



Inisiativa
Spotlight
Atu elimina violéncia
Kontra feto ho labarik-feto



Spotlight Initiative to eliminate violence against women & girls in Timor-Leste

Social Norms Study Report



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Acronyms and abbreviations

BCC	Behaviour Change Communication
CSE	Comprehensive Sexuality Education
DHS	Demographic and Health Survey
EVAWG	Ending/Eliminating Violence against Women and Girls
EU	European Union
FGD	Focus Group Discussions
GEM	Gender-Equitable Men (scale)
ICT	Information Communication Technology
MEAL	Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, and Learning
UN	United Nations

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Introduction

This report presents findings from a study on social norms in Timor Leste, 2021. The study is part of the Spotlight Initiative to Eliminate Violence Against Women and Girls. The Spotlight Initiative is a global joint European Union (EU) and United Nations (UN) program.

This qualitative study relates to attitudes to violence under Result Area 3 of the Spotlight Initiative concerning the prevention of violence. The study also responds to interest from the Ministry of Education over the possible impacts of pornography on young people. The Ministry raised concerns to the Spotlight team over pornography being increasingly available and accessible to young people via digital information communication technologies (ICTs), including smart phones.

Data collection for this study was completed in-country by Belun in Bobonaro, Ermera, and Viqueque, Spotlight Timor-Leste's three municipalities of focus. A total of 24 focus group discussions (FGDs) were completed with women and men with and without disability. FGDs with older female and male community members explored issues concerning household finance and sexual relations. FGDs with female and male youth focused on pornography. Data analysis was conducted by the Nossal Institute team in Melbourne. In this report we describe the approach used in the study, including limitations, and present key findings from the analysis.

Background

Violence against women and girls

Over their lifetimes, 59% of women in Timor-Leste have experienced either physical or sexual violence perpetrated by their domestic or intimate partner, while 14% have experienced non-partner sexual violence.¹ Societal attitudes towards violence against women persist in Timor-Leste and perpetuate violence against women and girls.¹ Justification of domestic violence remains high with 74% of women and 53% of men (aged 15-49 years) agreeing with a least one justification for a husband hitting or beating his wife.² According to the Gender-Equitable Men (GEM Scale), that measures attitudes towards gender norms, 61% of women and men believe that a woman should tolerate violence in order to keep her family together.¹

The Spotlight Initiative aims to include both women and men with and without disability. Women and men with disability were included in this study, including young people with disability. Although questions on disability were included in the 2016

¹ The Asia Foundation. 2016. Understanding Violence against Women and Children in Timor-Leste: Findings from the Nabilan Baseline Study. <https://asiafoundation.org/publication/understanding-violence-women-children-timor-leste-findings-main-report/>

² General Directorate of Statistics, Ministry of Finance/Timor Leste, and ICF. 2018. Timor-Leste Demographic and Health Survey 2016. <http://dhsprogram.com/pubs/pdf/FR329/FR329.pdf>

Demographic and Health Survey, data on violence against women and girls has not been disaggregated and analysed by disability.³

The Disability Monograph based on the 2010 Population and Housing Census finds approximately one in every five households in Timor-Leste include a person with disability.⁴ Also that over 50% of people with disability in Timor-Leste had never been to school. Illiteracy rates were higher in comparison to people without disability and 39% of people with disability under 20 years old were unemployed. Violence against women with disability in Timor-Leste is estimated to be over two times higher than against women without disability.⁵ This may be a conservative estimate. In comparison, reported violence against people with disability in the United States is 4-10 times higher than for people without disability.⁶

Social norms

This study explored social norms to inform the development of a behaviour change communication (BCC) strategy and revisions to comprehensive sexuality education (CSE) by the Ministry of Education. The study also contributes to Spotlight Initiative monitoring, evaluation, accountability, and learning (MEAL) activities related to changing norms, behaviours, and attitudes among program participants.

In this study, social norms are understood as:

A rule of behaviour that people in a group conform to because they believe:

- a. Most other people in the group do conform to it (i.e. it is typical behaviour)
- AND
- b. Most other people in the group believe they ought to conform to it (i.e. it is appropriate behaviour).⁷

In short, social norms inform people what behaviour is acceptable and unacceptable within their peer group or community. An individual's understanding of social norms is based on what they observe most people doing and what they think most people

³ Ibid

⁴ National Statistics Directorate and UNFPA. 2012. 2010 Timor-Leste Population and Housing Census: Disability Monograph https://www.statistics.gov.tl/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/Disability_Monograph.pdf

⁵ The Asia Foundation. 2016. Understanding Violence against Women and Children in Timor-Leste: Findings from the Nabilan Baseline Study. Summary Report. <https://asiafoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/Nabilan-summary-report-03-06-2016.pdf>

⁶ WHO. 2011. World Report on Disability. <https://www.who.int/teams/noncommunicable-diseases/sensory-functions-disability-and-rehabilitation/world-report-on-disability>

⁷ Adapted from Bicchieri, 2006 and Heise, 2013 in Alexander-Scott M, Bell M and Holden J. 2016. Shifting social norms to tackle violence against women and girls (VAWG). Violence Against Women and Girls Helpdesk. Department for International Development, London. p.9.(emphasis in original).

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/507845/Shifting-Social-Norms-tackle-Violence-against-Women-Girls3.pdf

consider to be acceptable. Social norms can result in both positive and negative behaviour.

Social norms contribute to sustaining violence against women and girls and are an obstacle to change. However, social norms do not exist and operate in isolation. Social norms are part of a 'social ecology'⁸ alongside personal attitudes; an individual's agency, self-interest, and beliefs; access to, and control over, resources; and structural factors, such as legislative and institutional frameworks. This implies that interventions that target social norms in isolation are unlikely to change what people do.

Work by UNICEF also recognises that a range of individual, social, and environmental factors influence the decisions people make and the actions they take.⁹ For example, we know it is not enough to provide people with the correct information and expect this to 'automatically translate into the [desired or intended] "logical choice"'.¹⁰ Efforts to generate positive behaviour change need to be holistic and to consider social norms; what other people think and do matters and have influence. At the same time, we need to consider how an individual's preferences and attitudes influence their choices. We also need to consider external factors, such as how economic necessity can influence decisions and behaviour.

The findings from this study illustrate some of these challenges. Although we refer to social norms, the driving factors behind the behaviours discussed are not always so neatly defined. Responses from the focus group discussions do provide insights on what people think is acceptable in the eyes of others. At the same time, other responses knowingly contradict wider societal views and demonstrate agency and the prioritising of individual attitudes and preferences. This was particularly evident in discussions of pornography with young people. At other times, it is the interest of the immediate household that is prioritised. This was evident in discussions of social norms with the wider community.

Pornography

The second component of the research focused on pornography and its consumption, or viewing, by young people. The Ministry of Education in Timor-Leste is concerned that pornography has become increasingly available and accessible to young people through the increased use of smart phones.

The literature reminds that pornography has existed for centuries and across cultures.¹¹ Finding an adequate legal definition of pornography has proven challenging.¹² For the

⁸ Ibid. p.7

⁹ Petit V, Zalk T N. 2019. Everybody wants to belong: A practical guide to tackling and leveraging social norms in behaviour change programming. UNICEF, Amman. p.12

<https://www.unicef.org/mena/media/4891/file/MENA-C4D-Report-May2019.pdf.pdf>

¹⁰ Ibid. p.12

¹¹ Sprague, C. 2021. Pornography. Salem Press Encyclopedia of Health. New York.

¹² Lindgren J. 1993. Defining pornography. American Law Register. Vol 141 No 3.

purposes of this study, pornography is understood as material designed to sexually stimulate or arouse a feeling of sexual desire.^{12,13} Materials may include images, videos, or literature. Deliberately, participants in this study were not presented with a definition of pornography. Instead, what participants understood as pornography was explored. These understandings are presented in the findings chapter.

A recent review of studies of the impacts of viewing online pornography on young people presents a range of findings.¹⁴ These include pornography consumption being linked to sexual dysfunction among young people, such as low libido and difficulty orgasming. Also, that viewing pornography may lead to young people having frequent casual sex. However, other studies suggest the reverse, including that Millennials are in fact having less sex than previous generations. Importantly for this study, there is a significant body of work examining whether consuming pornography leads to sexual or other violence.

