

Nabilan 2024 Phase III Mid-Term Review: DFAT and The Asia Foundation Joint Management Response

The Nabilan Phase III Mid-Term Review was completed over October – December 2024 by Strategic Development Group (Anna Trembath, Elsa Pinto and Catherine Renshaw). The Mid-Term Review was a high quality independent evaluation, which found that in Phase III, ten years into the life of the program, Nabilan continues to represent an exceptional quality, high-value, critically relevant investment in ending violence against women and children (EVAWC) in Timor-Leste.

This Management Response has been jointly developed by DFAT and The Asia Foundation (TAF). Responses to the evaluation's 20 recommendations are listed below. DFAT and TAF agree to 19 of the recommendations, and partially agree to 1.

Overall findings

No.	Recommendation	Management response
1	It is recommended that the Nabilan program be extended into Phase IV.	Agree. Both DFAT and TAF agree to extend Nabilan into Phase IV (2026-2030) through utilising the current extension option available in Phase III.
2	It is recommended that the level of investment be increased for Phase IV. Two options for investment increase are included below, with the MTR supportive of Option B.	Agree. DFAT seeks to increase the level of investment for Nabilan Phase IV. Exact budget will be subject to availability, and a 'design refresh' process over 2025-26, with a refreshed design submitted to DFAT by early 2026.

Relevance

No.	Recommendation	Management response
3	It is recommended that all key interventions and components of the Nabilan Phase III design retain relevance for the current environment, though as the Nabilan team recognises and is actioning, Violence Against Children (VAC) service response capacity needs to be strengthened. Key interventions should be continued across Phases III and IV.	Agree. Key interventions will be continued across Phases III and IV. In the remainder of Phase III (2025), the Nabilan team will workshop and articulate a strategy for further addressing VAC in the program. This will draw on external VAC expertise and will inform VAC activities through the remainder of Phase III, as well as the design refresh for Phase IV. Some elements of this will be able to be actioned in the remainder of Phase III: for example, deepening the approach to child-friendly counselling; strengthening child protection practices through review of services key policies and support for partners to review and strengthen their systems that respond to VAC.

No.	Recommendation	Management response
4	It is recommended that to support program responsiveness to forthcoming contextual changes (such as high-speed internet) and to maximise systems impact, the program invests in improving its Theory of Change for Phase IV, including systems analysis and future forecasting. A strengthened ToC should also be clearer about which forms of violence experienced by whom are addressed through which program strategies, and specifically how the program responds to VAC.	Agree. In 2025, DFAT will resource Nabilan to engage external expertise to assist with strengthening the program's systems analysis and refreshing the program's theory of change. This will be a collaborative DFAT – TAF exercise and will feed into a refreshed design for Phase IV.
5	It is recommended that DP coordination and liaison continue to be improved within the Phase III period, particularly with UN agencies. This could take the shape of more regular Nabilan-DFAT-UN agencies meetings, as well as direct meetings with particular agencies such as UNFPA. This increased engagement should also focus on supporting DPs to better understand the Nabilan program approach and evidence, especially in the prevention space	Agree. DFAT and the Nabilan team recognise the need to continue expanding engagement and coordination with development partners, including UN Agencies. Through the remainder of Phase III and in Phase IV Nabilan will continue to engage with regular inter-partner working groups and seek opportunities to formalise ongoing technical cooperation with UN agencies to grow coordination and amplification of evidence-based prevention initiatives.

Coherence

No.	Recommendation	Management response
6	It is recommended that, within Phases III and IV, the Nabilan team address the sense of siloing between program pillars and their partners, and the tension felt between older, more established partners and newer partners. Renewing of a shared program purpose could be supported through learning visits to each other's work, practicing sharing stories of change including collaborations, and, in Phase IV, providing older partners with more opportunities to engage in the community-based prevention work. This could look like the careful incorporation of the most prevention-ready service partner into KOKOSA! scale up in the coming years, and	Agree. During Phase III, the Nabilan team will explore options to continue building a shared sense of program purpose between partners, as well as exploring options for expanding the prevention work to include services partners, where appropriate and as funding allows.

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	opportunities for occasional training and accompaniment of community engagement for other partners.	
7	It is recommended that, within Phase III, Nabilan creates structured opportunities for HDS and HAMNASA to learn from one another's positive parenting interventions.	Agree. In early 2025, HAMNASA has shared lessons with HDS, and this will continue.
8	It is recommended that the Nabilan team consider more municipal visits and opportunities for municipal staff to engage in Dili-based reflective learning processes.	Agree. The Nabilan team will increase efforts to reach out to municipality-based staff, while balancing direct engagement with staff of satellite centres with partner organisations' own management systems.
9	It is recommended that the program undertake systems analysis, potentially with some limited external expertise, to support its systems-level strategising and to inform Phase IV design and MEL.	Agree. As above.

