACKGROUND

Timor island is at the far southeast end of the Indonesian archipelago and about 450 miles northeast of Darwin, Australia. Only the western half of the island, West Timor, is part of Indonesia. The eastern half is Timor-Leste, a separate nation. Conditions in West Timor are quite difficult for poor families. They mostly rely on subsistence agriculture, which is now more difficult than in the past because of the effects of climate change, especially drought.

To help families face their challenges and try to become resilient to their effects, T0H activity is in villages where most people are subsistence farmers and where 80% of families have farming (home gardening) as their main source of income. Of these, about 30% live below the national poverty line of \$25/month. So, most families are food insecure: they do not have access to enough safe, nutritious food to maintain a healthy and active life. This is especially true during the yearly hungry season before the corn harvest in March and April. Compounding families' challenges is the fact that they have very limited access to quality health care services, safe water and sanitary latrines. As a result, the Timor Tengah Selatan district in West Timor, the location of the T0H project areas, has the highest stunting (low height for age) prevalence in Indonesia: around 50% of children under 5 are stunted vs. the national average of 37%.¹

¹ <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2018/06/26/indonesia-fights-stunting-commitment-convergence-and-communities>

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Timor Zero Hunger's goal is to reduce food insecurity while improving the nutritional status of children under the age of five as well as that of pregnant and lactating women. With a focus on food security and nutrition; water, sanitation and hygiene and small-scale agriculture, **TOH has three objectives:**

1. increased access to nutritious food, year-round, for food insecure rural households with children under 5;
2. improved health care for and nutrition practices by pregnant and lactating women, with improved caring and feeding practices for children under 5 through knowledge and capacity-building among community health volunteers, and
3. increased access to safe water, household latrines and hygiene/sanitation information with behavior change support for households.

Together these activities help ensure that extremely vulnerable families can meet their basic human needs for safe water and food, while others help ensure better health and hygiene awareness to strengthen individual and family wellbeing. Families with older children, and many child caregivers, including community health volunteers, directly benefit from and extend the impact and sustainability of project interventions.

To move toward sustainable development and change for women and teenage girls especially, the TOH initiative, *Berdaya* (Empowerment), supports women's group saving and lending to help them add to their earning power and, separately, adolescent sexual and reproductive health education for girls to inform them of their reproductive rights and help them learn, factually, about their bodies and biology.

In pursuing *Berdaya's* first aim, women's group members start to save from their earnings, e.g., from selling vegetables or running a small shop. NOTE: The groups have elected not to receive seed money or grants from outside sources because they are aware of unsuccessful past government-supported savings groups that collapsed once the seed money was gone, and they did not want to repeat this. By their own accounting, groups are thriving and have reaffirmed micro-finance best practices showing that people who form savings and loan groups using their own earned income work hard to make the group work well and sustainably.

KEY OBJECTIVES

1. Improved livelihoods, nutrition and women's empowerment because of increased financial literacy and business acumen, savings opportunities / support, plus access to credit.
2. Improved adolescent wellbeing among girls, especially, due to education about sexual and reproductive health, plus nutrition and basic health.
3. Improved nutrition for children < 5 due to nutrition education and formation and support of food-related businesses which provide both income and improved nutritional options for women's families

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS THIS PROGRAM ADDRESSES

- Goal 1 (End poverty): Support increased women's / family income with savings/credit groups, entrepreneurship (business) education and training, plus information-sharing about marketing linkages and other business development options.
- Goal 2 (End hunger, improve food security/nutrition): Help families improve their food security based on improved incomes and more nutrition/related health information and education.
- Goal 3 (Ensure healthy lives and wellbeing): As above, help families improve income; separately, directly facilitate improved nutrition and related hygiene/health status, including adolescent girls' sexual and reproductive health.
- Goal 5 (Achieve gender equality, empower women and girls): Berdaya's focus is adolescent girls and women who are seeking to improve their lives with increased socioeconomic opportunity/success and more and better understanding of their health and physical wellbeing.
- Goal 8 (Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full & productive employment): As above, support women and girls to participate more fully in an expanded variety and number of educational and economic opportunities.

PROJECT LOCATIONS & PARTICIPANTS

During the past year, *Berdaya* activities were implemented in these villages: Enonabuasa, Oebaki, Oepliki Naip, Fatutnana and Oe Ekam in Noebeba sub-district; Noemuke in Amanubana Selatan sub-district; Op and Saenam in Nunkolo sub-district – all in Timor Tengah Selatan District. Project participants were women farmers, adolescent girls (ages 14 to 19), and village Health Post volunteers.