There is clear concern about the relationship between pornography, which is targeted towards male consumers in the main, and violence against women and girls. There is evidence that suggests frequent consumption of pornography can result in the consumer having more aggressive attitudes and negative gender attitudes.¹⁵ Aggressive attitudes have been noted in both male and female consumers. Other studies have shown low levels of violence associated with pornography consumption.¹⁶ Research into whether there is a direct causal link between consuming pornography and increased violence are inconclusive.^{15,17} There are multiple root causes of violence and variations between individuals.

Although pornography is increasingly accessed via smart phones today, a large study of online access in Europe and the United States found no increase in overall pornography consumption since the widespread use of smart phones.¹⁸ That there was no clear increase in consumption despite the increased accessibility of pornography raises question about the concern the consumption of pornography is addictive. Finally, it is important to note that studies of pornography have shown that respondents will both underreport, which may be due to prevailing social norms, and overreport, to appear uninhibited, their consumption of pornography.¹⁹

¹³ Cornog M. 1991. Libraries, erotica, pornography. Oryx Press, Toronto.

¹⁴ Lemma A. 2021. Introduction- Becoming sexual in digital times: The risks and harms of online pornography. *The Psychoanalytical Study of the Child*, 74:1.

¹⁵ Ibid

¹⁶ Keene S. 2016. Growing up with hardcore: Exploring the meanings of pornography in the digital age. *Women's Studies Journal*. Vol 31, No 1.

¹⁷ Ibid

¹⁸ Morrichetta A, Trevisan M, Vassion L and Krickl J. 2021 Understanding web pornography usage from traffic analysis. *Computer Networks*. 189 (2021).

¹⁹ Ibid

Methods

Research aims and questions

The aim of this study was to contribute to understandings of violence against women and girls in Timor-Leste, including how understandings may vary by gender and disability.

The research questions guiding the study were:

1. What are the social norms that contribute to shaping understandings and behaviours concerning violence against women and girls, and does this vary by gender and disability?
2. What do community members consider as constituting violence against women and girls, and does this vary by gender and disability?
3. How do young people consume pornography and how is this considered to shape their understandings of, and attitudes towards, violence against women and girls, and how does this vary by gender and disability?

The study provides qualitative findings to supplement data from the Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) Report, 2018 for baseline measurement of Outcome 3.1:²⁰

- What is the percentage of people who think it is justifiable for a man to (subject) beat his wife/intimate partner (to violence), by sex and age?²¹

The baseline measurement from the DHS was 53% of men and 74% of women 15 to 49 years of age think it is justifiable for a man to (subject) beat his wife/intimate partner (to violence).⁶ As noted earlier, DHS data for this question is not disaggregated by disability.

Data collection

All data for this study was collected via Focus Group Discussion (FGDs) in the three municipalities of Bobonaro, Ermera, and Viqueque. The study was divided into two components each with a distinct aim, FGD tool, and target group. The first component focused on social norms more broadly and targeted community members over 34 years of age in each municipality. The second component focused on youth attitudes to pornography with participants between 18 and 22 years of age.

Data collection tools for use in FGDs were designed in collaboration with Belun. The tools were designed to prompt discussion in FGDs and to depersonalise responses. The research deliberately avoided collecting direct or personal experiences from

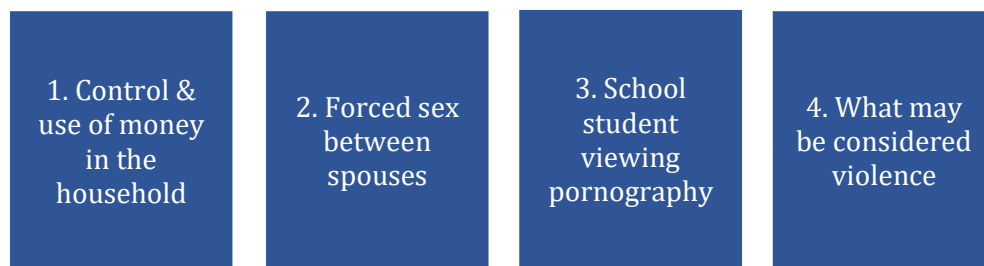
²⁰ General Directorate of Statistics, Ministry of Finance/Timor Leste, and ICF. 2018. Timor-Leste Demographic and Health Survey 2016. <http://dhsprogram.com/pubs/pdf/FR329/FR329.pdf>

²¹ Nossal Institute. 2021. Spotlight Initiative to eliminate violence against women & girls in Timor-Leste: Baseline, Final Report.

participants. Instead, participants were asked to reflect and comment on pre-prepared scenarios. The scenarios used were as follows:

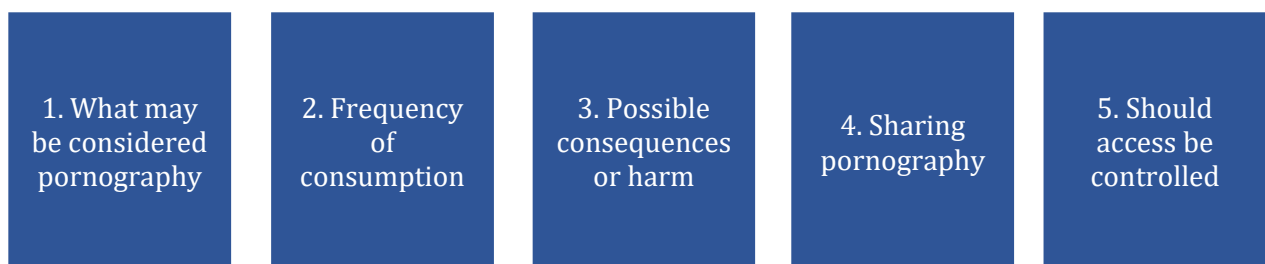
Focus groups for community members above 34 years used short vignettes, or scenarios, that were shared with participants to prompt discussion. Facilitators used the vignettes and participant's responses to explore and elicit new or alternative suggestions from participants. Standard prompts and additional questions were provided to build on the original vignette. The vignettes focused on the following topics (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Vignette topics for community FGDs



Focus groups for youth used ranking exercises to stimulate discussion. Participants were provided with a series of statements and were asked to what extent they agreed or disagreed with the statement. As with the vignettes, the purpose of the exercise was to prompt and elicit discussion. The aim was not to quantify responses from rankings. The statements were organised around the five topics illustrated in Figure 2. For each topic, the statements and questions were designed to firstly explore what other young people think and secondly what participants thought older people in their communities may think.

Figure 2. Ranking scenario topics for FGDs for young people



Training on use of the tools was conducted by the Nossal team between 31 May 2021 and 8 June 2021 with subsequent testing of tools and revisions by Belun. The training for this study and a related study under Pillar 1 of the Spotlight Initiative were conducted together. Due to COVID-19 restrictions the training was conducted remotely. Alongside the use of data collection tools, the trainings focused on ethical priorities, including recruitment mechanisms; informed consent; distress protocols and procedures; ensuring anonymity and confidentiality; and not seeking direct personal experiences or stories.

Data collection was completed by Belun in the three municipalities between 24 June and 16 July 2021.

Recruitment

The Belun team coordinated with post administrators in each targeted municipality and the village head in each data collection area to identify participants. Community members with disability and youth with disability were identified in consultation with two organisations of people with disability (OPDs), the Timor-Leste Disabilities Association (ADTL) and Raes Hadomi Timor Oan (RHTO). Verbal consent was obtained by Belun from all participants.

The FGDs in Ermera Municipality were conducted in the administrative posts of Ermera Vila and Railaco; in Bobonaro Municipality they were conducted in Maliana Vila, Cailaco, Balibo, and Atabe; and in Viqueque Municipality in Ossu, Uatulari, and Viqueque Vila. These locations (posts) were identified by the Belun team as having high incidences of reported violence against women and girls.

The research excluded children and participants under 18 years of age for ethical reasons. The UN definition of youth for statistical purposes is 15 to 24 years.²² However, youth categorisations vary with high end inclusion categorisations up to 30 or 35 years.²³ An age range towards the lower end was chosen for inclusion in the FGDs on pornography; that is, 18 to 22 years. To distinguish youth participants from participants in the community FGDs on social norms a cut-off point of 34 years was used.

