

WOMEN AND GIRLS' LEADERSHIP TO ENDING CHILD EARLY FORCE MARRIAGE AND UNION (CEFMU) IN TIMOR-LESTE

1. About Plan International

We strive to advance children's rights and equality for girls all over the world. As an independent development and humanitarian organization, we work alongside children, young people, our supporters, and partners to tackle the root causes of the challenges facing girls and all vulnerable children. We support children's rights from birth until they reach adulthood and enable children to prepare for and respond to crises and adversity. We drive changes in practice and policy at local, national, and global levels using our reach, experience, and knowledge. For over 80 years, we have been building powerful partnerships for children, and we are active in over 75+ countries.

Plan International has been working in Timor-Leste since 2001 to promote the rights of all children and young people and to give them practical support to achieve their rights to early education, water, sanitation and hygiene, youth economic empowerment, child protection, Participation in disaster risk management, and promote gender equality. Plan works in two municipalities as a program unit in Timor-Leste, such as Aileu and Ainaro. However, Plan International in Timor-Leste also works in other municipalities that are not as the program units, such as Manufahi, Covalima, Lospalos, Viqueque, Bobonaro, Ermera, Dili, and other municipalities.

The ambition of this strategy is for Plan Timor-Leste to become a leading child rights organization in the country that actively promotes gender equality and has specialized expertise in improving the lives and status of girls and young women.

Plan Timor-Leste is committed to supporting young people, particularly girls and young women, in gaining control over their own lives, bodies, and futures. The program empowers them to participate meaningfully in decision-making within their schools and communities. This gender-transformative approach integrates key areas, including economic empowerment and entrepreneurship, Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR), youth-led civic engagement, formal participation in local governance, SMART regenerative agriculture, Girls and Technology initiatives, the Girls' Alliance, and efforts to end child, early, and forced marriage and unions (CEFMU).

For more information about Plan International Timor Leste, please access: <https://plan-international.org/timor-leste>

2. Introduction and Background

According to UNICEF statistics, 45 per cent of girls have been affected by CEFMU in South Asia, 39 per cent in Sub-Saharan Africa, 23 per cent in Latin America and the Caribbean, and 18 per cent in the Middle East and North Africa. Child, early, and forced marriage (CEFM) remains a significant issue in Southeast Asia, despite recent progress in reducing its prevalence. According to a report by Plan International, while South Asia has the highest absolute number of child brides globally, Southeast Asian countries also face considerable challenges in addressing this practice¹. The report, titled "Efforts to End Child, Early and Forced Marriage in Asia," highlights that countries like Indonesia are among the top 10 with the highest numbers of girls married before age 18.

The prevalence of CEFM varies across the region, with some countries showing higher rates than others. For instance, in Bangladesh and Indonesia, both majority Muslim countries, CEFM manifests and is responded to in different ways. Vietnam has begun to address CEFM among ethnic minorities and is starting to consider early marriage in the general population. Several factors contribute to the persistence of CEFM in Southeast Asia, including entrenched patriarchal systems, acute poverty, local cultural traditions, and a lack of education and employment opportunities².

¹ <https://plan-international.org/publications/efforts-to-end-child-early-and-forced-marriage-in-asia/>

² <https://www.unicef.org/rosa/reports/profile-child-marriage-south-asia>

The legal framework for marriage age varies across the region, with most countries setting it between 18 to 21 years. However, customary and religious laws often facilitate CEFM, creating a conflict between cultural practices and human rights standards.

Efforts to combat CEFM in Southeast Asia include regional forums organized by ASEAN in collaboration with UNICEF, UNFPA, and Plan International to raise awareness. Additionally, initiatives like the "Time to Act!" campaign promote regional efforts to prevent and end CEFM.

It's important to note that while traditional forms of child marriage (typically arranged or forced) are still prevalent, there is increasing recognition that not all early unions in this region are non-consensual or formal. This nuanced understanding is crucial for developing effective strategies to address CEFM in Southeast Asia.