Effectiveness

No.	Recommendation	Management response
10	It is recommended that as interventions mature and cohorts exit, outcomes evaluations are undertaken of NeNaMu and the positive parenting initiatives to fully understand their potential, including six-month post-exit follow up. This should include the partners of incarcerated men in the context of HDS's ways of working with men.	Agree. DFAT and TAF value in outcome evaluations of Nabilan prevention programming and are committed to continually building the evidence base for Nabilan's program approaches. Outcome evaluation methods and approaches will be commensurate with budget availability in Phase III, and the design refresh process for Phase IV.
11	It is recommended that as soon as possible, the formal bilateral governance gap should be addressed – acknowledging that this may not be feasible in the short term. Current pragmatic solutions are appropriate, in the absence of alternatives, and TAF is taking steps within its control to give some formality and Government of Timor-Leste (GoTL) oversight to Nabilan's GoTL partnership by establishing a technical-level agreement with MSSl. However, a longer-term solution whereby DFAT, MSSl and SEl can come together is necessary for good governance. One suggestion – that there is a Nabilan Working Group comprising MSSl, SEl and DFAT attached to the	Agree. DFAT and TAF both note the critical importance of appropriate and effective governance arrangements with GoTL. A formal GoTL – DFAT governance mechanism will be re-established as soon as possible. In addition, TAF will continue exploring the possibility of Technical Cooperation Agreements with relevant GoTL counterparts. Likewise, Nabilan will continue exploring ways to contribute to the recently established interministerial committee for the NAP-GBV.

No.	Recommendation	Management response
	Interministerial Steering Committee for the NAP-GBV – could be further explored with SEI.	

Efficiency

No.	Recommendation	Management response
12	It is recommended that the program should not be expected to do a significant amount of additional activity on the basis of the current resourcing envelope.	Agree. DFAT and TAF both recognise the critical importance of quality, sustainable growth, and the risk of team burn-out when resources are limited in this challenging field of work. DFAT and TAF are committed to open, ongoing communication about prioritisation of activities within available resourcing.
13	It is recommended that the extent and servicing of DFAT requests for Nabilan engagement across the broader aid program be considered strategically in terms of their relative cost-benefit, including Nabilan resource usage and unintended impacts upon inhibiting localisation of leadership.	Agree. Requests for Nabilan engagement across DFAT's broader development program footprint in Timor-Leste (and beyond) should always be considered strategically in terms of their relative cost-benefit and DFAT and TAF commit to ongoing, open communication about this. In Phase IV, DFAT will look to resource a position within the Nabilan team specifically dedicated to Advisory support on EVAWC across DFAT programs and in the VAWC system more broadly. The locally-led development agenda is important to both DFAT and TAF. Opportunities for continuing to build Timorese leadership, both within DFAT's Embassy team working with TAF and within the Nabilan team, will continue to be prioritised.

Impact

No.	Recommendation	Management response
14	It is recommended that in Phase IV investment be made in carefully designed, robust impact evaluations of KOKOSA! and NeNaMu as Nabilan's leading community-based primary prevention initiatives.	Agree – however feasibility, timing and modality will be subject to budget availability.
15	It is recommended that in Phase IV investment be made in systems impact evaluation to further explore and document how Nabilan is effecting change at that level.	Agree – however feasibility, timing and modality will be subject to budget availability. DFAT and TAF will aim to implement this towards the end of Phase IV.
16	It is recommended that Nabilan maintain and seek to expand stress management training and other trauma-	Agree. Nabilan continues to provide stress management trainings to partners and non-partners and will continue to do so in Phase IV, with the aim of expanding and deepening these approaches.

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	responsive strategies that support the VAWC workforce to sustain (Phase IV recommendation).	Nabilan will aim to further integrate stress management and trauma response strategies into other activities (trainings, curriculum development) with a range of partners, alongside Safeguarding and Do No Harm responses.

Sustainability

No.	Recommendation	Management response
17	It is recommended that consideration is given to resourcing two Raising Voices Technical Advisors to visit Timor-Leste, to engage with the Nabilan team and PRADET including in community exit planning and undertake community observations.	Agree. The Nabilan team has scheduled this for mid-2025.
18	It is recommended that Nabilan support partners to undertake their own risk management plans.	Agree. The Nabilan team will support partners to undertake their own risk assessments and risk management plans in 2025.
19	It is recommended that DFAT and TAF undertake a reflection on the current level and requirements of DFAT engagement and determine a strategy to strategically prioritise and/or manage	Agree. DFAT and TAF have undertaken a reflection exercise together on the current level of DFAT engagement in the program. It is mutually determined to be largely appropriate and necessary, with some areas identified for streamlining. In Phase IV, DFAT will look to resource a position within the Nabilan team specifically dedicated to Advisory support on EVAWC across DFAT programs and in the VAWC system more broadly, which should assist with ensuring Nabilan's technical support on EVAWC in Timor-Leste is properly resourced and sustainable.
20	It is recommended that a co-Team Leader arrangement is considered to support national leadership of the program.	Partially agree. DFAT and Nabilan are committed to expanding the skills and leadership of staff. The current Nabilan team structure is highly effective and is maximising the leadership strengths of its team members, including on the leadership team. Throughout the remainder of Phase III and Phase IV, DFAT and TAF will continue to calibrate approaches to maximise Timorese leadership of Nabilan. Both agree to reconsider at appropriate points the questions of 'how can we maximise Timorese leadership of Nabilan' and 'how can we ensure Nabilan has the right skillset in the Executive Leadership Team as it grows and expands'.