Participants

In each municipality, FGDs were conducted with people with and without disability with separate FGDs for men and women. A total of 23 FGDs were completed. One FGD in Bobonaro was not completed as it was not possible to identify young men with disability to participate. Participants with disability included people with sensory and physical disabilities. Two people with psychosocial disabilities were identified by RHTO, in coordination with Belun, and participated with their carer present. Table 1 provides an overview of participation in the FGDs.

Table 1. FGD and participant summary

Municipality	Participant group	No of participants	Data collection tool
Bobonaro	Community members- women	10	Vignettes
	Community members- men	7	Vignettes

²² UNDESA. 2013. Definition of youth. UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, New York. <https://www.un.org/esa/socdev/documents/youth/fact-sheets/youth-definition.pdf>

²³ See, for example: Perovic, B. 2016. Defining youth in contemporary national legal and policy frameworks across Europe. European Commission and Council of Europe, Brussels and Strasbourg. <https://pjp-eu.coe.int/documents/42128013/47261653/Analytical+paper+Youth+Age+Bojana+Perovic+4.4.16.pdf/eb59c5e2-45d8-4e70-b672-f8de0a5ca08c>

	Women with disability	9	Vignettes
	Men with disability	9	Vignettes
	Young women	9	Ranking scenarios
	Young men	9	Ranking scenarios
	Young women with disability	9	Ranking scenarios
	Young men with disability	N.A	N.A
Ermera	Community members- women	9	Vignettes
	Community members- men	10	Vignettes
	Women with disability	6	Vignettes
	Men with disability	9	Vignettes
	Young women	10	Ranking scenarios
	Young men	10	Ranking scenarios
	Young women with disability	7	Ranking scenarios
Viqueque	Young men with disability	8	Ranking scenarios
	Community members- women	10	Vignettes
	Community members- men	13	Vignettes
	Women with disability	6	Vignettes
	Men with disability	9	Vignettes
	Young women	10	Ranking scenarios
	Young men	10	Ranking scenarios
	Young women with disability	6	Ranking scenarios
Young men with disability	8	Ranking scenarios	

Analysis

Notes from FGDs formed the basis of analysis. These notes were provided by Belun based on English translations of the FGD facilitators' notes. Extra information and clarifications were requested by the Nossal team as required.

The notes were analysed by the Nossal team in Melbourne. This was facilitated by entering the notes into NVivo software. Analysis involved identifying thematic areas, or patterns, through repeat reading of the notes and the assignment of codes to items of text. The analysis was inductive in that it began with observations contained in the notes and then moved to identifying broader relationships, or themes, and linking these back to the research questions.

Findings from the two study components are presented in the following chapter.

Limitations

The research was qualitative and exploratory in nature. Data collection was completed in three municipalities only. Participants were selected purposively; that is, participants were not selected randomly and instead were selected based on the judgement of the in-country team. From this sample, participants self-selected to take part in the study. COVID-19 restrictions meant that training and support to the Belun team needed to be provided remotely. This was hampered by issues of internet connectivity.

The FGD tools used required good facilitation skills to explore topics and elicit emerging themes effectively. It should also be noted that the vignettes used for the community FGDs took the starting position that men were the protagonists of controlling behaviour and violence towards women. This may introduce bias in some responses.

Each of these factors contribute risks in terms of consistency between different facilitators and the level of probing and detail obtained and reported from different FGDs. Some facilitators reported that not all participants contributed to discussions. The skill and experience levels of individual facilitators also appeared to have an impact on the level of participation and information obtained. Facilitators were expected to put aside their own perspectives on socially sensitive issues and to remain neutral throughout.

In light of the above limitations, care should be taken in making broad generalisations from the findings presented in this report.

Reflections from the Belun team

The following are reflections from the Belun team in their own words:

The Belun team has learned a lot through this research. Although Belun has done several research projects, this is unique research that Belun implemented with the support of UNFPA and the Nossal Institute through the Spotlight Initiative.

The data, or information, that should be gathered in this research is on a very sensitive issue in Timor-Leste. In fact, people are ashamed to talk about this and particularly in rural communities. Therefore, in this research Belun did not only learn about how to collect the data or the research methods, but also Belun could learn and understand about rural community perspectives relating to this topic.

The specific learning through this research are:

- *The Belun research team learned how to facilitate FGDs on this issue.*
- *This research helps the Belun research team to understand more about the pornography issue in Timor-Leste.*
- *Because of this research, Belun could find out that access to pornography is one of the possible causes of violence against women and girls.*

Findings

The following sections present findings from FGDs with community members above 34 years of age followed by findings from FGDs with youth between 18 and 22 years. In this chapter we only present key findings from the research. The following chapter discusses key findings in more detail.

The reader should keep in mind that the quotes included in this section are illustrative. Many are also speculative based on discussion of the scenarios provided. We do not claim the views expressed are necessarily representative of the wider population.

Findings from FGDs with community members on social norms

Findings from FGDs with community members are presented below and address the following two research questions:

1. What are the social norms that contribute to shaping understandings and behaviours concerning violence against women and girls, and does this vary by gender and disability?
2. What do community members consider as constituting violence against women and girls, and does this vary by gender and disability?

Firstly, participants' perceptions of social norms around household finances are presented. This relates to Vignette 1 on control and use of money in the household. Secondly, participants' perceptions of social norms around sexual relations between married couples drawing on Vignette 2 on forced sex between spouses.

For each of the above, sub-sections address participants' understandings of socially acceptable behaviour, the perceived impacts of behaviour, and participants' understandings of what constitutes violence as further explored under Vignette 4. Before turning to findings from the second component of the research we briefly present key points from discussion of pornography from Vignette 3.

Household finances

Male and female participants considered it appropriate that wives managed household finances and expenses because wives had better money management skills than husbands and better knowledge and awareness of basic household needs. Discussions about basic needs were largely centred around the purchase of food and consumable household items.

Women know how to save money only, and men are the ones who work. This means that men cannot take care of managing expenses in the house. Therefore, men's duty is to work, and women's duty is to save the money.

Male community member without disability

Male and female participants noted that a husband shifting the prime responsibility for securing money onto their wives would be considered unacceptable behaviour. Responses were gendered with husbands as the breadwinner and wives responsible for shopping for essential items, preparing food, looking after children, and cleaning in the home. Participants noted husbands asking their wives to borrow money as unacceptable behaviour because wives, unlike husbands, were considered less likely to be doing paid work and could face difficulties paying off debts by themselves. Female participants noted asking a shop owner for credit was shameful for women. Overall, borrowing money was generally considered inappropriate if the household was already in debt.

A husband withholding money was considered inappropriate by most participants. Husbands were portrayed as their wives' primary means of accessing money. Participants commonly described withholding money as unacceptable as this could leave wives unable to shop for essential items and prepare food for the household. Saving money was considered acceptable behaviour by male and female participants in the main, even when it involved a husband withholding money from their wife. It was considered acceptable for husbands to withhold money if it was to be used for future expenses. For example, female participants noted saving money for sending children to school was an acceptable reason for husbands to withhold money.

Saving is a good thing to do. Our child can be well educated so that they can provide us with food later. For me, husbands keeping money [for education] is good because of these reasons.

Female community member with disability

In general, participants considered it reasonable to withhold money from a spouse so long as the money was spent 'responsibly'. Some female participants noted that a husband withholding money from their wife could be justifiable if it avoided arguments over money.

Some male participants felt women were also entitled to spend money on things other than daily household necessities. Examples included cosmetics, jewellery, and clothing for cultural events and ceremonies. For a husband to withhold money in these examples was considered unfair. Male and female participants regarded it as unacceptable behaviour for men or women to spend money on what were considered frivolous, non-essential, items or activities. Examples given included cigarettes, alcohol, or gambling. Spending money on such examples was frowned upon and was described as 'selfish' and 'irresponsible'. Male and female community members believed it was acceptable to withhold money from a spouse so long as the money was spent responsibly.

If there is no food in the house and [the husband] doesn't want to give money [to the wife] to buy food, and instead goes to buy cigarettes to smoke, this must not happen. We can buy cigarettes, but we must respond to our most important needs in the house first.