To effectively eradicate CEFM, governments in Southeast Asia should strengthen laws on child marriage prevention, ensure robust birth and marriage registration systems, and develop an overall framework that supports the eradication of child marriage. Additionally, investing in girls' education, economic incentive programs, and awareness-raising campaigns about the negative economic, social, and health costs linked to child marriage is essential.

By 2030, it is expected that more than 800 million women will have suffered the consequences of child marriage, up from more than 650 million today. According to recent data by UNICEF in October 2021, without any further acceleration in rates, more than 150 million additional girls will marry before their 18th birthday by 2030. Globally, 115 million boys and men were married before the age of 18, making the practice not exclusive to women and girls.

In Timor-Leste, data indicated that 19% of young women (20-24) are married before 18, and 24% already have a child by the time they turn 20. This research was conducted in 2017 by UNFPA, Plan International and Secretariado Estado Juventude e Desporto (SEJD) based on a request from the Female Parliamentarians of Timor-Leste Group (GMPTL). This research clearly shows that teenage pregnancies and early marriage have consequences for many aspects of young people's lives. Census data also shows that, of all 15-19-year-old women with children, half of these young women already have more than one child. By understanding the factors that lead to teenage girls becoming pregnant, it is hoped that we can gather practical lessons and information to improve and/or develop effective policies, programs, and communication and education campaigns that may be applied to reduce the prevalence of teenage pregnancy and early marriage in Timor-Leste.

According to the World Health Organization, complications linked to pregnancy and childbirth comprise the second cause of death for 15-19-year-old girls globally. In addition, the mortality rate for children born to teenage girls is much higher, with babies more likely to have a low birth weight and face a greater risk of malnourishment and underdevelopment.

These results are also reflected in data from Timor-Leste, which shows that teenage mothers aged 15-19 years die nearly twice as much as mothers aged 20-24 years (1,037/100,000 vs. 534/100,000). As a result, the World Health Organization recommends avoiding pregnancies before the age of 20. Socially, the cost is also very high for young women as, according to social norms, it is not considered acceptable to get pregnant "early". Further, data shows that young women who are married early are often subject to more control, violence, and exploitation: the younger and the less educated, the less agency they have. Different from child marriage (marriage or union before the age of adult majority, i.e., 17 years old in Timor-Leste), early marriage is defined as the marriage of anyone before the age of 18. The Timor-Leste Civil Code states that 17 is the minimum age for marriage (16 with parental consent), and this rule applies to civil, catholic, and traditional bride-price (kaben adat) marriages.

CEFMU is a global issue and CEFMU is a harmful practice and a global issue disproportionately affecting girls and reinforcing gender inequality, while also undermining a child's right to education, health, participation, and life opportunities. CEFMU violates human rights. In July 2015, the Human Rights Council adopted its first substantive resolution recognizing child and forced marriage as a human rights violation. In resolution A/HRC/RES/29/8, the Human Rights Council requested the UN High

Commissioner for Human Rights to organize an expert workshop to review and discuss the impact of existing strategies and initiatives to address child, early, and forced marriage.

In Timor-Leste number of Child, Early, and Forced Marriage and Union is one of the biggest issues. Mostly Development agencies, Civil Society Organizations, and the Timor-Leste government are working to address these issues in 13 Municipalities.

In 2025, Plan International Timor-Leste continues work together with GMPTL, Instituto para a Defesa dos Direitos da Criança (INDDICA), Secretaria de Estado da Igualdade (SEI), SEJD and CSOs initiated to conduct the research on “Women And Girls’ Leadership To Ending Child Early Force Marriage And Union (CEFMU).

