

Timor-Leste 2018 Early Parliamentary Elections

# Disability Access Monitoring



Dili, Timor-Leste | August 2018



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Republic of Korea





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**Disclaimer:**

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## ACRONYMS

<b>AGAPE</b>	AGAPE School for the Deaf
<b>AMP</b>	Aliança de Mudança para o Progresso
<b>CNE</b>	Comissão Nacional de Eleições (National Election Commission)
<b>DFAT</b>	Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
<b>FDD</b>	Frente Desenvolvimento Democrático
<b>FRETILIN</b>	Frente Revolucionária de Timor-Leste Independente
<b>IFES</b>	International Foundation for Electoral Systems
<b>MDN</b>	Movimento Desenvolvimento Nacional
<b>MSD</b>	Movimento Social Democrata
<b>PD</b>	Partido Democrático
<b>PEP</b>	Partido Esperanca da Patria
<b>PR</b>	Partido Republicano
<b>RAEOA</b>	Rejiaun Administrativa Espesiál Oé-Cusse Ambeno
<b>RDTL</b>	Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste
<b>RHTO</b>	Ra'és Hadomi Timor Oan
<b>STAE</b>	Secretariado Tecnico de Administração Eleitoral (Technical Secretariat for Election Administration)
<b>UNCRPD</b>	United Nations Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Programme
<b>UNDP LEARN</b>	UNDP Leveraging Electoral Assistance for Regionalized Nation-Building Project



# 1. DEFINITIONS

**Accessible** - A site, facility, work environment, service or program that is easy to approach, enter, operate, participate in and/or use safely, independently and with dignity by persons with disabilities.

**Accessible Formats** - Print, audio or visual information that can be understood by persons with hearing, visual or other disabilities.

**Braille** - Writing system comprised of raised dots used by people who are blind or have low vision.

**Communication Disability** – a condition that affects the ability to receive, send, process, and comprehend concepts or verbal, nonverbal and graphic symbol systems.

**Disabled People’s Organisation (DPO)** – an organisation that is run by and promotes the interests of persons with disabilities.

**Hearing Disability** – a severe or profound loss of the ability to recognise sounds as a result of impaired auditory sensitivity.

**Inclusion** – Persons with disabilities are involved in all electoral activities on an equal basis with other citizens, including leadership positions, rather than just having accommodations that might segregate persons with disabilities from other citizens.

**Intellectual Disability** – a limit to a person’s ability to learn at an expected level and function in daily life.

**National Election Commission (CNE)** – the independent body that supervises all electoral processes in Timor-Leste.

**Persons with Disabilities** – according to Article 1 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, includes those who have “long-term/permanent physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others”.

**Physical Disability** – a condition that affects a person’s physical functioning, mobility, dexterity or stamina.

**Polling Center (PC)** – a building in which one or more polling stations are located.

**Political Campaign Event** - an activity organized by a political party or coalition, such as a rally, door to door campaign, parade, presentation, meeting, dialogue, concert and similar, with the goal of promoting political messages inviting voters to support the political party or coalition in elections.

**Polling Station (PS)** – a room or similar facility used for voting on Election Day.

**Psychosocial Disability** – conditions that affect cognition, emotion and behavior.

**Ramp** – An inclined plane or series of planes without obstacles to provide access to floor levels of different heights in the external and internal parts of a facility.

**Technical Secretariat for Election Administration (STAE)** – the body that implements all electoral processes in Timor-Leste.

**Visual Disability** – a condition that affects a person’s ability to see, even when using glasses or other corrective lenses.



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## 2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Following the dissolution of the National Parliament by the President of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste on January 26, 2018, an early parliamentary election was held on May 12, 2018.

In order to assess the accessibility of this election to persons with disabilities, Ra'és Hadomi Timor Oan (RHTO), supported by the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES), and the United Nations Development Programme's Leveraging Electoral Assistance for Regionalized Nation-Building project (UNDP LEARN), monitored the political campaign period and election day activities to assess the access of persons with disabilities to the electoral process. The support from IFES was funded by the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), while the support from UNDP LEARN project was funded by the Government of Japan and the Government of the Republic of Korea.

For the political campaign 24 monitors attended a selection of 69 political campaign events, covering all municipalities in Timor-Leste and all election contestants. On Election Day, 130 monitors were deployed -- ten in each of Timor-Leste's 13 municipalities - who observed 150 polling stations. Monitors used standard checklists and questionnaires to assess accessibility and to interview persons with disabilities attending campaign events and

voting.<sup>1</sup> As these locations were not randomly selected, the results of the monitoring are indicative rather than representative.

The results of the disability access monitoring for the May 12 early elections for the National Parliament indicated that there was no cohesive or strategic approach by the Government of Timor-Leste to provide access to political and electoral processes to persons with disabilities. The Government of Timor-Leste has not signed the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD). The Government has developed a National Action Plan for Persons with Disabilities, but it does not cover implementing political and electoral participation rights.

The election access monitors found that there are still significant barriers to persons with disabilities accessing electoral facilities and that access to civic and voter education, while improving, has limitations. The monitoring also found that most political parties do not consider how persons with disabilities may be included in participation, in areas such as holding campaign events in accessible locations, creating policies that support disability rights, using accessible information campaigns, and ensuring inclusion in executive bodies and candidacy for elected positions.

The analysis of the legal framework found that with one exception, persons with disabilities may freely participate in elections in Timor-Leste. Election regulations, however, require election staff to ban access to polling stations to any person 'acknowledged to be mentally ill'.<sup>2</sup> Election staff must give priority in voting to persons with disabilities, along with voters over 65 years old and pregnant voters. Unlike for prisoners and patients in hospital, there are no legal provisions that allow persons with disabilities to access mobile voting services, even if it is not possible for them to vote in a polling station. Voters with



1 The checklists and questionnaires used are available in Annex 1.

2 Government Decree 21/2017, "Regulating the Organisation and Operations of Polling Centres and the Voting, Vote Counting and Tabulation of Results Procedures", Article 17(i)

disabilities may choose whomever they wish to assist them to vote. However political party agents must be present when polling station staff check with the voter that the assistant has been freely chosen, which provides an opportunity for political party agents to exert influence.

The two election administration bodies, the National Election Commission (CNE) and the Technical Secretariat for Election Administration (STAE), engaged constructively with disabled people's organisations (DPOs) before the election and encouraged persons with disabilities to participate in the election, though neither has a specific strategy for promoting electoral rights of persons with disabilities. Both bodies cooperated with RHTO in this access monitoring. STAE involved RHTO in its training workshops for polling centre managers, and both STAE and CNE involved RHTO in developing civic and voter education materials urging persons with disabilities to participate in the election.

Two of the major election contestants – Frente Revolucionário de Timor-Leste (FRETILIN) and Partido Democrático (PD) held dialogues with the disability community during the election campaign and made commitments to promote disability rights if elected to Government. Around three-quarters (73%) of the political campaign events attended by the access monitors were held in venues they assessed overall as inaccessible to persons with disabilities, while 40 percent of the campaign events monitored were held at venues that met none of the disability access criteria.

The political information provided at the campaign events monitored was generally not provided in a format accessible to persons with hearing or visual disabilities and only 12 percent of these events were publicised to DPOs. At 25 percent of the campaign events monitored, issues relevant to persons with disabilities were raised by one or more of the speakers. The monitors interviewed some persons with disabilities who attended these campaign events: 32 percent of those interviewed rated the policy of the party holding the event towards persons with disabilities as 'good' or 'very good'.

Election Day monitoring showed that only 5 percent of polling stations monitored met all eight physical accessibility criteria. Forty-four percent met a majority of these criteria, a

significant improvement over the 20 percent of polling stations monitored at the 2017 parliamentary election. However, not meeting even one accessibility criterion may make the polling station inaccessible to some persons with disabilities. The disability access criteria most likely not to be met were accessible toilet facilities (not present in 79 percent of polling stations monitored), sufficient accessible seating (69%) and absence of obstacles in the voting area (49%).