Female community member without disability

Women or men lying about what they intended to spend money on was considered unacceptable.

If I give my wife three dollars but she uses it to play cards or bingo, that's bad. If she doesn't have better money management skills, then as the husband I must manage the money. It depends on the situation.

Male community member without disability

Both men and women considered 'good communication' between husbands and wives necessary for the successful management of household finances and avoiding arguments and disputes over money. Good communication was described as engaging in calm and nonconfrontational dialogue about how money should be spent and by who. Husbands or wives making decisions about the allocation of household funds without consulting with their spouse was labelled inappropriate by male and female participants. Some participants emphasised the importance of wives speaking 'nicely' when asking their husband for money. No examples were given of the reverse.

Impacts

Participants noted that irresponsibly managing, or spending, household funds could impact negatively on the household. According to female participants, husbands withholding money could result in household members going hungry due to lack of food. Male participants emphasised that if husbands spent household funds frivolously, there would be no money for paying school fees or other future expenses.

Male and female participants noted borrowing from shops caused 'problems' in the family and should be avoided. There was a shared view that it may be difficult for families to repay debts later and going into debt could cause arguments with shop owners and between spouses. Female participants noted having a request for credit rejected by a shop owner was embarrassing and that if women did not have enough money to buy basic household necessities, they would be reluctant to ask shop owners for a credit or a loan.

As a woman, even though I do not have money, I would not ask the shop for a loan because this is shameful.

Female community member with disability

At times, the consequences of getting into debt were presented as extreme scenarios. One female participant speculated that if a husband failed to 'take responsibly' and pay off a loan taken out by the wife, the shop's owner could demand the wife as payment. Male participants noted how husbands withholding money would result in a wife asking others for money, such as parents or neighbours. This would be shameful for the husband. Withholding money was noted as contributing to distrust between partners.

If a woman goes and borrows money from a man, the husband might get angry with that man, but that man will say: 'You have no responsibility. Your wife came and asked for money. If you don't pay than I will have your wife.' So, if the debt is not paid, the woman would be taken as a replacement for the debt.

Female community member with disability

Some male participants felt it was common for wives to suspect their husbands of having an affair if money was not accounted for. Also, that if wives did not receive money from their husbands, they could have affairs with other men. It was suggested that this could lead to the woman wanting to divorce their husband or resorting to sex work as they had no other means of accessing money.

When husbands have a lot of money but never give it to their wives, the wives could find other men. This could create conflict within the family. If conflict occurs and there is no way to solve it then divorce would be the final solution.

Male community member with disability

Some male participants felt that if wives spent household funds intended for daily necessities on non-essential items, the husband was justified in using violence against them as a 'punishment'. Male and female participants stated verbal abuse and arguments between spouses were common when either a husband or wife was considered to have mismanaged household funds or spent money irresponsibly. Distrust and arguments over money were reported as leading to husbands and wives using physical violence against each other. Male and female participants emphasised it was common for both husbands and wives to use physical violence, such as 'hitting' or 'beating', but often did not specify a perpetrator.

It is important to have necessities in the house, so our children don't go hungry. If you don't save money, you just waste it, it is only a problem. When there is no money, the husband and wife won't live peacefully. They will often beat each other.

Female community member with disability

When participants did identify a perpetrator, male participants gave examples of husbands 'slapping' or 'beating' their wives, while female participants gave more generic examples of women becoming violent with their husbands.

For me, if I ask for money to buy groceries and he refuses to give it, I always start the fight and even become violent with him.

Female community member without disability

Understandings of violence

Participants used 'physical violence' and 'domestic violence' interchangeably to describe violence between married couples. Some participants noted that a husband using violence against their wife, such as beating or slapping, is considered domestic violence according to Timorese law.

Male and female community members used the term 'economic violence' to describe instances where either a husband or wife had mismanaged household finances compromising the immediate needs of the household. Some participants described economic violence as disagreements or arguments over money more broadly, or as

physical violence resulting from arguments over money. All male and most female participants did not clearly identify withholding money as violence in and of itself.

If the husband has money and doesn't give it to his wife to buy urgent necessities and things she needs, then this is violence. But if the husband saves money to buy things that are important for the family, this is not violence.

Female community member with disability

Some male and female participants associated economic violence with 'selfish' behaviour by either husbands or wives with regards to spending household funds. This included husbands withholding money from their wives to purchase nonessential items, or husbands or wives spending money on nonessential items in general.

It is violence when the money I am using is not used for the family's needs, but rather for my own needs.

Male community member with disability

Selfish behaviour related to actions viewed as not contributing towards meeting the household's basic needs. Some female participants considered husbands refusing to give their wives money, husbands asking their wives to take out a loan, and contributing to households going into debt, as selfish acts that were examples of economic violence.

Some participants associated economic violence with poor communication, or 'coordination' between husbands and wives that resulted in household finances being poorly managed. Good communication was considered necessary for avoiding arguments and arising from disputes over money. Strategies for avoiding violence occurring from arguments over money were not explicitly discussed, however one female participant noted:

When your husband commits violence by beating you because you use [money] to buy other things, don't ever think about reporting the incident to the police because it's your fault.

Female community member without disability

Sexual relations

Discussions by male and female participants centred around gender-defined roles and expectations in marital relationships. Strong views were expressed around a wife's role, or 'duty', to obey their husband. It was considered normal and acceptable behaviour for wives to fulfil their husband's 'requests', which included having sexual relations when the husband wanted or 'needed' to have sex. Husbands were expected to reciprocate by ensuring their wife was looked after and cared for, such as when they were tired, unwell, or needed rest.

If [the wife] said she was tired, her husband should comfort her, massage her body, talk to make her happy, tell stories from their past, and tell her to rest. Let the husband cook and do [the wife's] work.

Female participant without disability

Husbands forcing their wives to have sexual relations was considered unacceptable in certain circumstances. This included when the woman needed to rest due to feeling unwell or tiredness due to work.

If my wife worked from morning to night, when she came back, I would not force her because she was tired and she needed a rest. As a man, I must understand that.

Male community member without disability

This was often described as the husband failing to consider the 'physical condition' of the wife. Most participants considered work to be manual work, such as working in the field or cooking or cleaning, and looking after children in the home. Some male and female participants felt wives refusing to have sexual intercourse with their husbands was unacceptable if the wife was not tired or had not been working. One male participant felt it would be unacceptable for a wife to refuse sexual intercourse if they had been working on a computer in an airconditioned room.

Male and female participants noted a husband should wait one or several days, or until the wife felt physically recovered, before initiating sexual relations again. It was noted that husbands should exercise restraint, 'be patient', and control their sexual urges. However, some men felt it was unacceptable for a wife to refuse sexual relations more than one or two days in a row.

I think, as a wife, she shouldn't keep giving the reason that she is tired. She could say it one night, but not every night.

Male community member without disability

Some participants noted wives refusing to have sexual relations with their husbands could be considered inappropriate behaviour as it was more important to make personal sacrifices to preserve marital harmony. Some women felt this prevented affairs, arguments, and disputes.

No matter how tired we are, we need to fulfil our husbands' needs.

Female community member without disability

The possibility that disputes could be witnessed by children or neighbours was a concern expressed by women and men. Some felt it was important for a wife to have sexual intercourse with her husband, even if she did not want to, if there was a risk the wider community may discover they were not having sexual intercourse or overheard disputes.

If the wife doesn't have sex with her husband and the marriage breaks down, many people will know. This is the husband and wife's secret. It is better that she has sex with him so that other people don't know.

Male community member with disability

Some women noted that a husband forcing their wife to have sexual intercourse was unacceptable as it demonstrated the husband did not love their wife. Some women noted that if a wife was tired or unwell, the husband should cook or give their wife a massage rather than insisting on sexual intercourse.

Only female participants spoke about the sexual desires or 'needs' of women. Some women said husbands should 'ask nicely' when they wanted to have sexual intercourse with romantic gestures, such as pampering, massaging, or kissing, given as examples of appropriate behaviour. One female participant (with disability) noted that sometimes wives insisted on having sexual relations when their husbands did not want to and that husbands would be expected to comply. Other women (with disability) added that sexual relations should only occur when there was mutual agreement from both the husband and the wife.

