# FERTILITY AND NUPTUALITY SUMMARY REPORT

2022 TIMOR-LESTE POPULATION AND HOUSING CENSUS

# *Introduction*

The 2022 Timor-Leste Population and Housing Census (PHC) was the fourth census to be conducted after independence restoration in 2004. The census was conducted by the Government through the then General Directorate of Statistics under the Ministry of Finance.

The objective of the Timor-Leste Population and Housing Census 2022 was among other things to produce reliable statistical information on the size, composition, characteristics and spatial distribution of the resident population of Timor-Leste.

The census also provided fertility indicators including levels, patterns, and trends in both current and completed fertility, the age at which women begin childbearing and teenage childbearing.

There census also provided indicators on marital status of the population, age at marriage and marriage patterns

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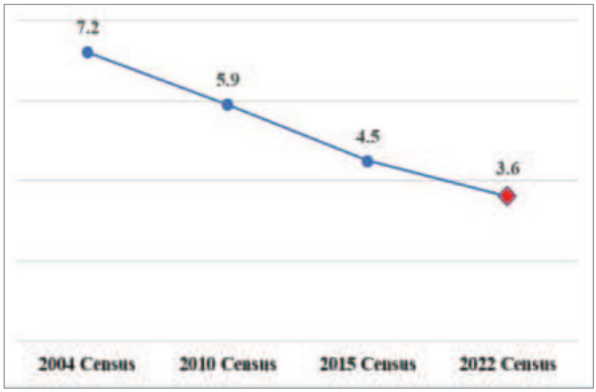
# *Total Fertility Rate continues to decline in Timor-Leste*

Total fertility rate is the average number of children a woman would have by the end of the childbearing age, if the current age specific fertility rates would remain constant.

The 'own children method' of estimating total fertility rate shows that in Timor-Leste, a woman on average will give birth to 3.6 children in her reproductive lifetime.

**Trends in Total fertility Rate 2004 to 2022**



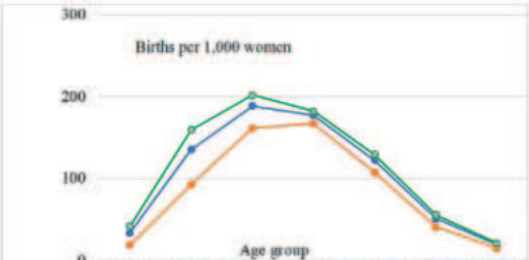

Since 2015, TFR has declined from 4.5 to 3.6 in the recent census. During this period, total fertility rate declined by one child.

Over the past 18 years TFR has declined from 7.2 in 2004 to 3.6, showing a decline of around 3 children woman during the period.

# *Total Fertility Rate in urban and rural areas*

Total Fertility Rate in urban areas is 3.0, which is lower than rural areas at 4.0. This means that a woman in urban areas on average is expected to have one child less that a woman in urban areas, with the prevailing age pattern of fertility.

## Age Specific Fertility Rate- Total, Urban and Rural




| | 15-19 | 20-24 | 25-29 | 30-34 | 35-39 | 40-44 | 45-49 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Total | 34 | 135 | 189 | 177 | 122 | 51 | 19 |
| Urban | 19 | 93 | 162 | 167 | 108 | 41 | 15 |
| Rural | 42 | 160 | 202 | 182 | 130 | 56 | 21 |

Fertility among all women peaks at age 25-29 with 189 births per 1,000 There is variation by rural and urban areas. The age specific fertility rates for rural areas are higher than for urban areas at all ages. The biggest gap of fertility rates is for women in the age group 20-24. In this age group, the fertility rates of rural areas exceed urban areas by 67 births per 1,000 women In rural areas, the highest fertility rates are experienced by women in the age group 25-29, that is 202 births per 1,000 women. In urban areas, the highest fertility rates are experienced by women in the age group 30-34 , that is 182 births per 1,000 women.