Child, Early, and Forced Marriage and Union (CEFMU) remains a significant concern in Timor-Leste, particularly affecting girls and young women. While the legal minimum age for marriage is 17 years old, or 16 with parental consent, traditional and customary practices often result in early and forced marriages, especially in rural areas. Cultural and social norms play a major role, as many families view early marriage as a way to maintain family honor or strengthen community ties. Economic hardship also contributes to the practice, as some families see marriage as a means to reduce financial burdens or secure economic stability through the exchange of bride price (barlake). Gender inequality further exacerbates the issue, as girls often have limited decision-making power regarding their education, relationships, and future. Additionally, limited access to education, particularly for girls in remote areas, increases their likelihood of early marriage, as dropping out of school due to financial hardship, household responsibilities, or early pregnancy leaves them with fewer opportunities. Although laws exist to prevent forced and early marriage, enforcement remains inconsistent, especially in remote areas where customary practices often take precedence over formal legal frameworks.

The consequences of CEFMU are far-reaching, particularly for the health and well-being of young girls. Early pregnancy poses serious health risks, including complications during childbirth, maternal mortality, and increased rates of low birth weight and malnutrition among infants. Furthermore, early marriage disrupts education, as married girls are more likely to leave school, limiting their future economic opportunities and perpetuating cycles of poverty. Many girls in early marriages face gender-based violence and coercion due to power imbalances within their relationships, further exacerbating their vulnerability.

Efforts to address CEFMU in Timor-Leste include strengthening legal and policy frameworks to align with international human rights conventions, raising community awareness, and advocating for girls’ rights. Programs such as Champions of Change and other youth-led initiatives work to educate communities about the harmful effects of early marriage and promote gender equality. Additionally, education and empowerment programs, including scholarships, vocational training, and life skills initiatives, aim to support girls in staying in school and delaying marriage. Engaging traditional and religious leaders is also a crucial strategy, as partnerships with these key influencers help challenge harmful practices while respecting cultural values. Although progress has been made, addressing CEFM in Timor-Leste requires continuous efforts across multiple sectors to ensure girls have the opportunity to make their own choices and pursue a future free from forced and early marriage.

The initial research on Teenage Pregnancy and Early Marriage³ in Timor-Leste was conducted in 2017, providing critical insights into the prevalence, drivers, and consequences of the practice. Now, after eight years of ongoing efforts and interventions supported by various stakeholders, including government institutions, civil society organizations, and development partners, Plan International is set to launch a follow-up study in 2025. This research aims to assess the progress made in addressing CEFMU, evaluate the effectiveness of past interventions, and identify remaining gaps and emerging trends. By building on the findings of the initial study, the follow-up research will provide updated evidence to inform

³ <https://timor-leste.unfpa.org/en/publications/report-teenage-pregnancy-and-early-marriage>

policies, advocacy efforts, and programmatic strategies to further combat CEFMU and promote gender equality in Timor-Leste.

Instead of portraying women and girls as passive victims of CEFMU, this research acknowledges their role as active leaders who can challenge harmful practices, advocate for their rights, and influence decision-making within their families and communities. Therefore, working with SEI, INDDICA, and GMPTL will give the chance to see the opportunities to work with women and girls to end the CEFMU. Empowering women and girls to lead efforts against CEFMU ensures that change is rooted within communities, making it more sustainable. When women and girls take ownership of advocacy and intervention efforts, they are more likely to drive long-term transformation. Over the past eight years, various programs in Timor-Leste have strengthened awareness and mobilized communities to prevent early and forced marriages. This research seeks to assess how these efforts have contributed to fostering leadership among women and girls and how this leadership can be further strengthened. By focusing on leadership, the research will explore how different factors, such as education, economic empowerment, and political participation, intersect to enable women and girls to challenge CEFMU. This approach ensures that solutions are comprehensive and address the root causes of gender inequality. Timor-Leste has committed to global frameworks such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 5: Gender Equality) and international human rights conventions that call for the elimination of CEFMU. Strengthening women's and girls' leadership aligns with these commitments by ensuring that the fight against CEFMU is led by those most affected by it.