Again, the importance of good and 'calm' communication between husband and wife was considered important to avoid confrontation and disputes. Female participants placed emphasis on wives communicating better, stating it was up to wives to talk their husbands out of having sexual intercourse if they did not want to. Suggesting to postpone sex until the next day, or until they felt better or had had sufficient rest, was considered appropriate. Other strategies included wives keeping away from their husbands, bringing children into the room, playing music, and turning on the television. These were considered effective ways for wives to lower the sexual arousal of the husband and 'calm him down'.

If the husband wants to have sex, then he shouldn't force her. He must speak nicely and comfort her to make his wife happy so that she accepts.

Female community member without disability

Wives seeking assistance from family, neighbours or authority could be considered as acceptable behaviour for women to avoid or reconcile instances of forced sexual relations and violence at the hands of their husband. Some male and female participants considered it appropriate for wives to go to the home of neighbours or relatives, including the wife's parents. Male participants noted that wives could go to the police or a women's organisation or shelter to seek protection from their husbands. Male participants also noted that conflict between married couples should be resolved through family- and community-level mechanisms.

Impacts

Husbands forcing their wives into having sexual intercourse was considered to have a negative impact on the wife's health and wellbeing. These views were expressed more often by female participants and participants with disability. Some female participants reported wives who were continuously forced to have sex with their husbands could result in self-harm or (contemplate) suicide.

Violence between partners, including husbands using physical violence against their wives, was considered a likely outcome if wives did not use what were considered

appropriate communication strategies when their husbands were making unwanted sexual advances.

If the husband persists and insists on having his way, the situation can cause him to resort to violence. [...] Maybe, if she spoke in a gentle way and her husband did not insist on having sex that night, it wouldn't lead to violence.

Female participant with disability

Some male participants noted how husbands who were intoxicated were more likely to force their wives into having sexual relations as their ability to make 'normal' decisions was impaired. Male and female participants commonly noted husbands forcing their wives into having sexual relations could cause tension and a lack of 'harmony' and 'peace' between couples. Some male participants noted arguments over husbands insisting on having sex were common. This could lead to sexual and physical violence. One male participant speculated that arguments could even result in spouses stabbing each other.

If the husband continuously insists on having sex, it means he really needs it. If [the women in the scenario] does not agree with him forcing himself on her, he will assume that she might be having an affair. This will cause a problem between them. They will fight and they can stab each other because of this.

Male participant without disability

Male and female participants noted that if wives refused to have sexual intercourse with their husbands, it was common for husbands to have affairs with other women or want a divorce. There was no information shared about what women might do if sexual needs are not met.

Understandings of violence

Male and female community members mostly described instances of sexual violence between husbands and wives in terms of 'forcing sex'. There was consensus that forcing or coercing someone into sexual intercourse was unacceptable behaviour. Wives refusing sexual intercourse was not considered acceptable behaviour in and of itself. Consent was not clearly defined, with participants mostly considering it only acceptable for wives to refuse sexual intercourse with their husbands if they were tired.

'Sexual violence' was used by some male community members to describe incidents where men sexually abused young girls, including their daughters. Some male participants (with disability) emphasised that sexual violence, including sexual abuse against children, constituted the worst form of violence. In one focus group, male participants stated forcing a person to have sexual intercourse did not constitute a form of violence, reasoning that this type of behaviour did not occur in their community.

We still don't have cases of sexual violence happening in our area.

Male participant without disability

Female participants considered a wife seeking assistance from family, neighbours, or authorities as acceptable behaviour for women to avoid or reconcile instances of forced sexual relations and violence at the hands of their husband. Some male and female participants noted it was appropriate for a wife to go to the home of their neighbour or relatives, including the wife's parents. Some male participants noted that women could go to the police or a women's organisation or shelter to seek protection from their husbands.

Some male participants noted a husband forcing their wife into having sexual relations could be considered illegal and a crime. Other male participants felt if a husband forced their wife to have sexual intercourse, or if physical violence occurred between spouses, resolutions should be sought through family or community intervention in line with what was described as 'cultural practice'. Only if a wife had been badly injured was it considered as acceptable for authorities, such as the police or village officials, to intervene. Some male participants distinguished between a 'semi-public crime' of moderate severity that could be resolved within the family and a 'public crime' which was severe enough to be taken to an authority for resolution.

Male community members with disability reported that sexual violence against people with visual, speech and hearing impairments was common in their communities. It was noted that sexual violence against people with a vision impairment was common, and that any conflict resolution was difficult as victims may not be able to identify the perpetrator.

Perceptions of pornography

Vignette 3 was used as a basis to discuss views on pornography. The viewing of pornography by children, under 18 years, was considered unacceptable behaviour by community members. The potential impacts were only described in negative terms. It was noted that children were 'too young' to see pornographic images.

A common concern was viewing pornography would lead to minors wanting sexual relations before they were old enough to start a family. Similar to views expressed in FGDs with young people below, it was often assumed that minors, particularly boys, would lose control and be unable to focus on schoolwork. This could 'ruin their future'. Unlike findings from FGDs with youth, community members did not consider the possibility of pornography having a positive or harmless impact.

Minors watching pornography in private was commonly viewed as problematic. Community members reflected that parents could take steps to curb this behaviour, such as confiscating smartphones and 'teaching' children about what were seen as negative impacts. The need for 'changing attitudes' was noted. Other suggested mitigation measures included banning smartphones and expelling students from schools, as well as implementing laws preventing access and dissemination of explicit content online. Unlike in FGDs with young people, sexuality education programs were not mentioned.

Pornography was the main topic of the second component of the research and is discussed below.

Findings from FGDs with youth in pornography

The following sections present findings from FGDs with youth between the ages of 18 and 22 years on the topic of pornography. FGDs were conducted with young men and women with and without disability.

This component of the research was concerned with research question three:

3. How do young people consume pornography and how is this considered to shape their understandings of, and attitudes towards, violence against women and girls, and how does this vary by gender and disability?

Firstly, we summarise how participants understood pornography, then we present findings relating to access to pornography and how pornography is consumed, or viewed. Finally, we present findings on perceptions of impacts of consuming pornography. These findings are explored further in the following discussion chapter.

Describing pornography

Pornography was identified by participants in terms of distinguishing between private and public spaces with emphasis placed on pornography being shared material. Pornography was understood as material of a sexual nature that was available publicly. This was described in contrast to material of a sexual nature that was produced and consumed in private. For example, if an adult married couple recorded a video of themselves having sexual intercourse, this was generally considered to be a private matter and, as such, acceptable.

There was consensus that as soon as a video or image of a sexual nature was shared and/or accessible by others it was pornography and unacceptable by most participants. Video content was the major focus and concern of participants. One participant considered material in video format to be pornography but not still images. Other behaviours were considered inappropriate although did not necessarily amount to pornography for all participants, for example nakedness as discussed below. Others held stronger views:

Men and women not wearing clothes [...]. This is categorised as pornography. We can't think of them as human. Or using harsh words: we can say that they behave like animals.

Male youth with disability

Nakedness and exposing skin was considered inappropriate for women. For men, exposing the upper body was considered normal, particularly if it related to manual labour or sport. Examples of young men posting photos of themselves on social media naked from the waist up were noted. These photos were said to be posted to 'attract'

women but were considered 'normal' behaviour and not pornography. Young people considered older people to hold more conservative opinions about nakedness and how people should dress. At the same time, young participants also associated nakedness with mental illness and, as indicated, behaviour more characteristic of animals.

Social media has altered the perspectives of young people. Young people nowadays are showing images of their body because they have had access to lots of pornographic materials due to the technology available now. Back then during the era of our parents, people upheld old cultural practices [...]. Nowadays there is a massive change in attitudes and moral acts are different compared to young people back then.

Male youth without disability

External influences were noted, such as 'outside' fashion trends and beachwear and partial nudity (exposed navels) in Bollywood movies. All were considered at odds with Timorese values, particularly for older generations. While the Catholic religion and the sacredness of the female body were noted, unacceptable behaviours were mostly described as being at odds with Timorese, rather than religious, identity. One participant noted it was acceptable for 'old women' to remove their top if it was hot and they were at home, but not for young women. A couple kissing in public was considered inappropriate; however, what a (married) couple did in private was not a topic of concern so long as their actions were not visible to others.

