



# YOUTH

## SUMMARY OF THE THEMATIC REPORT

TIMOR-LESTE POPULATION & HOUSING CENSUS 2015







## Introduction

Youth: Persons aged 15-24  
Adolescent: Persons aged 15-19

The analytical report on youth combines findings from the 2015 DHS and Census. It relates to sexual and reproductive health from the recent 2016 Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) to provide an overview of the situation and range of issues faced by young people in Timor-Leste today.

The vision of the National Youth Policy is for young people to be **“healthy, educated, competitive, active and responsible citizens, who are proud to be Timorese.”**

The policy outlines five priority intervention areas: Education; Healthy lifestyle; Employment and employability; Civic participation; Violence and crime. This brief addresses three of these priority areas.

Issues facing young people include:

*Barriers to completing secondary school education* : Lack of a safe and high-quality learning environment.

*Difficulty in getting the right knowledge and skills*: To strengthen their leadership capacity and promote a healthy lifestyle.

*Early marriage and teenage pregnancy*. Has significant health implications for young women and leads to them leaving school early.

*A lack of information and services related to sexual health*. Leaves young people at risk of contracting and transmitting Sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and HIV.

*Risks to health*: High rates of smoking and traffic accidents are a major cause of injury and death for young people.

*A lack of employment opportunities and skills*. And a lack of confidence to compete for jobs.

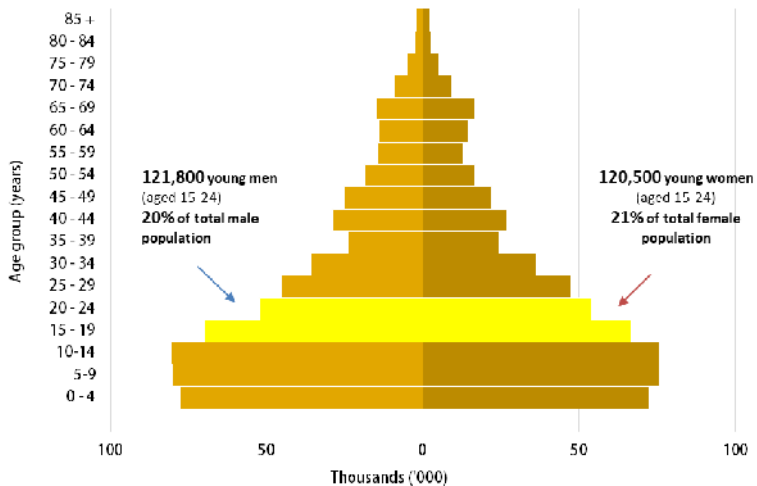
*Barriers to participating in public life and decision making*. Limited engagement in the democratic process, development programs and implementation of policies and programs designed to address youth issues.



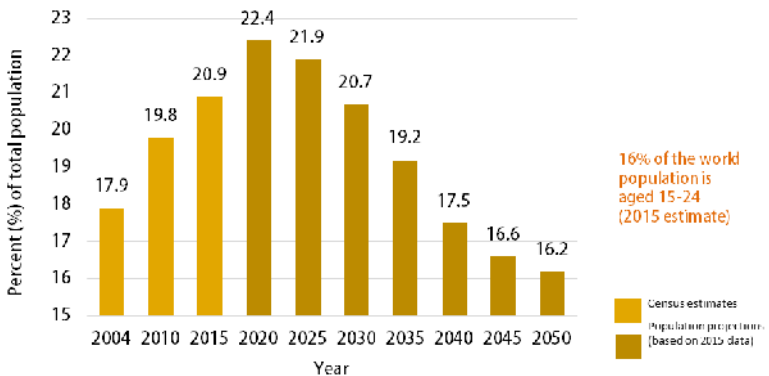
Timor-Leste has a young population. In 2015, youth comprise 20% of the total population (males: 20%; females 21%).

The youth population (as a proportion of the total population) has been increasing over the last decade. In 2015, there were more than 242,000 young people (122,000 men and 121,000 women) comprising around 20% of the total Timorese population. The youth population is estimated to initially rise and then decline to around 16% of the total population.

Population of Timor-Leste by age group and sex, 2015



Youth population as a proportion of the total population, 2004 – 2050



The highest concentration of young people is found in Dili (72,000; 30%), 25,500 are in Ermera and almost 24,000 in Bacau.