In Timor-Leste, this research will serve as evidence to influence the government and relevant entities on effective strategies to eliminate CEFMU. At the same time, it will highlight opportunities to support girls and boys in returning to school, continuing their education, and fully enjoying their rights while living free from discrimination and stigma.

In Timor-Leste" as evident to influencing the government and relevant entity on how to eliminate the CEFMU in Timor-Leste and the same time we can bring back girls and boys back to school to continue their education and enjoy their rights and living free from any form of discrimination and stigma.

3. Research focus

3.1 Research Purpose

This study aims to assess the progress made in addressing Child, Early, and Forced Marriage and Unions (CEFMU) in Timor-Leste since the 2017 research through a more extensive scope across multiple sampled municipalities. It will evaluate the effectiveness of interventions implemented over the past eight years by government institutions, civil society organizations, and development partners, while also exploring shifts in social norms, behaviours, and attitudes related to CEFMU. The research will examine the extent to which the recommendations from the 2017 study have been adopted and how national guidelines and legal frameworks on prevention and response have been implemented, particularly their impact on improving outcomes for women and girls.

The study adopts a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative and quantitative data collection. It will compare current findings with those from the 2017 qualitative study by revisiting and expanding key themes, while incorporating updated evidence through primary data collection and secondary data sources such as the Demographic and Health Survey (DHS), national census data, and sectoral reports. This approach will allow the research to identify patterns of change over time, gaps in implementation, and factors contributing to successful interventions.

Furthermore, the study will generate practical recommendations for policy development, advocacy, and programming. It aims to identify and map out effective, locally relevant approaches to reduce the prevalence of CEFMU and promote gender equality in Timor-Leste. The findings will support the government of Timor-Leste to strengthen child protection mechanisms and uphold children's rights—both girls and boys—as enshrined in national laws and international human rights instruments such as the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).

3.2 Research Questions

In line with Plan International's organizational values and ambitions, this research prioritizes a focus on children's rights, gender, and inclusion, and tries to understand the extent to which a project or The program is addressing the CEFMU in Timor-Leste and how a gender-transformative and inclusive approach is explicitly aimed at outcomes that improve child and youth rights and gender equality. Likewise, the Timor-Leste context reflected the gender inequalities that subordinate girls and deprive them of their rights and entitlements.

This research question will focus on:

1. Progress and Effectiveness of Interventions

- a. What progress has been made in reducing the prevalence of CEFMU in Timor-Leste since the 2017 research?
- b. How effective have past interventions been in preventing early and forced marriages?
- c. What are the remaining gaps and emerging trends in CEFMU in Timor-Leste?
- d. What types of approaches or intervention methods have been used, and how do their outcomes compare in terms of reducing CEFMU?

2. Leadership and Agency of Women and Girls

- a. How have women and girls been engaged as leaders in efforts to combat CEFMU?
- b. What barriers and enablers influence the ability of women and girls to challenge early and forced marriage practices?
- c. How can leadership among women and girls be further strengthened to sustain long-term change?
- d. To what extent young boys and men engagement and action eliminate this CEFM?

3. Intersection of Structural Factors

- a. How does access to education, economic opportunities, and political participation influence the likelihood of preventing CEFMU?
- b. How do cultural and social norms impact the decision-making power of girls and young women regarding marriage and family planning?
- c. What role do community and traditional leaders play in shaping attitudes toward CEFMU, and how can they be engaged more effectively?
- d. How do young men and men advocate for gender and prevent harmful practices?

4. Policy and Programmatic Implications

- a. How can research findings inform future policies and advocacy strategies to eliminate CEFMU in Timor-Leste?
- b. What opportunities exist to improve access to education, vocational training, and support services for girls at risk of early and forced marriage?
- c. How can government agencies, CSOs, and development partners strengthen multi-sectoral coordination to address CEFMU more effectively?