Access

Young people generally considered pornography to be a product of the availability of low-cost digital ICTs, particularly internet enabled smart phones, and social media. As noted, emphasis was placed on videos and shared content. Pornography was presented as a modern phenomenon. Largely, it was assumed that older generations did not have access to pornography in the past or lacked the digital literacy to access pornography today. However, it was suggested that it was possible that 'parents' watched pornography in private. One male participant noted that pornography was available in the past in digital video disc format. Another reported that their older uncles had mentioned that watching pornography 'kept them awake at night'.

It is very unlikely that people like our parents, who are already getting old, access pornography. In my observation, there might be some, but very few who are accessing pornography.

Male youth with disability

No specific pornographic internet sites were mentioned in FGDs; however, several social media platforms were noted as being sources of pornographic material. These included YouTube, Facebook, TikTok, and WhatsApp. A male participant noted that pornography could be accessed via Google but there was 'no need' to actively search for pornographic material as it usually 'appears' in Facebook feeds, although they were not sure why, and is commonly shared through WhatsApp groups.

For me personally, I've looked at [pornographic] images. Now, there is TikTok that I can also watch the [pornographic] videos from. [...] these videos can make me ask questions to myself: Can I watch it or not? Will this video have an impact on my thoughts and mind? Therefore, I have to ask myself a question before I can [decide to] watch or not.

Female youth with disability

Overall, male and female participants felt that most young men had accessed pornography. A few participants felt it was not the majority of men with one participant estimating 25% of young men accessed pornography. Whether women accessed pornography was more contentious; however, there was general agreement this happened. One male participant considered it inconceivable that young women would view pornography. Others considered viewing pornography inevitable if you used social media. One male participant was sure most women had accessed pornography. A small number of female participants noted that accessing pornography was acceptable for adult women. Other women noted that women accessed pornography, but it was more common among 'bad girls'.

I don't believe it when we say that girls and women are not watching pornography. There must be some who are watching it but don't show it to men or their sisters because they do it secretly in their bedroom.

Male youth without disability

Sometimes, some of my friends, they take a photo of themselves in a pornographic pose, but when they share the photo through WhatsApp, they send it to our WhatsApp group instead of to the friend that they intended to share it with.

Female youth with disability

Male participants felt women were more likely to access pornography on their own and in private. Overall, men were considered more likely to share pornographic material. However, some women participants noted that women would also view pornography in groups and that women would also share, and produce, pornography.

There is no young woman [who] after viewing a pornographic video will not forward the video to their friends.

Female youth with disability

Consumption

Male and female participants emphasised that smart phones and social media were used for a range of entertainment purposes, including gaming and watching movies, as well as for education purposes, particularly during recent COVID-19 restrictions. Participants felt that there was often an assumption among older community members that young people were doing something bad if they were watching media on their phones.

Some children stay at home, but they don't watch pornography. They just watch TikTok. But for their parents this is also considered as something that is harmful for their children.

Female youth with disability

For those over 18 years of age, consuming (or viewing) pornography was not necessarily considered bad in and of itself. A small number of participants noted that if a person was over 18 their decision to consume pornography was their 'right'.

When women watch bad things, they then [imitate] it on TikTok. This often goes viral and it's kind of difficult to change such an attitude. We cannot be angry with them as it is everyone's right. It can only be changed through open discussion.

Male youth without disability

The above individual described 'such an attitude' in terms of actions taken. That is, watching and sharing pornography on and via mobile phones. He felt these actions had consequences, including spoiling a woman's dignity and that of her family.

Distinctions were made between viewing pornography and acting on what had been watched. This was often described in terms of imitating, or experimenting with, sexual activities. Again, if in private, consuming pornography could be considered acceptable or normal. For example, one woman noted that if a married couple watched pornography together, that was OK. However, a line had to be drawn if they then shared this content.

It was also noted that watching pornography could lead to 'positive thoughts', such as a sense of pleasure. A few participants also noted that viewing pornography could be 'educational'. However, pornographic material being either shared with, or accessible to, minors was unacceptable. That the consumption of pornography could cascade and increase due to other people becoming curious and wanting to see for themselves was also raised.

I've watched these videos for a long time up until now, but they have not impacted me negatively. I feel normal as usual now, so I feel that perhaps it will not impact me negatively.

Male youth without disability

In the main, issues were noted as arising when people frequently consumed pornography. Frequent consumption of pornography was considered to cause the consumer to lose control of their thoughts and/or actions (see impacts below). In general, and although not specified, there seemed to be a point where frequency of consumption of pornography led to a loss of control or 'addiction'. Often this bar was considered low, particularly for men.

I think that not many girls [18 to 24 years] are [watching pornography]. But everything is up to each individual [and] that's her desire. Excuse my words, but maybe

she has had sex with her boyfriend and has felt the pleasure. She might always imagine it, so she has to watch.

Female youth without disability

Although in general men were considered more likely to consume pornography than women, the few specific examples of 'production' of pornography noted in FGDs were raised by women. This included an example of a woman editing a photo of another woman and her clothes to shame the other woman. Also, the example of a woman sharing a pornographic video of herself with her ex-boyfriend to embarrass or hurt the ex-boyfriend (revenge porn). It was also noted that both young women and men may share what were considered pornographic images of themselves as flirtatious behaviour when trying to initiate, or in the early stages of, a relationship.

Impacts

As noted, the frequent consumption of pornography was considered to lead to a lack of control. At times, the consequences described were extreme; however, these examples were largely speculative. While some participants said they had consumed pornography, no participants considered themselves to be susceptible to the impacts described in the FGDs. It was only other people who would not be able to control their thoughts and actions.

It depends on each individual's thoughts [...], for those young people who have a slightly bad mentality, as in those cases we have heard of about sexual abuse occurring in public spaces, those who watched [pornography] can sometimes attempt to lure other young people who walk alone on the street. But this is also very destructive if those videos are watched by girls because they can make bad decisions as they too want to try things out in sexual activities.

Male youth without disability

A small number of participants noted there was no negative effect from watching pornography and that most young people probably thought the same. In contrast, a commonly expressed view was that pornography could be the trigger for unacceptable behaviour or violent action, but again the examples were largely speculative.

When we see the men watching pornographic videos, there will be lots of them viewing the video together, there is no reaction or negative thoughts whatsoever [...], but for other people maybe there is a reaction after they have watched a video. They began to feel the emotions, hence for those who cannot control themselves, there will be reactions such as committing sexual abuse against little underaged kids [...] because they cannot control their emotions, but it depends on their control of themselves and our individual thoughts.

Male youth without disability

Overwhelmingly, the impacts of pornography were described in negative terms and, in general, followed a similar pattern. That is, pornography can cause people to lose control and promotes promiscuity. In turn, this leads to pregnancy and marrying at a young age and/or the abandonment of infants. Bringing shame on oneself or one's

family was a recurring issue. That there is a problem with newly born infants being abandoned in Timor-Leste was raised in several FGDs. In several groups, participants said that they believed that consuming pornography led to rape, incest, and other forms of sexual violence. The perpetrators of violence were usually described as being men. Although there was acknowledgement that women could also lose control, the impacts on women were usually described in terms of a 'loss of dignity'. Some noted that women who consumed pornography were also at risk of becoming promiscuous and may seduce their male friends due to uncontrolled desire. Among older married women, and men, consuming pornography was considered to lead to extra marital affairs. A few speculated that if a woman regularly viewed pornography, this could lead to her turning to prostitution.

Once young people access or watch pornographic pictures or videos they will keep imagining and wanting to do such a thing. This is bad and will have a negative impact on the community and the society in general. Therefore, whenever young men or women watch pornography, we may consider that they are greatly at risk [...]. [Men] may think of raping their female relatives, sisters, or even their female friends. That is why, if young men or women are watching pornography, it will affect their mentality to commit violence.

Male youth with disability

It was often assumed that there is a direct causal link between the consumption of pornography and negative behaviour and actions. For example, many participants said that Timor-Leste is witnessing an increase in young marriages because of the consumption of pornography. The impacts of pornography were often described in destructive terms without any clear links of causality being made. For example, if a child were to consume pornography, participants assumed that this would result in the child destroying their future or their family's good name. This was usually attributed to the child, again, losing control and not being able to concentrate, such as at school. However, no clear examples of causality were provided.