Many persons using wheelchairs or other mobility assistive devices or of short stature, or with visual disabilities, could not vote independently and in secret. The design of the voting compartments used for elections in Timor-Leste does not allow access to little persons, or people who use wheelchairs or some other mobility aids. In 42 percent of polling stations monitored, the placement of the voting compartments made it difficult for persons with disabilities to access them. In almost half (47%) of the polling stations monitored, the ballot box was placed too high to be accessible to wheelchair-users or persons of short stature. There is no officially provided equipment, such as braille ballot guides or magnifying glasses, to support persons with visual disabilities. Due to the low number of contestants, party and coalition symbols on the ballot paper for this election were of a larger size than at the 2017 parliamentary election, which may have assisted some persons with visual disabilities to vote independently.

The monitors recorded 280 voters with a disability voting with an assistant. In 75 percent of the polling stations where this was observed, all such voters could choose their assistant freely, and in two-thirds of them the polling station secretary checked with the voter that the assistant had been freely chosen. In almost all (91%) of the polling stations monitored in which the polling station secretary confirmed that the voter had freely chosen the assistant, political party agents were present at this check. In 30 percent of the polling stations in which assisted voting was observed, the access monitors reported that political party agents had made at least one attempt to influence voters on who should assist them to vote.

Participation in an election as election staff is an important means of engaging persons with

disabilities in electoral processes. Only 11 percent of the polling stations monitored included a staff member with a disability, equivalent to 1.1 percent of the total staff of the polling stations monitored.

A total of 99 voters with disabilities were willing to participate in a short survey after voting. The majority of respondents had a positive response to the election process, even though the reports from the election access monitors indicate that very few of the polling stations observed were fully accessible to persons with disabilities. A majority of those persons with disabilities who

answered the questionnaire believed that there was sufficient accessible information about the election available to them, while almost one half (47%) had had some contact with STAE or CNE's education campaigns.

There were indications that there had been some progress, in the activities monitored at the 2018 early parliamentary elections, in providing a more inclusive electoral environment for persons with disabilities, when compared to the activities monitored at the 2017 parliamentary elections.

**Table 1** – Progress in addressing some barriers to participation in voting by persons with disabilities between the 2017 and 2018 elections

Issue	2017 Parliamentary Elections (124 polling stations monitored)	2018 Early Parliamentary Elections (150 polling stations monitored)
Stairs at access points to polling stations	Stairs at 84 per cent of polling stations monitored	Stairs at 90 per cent of polling stations monitored
Polling stations with ramps	Ramps at 20 per cent of polling stations with stairs monitored	Ramps at 55 per cent of polling stations with stairs monitored
Priority for persons with disabilities casting their votes	Priority was generally being given to persons with disabilities when casting their votes	Priority was almost always being given to persons with disabilities when casting their votes
Relationship between STAE, CNE and RHTO	CNE and STAE invited RHTO to attend several meetings and workshops, and CNE developed a public service announcement with RHTO	CNE and STAE liaised closely with RHTO, STAE invited RHTO officials to address election staff training sessions, and RHTO developed a public service announcement for CNE
Inclusion of persons with intellectual and psychosocial disabilities as voters	Legal barriers to voting by persons with intellectual and psychosocial disabilities still persist	Legal barriers to voting by persons with intellectual and psychosocial disabilities still persist, however some persons with these disabilities were observed voting.





### 3. INTRODUCTION

International law requires that all citizens shall have the right and opportunity to take part in public affairs, including to vote and be elected at elections held by universal and equal suffrage.<sup>3</sup>

Additionally, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD), Article 29, calls on States to ensure that persons with disabilities can “*effectively and fully participate in political and public life on an equal basis with others, directly or through freely chosen representatives, including having the right and opportunity to vote and be elected*”. Timor-Leste has not yet ratified the UNCRPD, a treaty that has been ratified by over 90 percent of UN member states.

For the 2018 early parliamentary election, Raés Hadomi Timor Oan (RHTO), a national disability-led organisation that works to promote the rights of persons with disabilities, deployed 130 monitors across all municipalities in Timor-Leste to assess how effectively these principles are implemented in Timor-Leste. RHTO previously monitored elections in Timor-Leste in 2012, 2016 and 2017. Access monitoring in Aileu, Baucau, Bobonaro, Dili, Ermera, Liquica and Rejiaun Administrativa Especial Oé-Cusse Ambeno (RAEOA) was supported by the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade through IFES. In Ainaro, Covalima, Lautem, Manatuto, Manufahi and Viqueque it was funded by the Government of Korea and the Government of Japan through the UNDP LEARN project.

Based on its 2012, 2016 and 2017 election observations, RHTO has advocated to the government of Timor-Leste, CNE and STAE on the necessity to improve election conditions so that persons with disabilities have full access to cast their votes. STAE and CNE have responded positively to this advocacy. The findings and recommendations of this report will be used by RHTO to continue its advocacy for full and complete access of persons with disabilities to all electoral processes in Timor-Leste.

<sup>3</sup> International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, 1966, Article 25



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## 4. DISABILITY IN TIMOR-LESTE

According to the 2015 National Census of Timor-Leste<sup>4</sup> 38,118 people, or 3.2 per cent of the population, identified as having a disability. However, this number is highly questionable, given barriers to self-reporting a disability and the limited knowledge of census officials regarding disability. Research by the World Health Organisation<sup>5</sup> and the World Bank indicates that, worldwide, 15 percent of the population have a disability. On this basis, it can be estimated that around 177,000 people in Timor-Leste have a disability.

While the Government of Timor-Leste has not ratified UNCRPD, in 2012 it designed *A National Policy for the Inclusion and Promotion of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*, and later drafted a *National Action Plan for Persons with Disabilities 2014-2018*.<sup>6</sup> The National Action Plan envisages a number of activities that were anticipated to have a significant impact on electoral accessibility for persons with disabilities, which it describes as follows:<sup>7</sup>

- ratification of the Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities
- the creation of a guideline and rules for accessibility of public places<sup>8</sup>
- provision of sign language interpretation on Television Timor-Leste
- provision of training about disabilities for journalists and media

However, the National Action Plan does not cover electoral and political rights of persons with disabilities and has no objectives specifically related to empowering persons with disabilities to make the decisions that govern their environment. Additionally, the National Action Plan has never been formally approved by the Council of Ministers. The *Mid-Term Review of the*

4 Ministry of Finance 2016

5 World Health Organisation 2011

6 Developed by the Ministry of Social Solidarity

7 As stated in *Looking Backwards, Planning Forwards*, Report of the Mid-Term Review of the National Action Plan for Persons with Disabilities, Mid-Term Review Team, October 2016, page 6

8 This would affect most polling centres since they are in schools or *aldeia* and *suco* offices



*National Action Plan for Persons with Disabilities, 2014-2018*, notes barriers to progress including: a low level of knowledge of the plan; low priority for implementation of the plan; weak coordination; and insufficient resources allocated.<sup>9</sup>

Persons with disabilities in Timor-Leste still experience violations of their rights such as poor accessibility to government institutions and few health services providing specific support to persons with different types of disabilities. While some newer government ministry buildings in Dili are designed with international standards for disability access in mind, there are no standards for disability access of buildings or public places defined in Timor-Leste law or regulations. There is very high unemployment of persons with disabilities, exacerbated by a lack of effective and inclusive education, particularly for persons with visual and hearing disabilities. Access to the fundamental right to vote can be denied to persons with disabilities due to attitudinal, communication, physical and institutional barriers. In Timor-Leste physical inaccessibility of polling stations, and the limited accessible information on electoral processes and political programs are major barriers to electoral participation by persons with disabilities.

## 5. DISABILITY ACCESS MONITORING METHODOLOGY

The disability access monitoring program for the 2018 early parliamentary elections was implemented by RHTO, with support from the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade through IFES and the Government of Korea and the Government of Japan through the UNDP LEARN project.