4. Users of Research

The findings of this research will be utilized by Plan International Timor-Leste as evidence to support advocacy efforts at both national and local levels. These efforts will focus on re-entry policies for adolescent mothers, the legal age of marriage, comprehensive education on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR), and the strengthening of existing child protection mechanisms.

To ensure the findings are effectively used, the consultant is expected to take necessary steps to maximize accessibility and usability. This includes ensuring that the research findings are communicated effectively to relevant audiences and stakeholders.

The primary users of this research are expected to be Plan International Timor-Leste staff, particularly those working in programming, advocacy, and campaign initiatives, who will use the insights to inform future interventions. Additionally, the findings will be shared externally with key stakeholders, including government institutions, academia, the private sector, other NGOs, INGOs, UN agencies, and the broader civil society network.

5. Methods for Data Collection and Analysis

This research will utilize a mixed-methods approach, combining both qualitative and quantitative data collection through primary and secondary sources. The specific data collection methods will be determined by the consultant based on the research objectives and key questions.

Plan International Timor-Leste requires the consultant to integrate gender-sensitive, inclusive, and safeguarding approaches throughout all stages of the research process, ensuring alignment with child protection principles.

Note: The consultant is expected to develop a detailed methodology outlining the approach for data collection, data management, and analysis as part of their proposal. This methodology must directly address the research questions and will be further refined once the research is underway.

5.1 Sample

The research will collect primary data from diverse groups to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the issues. The estimated sample size is as follows:

- a. **120 Girls and Young Mothers in Aileu, Ainaro, Dili, Manufahi, Baucau, Covalima, and Oecusse**
 - **Data Collection Method:** Individual in-depth interviews (IDIs) and participatory focus group discussions (FGDs), depending on sensitivity and context, and a brief **structured quantitative survey** to collect demographic and prevalence data (e.g., age at marriage, schooling status, access to SRHR).
 - **Question Themes:**
 - Qualitative:** Personal experiences with early/forced marriage, agency and decision-making, education access, access to SRHR information/services, perceptions of empowerment, roles in resisting CEFMU, and knowledge of rights.
 - Quantitative:** Age, education, marital status, age at first marriage, number of children, SRHR access, awareness of legal age of marriage.
 - **Inclusion Criteria:** Girls may be single, married, or previously married. Those selected will include both girls exposed to CEFMU and those not, for comparative insight.
 - **Sampling:** Purposive sampling, with assistance from local youth networks and NGOs, ensuring diversity in age (12–17, 18–24), marital status, and background.
- b. **100 Women (Mothers/Family Members) in Aileu, Ainaro, Dili, Manufahi, Baucau, and Covalima**
 - **Data Collection Method:** Mixed methods – structured surveys, focus group discussions (FGDs), and key informant interviews (KIIs)
 - **Question Themes:**
 - Quantitative:** Knowledge of legal age of marriage, perceptions of ideal marriage age, attitudes towards girls' education, and household decision-making patterns.
 - Qualitative:** Role in decision-making on girls' marriage, intergenerational views on CEFMU, gender norms, family pressures, and economic factors.
 - **Sampling:** Snowball and purposive sampling based on referrals through community structures, ensuring a range of socioeconomic statuses.

- c. 80 Young Men (Husbands/Boys and Men in the Community) in Aileu, Ainaro, Dili, Manufahi, Baucau, and Covalima
 - **Data Collection Method:** Mixed methods – structured surveys, FGDs, and semi-structured interviews.
 - **Question Themes:**
 - Quantitative:** Attitudes toward gender roles, acceptance of early marriage, exposure to gender-transformative campaigns.
 - Qualitative:** Male perspectives on marriage practices, gender roles, peer influence, involvement in prevention, and openness to gender-equitable attitudes.
 - **Sampling:** Purposeful engagement via youth groups, village leaders, or CSOs working with men and boys.
- d. 50 Key Stakeholders, including Traditional Leaders, Religious Leaders, Government Authorities, and other relevant stakeholders
 - **Data Collection Method:** Key Informant Interviews (KIs).
 - **Question Themes:**
 - Qualitative:** Policy implementation, community norms, past interventions, institutional challenges and opportunities, and their role in supporting girls' leadership and prevention strategies.
 - **Sampling:** Selected based on their role and relevance in CEFMU prevention and child protection efforts. A subset of stakeholders in selected municipalities will form the basis of in-depth case studies, combining qualitative interviews with review of local policies, action plans, and monitoring data to explore how local practices align with national standards and recommendations from the 2017 study.