Discussion

General observations

Strongly held gender-based roles and expectations were evident throughout the FGDs. For example, in FGDs with community members, both male and female participants shared the view that the husband has the primary responsibility to secure money for the household. In discussions of household finances, there was no clear acknowledgement that women also worked (to secure income). However, a core reason women may not want to have sexual intercourse with their husband was noted as being tiredness from work or having a long day.

Unpaid work or contributions to the household by women in gender-typical roles were noted in FGDs, such as preparing food, cleaning, and childcare. That men may also contribute to the household through unpaid work, including through similar gender-typical roles, such as maintenance of the home or vehicles, was not noted. However, in discussions of sexual relations it was noted by some women that it would be good if their husbands cooked once in a while.

In discussions, participants seemed to find it hard to escape, or consider situations beyond what they considered to be the widely accepted gender-based social norms even when there was clear evidence to the contrary. For example, it is evident that women in Timor-Leste do work, secure income, and contribute to household finances. While the choice of vignettes, which portrayed men in gender dominant roles, and facilitation of FGDs likely had a bearing on responses, it is notable that participants could be accepting of these assumptions. This was also evident in discussions of pornography. For example, the uncritical assumption by a small number of men that women would not access pornography simply because they are women.

We are also conscious that differences in facilitation and emphasis between different FGDs will impact on responses. However, when considering points of entry for influencing behaviour change it is important to consider the influence of entrenched social norms whether they are obviously reflected in observable behaviours or not.

Disability

No significant differences between understandings of social norms and pornography from people with and without disability were identified. FGDs with people with and without disability used the same vignettes and ranking exercises and the specific experiences of people with disability were not explored. It is worth reiterating that to minimise risks to participants, this study did not directly explore, or seek, personal experiences from any participants. However, it was clear that young people with disability, including women, do consume pornography as do young people without disability. This should not be surprising; however, it reminds us to be wary of prejudicial suggestions that people with disability do not engage in sexual relations.

Responses from people with disability reflected important considerations that are widely known. Firstly, that people with disability often have highly limited access to

resources. This includes limited access to financial resources that can contribute to increased stresses for households with people with disability. As one male participant with disability noted, 'financial violence' was more common within families with fewer employment opportunities. Further, when violence does occur people with disability have limited access to both formal and informal channels for recourse and mediation at the community level and through the criminal justice system.

That violence against people with disability is common in Timor-Leste was reported by both men and women with disability. It was suggested that violence against people with disability should be formally recognised in law as constituting a separate and distinct form of violence. The examples provided by people with disability remind that to positively, and inclusively, change behaviour requires consideration of access to resources and the removal of attitudinal and structural barriers.

Social norms

Discussions with community members were also influenced by an environment of scarce resources. For example, it was not always clear if the behaviours described in the FGDs were driven by wider societal expectations of what is and is not acceptable or by more individual strategies to negotiate and secure basic needs within the household. The key issue emerging from FGDs was that efforts to change behaviours are likely to have limited impact if the underlying causes of stresses, tension, and conflict are not also addressed.

What were considered as wider gender-defined roles and responsibilities appeared to have less influence on behaviour than the immediate and practical needs of being able to buy basic necessities. From this perspective, any behaviour that placed the household finances at risk was considered unacceptable. Conversely, actions that would benefit the household in the longer term were acceptable, for example a husband could withhold money from their wife if the money was to be used to pay for a child's education in the future. In such a scenario, it seemed that a unilateral decision would be justifiable. However, this contradicts the ideal that good and effective communication between a husband and wife are necessary for a harmonious household.

In discussions of sexual relations, the expectation for women to 'obey' and meet the needs of their husband was presented as the dominant norm. The exceptions were when the behaviours, and demands, of the husband were considered to pose a threat to the wife's well-being and health. Whether or not sexual intercourse between husband and wife is considered permissible was often explained in terms of an absence of conflicting 'need'. In other words, wives have the right to refuse sexual intercourse if they have a 'need to rest'. Conversely, husbands have a right to have sex with their wives if they 'need sex'. As such, sex between spouses is considered permissible when there is no commonly accepted reason not to have sex rather than on a basis of positive consent. Despite this, women participants provided clear examples of agency and described strategies of resistance to avoid their husband's advances when they were not wanted.

Pornography

It is assumed that there is a direct causal link between the consumption of pornography and negative behaviour and actions. For example, the idea that Timorese society is witnessing an increase in young marriages that are directly attributable to the consumption of pornography. The impacts of pornography were often described in destructive terms without any clear links of causality being made. For example, consuming pornography could destroy a child's future or a family's 'good name'. Discussions of pornography suggested impacts that are noticeably more speculative and, in some cases, extreme than the impacts of disputes over household finances or sexual relations within marriage. This suggests the need for caution. As other studies have noted, whether the consumption of pornography leads to violence remains open to question.

A key issue of concern for the elimination of VAWG is the clear distinctions made between public and private spaces and the visibility of actions. In short, women and men were free to do what they wanted in terms of pornography so long as it was kept private and did not become visible or evident to others. This applied to both viewing pornography and also producing pornographic content. Similar concerns arose in discussions with community members about social norms concerning sexual relations. For example, both women and men would make significant compromises to appease their spouse if this kept any sign of marital discord or conflict invisible to their neighbors.

The social norm around pornography was described as pornography being unacceptable with potentially adverse impacts on individuals, households, and communities. In contrast, it was recognized that pornography is widely consumed, shared, and even produced by people in Timor-Leste and by youth in particular. Despite the adverse impacts that the social norm surrounding pornography is held to trigger, individuals' views noted this was only for a certain type of person that could not control their emotions, minds, or bodies. Again, what is acceptable in terms of broader societal views and norms does not neatly correspond to what an individual may consider acceptable in terms of their own, or their immediate reference group's, behavior. Often, the social norms and individual attitudes and behaviors described were at odds with each other.

The above has implications for behavior change strategies in Timor-Leste and supports the view that social norms cannot be addressed in isolation. It is also important to consider the impacts resulting from consuming pornography described by participants. For example, if the issue to be addressed is early marriage or unwanted pregnancies, any approach to behavior change must consider improving access to comprehensive reproductive health and sexuality education programs and related services.

Recommendations

In this final section, we highlight key considerations and recommendations arising from this study. When considering the following recommendations, it is important to be mindful of the limitations of this study and of the speculative nature of the impacts reported by many respondents.

Recommendations for considering social norms in EVAWG programming in Timor-Leste

- **Consider social norms as one influencing factor within a holistic behaviour change strategy.** Social norms play an important role in influencing attitudes and behaviour. However, they are not the only influencing factor. This study supports previous research in this regard. It is important to consider that social norms may not be the most important factor for some individuals.
- **Anticipate that individuals do not always comply with social norms.** Social norms and individual attitudes and behaviours do not always align. Most people are aware of what is, and what is not, socially acceptable behaviour in their community. However, individuals also make choices out of self-interest or, for example, financial necessity. This suggests that large-scale media and information campaigns aimed at the general public are not likely to be effective in changing behaviours alone.
- **Link behaviour change strategies with programming in other development sectors.** The choices people make and how people choose to behave are driven by multiple factors. Limited money and resources in the household can be a driving force for tension, arguments, and violence despite these behaviours being considered unacceptable, such as the need to keep arguments secret from neighbours. Working across sectors is challenging; however, public health interventions that aim to change behaviours and do not address, for example, the root economic causes of conflict in the household are unlikely to be effective. Examples include exploring opportunities for linking behaviour change interventions with, or integrating into, social protection and income generation programmes for women and men.
- **Consider decision making in the household as a point of entry.** Addressing social norms head-on is problematic. As emphasised, knowing what is socially acceptable and desirable is one thing. What individuals do and how they behave may be another thing entirely. Conceptually, social norms may be an abstract concept to many and discussions of social norms may appear detached from an individual's reality. Participants placed value on solving issues within the household through discussion. Exploring and discussing who makes decisions within the household and when and why and for who, alongside issues of consent, may be a more grounded and tangible point of entry.
- **Recognise that people with disability can be at increased risk of violence and design and implement interventions accordingly.** Women and men with disability are at increased risk of violence compared to people without disability. People with disability are also more likely to live within poor households, which can increase stresses and possible sources of conflict. Behaviour change programming needs to respond to these inequities. This requires removing barriers to participation in program activities and challenging stigma within communities. In turn, this requires adequate planning and budgeting to ensure accessibility, including in communications, within behaviour change programming.

