

Case Study on Tara Bandu: Keys to Success & Overcoming Challenges.

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SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

- i. Having a deep understanding of the sociocultural background of selected communities where a Tara Bandu to be supported is paramount. It is crucial to assess the social cohesion, cultural and social changes, economic conditions, and resilience of its ritual structures for a successful Tara Bandu.
- ii. The selection of a particular community where a Tara Bandu is to be supported should not be done from a top-down perspective, but through extensive negotiation and dialogue with local leaders (both political and ritual ones, as well as other charismatic figures¹). The community should not feel that the Tara Bandu is an external proposal but rather that the external agents support their initiative. Otherwise, the feeling of transferring the control over the Tara Bandu, either real or perceived, to extra-community (or even extra-house) agents will provoke frictions among the actors involved and pose issues of sustainability.
- iii. Development actors should not neglect the importance of ritual efficacy. At the local level, a widespread social acceptance of the precedence of houses with the task of carrying out the ritual performances is a key to success. Assessing the presence of knowledgeable ritual specialist accepted for the most part throughout the community is an important step towards achieving an effective Tara Bandu.
- iv. Guaranteeing that the Tara Bandu is a general interest for the community. If a community does not see a specific environmental protection as being aligned with their interest, it may be potentially seen as an external imposition that would probably not be observed. A strong socialization of the purpose of the Tara Bandu and its understanding within the community must be sought after.
- v. Negotiating, preparing, executing, and enforcing a Tara Bandu, at the local level, is a big a challenge for the communities. Supporting only the theatrical stage of the process (the final ritual execution) without monitoring its enforcement is not desirable. In this vein, support for *kableha* (enforcers) of the Tara Bandu and their engagement with Forest Rangers should be pursued.
- vi. Dialogue, participation across all sectors of society (including the church, the state administration, etc.) should be pursued for a consensus to be reached.
- vii. The role of charismatic figures (such as the suku chief of Lourba) are key. Efforts should focus on the right identification of the figures able to become agents of change and that actively seek the engagement of all actors involved in a Tara Bandu.
- viii. Any action increasing transparency of local regulations should be promoted: disseminating the Tara Bandu and its codification through any means is desirable.

¹ I.e.: resistance leaders, church representatives from within the community, local businessmen and businesswomen, and so on.

- ix. Showing the proper respect to the houses considered to be the legitimate ritual guardians over a particular land should be guaranteed. The case of Marobo has shown how not following the proper path to promote a Tara Bandu has weakened its effects.
- x. Any measure of environment protection brings along downturns in livelihoods. Its impact over particular collectives whose livelihoods depend on environmental features that the Tara Bandu seeks to protect. A satisfactory livelihood alternative to those collectives should be provided.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Objective of the study

The main objective of this study is to capture the learnings of the success and challenges in enforcing effective Tara Bandu and to provide recommendations for its future use. Among those: a) understanding the historical and cultural context of Tara Bandu and its significance within communities; b) identifying the key factors contributing to the success or failure of Tara Bandu; c) analysing the socio-cultural, economic, and environmental challenges associated with implementing Tara Bandu; d) examining the effectiveness of existing strategies and interventions related to the application of Tara Bandu.

1.2. Key cultural concepts to understand the Tara Bandu

1.2.1. Timor-Leste and its house societies: *Uma-lisan*; *uma-lulik*; *uma-fukun*

People in Timor trace their descent in a unilinear manner through belonging to an *uma-lisan*, which is one of the most relevant elements of social and identity organization in the societies and cultures of the region (Carsten & Hugh-Jones, 1995; Joyce & Gillespie, 2000). Some of the societies in the country trace their affiliation in a matrilineal way, such as the Búnak (Friedberg, 1989; Narciso, 2013; L. M. G. de Sousa, 2010) or some Tetun térík populations in the Viqueque district (Hicks, 1971, 1976, 1990). However, the majority have a patrilineal pattern. (Forman, 1981; Guterres, 2001; Lazarowirtz, 1980; Marques da Silva, 2003; Renard-Clamagirand, 1982; Traube, 1980, 1986). Women born within an *uma-lisan* remain within it until the *barlake* (bridewealth) occurs, the final phase of a complex set of marriage ceremonies through which the married woman ceases to be part of the *uma-lisan* she was born into and enters her husband's. The word *barlake* is sometimes used metonymically to refer to the bride wealth, that is, the result of the total expenditure made in the set of marriage ceremonies and some funeral rites.

The concept of *uma-fukun* is used in a similar way to *uma-lulik*, that is, understanding that *fukun* is the house that has a type of precedence over others within a given territory. This precedence is based on a narrative of origin that considers one house (*uma-lisan*) as superior to the others that inhabit the place because they have established a relationship with the "spirits of the land" (*rai-na'in*) of the place (a *fukun*). Generally, this narrative of origin recounts how the ancestors established that *fukun*, that bond that gives them a privileged relationship with the spirits of the land, either because they are believed to be born directly from the land or because they were the first ones to settle down there and thus considered to be the pioneers.

The differential element of *uma-lulik* in relation to *uma-adat*, *lisan*, and *fukun*. All of them are sacred (*lulik*) to a different degree, although their sacredness is recognized at different levels. Thus, while an *uma-lisan*, its narrative of origin, and its relics are *lulik* for its members, they are not for other members of different houses within a particular community, who have different narratives of origin and objects. When an *uma-lisan* (that is, a specific house) is accepted as *lulik* by people belonging to different *uma-lisan* established in a specific area, it is because they recognize its precedence over the others based on its narrative of origin, thus being hierarchically higher (for example: house of kings, *uma liurai*). Through one or several narratives, a distinction is established between houses that organizes them among themselves. This type of social order, more or less stable, is not, however, static.

1.2.2. *Rai-na'in* and *rai-na'in kaer bua-malus*.

The concept of *rai-na'in* is difficult to translate. *Rai* means 'land', but the semantic field of the word goes beyond the concept of physical land and, in the cosmology of most East Timorese societies before the introduction of Christianity, land was considered a deity (Mother Earth) that is the provider of life and fertility (*buras*). The translation of the suffix *-na'in* is hard, as I mentioned before since its meaning varies contextually. In the case of the term *rai-na'in*, I have recorded the following meanings: (1) spirit of the land; (2) landowner; (3) house with precedence based on a narrative of origin in a specific place; (4) native; (5) from a place; (6) traditional authority; (7) ancestor, or (8) devil. These are just some of the meanings, but it is likely that there are many more and that many of them are created, lost, or vary in different moments and places.

Sometimes the concept of *rai-na'in* in its first meaning has been presented to me alongside the concept of *rai-fukun*. Understanding the meaning of the concept of *fukun* is particularly elusive in this case. Reviewing the scientific literature, I found this term referred to as "matriclan" among the Tetun-Terik of Indonesian Timor (Francillon, 1980, p. 248), an administrative unit formed by several villages, equating it with *suku*, so they would be synonyms (Hicks, 1973, p. 13). In other circumstances, *fukun* serves as a metaphor to refer to the cause of a problem. This is the case of consulting oracles through the reading of entrails (*halo urat*). In the case of sacrificing a rooster, its intestine is consulted and those protrusions that appear along it are interpreted as adversities - of various severity - whose causes are called *fukun* and also *hun* (for example: *problema nia hun*: "the root of the problem").

When used as part of a compound word, *fukun* denotes "the link that connects two things that would otherwise be separate" (Hicks, 1973, p. 14). *Fukun* is then the connecting element, that is, the connection between two conceptually different entities that are united through *fukun*. An example of this is found in the term *uma-fukun*, which designates houses that derived from a hierarchically superior one se

and are considered as subordinate to the precedent one. These derived houses generally, but not always, consider this core house as their house of origin (*uma-lulik*). In the case of *rai-fukun* when used as synonym of *rai-na'in*, I believe it refers precisely to the bond between people and land (personified through a *rai-na'in*, in its first meaning). This bond is legitimized through a recognized and accepted narrative of origin in a particular given moment and place.

Regarding the term *rai-na'in* applied to a specific person, it refers to someone who, within an identified house, holds the role of ritual specialist. That is, one or several people from a house (or derived one) who are recognized as representatives or spokespersons. In this sense, being a *rai-na'in* is not an exclusive role, but rather refers to the development of a public activity, and the same person may hold other roles as a ritual authority in different ritual contexts. Thus, being a *rai-na'in* does not prevent one from eventually acting as a *lia-na'in* in a private ceremony (such as a marriage or the construction of a sacred house, for example). *Rai-na'in* would ultimately be a community hierarchical position that holds a public role of establishing a communication with the guardian spirits (ancestors and spirits of the land) of a given territory.

It is important, then, understanding that the tenure of the land has two different aspects: the actual legal ownership of the land (legally or customary recognized) and the spiritual custody of the land. Even when individuals and families may own specific slots of land in a given place, it is a widespread belief (especially in rural communities) that some houses have the task of looking after the spiritus of the land and their ancestral connection with it. This task is normally seen as a public service that seeks to look after the wellbeing of the entire community. Owning land in a specific place does not exempt private landowners from acknowledging the ancestral connection that specific houses have with that place. This recognition is observed through the execution of ceremonies on those lands in which ritual specialists are summoned for different purposes (harvests, house constructions, infrastructure constructions, etcetera).

1.2.3. Fertility-takers / fertility-givers relations (*fetosaa* / *umane*)

The concepts of *fetosaa* (or *mane-foun*) and *umane* (or *uma mane*) are related to the affinal relationships between houses (*uma-lisan*), which are of two basic types: relationships with *uma-lisan* from which other *uma lisan* takes wives from, this is: their wife givers, called *umane* or *uma mane*; and with those houses to whom gives wives: their wife takers, called *fetosaa* or *mane-foun*. These types of relationships are one of the pillars of Timorese social organization and are constantly present in both everyday life and during the most formal events of social life (such as marriages, funerals and so on). These direction of wives exchanges is considered to be a “flow

of life" (Fox, 1980) not only of people, but also of "fertility" and general wellbeing between them.

1.3. What is Tara Bandu?

The expression Tara Bandu (hang + prohibition) refers to the physical act of placing signs (*horok*) whose symbolic encoding represents the regulation of relationships, both between humans and between humans and the environment (Alonso-Población, Rodrigues, et al., 2016, p. 8). This ritual is also known as *horok* in Tetun, by the name of the signs that are hung; and *disi gero* in Tokodede, (Carvalho, 2007; Carvalho & Coreia, 2011; Lekede'e Study Group, 2006), as well as *lobu* or *kero* (Kingsbury, 2009, p. 221). It has been defined as "seasonal or periodic resource harvesting restrictions" (Yoder, 2005, p. 249), although other authors have interpreted it, in a broader sense, as "from a local standpoint, what is today labelled as Tara Bandu is, and arguably has always been, more broadly interpreted as an agglomeration of practices drawn on to regulate place-based social and environmental relationships" (Palmer, 2016).

In its most well-known sense, Tara Bandu has to do with the restriction of productive activities, especially those related to the collection and use of natural resources, in a specific area for a variable period of time. That is, especially related to agriculture, although this type of prohibitions are also established for other activities, such as fishing (Alonso-Población, Rodrigues, et al., 2018, 2016; Cinatti, 1965; Silvestre & Barreto, 2011). However, nowadays Tara Bandu is used for many purposes (Alonso-Población, Rodrigues, et al., 2016; Brandão et al., 2013; Costa et al., 2017; Ide et al., 2021; Kehi & Palmer, 2012; Palmer, 2015; Palmer & McWilliam, 2019) and has been promoted by NGOs, civil society organizations, state institutions, and development agencies for various purposes, such as conflict resolution (Brandão et al., 2013), natural resource management (Alonso-Población, Rodrigues, et al., 2016; Carvalho & Coreia, 2011; De Carvalho & Coreia, 2011; Pompeia et al., 2003) or other transformations in agricultural patterns (Shepherd, 2009).