The monitoring assessed the access of persons with disabilities to voting on the May 12, 2018 election day. Recognizing that an essential part of making an informed voting choice is access to relevant information from the political campaigns by election contestants, the mission also assessed some political campaign events and the extent to which election contestants

<sup>9</sup> *ibid*, pages 9-11.

addressed issues of concern to persons with disabilities in their campaigns. The monitoring process also included obtaining the opinions of persons with disabilities on their experiences of political campaign events and of voting. RHTO's access monitoring program for the 2017 parliamentary election included a detailed analysis of the legal and administrative frameworks for disability in Timor-Leste.<sup>10</sup> This

<sup>10</sup> Timor Leste Parliamentary Elections July 2017, Disability Access Monitoring, RHTO, October 2017, pages 9-14 Available at <http://electionaccess.org/en/resources/publications/508/>



RHTO

**Paulo Da Silva Neves** is an RHTO field officer in Dili. Observing the 2018 early parliamentary election was his second time serving as an election access monitor. He said: *"When I was observing, people were staring at me because of my condition, but I have faith and confidence in myself because I want to help and fight for the rights of persons with disabilities"*. He noted that he faced the same obstacles as persons with disabilities voting: *"The access to the polling centre was very bumpy, which limited my movements while monitoring."*

analysis remains valid, as there have been only minor changes to electoral regulations between the 2017 parliamentary election and the 2018 early parliamentary election.

Twenty-four monitors, one in the municipalities of Aileu and Baucau and two in the eleven other municipalities, attended selected political campaign events between 10 April and 9 May. A total of 69 campaign events were monitored, and 38 persons with disabilities who attended these events were interviewed. On Election Day, a total of 130 access monitors were deployed, ten to each of the 13 municipalities. These short-term observers visited 150 polling stations in 127 polling centres to assess their accessibility and interviewed 99 voters with disabilities about their voting experience.

Polling stations to be monitored could not be selected using a random sample of the 1151 polling stations operating in Timor-Leste for the election as this would have created significant access challenges. Instead, monitors were assigned polling stations that were accessible to their place of living. These were generally within urban areas. Similarly, monitors attended campaign events that were held in places accessible to transport, generally within urban areas, and according to the monitor's availability.

This has two impacts on the data:

- The data is INDICATIVE rather than REPRESENTATIVE and is generally applicable to political campaign events and polling

stations that are in or around larger settlements.

- Some findings on accessibility of political campaign event locations and of polling stations locations may not hold for rural areas. Some findings, such as on how accessible the polling station is from the road, will thus understate the extent of problems with accessibility.

Each election day monitor was scheduled to visit at least one polling station on Election Day. All were assigned to different polling centres, however, where there was more than one polling station in a polling centre, their accessibility was separately assessed.

## Training

Two RHTO municipal staff members with disabilities from each municipality received two full days of training as a trainer of access monitors and as political campaign event monitors, at RHTO's Dili headquarters on April 5 and 6, 2018. These staff returned to their municipalities the next day and conducted a one-day training session for the other Election Day monitors in the municipality between April 28 and May 4. IFES attended the training in Ermera on May 2 and was satisfied with the quality of the training. The training was challenging as many of the access monitors had not observed an election previously.





## Checklists and Questionnaires

The checklists and questionnaires used were modified from the checklists used for the 2017 parliamentary election, based on observation experience. They consisted mainly of closed-ended questions for which monitors chose between Yes or No options, and where appropriate, space was provided for monitors to elaborate on their answer.

The political campaign event monitors used two data collection instruments developed by RHTO in collaboration with IFES:

- A political campaign event accessibility checklist
- A short questionnaire for event participants with disabilities who were willing to talk about their views on the event

The election day access monitors also used two data collection instruments developed by RHTO in collaboration with IFES:

- A polling station accessibility checklist
- A questionnaire for voters with disabilities who were willing to talk about their voting experience

These instruments were based on international good practices for election access observation, with some adjustments to contextualize the tools for Timor-Leste. Checklist templates in braille were available for use by access monitors with a visual disability. The checklists and questionnaires used are in Annex 1 to this report.

## 6. LEGAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE FRAMEWORKS

### Electoral rights of persons with disabilities in Timor-Leste

The guiding principles for issues relating to persons with disabilities are detailed in the UNCRPD. Article 29 of UNCRPD specifies requirements for State parties to ensure that persons with disabilities can “fully participate in political and public life on an equal basis to others”,

which is “including the right and opportunity for persons with disabilities to vote and be elected”. Article 29 then gives examples of what State parties must ensure to give effect to these rights, including “ensuring that voting procedures, facilities and materials are appropriate, accessible and easy to understand and use”, “protecting the right of persons with disabilities to vote by secret ballot in elections and public referendums without intimidation, and to stand for elections”, “guaranteeing the free expression of the will of persons with disabilities as electors” and “where necessary, at their request, allowing assistance in voting by a person of their own choice”.

Timor-Leste has not yet signed nor ratified the UNCRPD. Prior to the 2017 parliamentary election, FRETILIN Secretary-General Dr. Mari Alkatiri had committed that ratification of the UNCRPD would be a high priority for a FRETILIN government. However, the FRETILIN-led minority government installed after this election was unable to implement its policies. The attitude towards ratifying UNCRPD of the Aliança de Mudança para o Progresso (AMP) government formed after the May 12, 2018 election is not known.

Section 16 of the Constitution of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste states that all citizens have the same rights and that no-one shall be discriminated against on grounds including physical or mental condition. Section 21 of the Constitution further states that a citizen with a disability has the same rights and duties as all other citizens except for those rights and duties which he or she is unable to fulfil due to his or her disability. In the absence of Timor-Leste’s signing or ratification of the UNCRPD, there has been little accountability in Timor-Leste for ensuring that these constitutionally guaranteed rights are upheld.

The legal framework for the 2018 early parliamentary election was in almost all respects the same as for the July 2017 parliamentary election. The major laws governing the 2018 early parliamentary election process in Timor-Leste are: Law 6/2016 on Voter Registration; Law 7/2016, Second Amendment to Law 5/2006 on Election Management Bodies; and Law 9/2017, Fourth Amendment to Law 6/2006 on Election of the National Parliament. These are supplemented by election regulations relevant

to implementation of parliamentary election voting and election campaigns in Timor-Leste: Government Decree 18/2017 on the Electoral Campaign; Government Decree 21/2017 on the Organization and Operations of Polling Centers and the Voting, Vote Counting and Tabulation of Results Procedures; and Government Decree 4/2018, First Amendment to Government Decree 19/2017 and Government Decree 21/2017.

There is very little in the Timor-Leste laws and regulations that govern electoral processes that would ensure the implementation of the rights of persons with disabilities that are enshrined in Articles 16 and 21 of the Constitution. There are:

- no requirements to provide civic and electoral information in formats that are accessible to persons with disabilities;
- no standards for physical accessibility of polling centres, polling stations and voter registration centres
- no requirement that specifications for polling equipment and materials, including ballots, include that they are accessible to persons with disabilities;
- no alternative methods of voting made available to persons with disabilities who cannot access a polling station; and
- no mention of disability in relation to political party administration, candidate selection or campaigning.

This constitutes a failure of successive governments in Timor-Leste to protect one of the most important constitutional rights - the right to vote - of persons with disabilities in Timor-Leste.

The issue of voting by persons with disabilities is addressed in a very limited fashion in the electoral legal framework. Persons with disabilities are given priority in voting queues. Persons with disabilities may also be assisted to vote by a person of their choice. While such voting assistance is mentioned in UNCRPD Article 29, it is as a less satisfactory position “where necessary”, not as the norm, as being assisted to vote can violate the secrecy of the ballot. Government Decree 4/2018 exacerbates the inherent problems of assisted voting by requiring that political party agents be present when polling station staff verify that a voter has

freely chosen an assistant. This makes voters seeking to vote with an assistant susceptible to political influence or even intimidation.

## Electoral information for persons with disabilities

Both CNE and STAE, supported by UNDP LEARN project and IFES, produced targeted materials that encouraged persons with disabilities to participate in the early parliamentary election. There was a significant improvement in the engagement of both CNE and STAE with the disability community, compared to the 2017 parliamentary election.