PROJECT RESULTS

Objective 1: Improved livelihoods, nutrition and women's empowerment because of increased financial literacy and business acumen, savings opportunities / support, plus access to credit.

T0H supported women farmers in nine villages. After joining basic education and information-sharing sessions, women received vegetable seeds and gardening tools to use in putting their learning about organic farming into practice. Using composting for soil preparation and making and using locally sourced organic fertilizers and pest control applications, women planted cabbage, red chilli, long beans, green beans and eggplant. Home garden harvests were mostly eaten by the families who owned them, increasing their dietary diversity; surpluses were sold in the market for cash. Additionally, families built chicken coops, and each family received two locally sourced chickens along with information about poultry nutrition and diseases, as well as proper vaccinations.

CWS supported women farmers to achieve these outcomes:

- Women's savings and loan group strengthening: 350 women in Enonabuasa, Oebaki, Oepliki, Oe Ekam, Fatutnana, Naip, Noemuke, Op, Saenam formed 35 groups
 - OUTCOME: All groups are saving and 27 are lending to members. Capital growth averaged 16%.
- Information sharing and education/training sessions for improved products and better marketing/sales
 - OUTCOME:
 - 24 women increased their knowledge (by 43% on average per pre- / post-tests) for making, marketing and selling homemade snacks
 - 57 women learned to dye thread naturally and to market/sell their traditional textiles for greater profits. Pre-/post-tests showed an average knowledge increase of 34% about marketing and sales.
- Six one-day financial literacy workshops for 94 women with pre-/post-tests to assess learning.
 - OUTCOME: Women improved their knowledge of family financial management and savings, plus bookkeeping skills, by 67% on average
- Advocacy and networking for local government support for women's economic betterment
 - OUTCOMES:
 - Elected village leaders decreed recognition and legal status of the women's savings groups.
 - The new status allows access to Village Funds, and four groups in Oebaki village borrowed ≈\$700 each² to grow their capital so they can make larger loans to their members.

² Repayment can be: (i) in installments @ ≈\$71 + ≈\$3.57 (5% monthly interest) for 10 months ≈\$735 in principal + interest. Or (ii) repay the principle + 5% interest in a lump sum after 10 months ≈\$735 as well.

Objective 2: Improved adolescent wellbeing among girls, especially, due to education about sexual reproductive health, plus nutrition and basic health.

In the past years, Berdaya helped adolescent girls and village Health Post volunteers achieve these things:

- 165 girls and 66 boys joined one of seven one-day adolescent sexual and reproduction health education/training sessions
 - OUTCOME: Knowledge grew between 20% and 33%, on average, based on pre-/post-tests.
- 50 girls and 20 boys joined a two-day peer educator recruitment and education/training.
 - OUTCOMES: Pre/post-tests showed that participants increased their knowledge by 57% on average; and, six girls were identified as new peer educators.
- 767 adolescents (637 girls; 130 boys) in nine villages joined in one of 118 one-day, peer-led adolescent sexual and reproduction health info-sharing, knowledge-building and behavior change sessions.
 - OUTCOME: Girls and boys learned about early marriage, unwanted pregnancy, and puberty, and their knowledge grew 36% on average per pre-/post-tests.
- 29 Peer Educators and 24 Health Post volunteers joined an adolescent sexual and reproduction health counseling education/training event.
 - OUTCOME: Pre-/post-tests show learners' understanding of interpersonal counseling theory and skills grew 40% (average).
- 468 people – Health Post volunteers, teachers, students, religious and village leaders and government workers – joined one of four one-day adolescent sexual and reproduction health / nutrition campaigns.
 - OUTCOME: From the educational component of the campaigns, pre-/post-tests show that participants increased their adolescent sexual and reproduction health and nutrition knowledge by 32% (average).

Objective 3: Improved nutrition for children under 5 due to nutrition education and formation and support of food-related businesses, which provide both income and improved nutritional options for women's families.