The research will ensure gender-sensitive, inclusive, and child protection-focused approaches in sampling and data collection. The sample will be disaggregated according to Plan International's Minimum Beneficiary Disaggregation criteria, including Gender, Age groups, Socioeconomic background, and Disability status (where relevant). Additionally, for secondary data collection, the research will define clear inclusion criteria, such as: Types of sources (e.g., government reports, academic studies, NGO publications; Time period covered; Geographic focus. The consultant will refine the sample size and approach based on feasibility and research objectives.

5.2 Participant Selection and Recruitment

This research will involve girls, young mothers, women, young men, and various community groups, as well as government authorities, traditional and religious leaders, and other relevant stakeholders. The consultant will be responsible for outlining the recruitment and selection process for research participants, ensuring that it aligns with the research objectives and ethical considerations.

Plan International Timor-Leste and its partners can facilitate access to these groups where necessary. However, the consultant must clarify whether they will select and recruit respondents independently or rely on facilitation from Plan International and its partners.

The consultant is required to assess and mitigate potential risks associated with participant selection and engagement. This includes avoiding bias in participant selection (e.g., favoring one group over another) and ensuring ethical considerations when identifying vulnerable individuals, such as survivors of violence or young mothers. A gender-sensitive, inclusive, and safeguarding approach must be integrated throughout the research process to protect respondents and ensure meaningful participation.

5.3 Data Analysis

The research will adopt a mixed-methods approach, combining both quantitative and qualitative data analysis to provide a comprehensive understanding of Child, Early, and Forced Marriage and Unions (CEFMU) in Timor-Leste.

Quantitative data will be collected through structured surveys and analyzed using Microsoft Excel and SPSS (or similar statistical software). Descriptive statistics will summarize demographic data and the prevalence of CEFMU, while cross-tabulations and comparative analysis will be used to explore variations in child marriage rates across municipalities, age groups, gender, and other relevant factors. Specifically, the analysis will examine the percentage of girls married before the age of 18 and the impact of interventions aimed at reducing child marriage. This will include tracking changes over time and identifying patterns in relation to various demographic variables.

Qualitative data from key informant interviews (KIIs) and focus group discussions (FGDs) will be transcribed and thematically coded using NVivo, Atlas.ti, or a similar qualitative analysis tool. This will allow for the identification of common themes, narratives, and contextual factors that influence child marriage, such as socio-cultural norms, economic pressures, and the role of education and community interventions.

The analysis will also explore which types of interventions have been most effective in reducing child marriage rates, and will examine factors that influence these rates, including access to education, community awareness programs, legal frameworks, and the role of local leadership.

Triangulation of both quantitative and qualitative findings will be undertaken to enhance the validity and reliability of the results, drawing on multiple data sources and perspectives. All data will be disaggregated by gender, age, disability status, and location, in alignment with Plan International's Minimum Standards for Beneficiary Disaggregation and ethical data management principles.

6. Ethics and Child Protection

Plan International Timor-Leste is committed to ensuring that the rights, dignity, and safety of all individuals participating in data collection and analysis are respected and protected, in accordance with Plan International's Ethical MERL Framework and Child and Youth Safeguarding Policy.