The flip-chart used by the STAE’s *brigadas* for face-to-face voter education sessions at village level featured graphics and a message promoting inclusion of persons with disabilities in the election. For television, STAE with the support from UNDP LEARN project produced both short public service announcements (PSAs) and a series of short films on aspects of the electoral process, suitable for voter education and staff training. Those on voting processes dealt in particular with assisted voting for voters with a visual disability. CNE produced a television PSA that was developed and scripted by RHTO, showing the positive contribution that participation by persons with disabilities makes to the community. This PSA was broadcast on RTTL during May until election day. CNE also broadcast a television PSA highlighting the rights of persons with hearing disabilities.



Still from CNE PSA encouraging participation by persons with disabilities

Accessibility to information is a greater problem in Timor-Leste for those with a hearing or visual disability. Most CNE and STAE television PSAs produced in collaboration with UNDP LEARN project and IFES included sign language interpretation. AGAPE-school for the deaf did the sign language interpretation for the TV PSAs and short TV films. An Electoral Resource and Information Center established by UNDP LEARN project provided electoral information through special orientation programs to people with disabilities on early parliamentary elections. However, there is very little access for persons with a profound hearing disability to learn signing, and very limited opportunities for those with a visual disability to learn braille. While no braille materials were produced, STAE produced a large print A2 size facsimile of the ballot paper, to be displayed outside polling stations, that was useful for voters with low vision.

#### Political parties and coalitions

Few political parties or coalitions made any effort to target persons with disabilities with specific messages, and none employed message formats designed to be accessible to persons with disabilities. Two political parties, FRETILIN and Partido Democrático, sent senior officials to meet with the disability community to discuss their platforms on disability and to listen to the concerns of persons with disabilities. These were also the only two parties to meet with the disability community prior to the 2017 parliamentary election. The Aliança de Mudança para o Progresso (AMP) coalition contacted RHTO expressing interest in a meeting but took no further action.

### **Implementing political and electoral access for persons with disabilities**

Elections in Timor-Leste are managed by a two-part election management body: the CNE, which is the constitutionally independent body which supervises the electoral processes and among other responsibilities, conducts civic education and the national tabulation of votes and deals with electoral complaints and challenges, and the STAE, which implements all electoral processes. Prior to the early parliamentary election, STAE and CNE both engaged with RHTO, and the results of these meetings had a positive impact

on STAE's training of election staff and CNE's civic education content.

STAE's policies and procedures for electoral access of persons with disabilities mirror the limited provisions for assisted voting and priority access to voting contained in the election law and regulations. Polling centres and stations are defined in the legal framework<sup>11</sup> as being set up in public buildings, preferably schools, which offer accessibility (i.e. are close to a population centre) and security to voters, and if these are not available, in suco offices or community centres. These buildings are generally old and were built at a time when disability access was not a design consideration. More flexibility in the legal framework, to encourage STAE to locate polling centres in open air or other more accessible locations or to allow mobile ballot boxes to provide service to persons with disabilities would enhance disability access. Efforts by STAE to make voting more accessible through providing some more accessible voting compartments were not successful due to the short preparation time for the election.

STAE manuals and videos produced with the support of UNDP LEARN project and IFES for training its election staff from municipal to polling station level integrated images of persons with disabilities voting. STAE did make a notable effort to involve persons with disabilities in its training program for election staff. STAE invited RHTO's municipal staff to attend the training of brigadas (village/polling centre election managers) in each municipality, where they briefed brigadas on dealing with disability access issues likely to be encountered in polling stations, and the access monitoring program. STAE's training workshops for election staff emphasized the rights of persons with disabilities to be assisted to vote by a person of their choice and for persons with disabilities to be given priority in queues for voting. Monitoring reports indicated that these training initiatives were generally effective.

CNE recognised the need to motivate persons with disabilities to participate in voting. RHTO and other disability organisations worked with CNE on relevant content for CNE's local face-to-face civic education activities and their television advertising. Article 8 of Law 6 of 2016 on Election

<sup>11</sup> Government Decree 21/2017, Article 4



## Sentru Votasaun

Management Bodies gives, among others, the following powers to CNE:

*b) Enforce the application of constitutional and legal norms regarding the registration process, the elections and referenda;*

*e) Ensure equality of treatment for citizens in all registration and election acts;*

*"Ensuring equality of treatment" and "enforcing the application of constitutional ..... norms"* would suggest that CNE should actively take steps to ensure that persons with disabilities have equality of access to all electoral processes with any other citizen of Timor-Leste. As this access monitoring report shows, that is not the case. As the only requirements for disability access to electoral processes defined in law or regulations are for priority voting and being assisted to vote by a freely chosen assistant, it is not clear that there would be a legal basis for any challenge to the validity of electoral operations<sup>12</sup> on the grounds that an electoral process was not accessible to persons with disabilities.

There is no data available on whether political parties or coalitions considered persons with disabilities in the process of selecting candidates, or if any internal quotas (also called voluntary

party quotas) have been considered to ensure their participation in party structures. Very few persons with disabilities represented parties and coalitions as speakers at the political campaign events attended by access monitors. The Law on Parliamentary Elections does not provide any quota for political parties to include candidates with disabilities in their candidate lists, as is the case with the gender quota.

### **Involvement of persons with disabilities in electoral administration**

STAE does not have data available on how many persons with disabilities are employed as election staff and neither STAE nor CNE have targets for employment of persons with disabilities. The disability access monitors found that 1.1 per cent of the total staffing of the polling stations monitored were persons with disabilities, an improvement on the 0.2 per cent in polling stations monitored at the 2017 parliamentary election. Employment as an election official, observer, or party agent, even for a short period on election day, provides valuable confidence and leadership experience to persons with disabilities. In STAE's voter education and election staff training materials, and in CNE's civic education materials, there are depictions of persons with disabilities as voters but not as election staff or in other active electoral roles such as a candidate, observer, or party agent.

<sup>12</sup> For example, as allowed by Article 45(1) of Government Decree 21/2017: "Any voter or agent of a candidacy, during the operating hours of the polling station, can raise questions and file objections and claims regarding electoral operations".



## 7. POLITICAL CAMPAIGN EVENTS

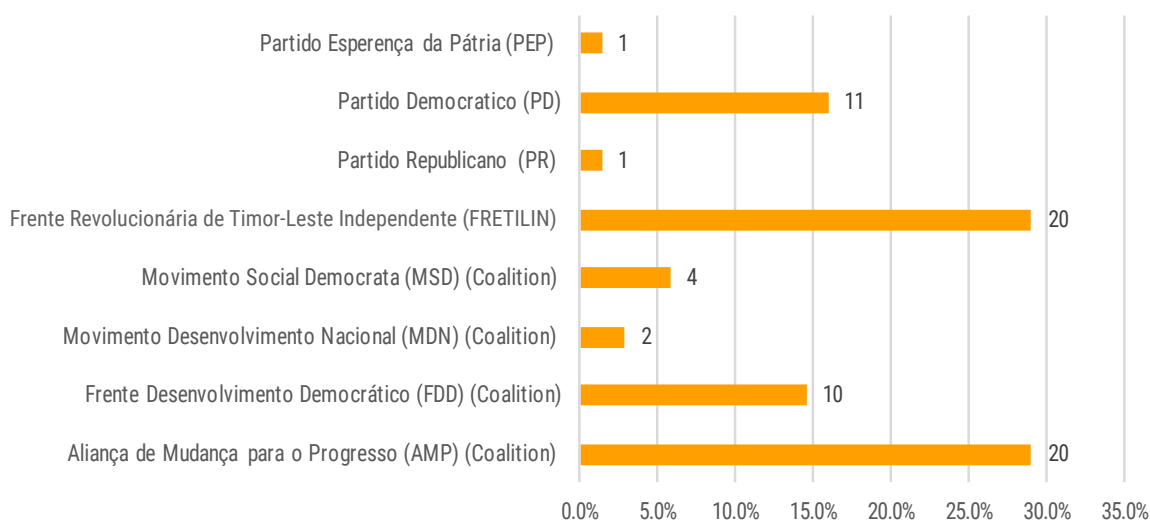
Persons with disabilities need not only to have access to all electoral facilities, but also to political information if they are to participate fully and effectively in choosing their representatives. To assess how accessible political information is to persons with disabilities, during the political campaign period disability access monitors attended 69 political campaign events across all municipalities: nine in Ermera, eight in Covalima, seven in each of Dili, Liquica and Viqueque, five in Aileu and Lautem, four in each of Bobonaro, Manatuto, Manufahi and RAEOA, three in Ainaro and two in Baucau.