It should be noted that Tara Bandu is a community regulatory mechanism, not a formal one. It does not have a clear governance structure, but rather varies from place to place and affects people who are included within a territory limited by the influence of a specific house or houses (*uma fukun*) in that area. Like in many other places in Timor-Leste (and even in East Indonesia), it is a narrative of origin that establishes the basis for social order (Van Wouden, 1968), creating a hierarchy among houses (Fox, 2009; Reuter, 2009; Vischer, 2006). This narrative determines which houses (*uma-lisan* or *uma-fukun*) are considered to be the pioneer houses in the area; that is, those that can establish communication with the guardian spirits of the land. It is these houses, and no others, the ones that oversee the ritual governance over the land, which affects all community members.

However, it is not only the members of that house the ones that take the decision to carry out a *Tara Bandu*. This decision can be promoted by external agents to the community (state members) or local authorities (*suku* or *aldeia* leaders). It is, at the local level, these two domains, the ritual (belonging to the house) and the political (usually in the hands of *suku* representatives), in wide consultation with the community, decide to carry out the *Tara Bandu*. On the part of the house, the ritual specialist responsible for establishing the prohibition on communication with the spirits of the land is called *rai-na'in kaer bua-malus* (a type of ritual expert with the task, usually carried out exclusively, of establishing communication between the human realm and the realm of the land and its guardian spirits).



Photo 1. A horok (sign of a *Tara Bandu*).

Once established, through a complex ceremony, the *Tara Bandu* is indicated by signals that informs what type of prohibition has been established (see Photo 1), called *horok*. This is used as a way of communicating to the people that a *Tara Bandu* has been established in the area. Once the *horok*, which inform about the existence of a type of restriction, are set up, a group of people from the area is organized to enforce its observance, called *kableha* and *kaburoda*. The latter are responsible for monitoring that people observe the restriction, and if they do not, they report them to the ritual and political authorities, who establishes the appropriate sanction (usually a fine). A portion of the proceeds from each sanction is redistributed among the *kableha* and *kaburoda* as compensation for their efforts (*kolen*).

However, it should be noted that it is not only humans who enforce the Tara Bandu, but the inhabitants of the different areas under Tara Bandu believe that the spirits of the land (*rai-na'in*, sometimes vaguely referred to as "*lulik*") and the ancestors do that as well. When a specific prohibition is not observed, it is believed that these non-human agents can "catch" (*kesi*) the people who have not observed those prohibitions, causing them misfortune, illnesses, or even death. In this sense, the ritual authorities (the *rai-na'in kaer bua-malus*) are the accepted mediators between the human realm and the non-human realm withing a community.

When Tara Bandu is transgressed, the local resolution of the problem is activated through the ritual of *nahe biti* (unroll the mattress) (Babo-Soares, 2004; Fidalgo-Castro & Alonso-Población, 2013; Miyazawa & Miyazawa, 2021), which refers to the act of resolving a problem through negotiated dialogue between the opposing parties. A specific ritual specialist (*tesi lia-na'in*) is responsible for mediating, along with the political authorities (suku chief or hamlet chief, depending on the seriousness of the transgression). In this process, a consensus is reached, and once agreed upon, animals that the transgressing person or persons have had to provide are sacrificed. Once the animals are sacrificed, the entrails of the animals (*halo urat*) are interpreted to determine if the resolution has been correct. It is through these sacrifices that the anger of the spirits of the land and the ancestors (*rai-na'in*) towards the transgressors is considered appeased, and it is understood that they will not face negative consequences to their well-being for having restored the balance they had broken by violating the prohibition (*hamatak malirin*) (Kehi & Palmer, 2012; Trinidad, 2014).

1.3. Methodology

Some of the data included in this report comes from previous ethnographical surveys in the country on a range of different topics. Scattered data on Tara Bandu practices was gathered by participatory observation and interviews while living in the communities.² On these projects primary fieldwork was carried out discontinuously between 2007 and 2013 in Liquiçá district (mainly in Faulara -suku Leotelá- and also in the suku of Dato and Loidahar) and elsewhere in Timor-Leste (Ainaro, Baucau, Ermera and Dili). The data gathered in past projects was used now

² As a member of a team of anthropologists directed by Professor Luis A. Gárate Castro and María Jesús Pena Castro I took part on the following research projects: 1) Evaluation and prospects of education in Timor-Leste. Education and development: challenges, problems, opportunities, and proposals for intervention strategies (2007); 2) Situation analysis of gender-based violence in Timor-Leste. (2008); 3) Analysis of the decision-making process at the household level. Assessment levels Empowerment of women in Timor-Leste (2009); 4) Uma lulik project. (2009-2010); 5) Fieldwork for my PhD dissertation (2010-2012) and short consultancy on nutrition for Care International Timor-Leste (2013). Some of my publications are: Alonso-Población, Fidalgo-Castro, et al., 2016, 2018; Alonso-Población, Palazón Monforte, et al., 2016; Alonso-Población & Fidalgo-Castro, 2014; Fidalgo-Castro, 2020b, 2020a, 2022a, 2022b, 2023, 2012b; Fidalgo-Castro et al., 2021; Fidalgo-Castro, 2012a, 2013, 2015b, 2015a, 2016, 2019; Fidalgo-Castro & Alonso-Población, 2017, 2023a, 2023b, 2023c.

to define the research problem, its main hypothesis as well as the design of the interviews. In addition, during the desk research phase of the project, literature concerning Timor-Leste use of Tara Bandu was reviewed from an anthropological, historical, political and environmental point of view.

New data was collected during 7 days of fieldwork in July 2023 (16th-23rd) in three selected areas: namely i. Marobo (suku of Ilat-Laun, Atu-Aben and Soileco), ii. Lourba and iii. Leohito. The three areas were selected within the areas where WVTL is implementing its programs in which Tara Bandu has played or is going to play a role. The people from these areas are of different ethnolinguistic groups: Kémak (Marobo area), Búnak (Lourba), Welaun [or Bekais] (hamlet of Mohak, in Leohito) and Tétum Terik (hamlet Faloai, in Leohito).

Overall, 3 Focus Discussion Groups and 15 interviews were conducted (see ANNEX I: LIST OF PEOPLE INTERVIEWED). Apart from interviews, participatory observation techniques were applied during data collection. The consultant stayed in the areas of research, staying with a local family for the total length of the fieldwork (4 days in Marobo, with a short visit to Lourba and 2 in Leohito). Data was gathered during informal conversations. The use of participant observation, short as it was, was applied with the intention of overcoming biased (discursive-only) data gathering. As previously pointed out, participant observation conducted during these six days was complemented with previous observations from past studies.

Table 1: Field research matrix. July 2023 (16th-23rd)

	Marobo & Lourba	Leohito
Length of stay	4 days	2 days
Areas of research	Ilat-Laun, Atu-Aben, Soileco & Lourba (suku)	Faloai and Mohak (hamlets)
Number of interviews and FDG	15 interviews 2 Focus Discussion Groups	1 Focus Discussion Group 1 interview
Other techniques	Participant observation	Participant observation

Apart from these, two interviews with World Vision staff from Maliana were conducted, as well as several informal conversations. I must mention my gratitude to all the WVTL local team, but specially the assistance of Mr. Domingos de Araújo, for his valuable support during fieldwork in Marobo and Lourba. His promptness and eagerness were fundamental to seek interviews with the people within the community in Marobo.

Even though the initial plan for the fieldwork was 10 days (including travels), the fact that the electricity supply went down for two days straight in Marobo made impossible to work on the data gathered. This added to the fact that the responses

the consultant was receiving were starting to be redundant, were the reasons for him to decide to cut the length of the fieldwork short in one day and a half.

Once the initial data gathering was accomplished and the first draft of the report was finished a participatory validation and diagnosis workshop was held with the communities' local ritual and political authorities as well as several municipal representatives (see ANNEX II). The workshop was structured as follows: a. In the first part, the preliminary results of the data available (primary and secondary) were presented to the participants by the consultant (see ANNEX III), as well as the recommendations. After that, different stakeholders validated the conclusions of and discussed some of the challenging aspects that a using Tara Bandu only as an environmental mechanism poses them (the main point of the discussion have been included in the report [see [2.5. Lessons from the Maliana participatory workshop \(08/08/2023\)](#)]).

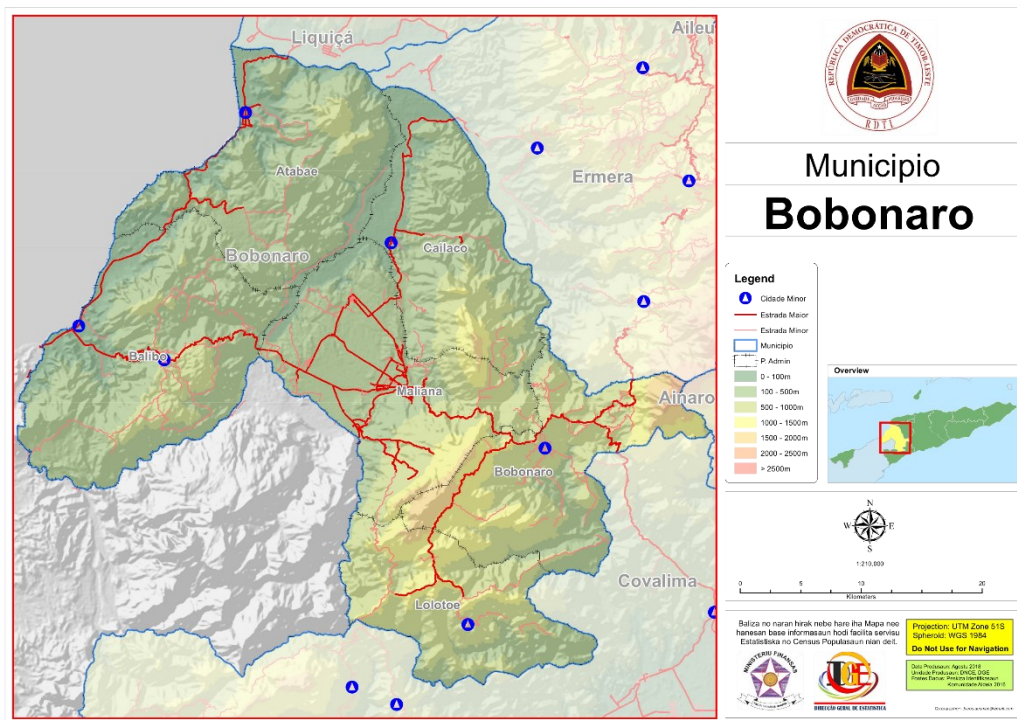
1.5. Limitations of the study

Even though I tried to interview women on several occasions, when it was stated that the topic of the conversation will be around the Tara Bandu, all the prospective women approached refused to be involved, arguing that talking about *kultura* (culture) was a male activity and that they “did not know about culture”. Even though in their daily life women do talk about culture all the time, they mostly do so during informal moments during their everyday private life (even though some *ferik* [elderly women] sometimes state their opinions publicly). The performative formal action of being interviewed for a topic such as this, during a short period of fieldwork, is normally rejected. In my previous experience on longer ethnographic surveys, once the women get use to the presence of the researcher, they do speak about any topic during informal conversations and even correct males if they consider that they happen do get something wrong. In the case of this consultancy, however, gender bias was unavoidable due to the short period fieldwork. The consultant used data from informal conversations and from previous fieldworks undertaken in the country to fill possible gaps.

2. Bobonaro Case Studies

2.1. Introductory notes on Bobonaro municipality

Bobonaro is one of the 13 municipalities of Timor-Leste. It borders the municipalities of Ermera and Liquiçá to the north, Cova-Lima and Indonesia to the south, and Ermera, Ainaro and Covalima to the east, as well as Atambua (Indonesia) to the west. The capital of Bobonaro is Maliana, a city that is home to a large part of the region's economic and administrative activity.



Map 1: Bobonaro municipality

The municipality of Bobonaro has a population of 106,639 people (INETL, 2022). Languages spoken in the municipality are mainly Tetum Terik, Kemak, Búnak, and Welaun (also known as Bekais).

As for the economy, agriculture is the main activity for most of Bobonaro population. The most important agricultural products include rice, maize, coffee, peanuts, and cassava. In addition to that, some crops like betel and areca are used as cash crops. Livestock farming is also an important activity in the region. However, despite its agricultural potential, the municipality of Bobonaro faces challenges such as a lack of infrastructure, a shortage of workforce, and a still nascent agricultural mechanization.

