

Timor-Leste : Another case of Fatal Neglect

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This Timor-Leste case study should be read in conjunction with the international WaterAid report *Fatal Neglect: How Health Systems Are Failing to Comprehensively Address Child Mortality*, available at www.wateraid.org

On the basis of both field experience and data analysis, WaterAid Australia believes that sanitation in Timor-Leste is dramatically underfunded, resulting in significant levels of avoidable disease and death.

The situation in Timor-Leste (Chart One) mirrors the global neglect of sanitation and diarrhoeal diseases, which was conclusively documented in *Fatal Neglect*, a report released internationally in May 2009.

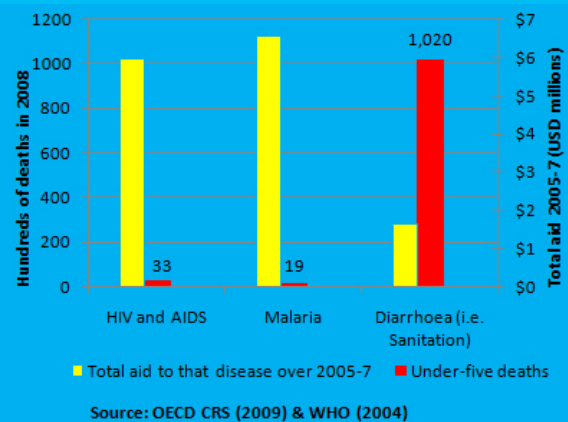
Diarrhoea is a leading cause of under-five child deaths in Timor-Leste, accounting for 22% of the total 5,000 children that die every year.ⁱ Yet sanitation, the most effective and efficient means of preventing diarrhoea, receives extremely low priority from donors and the national government.ⁱⁱ Access to sanitation in Timor-Leste is estimated at 41%ⁱⁱⁱ and the country is perilously short of meeting the MDG target for sanitation.^{iv}

The sanitation improvements that will dramatically improve child mortality and general community health in Timor-Leste are relatively cheap and easily implemented. A community which is empowered to improve its health and sanitation requires relatively modest financial support to build basic toilets and bring in complementary measures including soap and hygiene promotion.

WaterAid welcomes the increased funding that has been given to malaria and HIV/AIDS. Policy makers now need to give the same level of attention and resources to diarrhoea and the problem of sanitation.

Chart One

The relative neglect of sanitation in Timor Leste health financing



	Total aid to disease (2005-7)	Under-five deaths
HIV and AIDS	\$5,950,204	33
Malaria	\$6,551,741	19
Diarrhoea (i.e. Sanitation)	\$1,656,988	1,020
Source:	OECD CRS	WHOSIS

See endnotes for more detail

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References

ⁱ The proportion of child deaths from various diseases is taken from *WHO Statistical Information System* (<http://www.who.int/whosis/en/>). Total number of child deaths taken from UNICEF (2009) *State of the World Children*. Accessed August 2009

ⁱⁱ Total number of child deaths taken from UNICEF (2009) *State of the World Children*. The proportion of child deaths from various diseases taken from *WHO Statistical Information System* (<http://www.who.int/whosis/en/>) accessed August 2009. Donor commitments based on OECD Creditor Reporting System database accessed in September 2009. For water and sanitation projects that were smaller than \$500,000 or for which detailed information could not be obtained, 14% of the total project cost was allocated to sanitation. Source: WHO (2000) '*Global Water Supply and Sanitation Assessment 2000 Report*' (average was used for of combined values for Asia and Africa region). For statistics on global status of water and sanitation see UNICEF (2008) *Progress on Drinking Water and Sanitation* and for information on cost effectiveness of various interventions see World Bank (2006) *Disease Control Priorities in Developing Countries* (second edition).

ⁱⁱⁱ UNICEF (2008) *Progress on Drinking Water and Sanitation*

^{iv} RDTL and UNDP (2009) *The Millennium Development Goals, Timor-Leste*