Overall, the age pattern of fertility for urban and rural areas follows a similar pattern. There is rapid increase in fertility from teenage years to mid-20s , and it starts to decline steadily from age 30-34.

# Completed fertility

In 2022, the average number of children ever born among older women age 45-49 is 5.0

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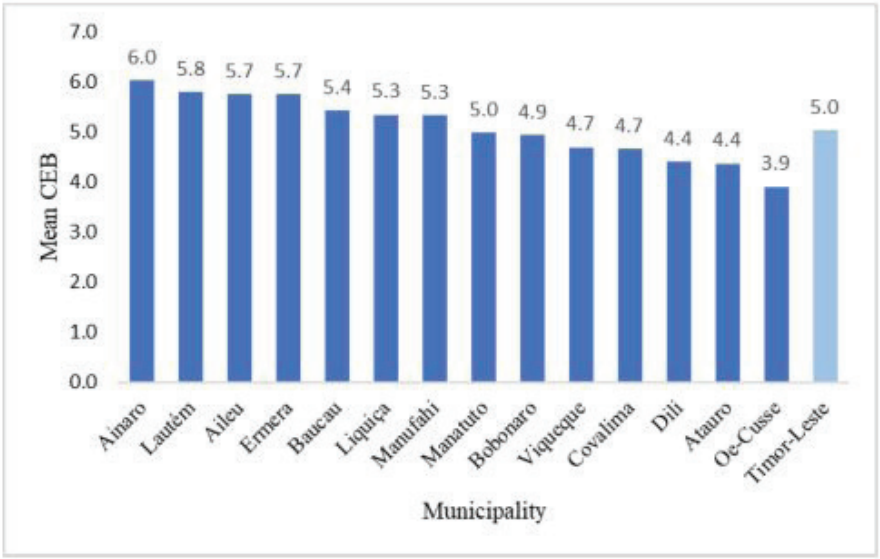
## Mean children ever born by Municipality




Notable variation at municipality level with highest completed fertility of 6 children in Ainaro and lowest in Oecussi with an average of 3.9 children ever born per woman.

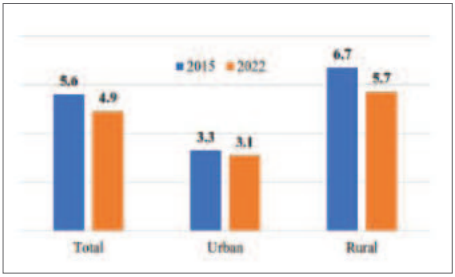
# *Teenage childbearing*

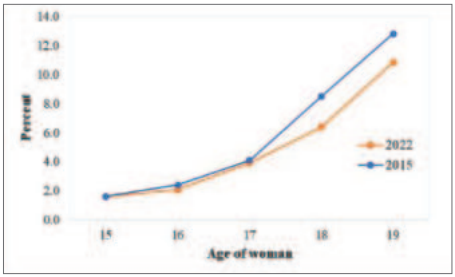
In Timor-Leste, 4.9% of young women age 15-19 have already started childbearing. In 2015, slightly more teenagers had ever given birth (5.6 %)

Teenage childbearing is higher in rural areas (5.7%) than urban areas (3.1%) percent of teenage women in urban areas have started childbearing

Most of the decline in teenage fertility between 2015 and 2022 was in rural areas from 6.7% to 5.7%

## Teenage childbearing by single age, 2015 and 2022




Between 2015 and 2022, the decline in proportion of teenagers that have ever given birth is mostly at ages 18 and 19