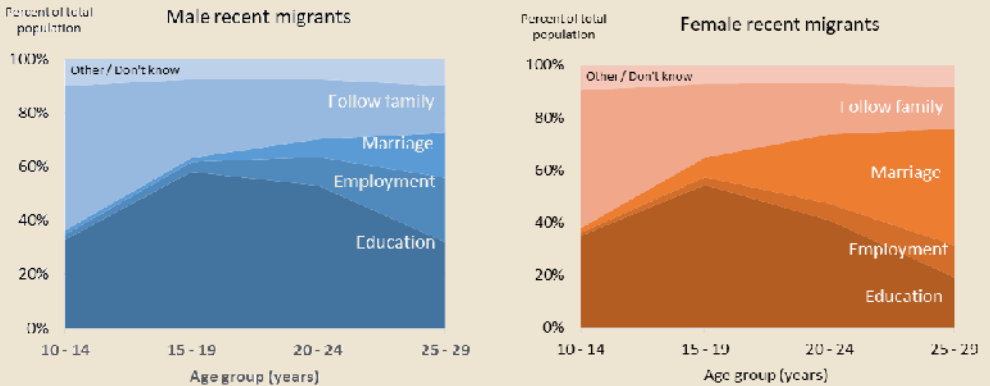


## Young people on the move

A large proportion of young people are internal migrants: *they were born in one Suco but, at the time of the 2015 census, resided in another*. Only 5% of children aged 10-14 years have migrated. However, by the time they reach the age of 30, around one quarter of Timorese have migrated for one reason or another (23.9% of men aged 25-29 and 25.5% of women aged 25-29).

The reasons for migrating vary considerably by age and between the sexes. At younger ages, the reasons are mainly to follow family or for education. As age increases, women are more likely to migrate for marriage, and men for employment.

Reasons for migration, by sex and age, 2015 Census



## Becoming independent

- ⇒ By age 20, 44% of women and 53% of men no longer live with their mothers
- ⇒ By ages 30-34, 56% of men are household heads and by their late 30s 76% of men are household heads
- ⇒ Only 13% of women are household heads by their late 40s

## Early marriage and Childbearing

The legal age of marriage in Timor-Leste is 17 years old. Marriage before the age of 18 puts an end to education for young people, especially girls, limiting their opportunities. Early childbearing risks the health of mother and baby, and increases the fertility rate.

A small number of teenage girls and boys are married or living with their partners before they reach age 18: 1,000 boys and 1,900 girls (1.3% of boys and 2.7% of girls aged less than 17).

Child marriage is more common for girls in Oecussi (8.7%), Covalima (8.1%), Manatuto (7.4%) and Manufahi (6.8%). For boys, teenage marriage is more common in Covalima (4.0%) and Manatuto (3.3%).

In 2015, around 5% of women aged 15-19 have given birth - down from 6.3% in 2010.

More than a third (34.5%) of women in their early 20s have given birth, down from 41.5% in 2010. More women are staying in school increasing their age of marriage and delaying their first birth.

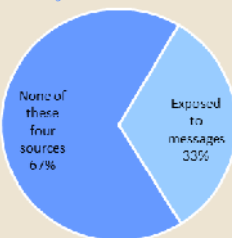
## Sexual and reproductive health

The sexual and reproductive health of young people is an important priority for the future, but young women lack knowledge about their own reproductive cycle and fertile period. Only 3.8% of women aged 15-19 and 7.8% aged 20-24 years are aware of when in their cycle they are likely to fall pregnant as compared to 8.4% of women aged 15-49.

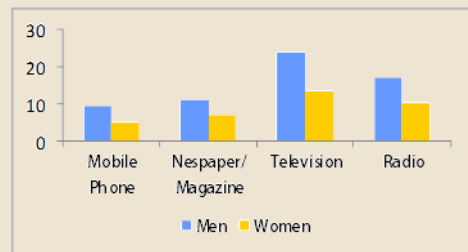
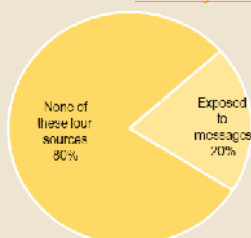
On average, 25% of women and 38% of men aged 15-49 years have received family planning messages through the media. Among youth, only one in five women and 33% of men are getting family planning messages.

Exposure to family planning messages among youth, by sex and type of media, 2016 DHS

Male youth



Female youth



## Awareness of STIs and HIV

47% of women and 66% of men aged 15-49 and 51% of women and 64% of men aged 15-24 have heard of HIV/AIDS. However, only 10% of women and 16% of men aged 15-19 have a comprehensive knowledge of HIV (how it is transmitted, etc.). Therefore, comprehensive knowledge of HIV is low, with only 7.7% of young women and 14.6% of young men aware that a healthy-looking person can have HIV and that HIV cannot be transmitted by mosquito bites.