Recommendations for considering pornography in CSE interventions in Timor-Leste

- **Consider that any direct links between consuming pornography and violence remain inconclusive.** This study does not add any clarity on whether there is a direct causal link between consuming pornography and an increase in violence against women and girls. This remains an open question. The more extreme examples of the consequences of consuming pornography, such as incest or rape, provided by participants were largely speculative. That is, things they felt could happen. As with the findings on social norms, we should assume that other factors, beyond consuming pornography, influence an individual's actions.
- **Clearly define the purpose of interventions targeting pornography.** Opinions regarding pornography were mixed. On the one hand, children viewing pornography was considered unacceptable. On the other hand, what consenting adults did in their own time was considered a private concern. It is understood that the dominant social norm is that viewing pornography is bad. Regardless, people continue to consume pornography. This suggests that efforts to ban or restrict access to pornography will be challenging and may not be effective.
- **Explore strategies that focus on the responsible use of technology.** Access, consumption, and sharing of pornography is facilitated by digital technology. This was to the extent that pornography was considered a modern phenomenon by many. The accessibility and availability of internet enabled smart phones with cameras, also means pornographic images and videos can easily be produced and shared. Examples of inappropriate sharing and reports of 'revenge porn' were concerning. Considering mixed attitudes to pornography, as noted above, emphasising the responsible use of technology as an entry point for changing behaviours warrants further exploration.
- **Ensure comprehensive sexuality education addresses both existing and emerging issues and behaviours.** Despite common beliefs that viewing pornography is resulting in unwanted pregnancies and early marriages, any link remains unproven. Improving young people's access to information about contraception and related support and services would be a more effective way of addressing these issues than targeting pornography as the focus of behaviour change interventions. At the same time, sexuality education needs to address emerging issues, such as revenge porn noted above, if it is to remain comprehensive and relevant to young people today.
- **Ensure children and young people with disability have equitable access to comprehensive sexuality education.** It is important that children and young people with disability have the same opportunities to access and benefit from comprehensive sexuality education. There were no notable differences in responses from young people with and without disability in terms of access to, and consumption of, pornography. However, globally children and young people have less access to education and information than their peers without disability. Ensuring equitable access will require delivering comprehensive sexuality education through both the formal education system and other channels, such as working with organisations of people with disability.

Annex A: Vignettes for FGDs with community members

Vignette 1

[Jane – all names changed to local names] asks her husband for some money to buy rice and sugar. Her husband says that he needs to keep the money to buy seeds for planting. He says [Jane] can ask the store for credit to buy the rice and sugar.

- Is this fair?

[Jane] says that they already have credit at the store and that she feels very uncomfortable asking for more credit. She asks her husband if he can ask for credit to buy the seeds? Her husband says no. He says it his money and Jane must find a solution to buy the rice and sugar.

- Is this fair?
- Would the situation be different if Jane wanted to buy something else that was not food for the family?
- Would the situation be different if Jane's husband wanted to keep the money to buy cigarettes?
- Is it OK for a husband to withhold money from their wife?
- Do you think any of these, or similar situations, are violence?

Vignette 2

[Emma] has had a long day and is very tired. When she goes to bed her husband joins her. Her husband wants to have sex, but [Emma] says she is tired and does not want to. Her husband insists, but [Emma] says no she does not want to have sex.

- Is [Emma's] behaviour acceptable?
- Is he husband's behaviour acceptable?

[Emma's] husband continues to insist. [Emma] continues to say no. He then forces himself on [Emma] and tries to have sex.

- Is this fair?
- Is this acceptable?
- What should [Emma] do?
- What should the husband do?

Vignette 3

[John] is a secondary school student. He is 15 years old. [John's] teacher catches [John] looking at pornographic pictures on his phone. [John] says this is normal and all boys his age look at these pictures and videos. The teacher says it is not acceptable and sends [John] to the head of the school.

- Do you think it is OK for young people (boys, girls, different ages) to look at pornography?
- Are there positive / negative impacts of looking at pornography?
- What should the head of the school do?
- What would you think/do if [John] was your child?

Vignette 4

A non-government organisation is starting a project to stop violence against women and girls. They start by making a list of what they consider to be types of 'violence'. The list includes the following:

- Physical violence
- Emotional violence
- Withholding money
- Forcing someone to have sex
- Forcing a spouse to have sex
- Viewing pornography

Do you agree with this list?

Is there anything that should not be on the list?

Is there anything that should be added to the list?

Are any of these worse than others?

If you listed these which would be at the top (most violent) and which would be at the bottom (least violent) of your list?

Annex B: Exercises and scenarios for discussing pornography with young people

Task 1

Aim

To understand what people think pornography is.

1a

I would like to ask you about what you think other young people think:

Agree a lot	Agree a little	Disagree a little	Disagree a lot	Don't know	Prefer not to answer
-------------	----------------	-------------------	----------------	------------	----------------------

- A picture / video of a topless woman or man is not pornography.
- A picture / video of a naked woman or man is not pornography.
- A picture / video of a naked couple kissing is not pornography.
- A picture / video of a couple having sex is pornography.

1b

Now, I would like to ask you about what you think older people think:

Agree a lot	Agree a little	Disagree a little	Disagree a lot	Don't know	Prefer not to answer
-------------	----------------	-------------------	----------------	------------	----------------------

- A picture / video of a topless woman or man is pornography.
- A picture / video of a naked woman or man is pornography.
- A picture / video of a naked couple kissing is pornography.
- A picture / video of a couple having sex is pornography.

Task 2

Aim

To understand how often young people may look at (consume) pornography.

2a

I would like to ask you about what you think other young people think and do:

Agree a lot	Agree a little	Disagree a little	Disagree a lot	Don't know	Prefer not to answer
-------------	----------------	-------------------	----------------	------------	----------------------

- Most men my age have looked at / watched pornography.
- Most women my age have looked at / watched pornography.
- Most men my parents' age have *never* looked at / watched pornography.
- Most women my parents' age have never looked at / watched pornography.

2b

Now, I would like to ask you about what other people think young people do:

Agree a lot	Agree a little	Disagree a little	Disagree a lot	Don't know	Prefer not to answer
-------------	----------------	-------------------	----------------	------------	----------------------

- Older people in my community think young men regularly look at / watch pornography.
- Older people in my community think young women never look at / watch pornography.

Task 3

Aim

To understand if people think looking at / watching pornography causes harm.

3a

I would like to ask you about what you think other young people think:

Agree a lot	Agree a little	Disagree a little	Disagree a lot	Don't know	Prefer not to answer
-------------	----------------	-------------------	----------------	------------	----------------------

- Most young men think that men looking at / watching pornography causes no harm.
- Most young women think that women looking at / watching pornography causes no harm.

3b

Now, I would like to ask you about what you think older people think:

Agree a lot	Agree a little	Disagree a little	Disagree a lot	Don't know	Prefer not to answer
-------------	----------------	-------------------	----------------	------------	----------------------

- Older people in my community think that if men look at pornography, it will result in harm (to themselves or others).
- Older people in my community think that if women look at pornography, it will result in harm (to themselves or others).

Task 4

Aim

To understand the extent to which young people may share pornography.

4a

I would like to ask you about what you think other young people do:

Agree a lot	Agree a little	Disagree a little	Disagree a lot	Don't know	Prefer not to answer
-------------	----------------	-------------------	----------------	------------	----------------------

- Not many young men share pornography with others (e.g. from their phone).
- Not many young women share pornography with others (e.g. from their phone).

4b

Now, I would like to ask you about what you think older people think young people do:

Agree a lot	Agree a little	Disagree a little	Disagree a lot	Don't know	Prefer not to answer
-------------	----------------	-------------------	----------------	------------	----------------------

- Older people in my community think that a lot of young men share pornography with others (e.g. from their phone).
- Older people in my community think that a lot of young women share pornography with others (e.g. from their phone).



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