Present-day Bobonaro municipality was one of the places that experienced the most tensions during Portuguese colonization. Although the Portuguese carried out indirect colonization through agreements with local kingdoms, various wars

occurred during certain moments of colonization. The imposition of the *finta* tax during the 18th century required the kingdoms to deliver goods to the Portuguese administration, mainly sandalwood, gold, honey, and provisions, among others. Subsequently, during the mandate of administrator Celestino da Silva (1894-1908), the *finta* tax was replaced by the *capitação* tax (head tax), which required the payment of a monetary amount from every man between 18 and 60 years old. These two taxes led to several kingdoms in the current Bobonaro municipality declaring themselves in rebellion, initiating conflicts with the Portuguese administration. As a result of these conflicts, thousands of inhabitants from Bobonaro, as well as other areas of the country (Davidson, 1994), migrated to Dutch Timor, many of whom settled permanently there (Damaledo, 2018, p. 31).

At the beginning of the Indonesian occupation, Bobonaro was one of the most affected municipalities. Land invasion started from Indonesian Timor in several areas of the district. There is not much data on what happened during the occupation in the district, however, we do know that forced population transfers from remote areas to areas near roads were carried out due to military control by the Indonesian army (Aditjondro, 1994; Mubyarto et al., 1991). Additionally, the government of the Belu region, in Indonesian Timor, conducted a census in 1976 that estimated that around 37,000 East Timorese had been displaced to the region during the invasion and the Indonesian military campaign. Among these, it is estimated that around 18,197 Búnak from Bobonaro, about 6,911 Kémak from Marobo³, and about 6,726 Tétum Térik from Balibó settled in various areas of the region (Damaledo, 2018, p. 39). During that time, traditional houses, and ancestral settlements (*uma lisan*, *uma lulik*) was severely impacted, with many of them being abandoned throughout the entire occupation period. By 1999, the destruction in the Bobonaro area was massive, with an estimated 13,500 houses along with a large part of its public infrastructure being destroyed. Additionally, between 30,000-40,000 people were forcibly deported to Indonesian Timor, and although many of them returned after the intervention of UNTAET, many others settled permanently in West Timor and became Indonesian citizens (CAVR, 2013b).

2.2. Marobo Case Study: Ilat-Laun, Atu-Aben and Soileco

Marobo is the name by which the set of three suku formed by Ilat-Laun, Atu-Aben, and Soileco is known. Local population speaks Kémak, a language of the Austronesian phylum. Its current local governance is established, as is the case in other places in Timor-Leste, through the election of suku chiefs and village chiefs. Administratively, it depends on the *posto* Bobonaro.

Economically, agriculture work continues to be the municipality most important source for people's livelihood. The main crops being produced are corn, cassava,

³ The figures presented by Damaledo for the Kémak migrants from Marobo are somewhat doubtful (Damaledo, 2018, p. 39), since the population of Marobo in 1969-1970 was estimated about a total of 3,324 people (Renard-Clamagirand, 1982, p. 23) and, at the time of its highest population (in 1988), around 4,491 (Hidayah et al., 1990, p. 46). However, it is possible that when referring to Marobo, it includes regions beyond what strictly constitutes Marobo for its members (the suku of Ilat-Laun, Atu-Aben, and Soileco).

coconuts, as well as other seasonal crops and vegetables. In addition to that, cattle breeding and pig and goat raising are also major activities. However, a significant portion of the population also survives based on formal or sporadic work with the government, the church, or other non-governmental organizations. During the four-day stay in Marobo, it was common to see brigades of women carrying out cleaning tasks in various areas near the roads, and young people carrying out road improvement works. Also, there is a portion of the population that receives retirement subsidies, or, in their case, subsidies for the veterans of the resistance against Indonesian occupation. In addition to that, a portion of the people in the suku supplement their income with various types of retail businesses (kiosks). A smaller portion of the population extract rocks from the mountains for sale to contractors who carry out improvements to rural public infrastructure (at around \$80 per truck, according to gathered information). Also, remittances by migrant population (mainly from Korea and Australia) were said by the respondents to be an important element of their community economy.

Historical records show the existence of Marobo at least back to the 17th century (Belo, 2011). In 1895, there was a war with the Portuguese administration in which, according to administrator José Celestino da Silva, Marobo, along with the neighbouring kingdom of Obulo, threatened to raise the Dutch flag, thus showing their rejection of Portuguese colonizers (Davidson, 1994, p. 184). As a result, a confrontation occurred in which both kingdoms were attacked (J. C. da Silva, 1897). This revolt was caused by the imposition of the *capitação* tax (head tax) during the rule of the Portuguese governor (which replaced the *finta* tax). During this time, as mentioned previously, there was a migration of many members of the kémak communities living in Marobo to Indonesian Timor (Damaledo, 2018, p. 39).



There is no record of a ritual called Tara Bandu taking place in Marobo at that time. However, there is something called *ukon no badu*, which is the political power developed by the *dato* of the three main houses (Lolo Ubun, Dasi Ubun, and Bere Ubun) during community rituals. During the fieldwork for the consultancy, when asking the interviewees what they understood by Tara Bandu, they were referring to this type of rituals. Thus, from a local point of view, the prohibitions of Tara Bandu in Marobo are related to the prohibitions of consuming harvest products before the rituals that lift that prohibition take place. This includes the lifting of the prohibition of consuming corn (*sau sele*), the beginning of the dry season (*tuhi*), and the beginning of the rainy season (*suma ai*⁴). It also relates to conflicts that may arise between houses when customary laws are violated, especially those related to alliance relationships between houses (*fetosaa-umane*).



Figure 1. Knua (village) of ritual houses in Atu-Aben. Source: Alberto Fidalgo, 2023.

This type of prohibitions and regulations, according to most of the interviewees, were divided into cold ones (which belonged to the “cold” *bei* or “feminine”) and “hot ones” (which belonged to the hot *bei* or “masculine”). One refers to governance through ritual power, the other through customary law power. This division of local governance through dyadic relationships for local governance in house societies. At the community level, this social organization is based on a hierarchy of core houses. Collective rituals are performed by specific individuals (*bei*) on behalf of the entire

⁴ Meaning burn the land (*sunu rai* in Tetun).

community. These rituals do not involve the exchange of goods. However, if animals are sacrificed, the meat is divided among the core houses according to their status. Each status is associated with a specific cut of meat.

During the Indonesian occupation, many changes occurred in Marobo. In 1976, during the pacification campaign, many people were forcibly relocated to Maliana, others fled to the village of Aituto, and others to West Timor (Indonesia) (Barrkman, 2013). According to Damaledo's estimates, 6,911 Kemak people from Marobo fled to West Timor in 1976 (a figure that is unlikely considering that around 1970 the population of Marobo was estimated to be 3,425, see footnote 7). During the interviews and focus groups, it was repeatedly mentioned that it was precisely during the Indonesian occupation that the ritual activities associated with Tara Bandu (which locally include *tuhi*, *suma ai*, *sau sele*, and others) ceased to be performed and, in many cases, the sacred places and were abandoned. It should be recalled that due to military control of the population, collective ritual activities involving the gathering of crowds were prohibited by the Indonesians to prevent political resistance gatherings. However, the population of Marobo increased during the Indonesian occupation, at least according to the figures collected for the year 1988 (Hidayah et al., 1990). The figures may not be very reliable, but it is possible that some of the descendants of the Kemak population from Marobo who had fled during the wars against the Portuguese in the late 19th century returned to their place of origin during the Indonesian occupation. This phenomenon would explain the drastic increase in population between 1970 and 1988, as well as its subsequent decline in the 2004 census, once a large part of that population fled again to West Timor to settle there permanently until today (see Figure 2).

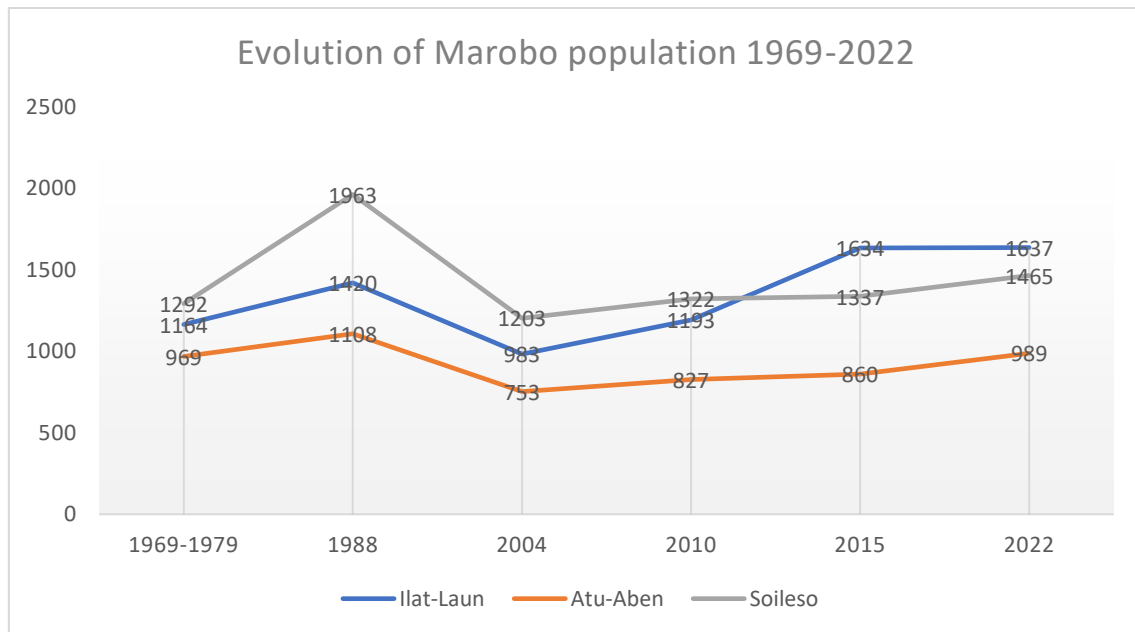


Figure 2. Evolution of population in Marobo 1969-2022⁵

It was also during the Indonesian occupation that most Timorese people, including those in Marobo, converted to Catholicism. In the interviews conducted, it was repeatedly mentioned that during the occupation, some people associated with the Catholic Church (mainly priests and catechists) were opposed to practices related to animist practices, considering traditional rituals to be worship of the devil” (*adora diabu*). It is possible that this type of attitude from the church during the occupation served as another coercive element that prevented the reactivation of communal rituals such as Tara Bandu. According to the people interviewed, this was no longer the case and authorities from the Church prompted people to keep doing the ancestral practices these days.

During the turmoil of 1999, informants mention being attacked by pro-Indonesian militias, and many fled to West Timor. At that time, both *uma-lulik* (sacred houses) and *lulik* objects from several houses that carried out ritual tasks in Marobo were burned or simply abandoned. Furthermore, disruption and discontinuation of ceremonial rituals also occurred. The events of 1999 are relevant because it is precisely one of the reasons that the interviewed political representatives (suku chiefs and village chiefs) indicated as the main obstacle that prevents them from developing Tara Bandu properly. A specific house (*Uma Sope*), considered to be an integral part of the ritual governance in Marobo, saw many of its members migrating to West Timor during 1999 turmoil and settle down there, becoming Indonesian citizens. This house (and its ritual specialist), originally from suku Atu-Aben, had the task of announcing to all the *uma lisan* of Marobo that a particular ritual event (included those related to Tara Bandu) was going to take place. Although there are still some people belonging to that house living in Timor-Leste, according to several

⁵ The sources for the population evolution chart are: 1967-1970 (Renard-Clamagirand, 1982, p. 23), 1988 (Hidayah et al., 1990, p. 46), 2004 (Census Project Team, 2008); 2010 (Direcção-Geral de Estatística, 2010); 2015 (Direcção Geral de Estatística, 2016); 2022 (INETL, 2022).

informants, they do not have the appropriate knowledge to carry out the rituals (*ko'alia hamulak la hatene*). Likewise, the only ritual specialist from the *Uma Sope* house considered the *na'in* (chosen by the ancestors to perform the ritual tasks) is currently an Indonesia citizen and cannot carry out these tasks in Timor-Leste. After independence, some people who were considered knowledgeable ritual leaders to carry out traditional resource management practices could not engage in this activity any longer because of this. When asked if any other person from Uma Sope who still living in Timor-Leste could carry on these tasks, most of the respondents stated that it could not be carried out by anybody else other person because it is taboo (*lulik*). According to them, the transmission of this position does not happen through human agency. It is the ancestors the ones that are believed to choose and transmit that position to a particular person (often through messages received in dreams). The selection of this person by ancestral agency cannot be subverted by human action. It is believed that doing that could cause misfortune to those who try to replace that person.