All applicants must include in their proposal a detailed plan on how they will uphold ethical standards, safeguarding principles, and child protection throughout the research process. Specifically, the consultant(s) must outline how they will:

- Ensure appropriate, safe, and non-discriminatory participation of all stakeholders, with special attention to children, young mothers, and other vulnerable groups.
- Mitigate potential risks and harms related to participant selection and engagement
- Guarantee confidentiality and anonymity of all research participants, ensuring that data is collected, stored, and used ethically.

A gender-sensitive and inclusive approach must be integrated at all stages of the research to uphold ethical standards and protect the well-being of all respondents.

7. Key Deliverables

Deliverable	Format	Length	Due	Detail
Inception Report	Microsoft Word	15-20 pages	October 14, 2025	Includes detailed methodology, sampling, and work plan
First Draft Research Report	Microsoft Word and PowerPoint	30-40 pages	November 22, 2025	Includes preliminary findings and analysis
Final Research Report (including Executive Summary)	Microsoft Word and PDF	40-50 pages	November 25, 2025	Final report including analysis, conclusions, and recommendations
Final Data Collection Tools	Excel, SPSS, relevant apps	5-10 pages	November 1, 2025	Includes finalized survey, interview guides, and coding schemes
Raw Data (including transcripts)	Excel, SPSS	Variable	November 26, 2025	Includes all collected data and interview/transcription records
Other Communication Products for Dissemination	Microsoft Word	5-10 pages	November 26, 2025	Includes summaries, infographics, or any other media for wider dissemination

8. Timeline

This research will be carried out for 29 Working days, starting from 26 September – 26 November 2025 (Including internal matters).

Activity	Time	Days of Work	Responsible	Individuals Involved
Tendering (internal)	26 – 7 October 2025	12 Days	HR	PM, MERL, and HR
Background Checks and Contracting. Inception Call/ Inception Workshop (internal)	8 – 10 Oct 2025	3 Days	HR	PM and MERL
Submission of Inception Report/ Research Protocol	14 Oct 2025	1 Day	Consultant	PM and MERL
Preparations for Data Collection				
Develop tools	15 – 17 Oct 2025	1 Days	Consultant	PM and MERL
Ethics approval (internal)	26-7 Oct 2025	14 Days	MERL	PM and MERL
Tool translation	15 – 17 Oct 2025	1 Days	Consultant	PM and MERL
Field piloting	27 Oct 2025	1 Day	Consultant	PM and MERL
Tools finalization	28 Oct 2025	2 Days	Consultant	PM and MERL
Enumerator training	29 Oct – 30 Nov 2025	2 Days	Consultant	PM and MERL
Coordination (Internal)	15 Oct – 14 Nov 2025	5 Days	MERL	PM and MERL
Data Collection	3 – 14 Nov 2025	12 Days	Consultant	PM and MERL
Data Entry and Cleaning				
Data Analysis	17 – 19 Nov 2025	3 Days	Consultant	PM and MERL
Validation of findings with key stakeholders and respondents & feedback incorporation	21 Nov 2025	1 Days	Consultant	PM and MERL
Submission of Draft	22 Nov 2025	1 Day	Consultant	PM and MERL
Submission of Second Draft	23 Nov 2025	1 Day	Consultant	PM and MERL
Submission of Final Report	25 Nov 2025	1 Days	Consultant	PM and MERL
Submission of Other Deliverables	26 Nov 2025	1 Days	Consultant	PM and MERL
Management Response and Action Plan (Internal)	27 Nov 2025	1 Days	MERL	PM, MERL, and E-CMT
Research launching on 16 days of Activism to Ending GBV	25 Nov 2025	1 Day	Consultant	PM, MERL, and E-CMT

This schedule assumes a start in October 2025 and proceeds logically from one phase to the next. Adjustments can be made depending on the consultant's specific availability and project dynamics.

9. Budget

The proposed budget should be realistic and aligned with the scope of work, timeline, and deliverables. Applicants are expected to submit a detailed financial proposal with the amount in US Currency in the application. (Include the travel cost, fee for consultant, tax).