This access monitoring covered campaign events held by all the competing parties and

coalitions, with the events attended for each contestant roughly in line with the intensity of the contestants' political campaigns, as shown below in Figure 1.

The bulk of the events attended were either rallies (61%) or meetings (30%), with small numbers of door-to-door campaigning and community dialogues also being attended. Over half the events attended had between 51 and 500 attendees (52%), with 13 percent having between 501-and 1000 attendees and 23 per cent having over 1000 attendees.

**Figure 1** – Political campaign events attended by access monitors, by election contestant: number and percent of total events monitored

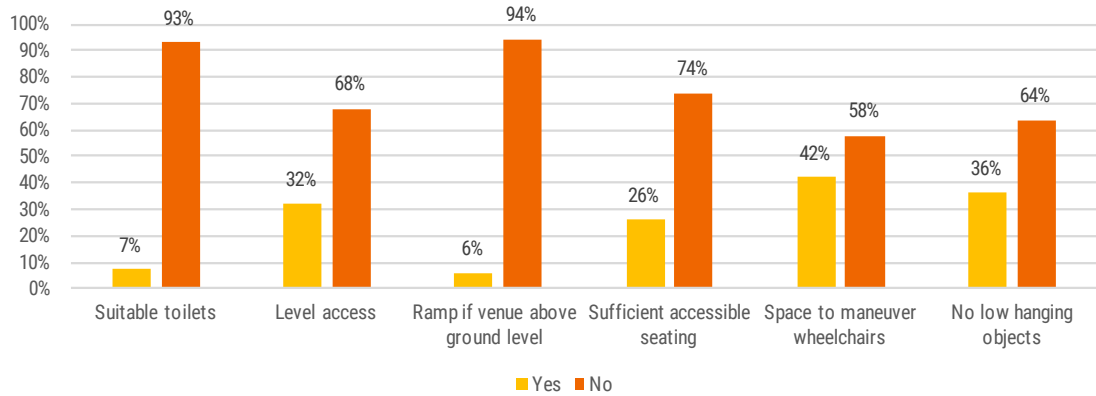


### Accessibility of the campaign events

At 59 percent of the campaign events attended, the access monitors saw no persons with disabilities among the attendees. This may be because the election contestants holding the events largely neglected to publicise the event to disabled persons organisations (12 percent of the events attended were so publicised), while less than a quarter of the events attended (23%) had been publicised in a format that could be accessible to some persons with disabilities. FRETILIN, AMP, FDD and PR informed DPOs

of at least one of the events monitored. The major contestants provided disability accessible information about the events monitored in a minority of cases: AMP (20%), FRETILIN (35%), PD (27%) and FDD (20%). Transport for persons with disabilities to attend the political campaign event was available for 19 percent of the events monitored. FDD, PD and FRETILIN were the election contestants more likely to provide such transport.

**Figure 2 – Assessment of disability access criteria at campaign event venues**



From this evidence, it would not have been easy for persons with disabilities to be aware of, or get to, most of the political campaign events monitored. Additionally, around three quarters (73%) of the political campaign events attended by the access monitors were held in venues they assessed overall as inaccessible to persons with disabilities. Thirty percent of the AMP, FRETILIN and FDD events monitored were assessed as being accessible overall to persons with disabilities.

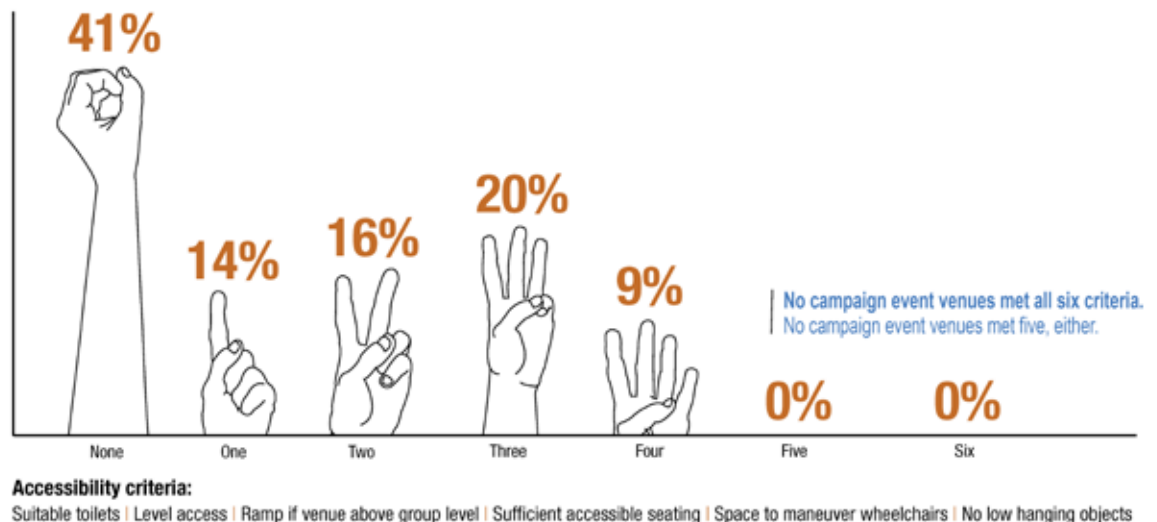
The access monitors assessed these campaign venues against six specific disability access criteria with the results shown above in Figure 2.

Sixty-eight percent of the political campaign events attended did not have level access to the venue and 94 percent had stairs without a ramp for wheelchair access, though once in the

venue, 42 percent of the locations had enough space for wheelchairs to move freely. MDN (50%) and FRETILIN (40%), followed by AMP and FDD (both 30%) were more likely to have level access to the campaign venues that were monitored. There was more likely to be accessible seating for persons with disabilities at the FRETILIN and PD campaign events monitored.

Very few (7%) of the venues monitored had toilets accessible to persons with disabilities – no more than one of the venues monitored for any of the election contestants. This contrasts to the results of the 2017 parliamentary election access monitoring where 43 per cent of venues monitored had accessible toilets. This may be because the 2018 campaign monitoring was more focused on larger outdoor campaign events.

**Figure 3 – Percentage of monitored campaign events held at venues meeting between 0 and 6 of the disability access criteria assessed**



This data emphasizes how difficult it is for persons with disabilities to participate in political campaign events: over 40 per cent of the campaign events monitored were held at venues that met none of the disability access criteria.

The political information provided at these campaign events was generally not provided in a format accessible to persons with hearing or visual disabilities. Only one event monitored (held by FRETILIN) had a sign language interpreter and one other event (held by FDD) had information in a format accessible to persons with a visual disability. Overall, the monitors assessed that information was provided in a manner that a person with disabilities overall could find accessible at only 23 per cent of the events monitored.

At 59 per cent of the campaign events monitored there were no persons with disabilities in the audience. If there were persons with disabilities in attendance, it was generally in small numbers. At 32 per cent of campaign events attended, there were between 1-10 attendees with disabilities. The only campaign event monitored with a substantial number of persons with disabilities attending (55), was the meeting FRETILIN held

in conjunction with RHTO with persons with disabilities. This was a targeted meeting and thus is not representative of the integration of persons with disabilities as political party supporters.

### Content of the campaign events

Of the 69 campaign events monitored, there were four events that each featured one speaker with a disability – one with a visual disability (at an FDD event) and three with a physical disability (at a PD, FDD and AMP event). There were no events that featured speakers with hearing, intellectual or psychosocial disabilities. While there were few speakers with disabilities, at 17 (25%) of the campaign events monitored, issues relevant to persons with disabilities were raised by one or more of the speakers. Only one of the events that featured a speaker with a disability covered disability rights issues. Table 2 shows which political parties or coalitions covered which disability related issues during a monitored political campaign event.