Highlights from the communities' interview on the difficulties to successfully carry on a Tara Bandu.

During the interviews and focus groups, some of the key points that were identified as crucial to perform a proper execution of Tara Bandu are the following:

One of the arguments that was repeated throughout the interviews is the loss of knowledgeable ritual specialists who can successfully carry out traditional resource management practices, caused by the death of the elders and the disruption of the transmission of the ritual position. According to some informants, this provokes fear of making mistakes among some ritual specialists during the ritual execution, which is considered to have serious effects on their own lives (as land spirits and ancestors are invoked). The loss of this ritual knowledge is attributed, by many, to various reasons: mainly, the death of many elders who knowledgeable of the ritual aspects, or them fleeing to Indonesian Timor 1999 and settle down there.

The loss of some ritual objects (*sasán lulik*) was also argued as another factor that hinders the proper execution of Tara Bandu. Many of them were lost during the Indonesian occupation and the turmoil of 1999, burned, or simply abandoned and neglected until their destruction. These elements are essential symbolic communicators that demonstrate the cosmology that connects the core houses to the land and prove their authenticity to the community. The *uma lulik*, many of which are also abandoned, serve a similar function as well. The fact that they have not been reconstructed (as it has conversely happened elsewhere in Timor-Leste) points to a weak social cohesion within the Marobo community. There are many reasons for this to happen, both past and present, but it is likely that the migration of a large part of the population after 1999, as well as the current social, cultural, and epistemological changes (particularly evident in intergenerational conflict) are its main causes.



Picture 1. Interview with Ilat-Laun suku chief. Source: Alberto Fidalgo, 2023

This intergenerational conflict is evident when respondents indicated the lack of interest of many young people in local cultural matters. It is not considered that they do not "believe", but rather that their interests are focused elsewhere, such as improving their private living conditions, education, Catholic religion, etc.

Another conflict that arises in the implementation of Tara Bandu in Marobo is the clash between community and private interests. The rituals associated with Tara Bandu are related to traditional local governance, largely sanctioned by houses that are hierarchically superior. While most people recognize their precedence, not everyone wants to use their time and economic resources to participate in community rituals that they do not see as personally utilitarian. Comments such as "*Imi atu selu ha'u ka?*" (Are you going to pay me?) were some of the reasons why many people in the community were not particularly interested in participating in such activities and preferred to focus on their personal businesses.

Another cause that respondents included as a reason why people do not want to participate in Tara Bandu rituals, especially from the perspective of older people, is that younger people are these days interested in "educating themselves" (*hola matenek, eskola*) themselves and not pay much attention to their local culture and roots. In a way, these types of interventions point to a certain preference for the "modern" and urban over the "traditional" and rural among younger generations. This being said, most of the young people interviewed stated that they are interested in cultural affairs, but that what it has being difficult for them is to deal with their desire for a better life and follow cultural practices at the same time.



Picture 2. Focus Discussion Group with ritual specialist from Atu-Aben. Source: Alberto Fidalgo, 2023.

Furthermore, democracy was confronted with the governance mechanisms of the *abó sira* (ancestors), which the Tara Bandu were considered to be an integral part of, as a source of conflict. Many ritual specialists considered that the fact that political positions (*suku* and hamlet chiefs) were now elected instead of being appointed from the original core houses of the place has caused that they sometime do not prioritize cultural revitalization in the area.⁶

Several interviewees mentioned that the only times agreements were reached between political authorities (*suku* chiefs) and ritual authorities in recent years was to prevent specific incidents through ritual action that were seen as in the interest of all the community members: the contagion of Covid-19 of Marobo people (for which rituals were performed in the sacred place of Ilat-Laun in the appropriate manner) and to prevent the United States from going to war with North Korea, as there were people from Marobo who had moved to South Korea to work and the ritual was aimed to prevent war in order to protect them. Most of the respondents

⁶ Even so, it is quite normal to find that many *suku* and *aldeia* chiefs are members of the core houses (*uma-lisan*) that were traditionally considered to be the ones from the traditional governance structure. In Marobo, the *suku* chief from Ilat-Laun was a member of Lolo Ubun house. In Atu-Aben, conversely, the *suku* chief was not a member of Bere Ubun. We do not have data on the Soileco's *uma-lisan* house.

agreed that these two specific actions, as they were widely accepted to be conducted the correct way, were largely successful.



Picture 3. Focus Discussion Group with Ritual Specialists from Atu-Aben. Source: Alberto Fidalgo.

Back in 2018 a Tara Bandu was held in the hamlet of Ai-Aras, part of suku Soileco with external support of the government and aid agencies. Most of the respondents share the opinion that such a Tara Bandu cannot be recognized as a proper one. According to them one hamlet or even one suku on their own cannot conduct a Tara Bandu on their own. If they do it anyway it is believed that it won't be a strong one and people won't observe the prohibitions. According to most of them, this ritual action must be conducted in all three suku altogether, because they are really believed to be the descendants of the same ancestors. Only when the three of them (along with government authorities, in this case the three suku chiefs) agree to carry a Tara Bandu on it would be believed to be strong enough, and people would observe the prohibitions. It is believed that, only doing it this way, will it be strong enough and people will fear (*tauk*) transgressing its prohibitions (because it has been done through the spirits of the ancestors and the land).

2.3. Lourba Case Study

In the suku of Lourba the consultant could not conduct interviews with community and ritual specialist. We could only interview the suku chief for an hour, because during the days we were conducting fieldwork there a community ritual activity

(*halo kultura*) was also taking place in the suku. It was related to the canalization of water from a sacred water spring (*bee matan lulik*). The suku chief was thus busy and needed to attend the ritual as a representative of the State. For this reason, the data from this suku has a limited validity as it was only gathered from one source.⁷



Picture 4. A house in suku Lourba c. 1958. Source: Cinatti et al., 1987, p. 70.

Between October 7 and November 2, 1894, the Portuguese campaign against the Lamaquito Kingdom (Lamak Hitu) took place. Lourbá was one of the towns in this kingdom where the local population confronted them (Pélissier, 2007, p. 204). During this period, which is part of the wide range of colonial wars that the Portuguese carried out against the local population during the government of Celestino da Silva, it is very likely that Lourbá was heavily affected and migrations to Indonesian Timor occurred, just like what happened with the kémak people of Marobo.

During the civil war and the subsequent Indonesian invasion, Lourbá was heavily attacked and a large part of its population fled to West Timor (Damaledo, 2018, p. 39). Later, during 1999, Lourbá was also heavily attacked by at least two pro-Indonesian militias (Halintar and Dadurus Merah Putih), destroying a large part of

⁷ In addition to that, according to what the chief of suku told us, some ritual specialists were not comfortable talking about the culture with me because they thought we could "steal" their words. Although we were unable to finally interview them, we made it clear to the chief of suku that our intention was not to steal the local knowledge considered to be secret (*lulik*) by the community, but rather to understand how the structure of the Tara Bandu worked there.

the suku houses and carrying out several killings of pro-independence locals (CAVR, 2013a, pp. 1106, 1099–1100).

There are records of Lourba ritual houses in a book published by Cintti et al. (1987, pp. 64–87). These houses were destroyed during the conflicts from 1975 onwards, subsequently rebuilt, as mentioned to us by the suku chief during the interview, and burned again in 1999, along with a large part of private houses and infrastructure (L. M. G. de Sousa, 2010, p. 77). Currently, some of these ritual houses were rebuilt, although not with traditional materials.

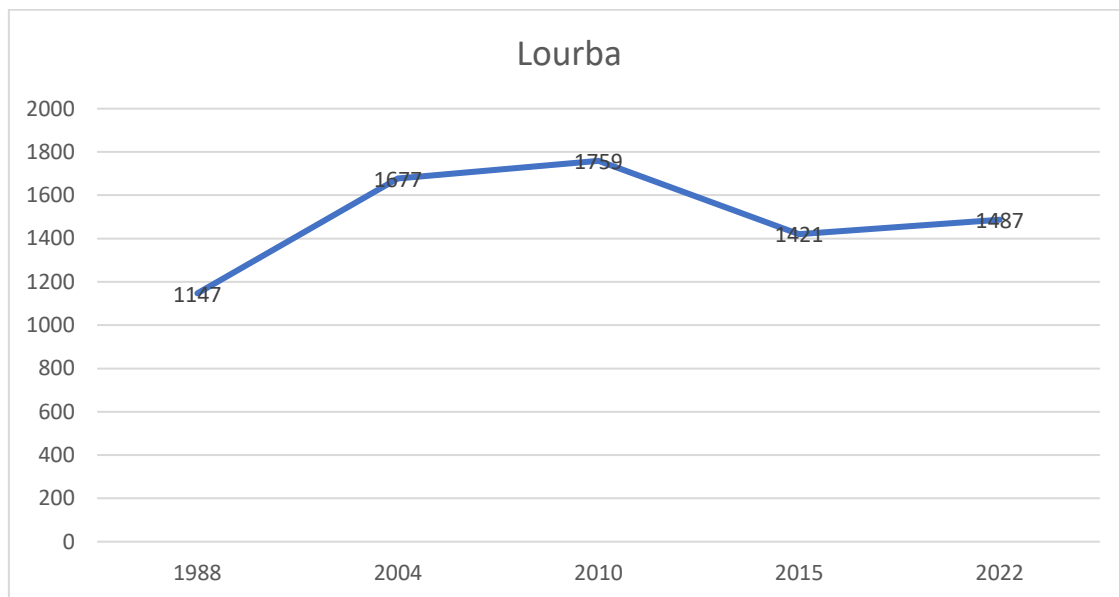


Figure 3. Evolution of Lourba population 1988-2022⁸

We do not have population data about Lourba from the Portuguese colonial era. We know that after independence, the population of Lourba increased until 2010, followed by a decline in 2015 that has been more or less maintained to this day. It is very likely that the data from 2015-2022 point to a high migration rate, as mentioned by the suku chief in a personal interview.

According to the suku chief, the Tara Bandu is performed in a manner similar to that recognized by the government. However, it is still not only seen as an environmental protection mechanism but rather as a broader local governance mechanism that regulates people's relationships with the environment (especially with sacred places), relationships between people, the protection of private property, and people's relationship with the church.

⁸ The sources for the population evolution chart are: 1988 (Hidayah et al., 1990, p. 46), 2004 (Census Project Team, 2008); 2010 (Direcção-Geral de Estatística, 2010); 2015 (Direcção Geral de Estatística, 2016); 2022 (INETL, 2022).

The pioneering *uma-lisan* in the area (*rai-na'in kaer bua ho malus*) are Pietas Rato, Pietas Bi-Gebel, and Leo-Pele. They have different tasks as original houses in the suku, in their relationship with the spirits of the land and the ancestors. The Leo-Pele house is responsible for placing the areca nut and betel nut (*bua-malus*)⁹ in the sacred place (where the primordial connection between the land and the first inhabitants is considered to have been established). Pietas Bi-Gebel house acts as a witness (*matan ho tilun*) and ensures that the ceremony is carried out properly. Finally, Pietas Ratu house performs the ritual speech (*hamulak*) to communicate with the guardian spirits of the place. According to the suku chief, these houses are believed to be subdivisions from a hierarchically superior one from Bobonaro (Mali-Lait).



