Youth Employment and Entrepreneurship Skills (YEES Project) is a joint initiative between Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA), Government of Timor-Leste, and UNDP to tackle the unemployment and job creation issues among young men and women. The project supports the economic diversification of the country by fostering MSMEs development, promoting the investment and job creation in the productive sectors, as well as strengthening the employability skills of youth to get better employment access.

**National Prioriories**

- **Job creation for youth**
  - The government has set the job creation for youth as the number one priority in the socio-economic aspect.

- **Skills development for youth**
  - The government has envisioned to promote skills development of youth, including entrepreneurship and soft skills.

- **Economic diversification**
  - The government aims to create all possible conditions to leverage economic diversification in productive areas, such as agriculture, livestock, fisheries, forests and tourism, in addition to the industry sector.

- **Strengthening business enabling environment**
  - The government plans to improve the business enabling environment, both in technical and policy levels.

**Project Main Activities**

- **Internship and soft skills training for university fresh graduates**
- **Job fair and career counselling for youth**
- **Entrepreneurship training for youth and returnee migrants**
- **Soft loan and access to finance to MSMEs**
- **Business competition and entrepreneurship expo**
- **Information on market access, value chain, and access to jobs for youths**

**Quick Facts**

- **Project Title**: Youth Employment and Entrepreneurship Skills (YEES)
- **Total Budget**: US$8,120,947.00
- **Beneficiaries**: Young women and men, people with disability, returnee migrants

**Co-Funded by**

KOICA

**SDG alignment**

**Duration**

July 2022 – December 2027

**Government Counterparts**

MCI, SEFOPE, IADE, The Bridge

**Contact**: Hunjai LEE – Project Manager (hunjai.lee@undp.org)
Key Development Challenges

- 9.6% of youth aged 15-24 were unemployed.
- 30.5% of youth aged 15-24 were not engaged in employment, education or training (NEET).
- 15% of firms have a bank loan or a line of credit. Only 3% of investments in fixed assets were financed by bank lending.
- 50,000 Timorese are living abroad with potentially half of these being temporary migrant workers. Migrant workers find it difficult to find employment and transfer their knowledge upon their return.

Key Results

**Youth internship**
- 171 youth obtained internship and 50 people secured full-time employment after the internship.

**Host institutions**
- 23 people received soft loans to develop their business. A total of 14 male received US$227,245.29 and 9 female received US$139,050.00.

**Business training**
- 312 people participated in entrepreneurship training.

**Soft loans**
- 23 people received soft loans. Female: 39.1%, Male: 60.9%.

**Business Grants from BIC 3**
- 102 people received Business grants to advance their business in 7 sectors below:
  - Agriculture
  - Commerce
  - Fisheries
  - Food tech & Innovation
  - Industry
  - Technology
  - Tourism
- **MICRO** 18: $293,395.29
- **SMALL** 5: $72,900.00

Voices

“I managed to increase my production capacity after receiving grants from Business Innovation Challenge. My products are also now available in over 16 retailers in the country. Thank you UNDP and MCI.”

Martinho Gorety, Beneficiary of Business Innovation Challenge

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