Disability related issues were more likely to be raised at the FRETILIN and PD events monitored. These were also the only two parties to meet with disability groups during the political campaign.

**Table 2 – Disability related issues mentioned by election contestants at monitored campaign events**

ISSUES	Number	% of Events Monitored	Party or Coalition Name - Number of Events at Which Issue is Mentioned							
			PEP	PD	PR	FRETILIN	MSD	MDN	FDD	AMP
Equal access and rights for persons with disabilities	4	6%				4				
Subsidies for persons with disabilities	2	3%				1				1
Inclusive development of society	2	3%		1		1				
Providing access to education for persons with disabilities	4	6%		1		2			1	
Increased salaries for persons with disabilities	1	1%				1				
Increasing participation by persons with disabilities	1	1%							1	
Party will focus on the needs of persons with disabilities	3	4%		1		1				1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>% of Party/ Coalition Events Monitored</b>			<b>0%</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>10%</b>



### SOME BARRIERS TO PARTICIPATION IN POLITICAL CAMPAIGN EVENTS

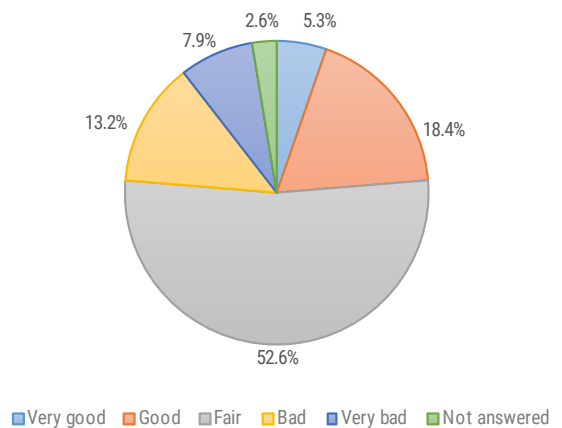
- 41 per cent of monitored campaign event venues met none of the disability access criteria
- Only one monitored campaign event had information in a format accessible to people with a visual disability



## 8. SURVEY OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES PRESENT AT POLITICAL CAMPAIGN EVENTS

At each of the campaign events monitored, the disability access monitor attempted to interview some persons with disabilities who were present, asking two questions: how accessible the person thought the venue was and why; and the person's assessment of the election contestant's program for persons with disabilities and the reason for this assessment. A total of 38 persons with disabilities who attended one of the 69 campaign events monitored were willing to answer these questions.

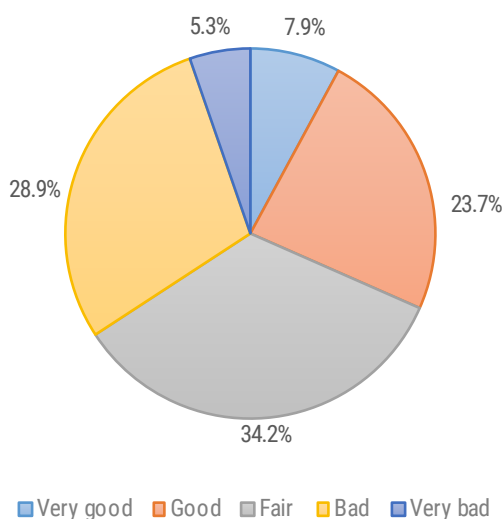
**Figure 4** – Campaign event attendees' assessments of venue accessibility



Accessibility of the venue was rated as either 'very good', 'good' or 'fair' by 76 per cent of the attendees with a disability who were surveyed. Overall, the attendees with a disability were likely to rate the accessibility of the event venues more favourably than the disability access monitors, perhaps reflecting campaign event attendees' low expectations of facilities provided for persons with disabilities in Timor-Leste. For example, some attendees who rated accessibility of the venue as 'fair' noted in their comments that there was no wheelchair accessibility.

The election contestants' programs in relation to persons with disabilities were assessed by these attendees with a disability, with the following results.

**Figure 5 – Campaign event attendees’ assessments of the election contestant’s program**



Attendees surveyed at FRETILIN and FDD campaign events were more likely to assess the party or coalition’s program as ‘very good’ or ‘good’ (50% and 43% respectively). Attendees at PD events were more likely to assess that party’s program as ‘bad’ or ‘very bad’ (67%), although PD

was one of only two parties to meet with DPOs during the campaign period.

Those respondents who assessed the election contestant’s program positively did not always give a specific reason for this. In some cases, the positive assessment was based on speakers at the event referring generally to ensuring disability rights. Other reasons given included that there was a speaker with a disability and that speakers mentioned subsidies and improving education opportunities for persons with disabilities. Those who rated the contestant’s program as bad did so generally because speakers at the event made no mention of disability.

## 9. ELECTION DAY MONITORING

### Election access monitors deployment

RHTO deployed 130 election access monitors on the 12 May Election Day for the early parliamentary election. The deployment by municipality and type of disability was as follows.

**Table 3 – Number of disability access monitors deployed for election day by type of disability**

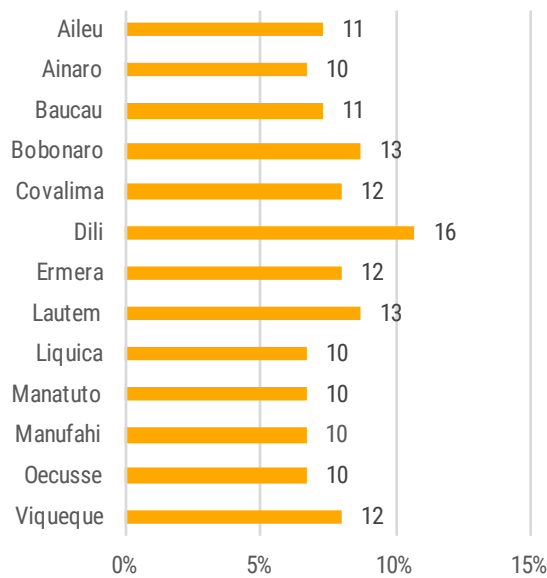
Municipality	TYPE OF DISABILITY							Total
	Physical	Leprosy	Visual	Visual/Communication	Hearing	Communication	Intellectual	
Aileu*	6		2			1	1	10
Ainaro#	9			1				10
Baucau*	8	1	1					10
Bobonaro*	7		2			1		10
Covalima#	10							10
Dili*	9		1					10
Ermera*	9		1					10
Lautem#	9		1					10
Liquica*	9		1					10
Manatuto#	8		2					10
Manufahi#	8		2					10
RAEOA*	7		1		2			10
Viqueque#	9		1					10
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>108</b>		<b>15</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>		<b>130</b>
Percent of monitors	83.1%	0.8%	11.5%	0.8%	1.5%	1.5%	0.8%	100.0%

\* Funded by DFAT Australia through IFES

# Funded by UNDP LEARN project

STAE was very cooperative in processing quickly the accreditation of each disability access monitor as an election observer, giving them all the rights and responsibilities pertaining to election observers. Due to access issues, in some municipalities fewer than the targeted 10 polling centres were visited, and instead multiple polling stations in some polling centres were monitored. In total, an election day access monitoring checklist was processed from 150 polling stations located in 127 polling centres, with the following municipal breakdown.