Picture 5. Interview with Lino da Crus. Suku chief of Lourba. Source: Alberto Fidalgo

In the Búnak language of Lourba, Tara Bandu is called *ukon ho on*. According to the suku chief, although the realization of Tara Bandu may receive support from external

⁹ The *bua-malus* (betel and areca) is a central element in all Timor-Leste societies. I suppose that, within the ritual action, it serves as a symbolic communicator that opens communication between the realm of the living and the realm of the guardian spirits of the place (*rai-na'in* and *abó sirá*). The suku leader indicated in the interview that the way he managed to get the *lia-na'in* to accept this solution was by pressuring them to perform the rituals, or else he would do it himself. This caused the *lia-na'in* to dream (one of the ways in which spirits of ancestors and the land are believed to communicate with the living in Timor-Leste), and they eventually agreed to perform these rituals through new animal sacrifices.

entities, it is organized by the community. The last time they conducted a Tara Bandu was in 2017, in relation to the canalization of water from a sacred spring (*bee-matan lulik*), located within the suku. The canalization involved installing a water pump, and the objective was to keep the spring in good condition (activities such as washing clothes, logging, or clearing vegetation were prohibited, and animals were prevented from entering the area). According to the suku chief, this sacred spring is where all the rituals related to Tara Bandu in the suku take place. This is the location where according to the narrative of origin the relation between the ancestors and the spirits of the land was established. The boundaries of this Tara Bandu are with Soileco, Atu-Aben, and Bobonaro. There is no boundary with Mali-Lait because they are descendants of people from there (Búnak speaking as well).

One of the aspects that the suku- chief emphasized was the fact that it takes a long time to reach an agreement on the implementation of a Tara Bandu to be agreed upon, carried out and enforced. According to him, the last one they did in 2017 took six months from the first meeting until it was executed. This was because all the members of the community must be present and many of them work outside the suku (some in Dili), so they can only attend on Saturdays. Additionally, that was the time when the necessary resources are gathered at the community level to carry it out. After that, government officials and other authorities are invited (*bainaka*) to participate in the theatrical phase of the ritual execution that initiates the Tara Bandu prohibitions.

2.4. Leohito Case Study: the hamlets of Faloai and Mohak.

Leohito is a suku in the administrative post of Balibo, with a current population of approximately 3,611 people (see Figure 4). Economically, like many other places in Timor-Leste, corn and cassava are cultivated as basic subsistence crops. Rice is also grown in some areas of the suku, but it is not of much relevance according to the interviewees. In addition to that, betel nut and areca are also grown as cash crops. Livestock raising, particularly cattle, is also of importance. Additionally, based on what we could see, there are some places where aquaculture is practiced, possibly because of development aid projects. Alongside that, there may be some minor smuggling of goods between the suku and Indonesian Timor. Furthermore, there are several families in the area with members who have migrated to Australia and Korea and regularly send remittances.

From a linguistic perspective, Leohito is a complex suku. It is the only place in Timor-Leste where the Welaun language, also known as Bekais, is spoken. It seems to be an Austronesian language that gradually replaced Tetun Terik due to the political power of the Wehali Kingdom in the 16th century (Manuel, 2012; Therik, 2004). The number of speakers varies, but it is estimated to be around 3200 (Census Project Team, 2008). However, Welaun is only spoken in three villages in Leohito: Mohak, Ferik Katuas, and Rai Ulun. The other two villages have different native languages: Faloai speaks Tetun Terik, while Aiasa speaks Kemak.

We do not have much information about what happened in Leohito during the Portuguese colonization and how that may have affected the implementation of Tara Bandu and the local governance structure through houses. We know that Leohito was part of the Batugade Military Command and that, during the colonial war campaigns of Celestino da Silva, it was not one of the most affected places. There is evidence of interference against the suku chiefs of that time by the Portuguese authorities: in 1909, it is reported that the chiefs of Leohito and Leolima were replaced by others whom the commander trusted more (Davidson, 1994, p. 239). Also a border control post was established in 1902 with then Dutch Timor, to control smuggling activities in the area (Boavida, 2014, p. 242). Leohito, which was outside the coffee cultivation areas of interest, was not one that had been stressed to increase coffee production.

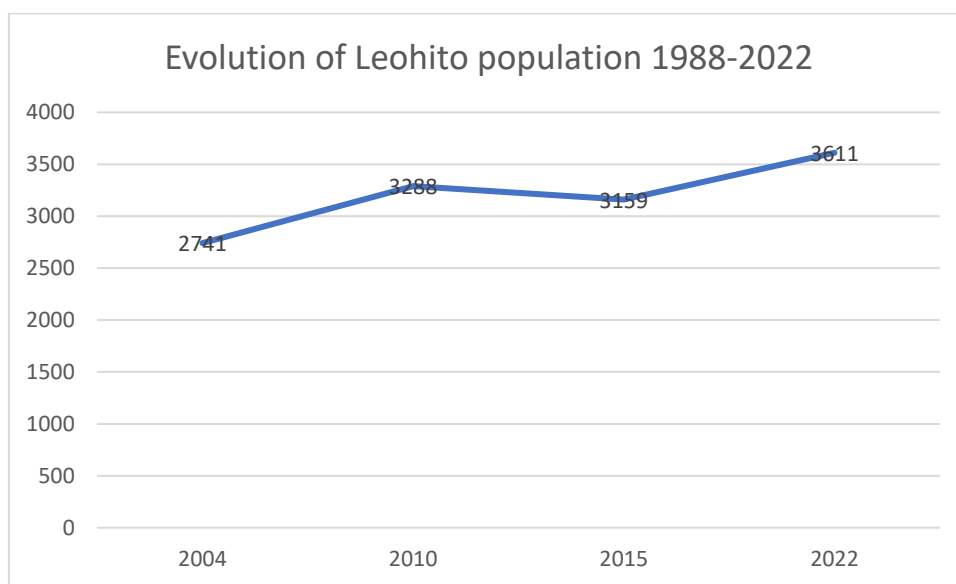


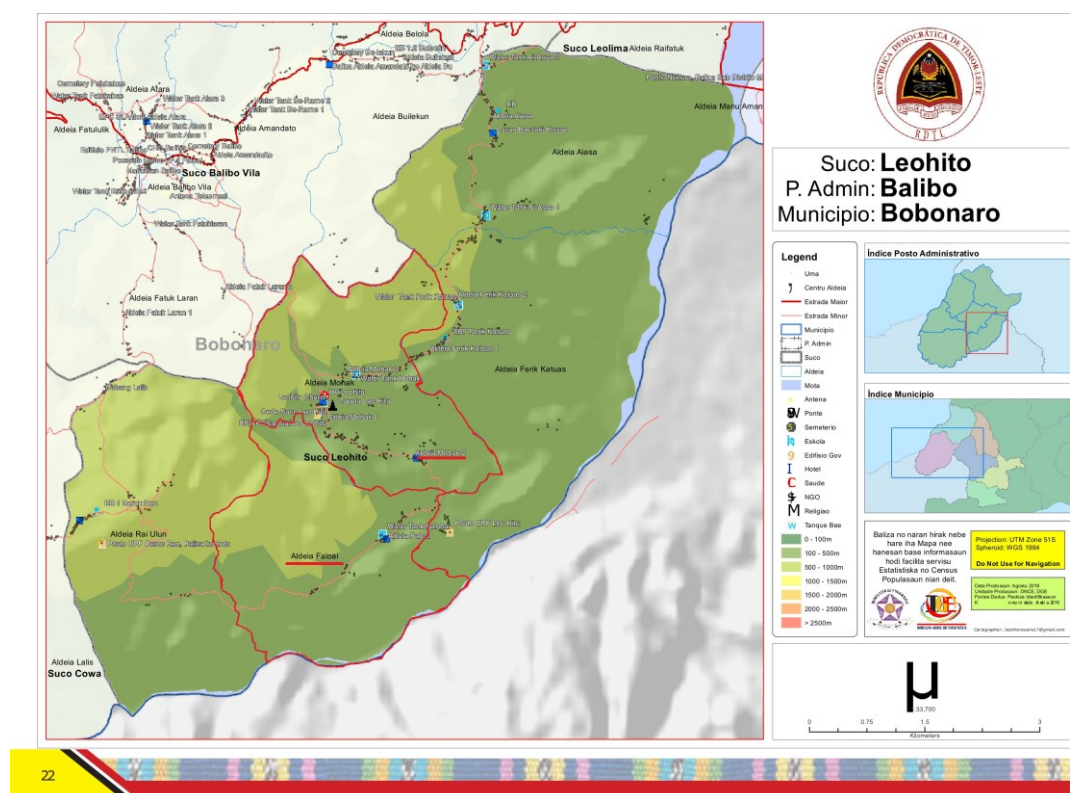
Figure 4. Evolution of Leohito population 1988-2022¹⁰

There is also not much information available about what happened during the Indonesian invasion and the subsequent occupation in the published materials about the region. While Balibo was known for being one of the first places invaded in 1975, it is possible that a large part of the local population fled to West Timor seeking refuge during that time. During the interviews, it was indicated that while many of the people in the suku fled to Indonesian Timor in 1999, they did so not so much for political reasons of belonging to pro-Indonesian militias or pro-independence groups, but rather as displaced persons under coercion. Additionally, according to what several people in the villages of Faloai and Moha mentioned, the sacred houses of the groups considered pioneers in the area were not burned down. We do not have data on population trends during Portuguese Timor and Indonesian occupation, so we have not been able to triangulate this data and verify its

¹⁰ The sources for the population evolution chart are: 2004 (Census Project Team, 2008); 2010 (Direcção-Geral de Estatística, 2010); 2015 (Direcção Geral de Estatística, 2016); 2022 (INETL, 2022).

consistency. However, what we can confirm is the relative sustained growth of the population from independence to the present (see Figure 4), this implies that although there may be some outgoing migration, its impact may not be as strong as it occurs elsewhere (for example in Lourba, see Figure 3).

Apparently, based on the responses of the people interviewed in Mohak and Faloai, the linguistic division by hamlets also mirrors the boundaries of the governances' structure for the Tara Bandu. The different houses that are considered to be the custodians of the spirits of the land and the ancestors are different in each of the ethnolinguistic areas. Thus, Welaun people, Kémak people and Tétum Têrik people have different houses that can uphold a Tara Bandu in their territory.



Map 3. Surrounded in red: hamlets of Mohak and Faloai.

2.4.1. Tara Bandu in Faloai

The houses, within the local hierarchy, that are considered pioneering and are the custodian of the spirits of the land and ancestors are: Uma Ikun, Uma Katuas, Uma Leon, and Uma Knokaar. The first of these houses, Uma Ikun, is considered the original, which the others would have derived from (*oan mane*). According to the interviewed people, there are barely any knowledgeable ritual specialists from Uma Ikun house, as they fled to Atambua and continue to reside there. There are people from that house living there, but they are not the ones chosen to be the “owners” (na’in), this is the ones chosen to carry out ancestral rituals and also, they do not have the necessary knowledge to do so. However, as indicated, Tara Bandu is performed every single year. In this case, it is Uma Leon house that is responsible for

performing the rituals related to Tara Bandu. The other two houses are responsible for: 1) guarding sacred objects and taking care of the house itself (Uma Katuas); and 2) carrying out government activities (hamlet chief).

As indicated, the Tara Bandu they perform focuses on animal control, the prohibition of corn consumption (*sau batar*), control over properties, and relationships between people. However, they mentioned that what marks the beginning of Tara Bandu is the betel nut cultivation cycle. Once harvested, the prohibition is reinstated until the next year. During that time, all previously mentioned prohibitions are maintained.

2.4.1. Tara Badu in Mohak



Picture 6. Focus Discussion Group with ritual specialist, hamlet chief and community members of Faloai. Source: Alberto Fidalgo, 2023.

The Tara Bandu in Mohak follows the same type of regulations as those seen in Faloai. According to comments made during interviews and fieldwork, the Tara Bandu in Mohak is also held annually and is considered a local governance mechanism that is carried out in conjunction with the village chiefs. The houses responsible for conducting the Tara Bandu rituals are called Mohak Rau Lau and Mohak Hale Bui, which have a relationship of wife-givers and wife-takers between them. Additionally, a third house called Manu-Laun from the Ferik and Katuas villages participates in the Tara Bandu rituals. It is considered that the boundaries within which they can perform the Tara Bandu are the three villages where Welaun is spoken.