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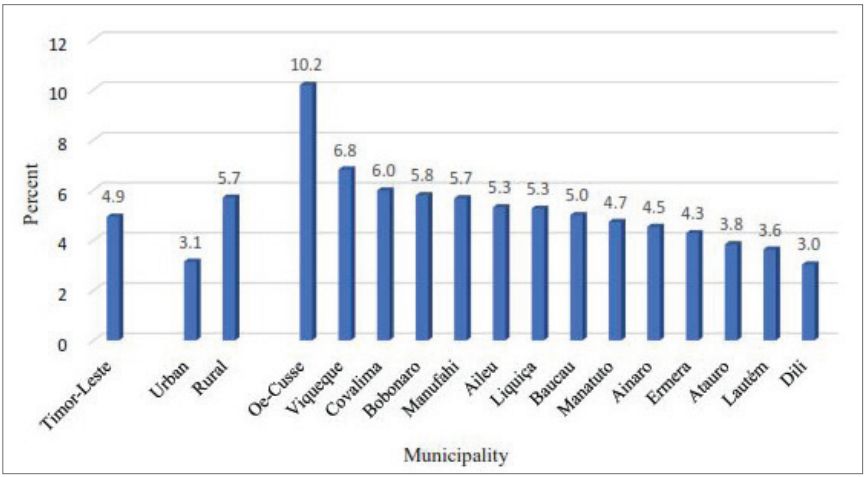
# Teenage childbearing

In 2022, the percentage of teenage women had ever given birth was 4.9%. It is lower than 2015 when 5.9 percent had ever given birth.

## Percent of women age 15-19 who have begun childbearing by municipality

Notable variation at municipality level with highest teenage fertility in Oecussi at 10.2% and lowest in Dili at 3.0%




## Fertility rate for women age 15-19

| | |
|---|---|
| **Urban** | 19 births per 1,000 women |
| **Rural** | 42 births per 1,000 women |
| **Timor-Leste** | 34 births per 1,000 women |

The fertility rate among women age 15-19 in Timor-Leste is 34 births per 1,000 women. Fertility in rural areas is twice as high as urban areas (42 births compared to 19 births per 1,000 women).

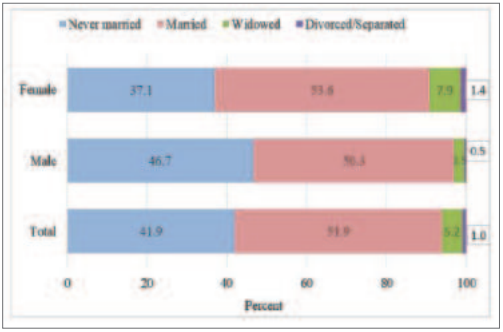
In 2015, the fertility for women age 15-19 was higher, at 54 births per 1,00 women.

# *Marital status of persons age 15 years and older*

Marriage marks exposure to childbearing, making it an important determinant in fertility. More than half (51.3%) of the population age 15 years + is married. About 6% of the population that was previously married is either widowed, divorced or separated.

The percentage of population that was married in 2015 was slightly higher at 54.6 % while percentage of the population that was married before but is now widowed, divorced or separated has remained the same.

## Marital status by sex




There are slightly more women that are married than men (53.6% vs 50.3%), a decline from 2015 where 56.0% of women and 53.2% of men were married.

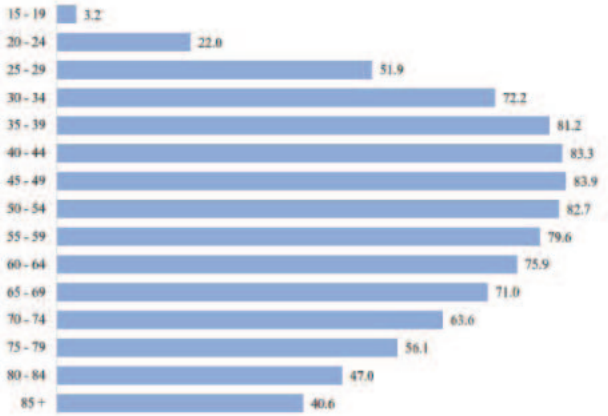
Among women, 7.5% are widowed, compared with only 2.5% of the men that are widowed. Compared to 2015, more women (6.8%) were widowed.