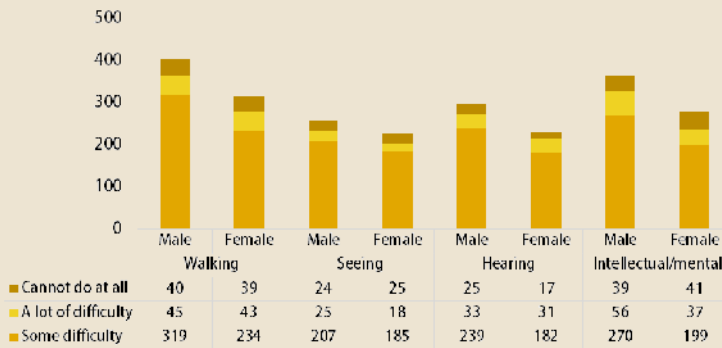
## Young people with a disability

Youth with a disability is a target group of the National Youth Policy (2016), with specific interventions related to employment and civic participation.

The census collects data that can be used to identify young people with a disability and compare their situation with the rest of the population.

The functional areas measured through the census are prone to deterioration with age and so disability is most commonly found among older age groups. Among the youth population, less than 1% reported some form of difficulty with walking, seeing, hearing or intellectual/mental condition.

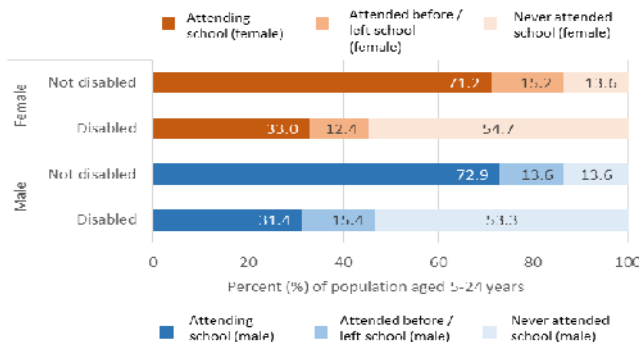
Young men aged 15-24 are more likely to have some form of difficulty or disability than young women. The most common form of difficulty is walking: 404 young men and 316 young women. Intellectual disabilities are the second most common disability: 365 young men and 277 young women aged 15-24.



Form and severity of difficulty reported by the youth population (aged 15-24 years), 2015 Census

The census provides the opportunity to compare the education and employment status of young people with a disability to other young people.

Disabled children and young people are disadvantaged when it comes to education. They are less likely to be attending school than the population who are not disabled. More than 70% of girls and young women aged 5-24 years without a disability are still attending school compared to only one third (33%) of those with a disability. More than half (54.7%) of girls and young women who have a disability have never attended school compared to 14% of girls and women with no disability. The situation is much the same for boys and young men. Disabled children are clearly not getting sufficient access to school or the special education they need.



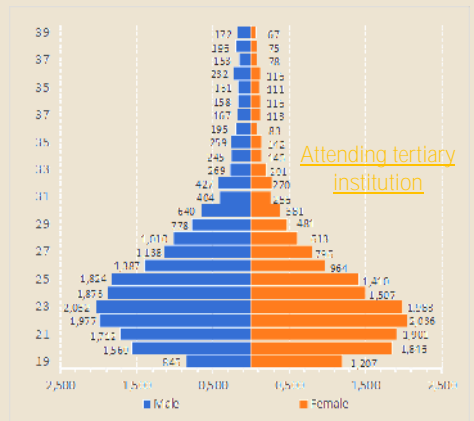
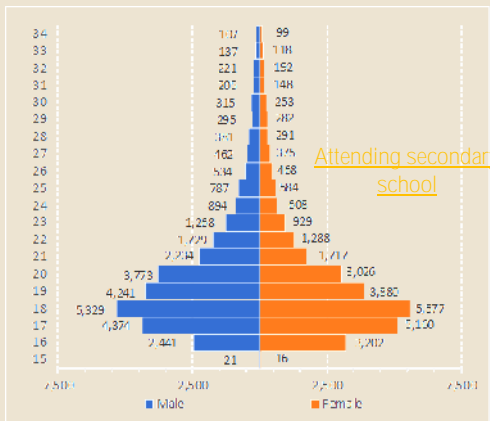
Disability and school attendance by sex, population aged 5-24 years, 2015 Census



# YOUNG PEOPLE IN EDUCATION

The youth population (*aged 15-24 years*) are at the stage of their life where they may be attending secondary school, undertaking a tertiary education, or have exited the education system to pursue employment or start a family. There are many secondary school and tertiary students outside of the youth age bracket as shown in the graphs below.