2.5. Lessons from the Maliana participatory workshop (08/08/2023)

One of the important elements that was brought up during the Malina workshop had to do with the use of fire within Tara Bandu cosmology, specifically in relation to swidden agriculture. Swidden agriculture in Timor-Leste (and in insular Southeast Asia in particular) has been extensively studied (Pannell, 2011; Piggin, 2003; Therik, 2000; Williams et al., 2017), most of them deeming the use of slash and burn agriculture as an intrinsic element of the local agricultural production with a strong connection with the ritual practices. Fire is a central element in swidden agriculture, playing a multifaceted role in this cultivation method. When the cleared vegetation is set ablaze, the fire serves as a tool for both land preparation and nutrient cycling. The burnt organic matter returns nutrients to the soil, enhancing its fertility and enabling robust plant growth. Some of the participants confirmed that for some of the local understandings of the Tara Bandu fire was an integral part that of their understanding of the ritual. Thus, we must remember how in Marobo the ritual *suma ai* (one of the two rituals that people considered to be a basic part of their Tara Bandu practices) meant “burn the land”. Also, some participants indicated that the use of fire was codified in some places as a symbol in neighbouring communities pointed to the beginnings of the preparation of the fields for cultivation each year.



Picture 7. Participants of the Workshop in Maliana

Thus, Tara Bandu served as a system through which slash and burn agricultural practices for some of the local communities researched. Considering this, using Tara

Bandu locally to prevent these kinds of practices when it actually codifies their proper use may not serve as a way to promoting environmental protection in communities' where swidden agriculture it's their main practice.

The other main finding of the Workshop had to do with the “real” (proper) Tara Bandu practice versus the “fake” one. When, during the discussion of the findings, the lack of following from Tara Bandu supported from communities' outside agents was brought up, an important topic was pointed out: how externally supported Tara Bandu was not considered “locally” as a proper Tara Bandu but as an external “project”¹¹, that did not was connected with the ritual system of governance of the community. This was, according to the participants due to different Tara Bandu not going through extensive consultations within the community, or even not being conducted by the ritual authorities legitimate considered to be the ones that can perform those tasks within a particular place.

¹¹ It is difficult to express what “get a project” (*kaer projek*) means in this instance. Basically, people use this expression as a mean of signifying that it is a private venture that some people have obtained through their ability to connect with national and international agents. This expression is used when some member of the community gets a contract to fix public infrastructures, organize an event, and so one. The point here is that the venture is not considered to be a collective one, but a private (and interested) one.

3. Discussion: general assessment of the Bobonaro case studies

Tara Bandu is a local practice of ritual prohibitions widespread throughout the country. From what we have seen in case studies, it is not merely a mechanism for environmental protection and seasonal harvesting restrictions but includes a whole set of practices in the local context that regulate a wide range of socio-environmental relationships.

Tara Bandu, as a customary law is recognized in the Environmental Basic Law (Decree-Law No. 26/2012 of the 4th of July) (RDTL, 2012), stating in its 8th Article:

Tara Bandu

The State recognizes the importance of all types of Tara Bandu as an integral part of the culture of Timor-Leste and as a traditional mechanism that regulates the relationship between humans and the environment around them.

Actions of Tara Bandu can be carried out according to the rituals established by local customary law, aiming at the conservation and promotion of the environment and the preservation and sustainable use of natural resources, provided that such actions are compatible with the objectives and principles established in this law.

Upon the completion of an action of Tara Bandu, as stipulated in this article, the State must ensure the effective protection of the involved area.¹²

In this vein, Tara Bandu has been adopted both by the State and NGOs as a way of enrolling local communities in protecting the environment for different reasons. In the case of this consultancy, it is understood as way to limit and even ban the practice of firewood cutting from the forest that have turned the land to barren. Tara Bandu, seen this way is a mechanism that serves to advance nature conversation, but from a local standpoint it is understood by most of the people as several practices that regulate place-based social a socio-environment relationships.

An example of this was found by the consultant while conducting fieldwork in Marobo (as is know the area comprised by the suku of Ilat-Laun, Atu-Aben and Soileco). When asking people when the last time was that a Tara Bandu has been enforced in the area, most of the respondents said that it happened a couple of times since independence but that the practice has for the most part being abandoned. For them, the Tara Bandu, or as they called in kémak “*ukon no badu*” (see also Renard-

¹² Translated from the Portuguese by the consultant.

Clamagirand, 1980)¹³, was not only related to the protection of the environment, but rather considered the way that the annual ritual cycle was conducted in the past. Is seen locally no as a traditional and environment protection ritually sanctioned activity, but rather as a local way of governance, connected to the original houses of the settlement. Its most important ceremonies were *Tuhi* (Renard-Clamagirand, 1982, p. 208) and *suma ini* (Renard-Clamagirand, 1982, p. 209), which split the year in two different seasons: the rainy season and the dry season. At the beginning of the *suma ini* (around November) the Tara Bandu was re-established (mostly directed to the interdiction of harvesting) and when the *Tuhi* (around may) was celebrated this interdiction was uplifted. After finishing the harvest, the Tara Bandu was established again and repeated in a yearly basis. So, for most of the respondents, Tara Bandu a whole range of social an environmental relations: cannot cut down trees in the area under restriction, cannot harvest what they have cultivated in the area affected, cannot rob people's harvest, cannot let their animals to wander around and must keep them supervised, women and men cannot "get in love" (*namora malu*)¹⁴, among many others.

When confronted with the fact that a Tara Bandu was enforced in Soileco, in the aldeia of Ai-Aras, back in 2018 (with support from World Vision) most of the respondents agreed that this was not a proper Tara Bandu, because it hasn't been conducted the way it should have been: this is, no aldeia or suku on its own is recognized as having the right to do so. It is only the local suku chiefs (from the three suku), together with the ritual authorities of the houses considered to be the pioneer houses in the area of Marobo: this is Lolo Ubun, Dasi Ubun, and Bere Ubun, the ones that are recognized to have this right.¹⁵ The fact that is wasn't enacted this way was, according to most of the respondents, one of the main factors that made that particular Tara Bandu not very strong (*tan ida ne'e la forte*).

Thus, there is a different understanding of Tara Bandu locally and the way the state has recognized it as an environmental protection mechanism. It is likely that Tara Bandu relates (as understood locally) to the idea of traditional governance based on the established social hierarchy among houses in a specific place. In this sense, it regulates not only environmental relations but also social ones. As pointed out by some studies (Alonso-Población, Rodrigues, et al., 2018, 2016; J. Casquilho &

¹³ Renard-Clamagirand (1982, p. 304) has defined this as "Administer justice and regulate": Power of the chiefdoms that regulate the use of products from the land" (my translation of: "*rendre la justice et réglementer*": *pouvoir des chefferies qui règlent l'usage des produits du sol*).

¹⁴ This restriction does not actually mean to ban people to fall in love with each other, but rather to follow the proper way to do it: this is by getting to know each other families, see if their relations is desirable according to the taboos related to the wife-givers' wife-takers' relations, see if they are mature enough to do so, and so on.

¹⁵ It is believed that these villages share a common ancestry being the descendants of the same mother and father (*inan-aman*), and thus being elder, middle, and younger brothers and they are, in this vein, seen as *ema ida deit* (the same people).

Martins, 2022; J. P. Casquilho & Martins, 2021; De Carvalho & Coreia, 2011; Gonçalves & Meneses, 2019; Palmer, 2011; Palmer et al., 2023; Palmer & McWilliam, 2019; Roque, 2012; Yoder, 2007), this tension resulting from the hybridization between local governance mechanisms and state governance mechanisms is one of the central elements that stresses local and national institutions and authorities.

So, we must conclude that while Tara Bandu is legally recognized as an environmental customary practice, the local idea of Tara Bandu is actually more closed to the local governance of the people all their relations with their environment (in all its economic, political, and religious). There is, thus, a gap in the understanding of the Tara Bandu between the local way of Tara Bandu and the one at the national (an International) level. This gap must be negotiated in each of the communities with the different agents: the houses that have that connection with the land, the village or hamlets chiefs and the community as a whole for a Tara Bandu to be locally considered to be properly enacted and enforced.

There are many reasons why a community may decide to carry out a Tara Bandu ceremony (and its associated process). This often includes environmental factors, as for example the need to protect water sources or forests, which are often considered sacred places (see, for example the 2.3. Lourba Case Study). It is also frequently used to deter people from allowing their livestock to roam freely and ruin other people's crops (this issue was mentioned in all three case studies). Other reasons given were the need to prevent episodes of violence of different kinds, as well as inappropriate sexual behaviour. In the case of Lourba, the Tara Bandu was also mentioned as involving attending mass on Sundays, regulating the relationship between the community and the Catholic Church. Furthermore, in all cases, it was mentioned how the Tara Bandu is a process associated with the annual cycle of crops in each place, where the collection of crops is prohibited until the ban is lifted.

We have seen that there are different levels at which Tara Bandu is supposed to be carried out in an orthodox manner. In Marobo, for example, a proper Tara Bandu is considered to be performed at the level of three suku because the community is organically interconnected and recognizes themselves as descendants of the same ancestor. In Lourba, on the other hand, Tara Bandu is performed at the suku level. In Leohito, for its part, Tara Bandu is carried out differently depending on the origin of the ethnolinguistic groups that performs it up: the Welaun people do it separately, the Kémak people do it on their own, and the Tétum Térik do it on their own. In the case of Leohito, neighbours who are not from the same group are invited to the ceremony to be informed of its implementation, but they are not involved in the preparation and organization of the ceremony.

Furthermore, as we have seen, for a Tara Bandu to be carried out successfully, a broad community agreement should be reached, which is not a task easy to achieve. Thus, both local political authorities (village and suku chiefs) and ritual specialists, along with the agreement of the community, must agree on its implementation. This process of community agreement is essential and probably the most difficult to

achieve. In Marobo, for example, we have seen that there are several reasons why Tara Bandu is not regularly performed (as understood by most of the interviewees). Some of these reasons include the lack of ritual specialists knowledgeable, the lack of willingness on the part of political or traditional leaders to perform them due to their intrinsic difficulty, the lack of interest from community members to participate in community rituals (and focus more on those of their private affairs), conflicting interests between different generations (young people versus older individuals), and so on. What is important for the effectiveness of the ritual is the ability of those involved in the preparation of Tara Bandu (at all levels) to control the terms in which it is carried out and to understand and negotiate the complex history of relationships between humans and non-human agents (ancestors, spirits of the land and deities) that are involved in each local context.

We have seen that the different historical events that some of the communities have experienced have had significant consequences for their social cohesion. This type of issue is very relevant to understand some of the shortcomings that may arise when carrying out a Tara Bandu ritual. In the case of the Kémak people from Marobo, as well as the Búnak people from Lourba, we saw how the Portuguese colonial regime and the Indonesian occupation had significant effects, both in terms of forced relocations of people (for various reasons) and the fleeing of many inhabitants from these areas to other places (mainly Indonesian Timor). Furthermore, changes in different systems of governance by the colonial regimes (and their interference in the selection of community leaders) have had effects that cannot be easily measured on what was possibly one of the original tools of governance for the ancient Timorese kingdoms, known as *ukun no bandu*. It is this local form of governance, which divided the exercise of power into ritual authorities and political authorities, what many of the interviewees think Tara Bandu is in their communities nowadays. In this sense, all the interviewees understand Tara Bandu as a continuation of the way in which ancestors carried out the exercise of regulation and ritual governance, that is, the exercise of power. The activation of Tara Bandu involves a cosmology in which entities beyond the human realm (ancestors, deities, and land spirits) are an integral part of socio-environmental relationships. In this vein, the agency of these entities is largely believed to guarantee that those who violate it will suffer punishments that have supernatural causes (*sira kesi ona*: the people who transgress it are “caught” by these entities).

Customary practices and National governance: an ongoing negotiation in search for synthesis.