**Figure 6 – Polling stations monitored by municipality: number and percent of total polling stations monitored**



## Polling station checklists

### Priority voting for persons with disabilities.

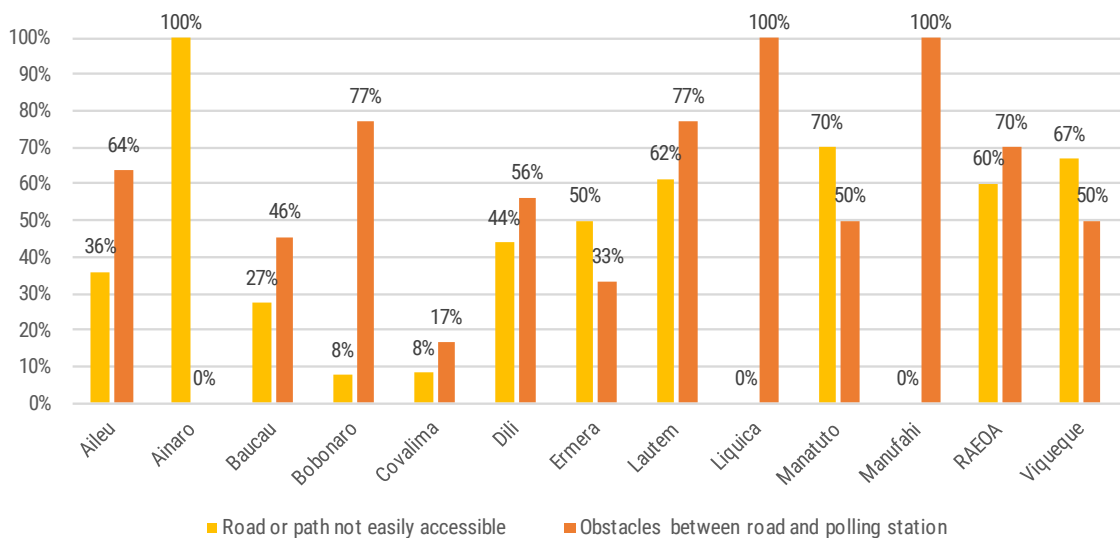
The election access monitors took a tally of how many voters with a disability, older voters, and pregnant voters turned out to vote while they were monitoring at their assigned polling station. Overall, in the 150 polling stations monitored, they noted 2,452 persons with disabilities arriving to vote (1,411 men, 1,041 women). Of these, 731 had a visual disability, 290 a hearing disability, 1,058 a physical disability, 129 a communication disability, 98 an intellectual disability and 146 a psychosocial disability. The access monitors also noted the numbers of older and pregnant voters turning out to vote, recording 5,374 older voters (2,768 men and 2,606 women) and 1,132 pregnant voters.

Article 41(5) of Election Regulation 21/2017 requires that voters who are pregnant, over 65 years old or who have a disability must be given priority to vote. It appeared to observers that STAE’s election staff generally implemented this responsibility well. In 91 percent of the polling stations monitored where persons with disabilities, older voters and pregnant voters were seen waiting to vote, they were given priority.

### Accessibility of road/path to building housing the polling station

The access monitors assessed the condition of the access route to the polling station for

**Figure 7 – Difficulties in accessing polling station location by municipality**



accessibility. The road or path leading to the polling station was not easily accessible for persons with disabilities in 41 percent of polling stations monitored; there were obstacles such as open drains or uneven surfaces between the road or path and the polling station in 57 percent of cases. In 71 per cent of the polling stations with such obstacles, the road or path to the polling station also was not easily accessible to persons with disabilities.

Voters with a disability at the polling stations monitored in Ainaro, Manatuto, Viqueque and Lautem were more likely to find that the road to the polling station was not easily accessible, while those in Liquica, Manufahi, Bobonaro, and RAEOA were more likely to face obstacles between the road and the polling station.

Accessibility of polling station building

All polling stations monitored were on the ground floor. The physical accessibility of the polling station buildings was assessed according to eight criteria:

- No stairs to the building, or if there are stairs there is a suitable ramp
- Sufficient width of entrance for wheelchair access
- Sufficient width of exit for wheelchair access
- Accessible toilets or washrooms
- Enough accessible seating
- Enough space for wheelchair users to move around easily
- Entrance areas free of obstacles
- Voting area free of obstacles

The results of the assessment against these criteria are shown in the following chart.

There was at least one stair at the entrance to 90 percent of the polling stations monitored, and 33 percent of locations had three or more stairs. In all municipalities, most of the polling stations visited had stairs at the entrance: Lautem had the highest percentage of polling stations monitored without stairs (23%). In five municipalities, half or more of the polling stations monitored had three or more stairs at the entrance: Ainaro (70%), Manatuto (60%), Ermera (54%), Lautem and Viqueque (each 50%).

In 61 percent of the polling stations monitored that had stairs, there was some type of ramp that could be used to access the polling station. However, the ramps were not always suitable for wheelchair access, some did not have a safety rail or had a steep gradient, and others were improvised constructions from lengths of wood. None of the assessed polling stations that had stairs in Viqueque, and few in Bobonaro, had a ramp.

In 26 percent of the polling stations monitored, the entrance and/or the exit were not wide enough for a wheelchair to fit through. In Ainaro, Bobonaro, Liquica and Manufahi all polling stations monitored had an entrance and exit that were sufficiently wide for wheelchair access, compared to Covalima (42%), Lautem (46%), Viqueque (58%) and Dili (63%).

The most common accessibility deficiency in polling stations is that there is no toilet or washroom that is accessible to voters with disabilities. This could affect voters with disabilities, who may have to queue for a lengthy period waiting to vote. Overall, 79 percent of polling stations monitored did not have an accessible toilet or washroom. Only in Aileu and

**Figure 8 - Polling station accessibility criteria**







Rochan Kadariya / UNDP Timor-Leste

Liquica did a majority of the polling stations monitored have accessible toilet or washroom facilities.

A little under one-third (31%) of polling stations monitored had sufficient accessible seating

for persons with disabilities waiting to vote. In Aileu, most polling stations monitored (82%) had sufficient accessible seating, as did half or more in Bobonaro (54%) and Liquica (50%). On the other hand, one-tenth or fewer of polling stations monitored in Manufahi (10%), Viqueque (8%) and Ainaro (0%) had sufficient seating.

Having a polling station entrance and interior that are free of obstacles and sufficient room amongst the polling station furniture to maneuver a wheelchair are also necessary so that persons with disabilities – particularly people with physical and visual disabilities – can participate equally in voting. In 61 percent of polling stations monitored, there were obstacles for voters with disabilities in or around the entrance, in 49 per cent there were obstacles within the polling station that made it difficult for voters with disabilities to access all parts of the voting area, and in 58 per cent there was insufficient room to maneuver a wheelchair in the polling station. In Viqueque very few polling stations monitored met these criteria.

The following table summarises the data on these eight disability access criteria provided by the access monitors in each municipality.

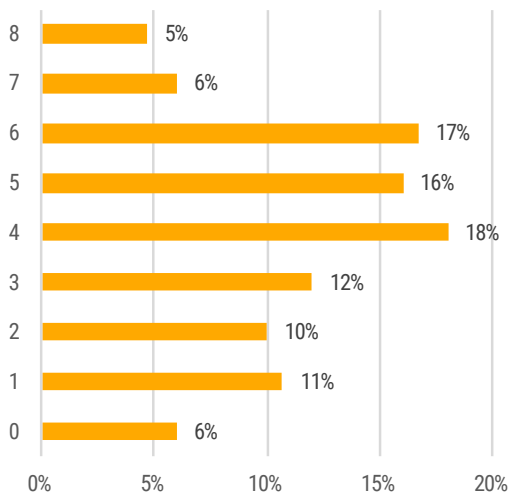
**Table 4** – Summary of assessment of polling stations against disability access criteria, by municipality

Municipality	Number of polling stations visited	Per cent of Polling Stations Monitored That Meet Each Disability Access Criterion							
		No stairs, or a ramp	Entrance width	Exit width	Accessible toilet	Sufficient Accessible seating	Sufficient Space for wheelchair users	Obstacle free entrance	Obstacle free voting area
Aileu	11	91%	82%	82%	55%	82%	82%	73%	46%
Ainaro	10	100%	100%	100%	0%	0%	40%	70%	90%
Baucau	11	73%	73%	73%	46%	27%	46%	18%	27%
Bobonaro	13	23%	100%	100%	31%	54%	54%	85%	46%
Covalima	12	42%	42%	50%	25%	17%	17%	17%	100%
Dili	16	44%	69%	63%	19%	38%	44%	44%	56%
Ermera	12	83%	92%	75%	8%	17%	58%	0%	42%
Lautem	13	38%	46%	46%	8%	23%	15%	23%	31%
Liquica	10	90%	100%	100%	60%	50%	80%	80%	80%
Manatuto	10	100%	70%	70%	0%	30%	20%	10%	30%
Manufahi	10	100%	100%	100%	10%	10%	30%	90%	80%
RAEOA	10	90%	89%	70%	20%	50%	60%	10%	90%
Viqueque	12	17%	58%	58%	0%	8%	8%	0%	8%
Total	150	65%	77%	75%	21%	31%	42%	39%	51%

When the data for each of the eight physical accessibility criteria tabulated above are combined, only seven (5%) of the 150 polling stations monitored meet all of these criteria, and so were fully accessible to persons with disabilities.