More men than women are still single, because they have never been married; 46.7% compared with women 32.1%. However, compared to 2015, the proportion never married for both men and women was lower (35.1% and 42.9% respectively)

## Proportion married by age

The proportion of the total population that is married rapidly rises from early 20s. The proportion of people that are married rapidly rises from 22.0 % for among those age 20-24 to 72.2% among those age 30-34. The proportion married peaks at age group 45- 49, with 89.9 % that are married.

## Proportion married in total population by five-year age-group



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# *Singulate mean age at marriage has not changed since 2015*

The average age at first marriage for Timor-Leste is 27.0 years. Compared to 2015 census, it has remained the same. There is variation by sex with males having a higher average age at marriage of almost 29 years compared with 25.0 years for females. Men delay to enter marriage by 4 years when compared to the age at which the women get married.

## Singulate mean age at marriage, 2022

The average age at first marriage is higher in urban areas (28.2 years) than rural areas (26.4 years), a difference of almost two years The results further shows that in men in rural areas on average marry 1.5 years earlier than men in urban areas. As for females, those in rural areas marry 2.2 years earlier than women in urban areas.

| Place or residence | Singulate Mean Age at marriage |
|---|---|
| **Urban** | |
| Male | 29.8 |
| Female | 26.7 |
| Total | 28.2 |
| **Rural** | |
| Male | 28.3 |
| Female | 24.5 |
| Total | 26.4 |

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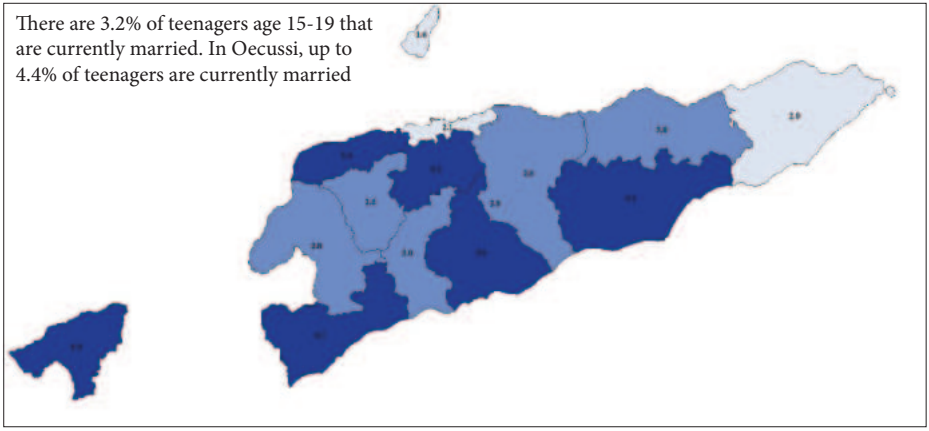
## Teenage marriage

There are 3.2% of teenagers age 15-19 that are currently married. In Oecussi, up to 4.4% of teenagers are currently married



## Highlights

**Total Fertility Rate** on average, a woman will give birth to 3.6 children in her reproductive lifetime, a decline from 4.5 recorded in 2015 census

**Teenage fertility** 4.9 percent of teenage women had ever given birth from 5.9 percent in 2015

**Singulate mean age at marriage** in Timor-Leste is 27 years
**Marriage is common** , 80 percent of the population in mid-forties is married
**More girls than boys are married**, 5.5 percent of girls age 15-19 compared to 1.1 percent of boys of the same age.

## Policy Recommendations

- The need for government to promote family planning especially among young women to reduce unplanned pregnancies
- The need for improved youth friendly reproductive health services suitable for the young women
- The need to intensify sexuality education among the youths to raise awareness on negative consequences of early childbearing
- The need for more research to understand the disparities in fertility and marriage patterns
- The government needs to improve the civil registration of births , a source for more frequent statistics on fertility and marriages

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