Tara Bandu is a phenomenon that is difficult for outsiders to understand, and even for Timorese people (including the government) who sometimes attempt to instrumentalize Tara Bandu as solely a traditional environmental protection practice. As we have seen, Tara Bandu is much more than that. It is not just a limited set of rituals, but a whole cosmology at play, which does not see environmental and social relationships as separate domains.

Most support received for the implementation of a Tara Bandu from external entities (state and development agents) comes in the form of economic contributions (monetary or the provision of animals for sacrifice in ceremonies), with generally a lack of knowledge and participation in the complexities involved in the paced-based negotiations, preparations, executions, and enforcements of ritual prohibitions. For example, the Tara Bandu that occurred in the village of Ai-Aras in the Soileco suku in 2018. While it was carried out with the good intention of preventing land degradation and the dangers it brings to the community itself, the fact that it was only done in one hamlet, meant that many people considered it not to be a proper Tara Bandu. According to the interviewees, this weakened the strength of that Tara Bandu, and it is likely that it is seen as a ceremony that does not have the positive sanction of the spirits of the land and ancestors. In this case, we have an example of an attempt to establish a hybrid institution (state-community) with external support, which probably has not been successful due to a limited understanding of local social relationships and “spiritual ecologies” (Kehi & Palmer, 2012; Palmer, 2015; Palmer & McWilliam, 2019).

It is true that most leaders in local communities (at the level of pioneer houses and political authorities) consider the revival of Tara Bandu as a regulatory mechanism (not just environmental) to be a positive element and a source of community pride (as it continues the ancestral local knowledge), with many requesting greater formal recognition of traditional practices at the national level. Some communities have already taken initiatives to codify traditional law (see Alonso-Población, Rodrigues, et al., 2016). In other places, collaboration and good relationships between political authorities and ritual authorities, together with the tacit approval of the community, have ensured a successful hybridization of these practices and the with the national Tara Bandu model as an environmental protection mechanism. This is the case in Lourba, where a national intervention (with the support of development agents) to channel water from a sacred spring for water supply was creatively accommodated by local authorities within traditional structures.

A deep understanding of the conditions of possibility at the local and national levels is crucial for a successful Tara Bandu. To achieve this, it must be ensured that collaboration among the various actors involved is secured. As said by Palmer & McWilliam (2019, p. 500): “[...] the ability to combine formal state and customary approaches to governance depends on the capability of all actors to embrace a meshwork of practices that, in its continuous becoming, forms the negotiated outcome of multiple, diverse, contingent flows, and constraining elements”. When external parties (at the national or development aid level) are interested in selectively supporting certain ritual activities and do not understand their implications for local governance, it is very likely that a Tara Bandu will not have the desired impact and will likely fail in its objectives.

4. Conclusion

The case study we have reviewed clearly shows that the use of Tara Bandu as an environmental protection mechanism faces several challenges based on particular historical, social, and economic elements very specific to each of the communities in which it develops. As conclusions, we can point the following recommendations out:

- i. Having a deep understanding of the sociocultural background of selected communities where a Tara Bandu to be supported is paramount. It is crucial to assess the social cohesion, cultural and social changes, economic conditions, and resilience of its ritual structures for a successful Tara Bandu.
- ii. The selection of a particular community where a Tara Bandu is to be supported should not be done from a top-down perspective, but through extensive negotiation and dialogue with local leaders (both political and ritual ones, as well as other charismatic figures). The community should not feel that the Tara Bandu is an external proposal but rather that the external agents support their initiative. Otherwise, the feeling of transferring the control over the Tara Bandu, either real or perceived, to extra-community (or even extra-house) agents will provoke frictions among the actors involved and pose issues of sustainability.
- iii. Development actors should not neglect the importance of ritual efficacy. At the local level, a widespread social acceptance of the precedence of houses with the task of carrying out the ritual performances is a key to success. Assessing the presence of knowledgeable ritual specialist accepted for the most part throughout the community is an important step towards achieving an effective Tara Bandu.
- iv. Guaranteeing that the Tara Bandu is a general interest for the community. If a community does not see a specific environmental protection as being aligned with their interest, it may be potentially seen as an external imposition that would probably not be observed. A strong socialization of the purpose of the Tara Bandu and its understanding within the community must be sought after.
- v. Negotiating, preparing, executing, and enforcing a Tara Bandu, at the local level, is a big a challenge for the communities. Supporting only the theatrical stage of the process (the final ritual execution) without monitoring its enforcement is not desirable. In this vein, support for *kableha* (enforcers) of the Tara Bandu and their engagement with Forest Rangers should be pursued.
- vi. Dialogue, participation across all sectors of society (including the church, the state administration, etc.) should be pursued for a consensus to be reached.
- vii. The role of charismatic figures (such as the suku chief of Lourba) are key. Efforts should focus on the right identification of the figures able to become agents of change and that actively seek the engagement of all actors involved in a Tara Bandu.

- viii. Any action increasing transparency of local regulations should be promoted: disseminating the Tara Bandu and its codification through any means is desirable.
- ix. Showing the proper respect to the houses considered to be the legitimate ritual guardians over a particular land should be guaranteed. The case of Marobo has shown how not following the proper path to promote a Tara Bandu has weakened its effects.
- x. Any measure of environment protection brings along downturns in livelihoods. Its impact over particular collectives whose livelihoods depend on environmental features that the Tara Bandu seeks to protect. A satisfactory livelihood alternative to those collectives should be provided.

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ANNEX I: LIST OF PEOPLE INTERVIEWED

	Name	Position	Location	Type
1	Adelino Maubere	Former Suku chief	Ilat-Laun	Interview
2	Agostino Soares	Community neighbor	Ilat-Laun	Interview
3	Lourenço Barreto Afonso	Community neighbor	Ilat-Laun	Interview
4	Antonio da Crus	Hamlet chief	Ilat-Laun	Interview
5	Alexandre Simão Barreto	Hamlet chief	Ilat-Laun	Interview
6	José Godinho Baptista	Community neighbor	Atu-Aben	FDG
	Basilio Lopes	Hamlet chief (Talite)		
	Manuel Manis	Lia-na'in		
7	José Godinho Baptista	Community neighbor	Atu-Aben	FDG
	Armindo Maia	Lia-na'in		
	Pedro Leto	Suku council representative		
8	Agostino dos Reis	Catholic catechist & primary school teacher of religion	Atu-Aben	Interview
9	Fernando Pereira de Araújo	Suku administrative staff	Soileco	Interview
10	Fernando Cardoso Afonso	Village chief (Ai-Aras)	Soileco	Interview
11	Bei Jaime	Lia-na'in (ritual authority)	Soilesa	Interview
12	Januario Fernandes	Suku chief	Atu-Aben	Interview
13	Juvinal Pires Amaral	Suku chief	Ilat-Laun	Interview
14	Lino da Crus	Suku chief	Lourba	Interview
15	Filomeno Bere-Mali Alves	Hamlet chief	Atu-Aben	Interview
16	Gabriel Aleixo da Silva	Community neighbor	Atu-Aben	Interview

17	Daniel da Silva	Lia-na'in (ritual authority)	Leohito	FDG
	Aniceto dos Santos	Hamlet chief		
	Ananias Martins	Lia-na'in (ritual authority)		
	Marino Barreto Domingos	Community neighbor		
	Jon Carvalho	Community neighbor		
	Antonio Lo'u dos Santos	Community neighbor		
	Bendito Gaspar	Community neighbor		
18	Raúl Caivo	Lia-na'in (ritual authority)	Leohito	Interview

ANNEX II: LIST FOR PEOPLE INVITED FOR VALIDATION PARTICIPATORY SEMINAR HELD IN MALIANA (08/08/2023)

	Name	Position	Institution
1	Sr. Antonio Soares	Director Servisu Protesaun Sivil	MAE
2	Inspector Jose Lelo Bere	Comandante APC Munisipiu Bobonaro	SEPC
3	Sr. Francisco Tilman	Director CSSI Munisipiu Bobonaro	CSSI
4	Sr. Amilcar Tavares	Administrador Postu Administrativo Balibo	MAE
5	Sr. Alfredo Meta Dau	Administrador Postu Administrativo Cailaco	MAE
6	Sr. Juvinal dos Santos	Administrador Postu Administrativo Bobonaro	MAE
7	Sra. Gizela Pires Pereira	Directora Servisu Municipal Apoiu Sociedade Civil	MAE
8	Sr. Armindo Maia Vicente	Ponto Focal MDMC	MAE
9	Sr. Alberto Gusmao Lopes	Director MAP Munisipio Bobonaro	MAF
10	Pe. Lúcio Norberto de Deus	Pe. Director Comissão da Justiça e Paz Diocese Maliana	Church
11	Sr. Juvinal Amaral	President of SDMC Ilat-Laun	SDMC
12	Sr. Januário Fernandes	President of SDMC Atu-Aben	SDMC
13	Sr. Tiago Laka Mali	President of SDMC Gou Lolo	SDMC
14	Sr. Alexandrino Soares Costa	President of SDMC Genulai	SDMC
15		President of SDMC Leohito	SDMC
16		Lia-Na'in Suco Ilat-Laun (2 people)	Lia-na'in
17		Lia-Na'in Suco Atu-Aben (2 people)	Lia-na'in

18		Lia-Na'in Suco Gou Lolo (2 people)	Lia-na'in
		Lia-Na'in Suco Genulai (2 people)	Lia-na'in
19		Lia-Na'in Suco Leohito (2 people)	Lia-na'in
20	Sr. Joaquin Sequeira	Xefe extensionista	
21		3 other relevant stakeholders	

ANNEX III: POWER POINT PRESENTATION OF THE WORKSHOP HELD IN MALINA (08/08/2023)

Kasu estudo Tara Bandu nian: Dalan bá susesu no hakat liu difikultade

8 agostu 2023

Alberto Fidalgo Castro, PhD
Prof. Universidad Complutense de Madrid

1

1. Metodolojia no limitasaun estudu nian

- Estudu ida ne'e kualitativu deit, la iha dadus kuantitativu. Nia objektivu mak hatene deit saida mak bele halo Tara Bandu ida la'o ho susesu ka nia la susesu.
- Dadus ne'ebé ita hetan la representa Timor-Leste laran tomak, maibé exemplu simples ida ne'ebé ita hola husi comunidade iha Marobo, Lourba no mós Leohitu (munisípiu Bobonaro)

2

Marobo

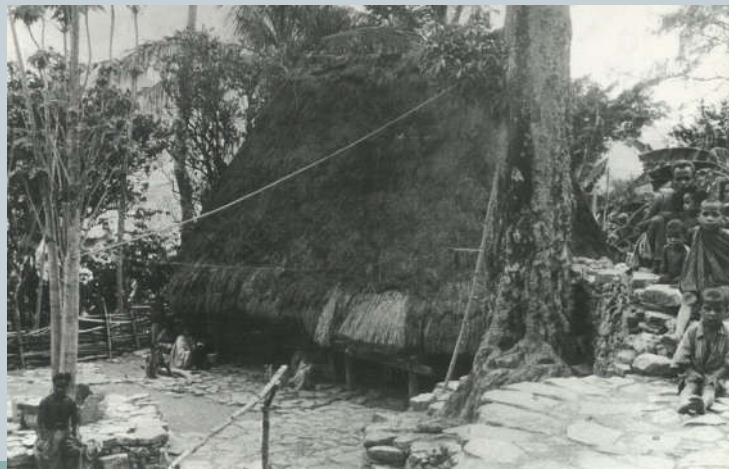
- Entrevista no fieldwork iha suku tolu: Ilat-Laun, Soileco no Atu-Aben.
- Loron haat iha ne'ebá
- Entrevista 14
- Grupu diskusaun 2.