CWS supported women farmers with children under 5 to achieve the following outputs and results:

- 268 women in nine villages joined 73 one-day food production and processing information sessions
 - OUTCOME: Women learned or expanded their knowledge and improved their techniques to make nutritious locally-sourced chips and snacks to eat or sell; their knowledge grew 48% on average per pre-/post-tests
- 214 parents of children under 2, plus some pregnant and nursing mothers, joined one of 15 one-day cooking demonstrations in Saenam, Op, Noemuke, Naip, Fatutnana and Oekam villages.
 - OUTCOME: People learned cassava's nutritional value and how to make meals / snacks with it; per pre-/ post-test results, knowledge grew 20% on average.
- With entrepreneurship training, some group members have started to diversify their micro-businesses.
 - OUTCOME: 15 women now sell homemade snacks; 24 women weave and sell traditional textiles; five women sell gas from their roadside kiosks; one woman opened a tire repair business and one sells phone credit. *Income has increased by between \$3.50 and \$18 / month, depending on the type of business.* Additional income is typically spent on food, school fees and medical costs.
- 268 women joined one of nine two-day workshops re: micro-business start-up: doing simple market research | developing a simple business plan and a marketing strategy | and ensuring product quality.
 - OUTCOME: Women's knowledge increased by 80% on average per pre-/post-tests.
- 15 women representing women's savings groups in nine villages took a study trip to the Women's Creative Enterprise Network in the provincial capital, Kupang
 - OUTCOME: The Network is helping facilitate women's plans for home food processing in their villages. And, with Network support two women's groups have succeeded in selling banana chips, purple sweet potato sticks and other snacks to restaurants and kiosks in the district capital, Soe.

FINANCIAL REPORT

See attached Excel file.

STORY OF CHANGE

Yance Tefa, 36, is called Mama Yance by her neighbors and friends in Banli hamlet in remote southern West Timor. She lives with her husband, Samuel Leokuna, 38, and their four children, who are all school or preschool students aged 4 to 16. Most people in Banli and others nearby hamlets and villages are household farmers like Mama Yance. She raises pigs for her primary income while others raise corn and other crops. Besides tending her pigs, Mama Yance weaves traditional ikat fabric for ceremonial shawls used in weddings and funerals, and blankets, which she sells for a nice profit. Usually she weaves with help from her daughter, and she can do so because of CWS support for her to expand her weaving business while also increasing her farming activities to include vegetable gardening that helps improve her family's diet and increase the family income too.



Mama Yance's financial situation is better now than in many past years primarily because of her own ambition and diligence. And, in truth, because CWS has been helping the women of Op village through the *Berdaya* (empowerment) initiative for the past year. Like past work with Op and other nearby villages, this new CWS focus on women and girls, which is funded by Week of Compassion, has been enthusiastically received, especially among mothers. One key reason that women like *Berdaya* is that it has supported savings groups start-up – not with seed funding or grant, but with simple technical assistance, advice and encouragement. Mama Yance, like others, is clear that she has gained a lot of new information from CWS staff to help her expand her knowledge for better household economic management as well as community group operations and management. She is especially happy to know more about group savings and lending – simple bookkeeping, business opportunity assessment and planning, market assessment and marketing ideas.

Because of *Berdaya* Mama Yance is, by her own admission, more active and diligent in working to improve her family's wellbeing. *"A year before CWS came to this village, I and some other mothers in this village were working with textile buyers from nearby Soe town to sell our ikat in Kupang, which is our biggest city and a place we would have more customers, potentially. However, the problem we faced was the lack of enough capital to buy thread and other materials in large quantities, so the number of ikat scarves we could weave was small since the profits we had from selling our pigs or vegetables was quite small with not much left after we paid our bills each month. So, when CWS approached us about Berdaya about a year ago and we figured we could learn a lot and benefit ourselves through the education and training being offered. And, we were right, especially in creating our savings group! We began to realize In Banli hamlet alone, we started saving our own money: 300,000 rupiah (\$23); after just four months we had 800,000 rupiah (\$61), which we used, in small loans to individual members, to buy yarn, and other weaving supplies and tools."*

Because she learned a lot more than she'd known before about business basics, Mama Yance was able to move from one 200,000-Rupiah (\$15) loan, which she repaid quickly after selling two shawls for a nice profit, to another, and then another – increasing her inputs (thread, primarily) and outputs (shawls and blankets) to grow her profits each time. For four months she wove six shawls and three blankets and sold four of the shawls and both blankets for 900,000 Rupiah (\$69) in profit!

"With this assistance from CWS, I would like to encourage all members of *Berdaya*-inspired savings group to try new business opportunities since we all have the benefit securing start-up loans. For those of us weaving ikat textiles, I hope that our collaboration with the buyers from Soe will continue to go well so that our handiwork can be regularly and increasingly sold in Kupang for more and more profit." In addition to profit, Mama Yance and dozens of other women in West Timor are increasing their pride alongside their profits by bringing their talents to bear for their families in improved livelihoods and wellbeing.