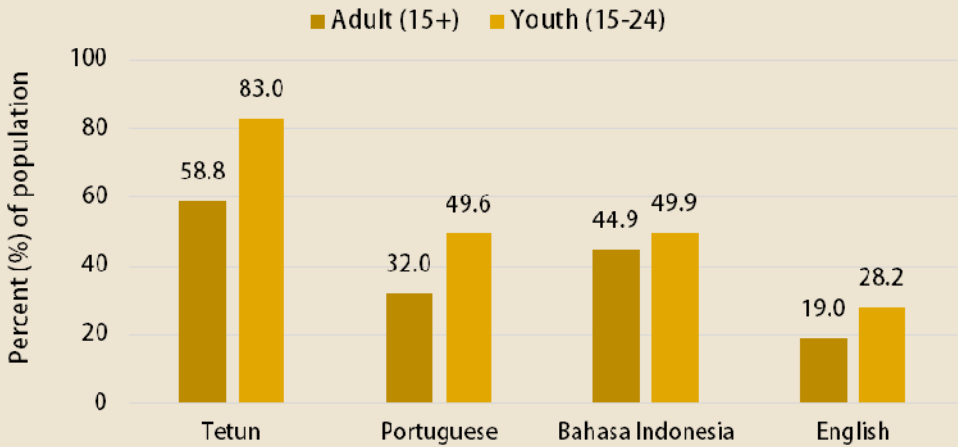
Population pyramid, by age and sex of people attending secondary and tertiary education, 2015 Census



Literacy has been rapidly improving in Timor-Leste. The adult literacy rate is 68.7% for men and 60.2% for women. By comparison, the youth literacy rate is much higher at 84.7 for young men and 84.1 for young women. Tetun is the most widely used of the four working languages for both adults and young people, followed by Bahasa Indonesia, Portuguese and then English. There is no gender gap in the youth literacy rate, a significant improvement over the adult literacy rate which shows that a greater proportion of men are literate than women for all four languages.



## Adult (15+) and youth (15-24) literacy rates, 2015 Census



Since one in five young people are illiterate and slightly more than one in ten (11.7%) have never attended school. The Government should:

- ⇒ Ensure the education system reaches all young people and quality education provides the functional skills and knowledge needed for their future.
- ⇒ Provide employment-oriented learning programs to help bridge the gap between formal education and paid work to provide young people with the confidence, skills and work experience to make them more marketable to employers.

## Young people and work

Most young men and women are neither employed nor unemployed because they are still in education or training. The labour force participation rate for young people aged 15-24 is 25.9% for men and 21.7% for women. These rates are much higher for the total working population: 67.9% of men and 46.2% of women aged 15 and above are in the labour force.

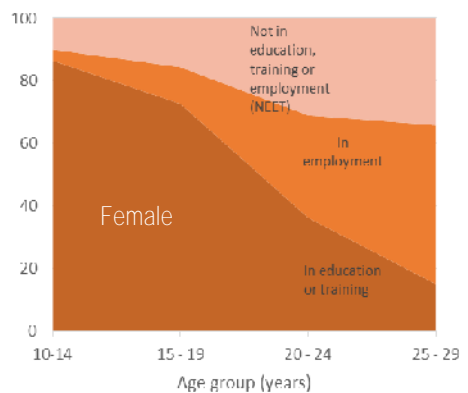
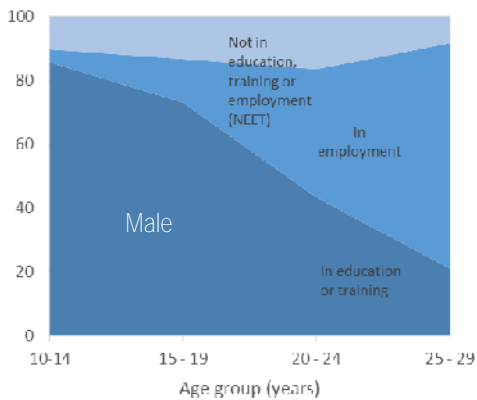
## Young people in vulnerable situations

Unemployment is a major issue for young people, particularly men: 4% of male youth and 14% of the male youth labour force were out of work and for female youth 2% were out of work. In total, 23% of unemployed men are young men; and 39% are unemployed women are young women.

The same proportion of adolescent boys and girls are in education or training (73%), but slightly more young men are in employment than women (14% and 12% respectively). The reverse is true for those in neither education, training nor employment (NEET): 13% of adolescent men compared to 15% of adolescent women.



Population in education, training or in employment, or NEET, by sex and age, 2015 Census



Working as an own-account worker or contributing family worker is considered to be a vulnerable form of employment. In urban areas, the vulnerable employment rate is 36.5% for the population aged 15-64 years. The rate is higher among adolescents in urban areas: women (91.5%) and men (90.6%).

The urban vulnerable employment rate is 44% for young adults (aged 20-24 years). The overall urban youth vulnerable employment rate of 53.9% (50.8% for young men and 57.8% for young women).

The Government should support young people to develop their skills in applying for jobs, being interviewed, creating their own businesses, and interacting appropriately with supervisors and other people in the work setting. Programmes should be designed to target current and anticipated skills shortages.





## Timor-Leste Population & Housing Census 2015

<https://www.mof.gov.tl/?lang=en>

<http://www.statistics.gov.tl/>

<http://timor-leste.unfpa.org/en>