3

Lourba

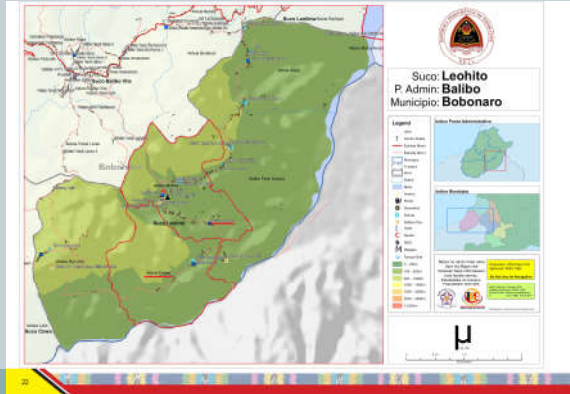
- Entrevista 1 deit.



4

Leohitu

- Entrevista 1
- Grupu diskusaun 1
- Fieldwork loron 2



5

2. Estudu nia objektivu

- Hola comunidade sira nia hanoin kona-ba suksesu no desafius iha aplicasaun efetivu ba Tara Bandu no fornese rekomendasaun ba uza Tara Bandu iha futuru. Entre sira ne'e:
- a) komprende kontekstu istoriku no kultural husi Tara Bandu no nia importansia iha comunidade sira;
- b) identifika fator prinsipal sira ne'ebe kontribui ba suksesu ou la suksesu ba Tara Bandu;
- c) analiza desafius sosiokultural, ekonomiku no ambiental ne'ebe asosia ho implementasaun Tara Bandu;

6

3. Tara Bandu Estadu nian no comunidade nian la hanesan

- Estadu rekoñese Tara Bandu hanesan ritual ida ne'ebé ajuda proteje meu-ambiente.
- Maibé Tara Bandu, tuir comunidade nia haré la'os deit ida ne'e. Tara Bandu ne'e konekta ho abó sira-bia dalan bá *ukun no bandu*. Ne'e la tama deit proteksaun meu-ambiente nian maibé tama hotu:
 - Haré ema nia hahalok (entre feto ho mane, relasaun fetosaa-umane, no sst)
 - Proteksaun bá ema nia sasán (evita ema na'ok)
 - Proteksaun bá ema nia to'os no kintal sira ne'e
 - Haré bá tempu halo to'os nian halonu'usá
 - Haré bá ema na relasaun ho igreja no estado hotu.
 - Sst
- Entaun ida ne'e problema ida ona: Tara Bandu estadu nian no comunidade sira nian la hanesan.

7

4. Kultura ida-idak nian, Tara Bandu mos ida-idak nian hotu

- Tara Bandu nia dalan, maske atu hanesan iha Timor laran tomak, sira ne'e espezifiku bá comunidade ida. Exemplu:
- Iha Marobo, tuir ema hatete, tuir loos, Tara Bandu tenki halo suku tolu hamutuk deit tambá sira ne'e jersaun husi inan-aman ida de'it. Iha Loubá, sira bele halo iha suku laran tomak. Iha Leohitu (suku ne'ebé inlkui ema Kémak, Welaun no Tetun Térik) ida-idak ho sira nian ema ne'ebé iha direito atu kaer bua ho malus iha sira nia área.
- Entaun ita bele dehan katak Tara Bandu tenki tuir ema sira ne'ebé kaer duni bua-malus iha área saida deit.

8

5. Tara Bandu no interesse bá comunidade laran tomak

- Tara Bandu mós hanesan kultura ida ne'ebé nia lala'ok la'os deit bá ema nia asuntu privado, maibé interesse bá comunidade laran tomak.
- Se karik ema balu hanoin katak Tara Bandu balu la tau matan bá sira nia interesse kolektivu, entaun sira sei la suporta duni ida ne'e. Exemplu ida: iha Marobo, maske Tara Bandu tuir loloos la halo durante tempu naruk ona, bainhira tempu Corona nian (Covid-19), comunidade laran tomak hanoin katak tenki duni hola matak-malirin husi bei'ala sira (hamutuk ho igreja hotu) hodi evita katak Corona bele tama mai Marobo. Sira simu duni ida ne'e hanesan mós nesesidade kolektiva ida ne'ebé halo katuas lia-nain sira no autoridade sira tuur hamutuk hodi proteje ema Marobo hotu kedas.
- Se karik atu proteje deit areas balun iha suku ida nia laran, ema balun (por exemplo to'os-na'in iha area ida ne'e) bele hanoin katak buat ne'e halo nia buka moris susar ona, entaun nia labele suporta duni Tara Bandu ida ne'e.

5. Tara Bandu no preparasaun, exekusaun no aplikasaun

- Atu halo duni Tara Bandu ida, ne'e buat ida ne'ebé que prezisa tempu naruk, osan, no mós ema nia kosar-been.
- Atu prepara, suporta no halo Tara Bandu, ita tenki hatene katak nia prosesu ne'e naruk duni no mós prezisa haré bá ema nia kbiit laek hodi halo ida ne'e
- Bainhira halo tiha Tara Bandu ona mós, ema ne'ebé sai hanesan *kableha* ou *kaburoda* mós serbisu todan ida. Iha parte ida ne'e importante katak: serbisu hanesan *kableha* ou *kaburoda* tenki fó-folin bá ema ne'ebé kaer duni knaar ida ne'e.

8. Ema barak la hatene / la besik kultura ona

- Tan kauza istória barak (liuliu funu ho portugués sira, japaun sira no mós indonesia sira) ema ne'ebé matenek kona-ba kultura barak mate tiha ona lae halai ona bá indonesia sidauk mai ou mate tiha ona iha ne'ebá. Ida ne'e desafio boot ida tan ema balu hanesan na'in bá sira nia uma lisan ne'ebe que sira-nia knaar tama mós bá parte Tara Bandu hotu, la iha ona. Ou se iha karik sira ta'uk halo sala tiha tan konsekuensia bele todan.
- Joven balu sira nia atensaun haré liu bá parte eskola nian no buka hadia sira nia moris no hetan serbisu. Balu ladún besik bainhira kultura ruma (hanesan mós Tara Bandu) hala'o iha sira nia área. Entaun ida ne'e hanesan desafio ida para jersaun ema nurak no ema boot mós ferik ho Katuas sira bele konkorda malu no mós tuur hamutuk hodi ko'alia hanesan.

11

Fó-hanoin provióriu

- **Atu hili comunidade ida ne'ebé sei bele suporta sira-nia lala'ok Tara-Bandu, it tenki iha kompreensaun kle'an liu kona-ba kontestu sosio-kultural kle'an loos. Avalia mudansa kulturál no sosial, kondisaun ekonómiku, no resisténsia estrutura rituál comunidade nian, ne'e importante tebes . boot liu atu Tara Bandu ida bele la'o ho susesu.**

12

Fó-hanoin provióriu

- **Seleisaun komunidadade labele halo ho top-down perspective maibé liu husi negosiasaun no diálogo (tuur hamutuk) ne'ebé ho líder lokal (polítika no ritual, ka lider karismátiku seluk hanesan katekista). Komunidadade tenki senti katak Tarabandu mak proposta eksterna la'ek, maibé tanba sira-nia laran hakarak atu suporta duni iniciativa ida ne'e**

13

Fó-hanoin provióriu

- **Negosiasaun, preparasaun, realizasaun no garante kumprimentu tara bandu ne'e desafio boot ida ba komunidadade sira. Suporta deit parte ritual nian ladún diak liuliu iha parte suporta kableha sira hala'o sira nia knaar (la'o tun-sae fatin sira ne'e). Sira ho guarda floresta sira ne'e ranger bele serbisu hamutuk hodi proteje área tara bandu nian ida.**

14

Fó-hanoin provióriu

- **Diálogu no partisipasaun iha setór sosiedad hotu-hotu nian (inklui igreja, administrasaun estadu, no seluk tan) tenke halo hodi buka konsensu (konkorda malu).**

15

Fó-hanoin provióriu

- **Tenki garante respetu bá uma lisan sira nebe kaer bua-malus no ukun ho bandu tuir uluk nian. Maski ohin loron buat barak muda tiha ona, ne'e hanesan abut ida ne'ebé que atu lakon ona karik ne'e ladiak.**

16

ANNEX IV: TERMS OF REFERENCE

Attachment A:

TERM OF REFERENCE

1. Background

Tara Bandu literally means "hanging prohibition" which refers to a wide range of prohibitions or restrictions by hanging an object to mark the restriction.¹ In practice Tara Bandu is used for many different purposes, from conflict resolution between communities, reinforcing "no-fishing" zone or slash-and-burn practices to prevention of gender-based violence.

World Vision Timor-Leste has facilitated communities to make community agreements through Tara Bandu to limit the practices of firewood-cutting and slash-and-burn. In the previous project, WVTL has facilitated 6 communities, namely Soileso, Letuhito, Ilatlaun, Atuaben, Goulolo dan Gunulei, to make Tara Bandu agreement to limit and even ban the practice of firewood cutting from the forest that have turned the land to barren. Consequently, the land is more prone to flood, landslides and has been degraded. However, the outcomes of the Tara Bandu implementation have been mixed: some were successful and some weren't.

2. Project Background

The Disaster Ready Phase 2.0 is a 4.5-year-project funded by DFAT through Australian Humanitarian Partnership (AHP) and implemented by AHP agency partners in across the Pacific and Timor-Leste. The objective of DRP phase 2.0 is for women, men, youth, people with disabilities, and other vulnerable groups, to be better prepared for and more resilient to disasters and climate change in selected Pacific countries and Timor Leste. This project is implemented by 5 AHP agencies such as World Vision, CARE, Oxfam, Plan International, and Caritas Australia. WV will be implementing the disaster ready 2.0 in Bobonaro municipality across 8 sucos, such as Ilatlaun, Atuaben, Goulolo, Guenulai, Manapa, Raiheu, Aiasa and Lourba and World Vision's Timor-Leste Better Food Better Health (BFBH) Phase 2 Project aims to bring about positive nutritional outcomes by improving access, utilization, and demand for diverse, nutritious foods for 20,549 people in Aileu, Baucau, Bobonaro and Covalima municipalities by 2027.

3. The Objectives

The objective of the assignment is to make a case study using ethnography, positive deviance or other sound sociological qualitative methodology to capture the learning of the success and challenges in enforcing effective Tara Bandu and to provide recommendations for future use of Tara Bandu

The output of the assignment is a case study report with a strong methodology, outlining:

1. Executive Summary (no more than 3 pages)
2. Methodology: key questions, approach, with strong data collection, verification and analysis method
3. Findings & Analysis: context, factors of successes and failures, positive reinforcement for Tara Bandu to succeed, learnings
4. Identify steps to establish Tara bandu and how to monitor its implementation outcome.

4. Key Questions

The Case Study is expected to answer the following key questions:

1. What is the context in the targeted areas that make Tara Bandu relevant?
2. Who are the key actors in each area?

3. What makes Tara Bandu effective in some areas and not in some other areas?
4. What discourages Tara bandu to be effective and what are the alternatives?
5. What are your recommendations to WVTL to facilitate the communities in order to make Tara Bandu effective and what are the alternatives, considering that WVTL is an external party to the community?

Methodology

The consultant is expected to propose the methodology, combining desk study and field data collection. The proposed methodology should include:

1. Scoping of the socio-cultural context,
2. Data collection that is robust and verifiable,
3. Facilitation techniques and approaches.

5. Timeline

The starting date of the consultancy is after the contract is signed and expected to be completed by the end of July 2023.

Budget & Milestone Payment

The agreed total budget is USD10,080, broken down into 3 payments:

No	Milestone	Description of the tasks	Deadline	Payment
1	Inception Report	o Inception report with detailed research methodology and research plan (including desk review, research objectives, detailed questions, methods and data collection tools, data analysis methods, etc.)	26 June 2023	30% of the total budget
2	Draft of Report	- o Carry out field data collection in the selected areas - o Data analysis - o Submission of first study draft and preliminary findings including clean data sets - o Presentation of findings to main stakeholders to collect inputs	18 July 2023	40% of the total budget
3	Final Report	o Final presentation of report finding and finalised report (further revision to include additional inputs if necessary)	27 July 2023	30% of the total budget

6.

7. Responsibilities of the Consultant

1. Conduct the case study based on the agreed methodology in the selected AHP project areas.
2. Arrange his own transport and accommodation for the assignment.
3. Present preliminary findings to WVTL to get feedback and revise accordingly.
4. Submit the report by the agreed due date.