Milestone	Detail	Amount to be Paid (%)	Expected Timeframe
Contract sign	The consultant will sign a contract with Plan International for the first period	N/A	1 Day
Literacy review and develop tools	Start with a literacy review, and tools for this research will be shared with Plan Timor-Leste, and to be approved by the Country Director	20%	2 Days to prepare and 1 Day for presentation with the Plan Management team
Site Survey	Consultants are required to visit the locations to obtain information	N/A	3 weeks in the fields
Preliminary report	Preliminary reports will be shared with CMT, GMPTL, INDDICA, SEJD, and SEI	20%	a week after the field's visit
Draft Report	The consultant will share the draft report to get comments from the Plan Timor-Leste team	30%	One day after the presentation of the preliminary report.
Presentation on Final Report	Final comment and feedback from the Plan Timor-Leste team will elaborate on the final report and will be shared with the Plan Timor-Leste team	N/A	1-day presentation

10. Research Collaboration

Plan International Timor-Leste will collaborate with the government, such as GMPTL, INDDICA, MSSl, SEI, and MJDAC, when Plan Timor-Leste has hired a consultant to conduct this research in the municipalities of Aileu, Ainaro, Covalima, Baucau, Ermera, Liquica, and Dili, which are identified by Plan International. Additionally, Plan International Timor-Leste will receive support from Plan International's regional offices and the CEFMU (Child, Early, and Forced Marriage and Unions) working group at the local, national, regional levels and Global level. This support will involve experts in the relevant research areas from other countries as well, ensuring a comprehensive and informed approach to the study.

11. Expected Qualifications

Academic qualification:

The expert must hold at least a bachelor's degree in a relevant field, such as development studies, social and political sciences, education, or another related field. A supplementary qualification in Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) would be considered an asset.

Technical competencies and experience requirements:

- A minimum of five years of experience working in the development sector.
- Proven experience conducting similar research in the field of girls' rights, gender-based violence, or child protection.
- Strong ability to meet deadlines and work efficiently under pressure.
- Demonstrated expertise in issues related to violence against girls, girls' rights, gender-based violence, and gender equality.
- Knowledge of the women's rights situation in Timor-Leste is highly advantageous.
- Experience in child-sensitive and gender-sensitive interviewing, with a strong understanding of ethics when conducting research with women and children.
- At least five years of experience in gender-sensitive programming.
- Proven experience in liaising and coordinating with national government bodies, civil society organizations, and other stakeholders.
- Excellent analytical, communication, consultation, and dialogue skills.
- At least five years of experience in human rights issues.
- Ability to respond promptly and appropriately to feedback and queries.
- Proficiency in writing high-quality, clear, and concise reports in English.
- Excellent written and spoken English and Tetun language skills.

12. Contact

For more details on this information, please contact:

Name : Fatima Estrela Soares
Position : Acting Country Program
Email : Fatima.Souares@plan-international.org

Name : Emilia Quintão Falcão
Position : Monitoring, Evaluation, Research and Learning Manager
Email : Emilia.Falcao@plan-international.org

13. Applications

Interested applicants should provide a proposal covering the following aspects:

- Detailed response to the TOR
- Proposed methodology
- Ethics and child safeguarding approaches, including any identified risks and associated mitigation strategies
- Proposed timelines
- CVs
- Example of previous work
- Detailed budget, including daily fee rates, expenses, etc.

For you note: If you succeed in this interview process you will be asked to submit the Inception report.

Please send queries and applications to Plan International Timor-Leste

Email: PlanTL.Jobs@plan-international.org or by hand to Plan International offices in Dili (Avenida Nu'u Laran No. 20 Bairro dos Grilhos, near Xanana Sport Centre, opposite CNRT Office).

The deadline for applying is October 7, 2025
The deadline for submitting the final report will be TBC

APPROVED