Overall assessment of physical accessibility of polling station buildings

**Figure 9** – Number of accessibility criteria met in polling stations monitored

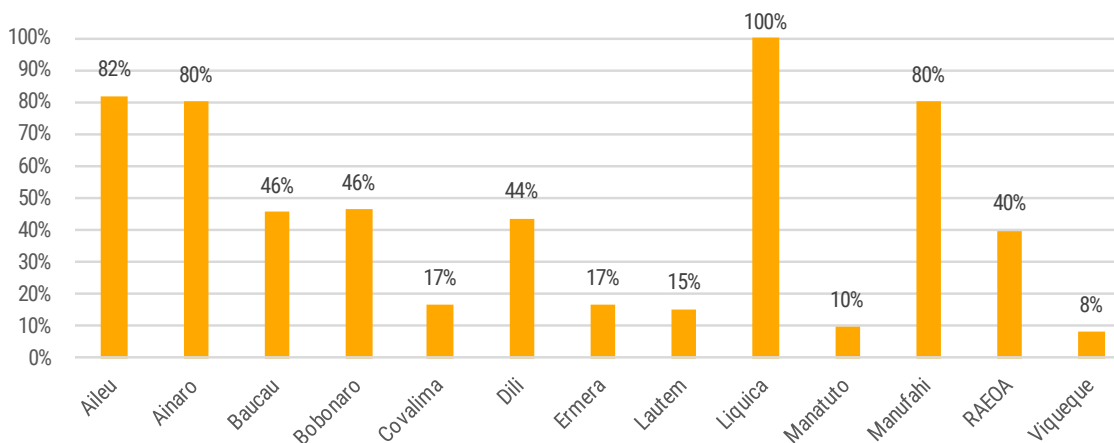


In 43 per cent of the polling stations monitored a majority of the accessibility requirements were met. However, not meeting even one accessibility criterion may make the polling station inaccessible to some persons with disabilities. Polling stations monitored in Aileu, Ainaro, Liquica, Manufahi and Baucau were more likely to meet a majority of the 8 accessibility criteria.



**Maria Teodora Marques Freitas** is an RHTO field officer in Manatuto Municipality. As a person with a disability, who is also pregnant, she was proud of the opportunity given to her to be an election access monitor, to be able to report on the obstacles faced by persons with disabilities in the election. She said *“I was so sad because I saw one voter with a mental health issue who was accompanied by his father in the queue, but when he received his ballot paper the election staff would not allow his father to assist him to vote, so he had to try to vote alone in the voting compartment.”*

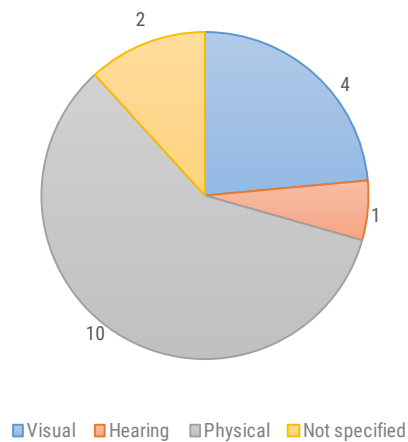
**Figure 10** – Percentage of polling stations monitored that met a majority of the 8 accessibility criteria



### Election staff with a disability

At each polling station monitored, the access monitors noted if any election staff had a disability. One staff member with a disability was noted at 17 (11.3%) of the 150 polling stations monitored. This represents 1.1 per cent of the total staff (10 per polling station) allocated to the polling stations monitored. The breakdown of these staff by type of disability is shown below.

**Figure 11** – Numbers of election staff with a disability in polling stations monitored



There were no election staff with a disability in any of the polling stations monitored in Aileu, Bobonaro and Liquica.

### Barriers to voters with a specific disability

#### **Visual disability**

In almost all polling stations monitored (92%) there was sufficient light in the voting compartments for voters with low vision to see the ballot paper. The only municipalities where a large proportion of the polling stations monitored did not have sufficient light in the voting compartments were Viqueque (50%) and Dili (25%). In almost one quarter (24%) of the polling stations monitored there were obstacles that made it difficult for persons with a visual disability to move around. Such obstacles were more likely to be found in the polling stations monitored in Covalima (67%) but were not reported in any of the polling stations monitored in Bobonaro, Ermera, Liquica and Manufahi.

In seven of the 150 polling stations monitored (5%) there were assistive devices available for persons with visual disabilities: in three polling stations these were identified as magnifying glasses and in three as large format materials; the other was not specified. The STAE does not provide such aids, so these would have been local initiatives in the few polling stations in Aileu, Ainaro, Baucau, Ermera and RAEOA where they were reported.

#### **Physical disability**

In 42 percent of polling stations monitored the placement of the voting compartments made it difficult for voters using wheelchairs or with restricted mobility to move behind the compartment to vote. This access issue was most frequently found in the polling stations monitored in Ainaro, Manatuto and Viqueque. In 71 percent of polling stations monitored, election staff or other voters assisted voters with disabilities to overcome obstacles to entering or moving around the polling station. While this enabled these voters to vote, they could not do so independently.



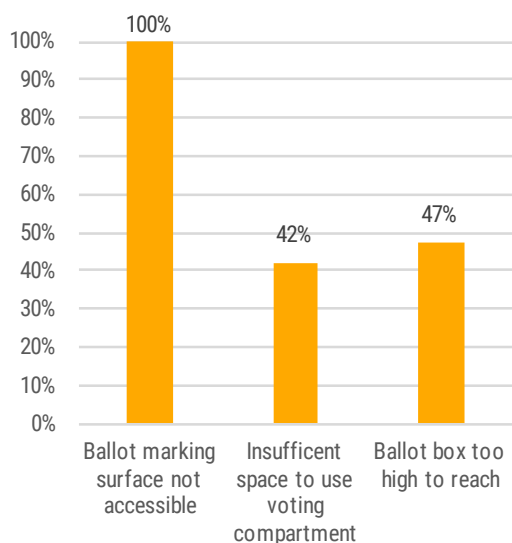
**Silvia Antonia Soares** is RHTO's Training Manager and was an access monitor in Dili for the 2018 early parliamentary election. She observed that *"I saw difficulties for people with a physical disability who can't climb stairs, and then have to try to find another voting station where they can vote. I saw people with visual disabilities struggle because there were no braille ballot papers, so they have to be assisted by someone to vote, and do not know if the ballot paper is marked according to their choice."*



An issue that requires resolution at a national procurement level is that of the design of the voting compartments. The writing/punching surface in the standard cardboard voting compartments used in all polling stations in Timor-Leste is too high for persons in a wheelchair or of short stature to be able to reach it to vote in secret. The solid cardboard front of the voting compartment makes it very difficult for anyone using a wheelchair to be near enough to the voting compartment to attempt to use the writing/punching surface. Many countries make available in each polling location a folding cardboard or wooden screen that can be placed on a low table so all persons using a wheelchair or of short stature may vote in secret. The STAE did make an effort to manage the logistics, however, did not have sufficient time or funds to procure these for the 2018 parliamentary election and in addition, its request to a neighbouring country to borrow some was not successful.

It is important that voters can independently place their ballot in the ballot box. In almost half (47%) of polling stations monitored the ballot box was placed on a high table so that the slit was too high for voters using a wheelchair or of short stature to reach it to deposit their ballots. This was more frequently found in polling stations monitored in Ainaro, Dili, Manatuto and Viqueque. This accessibility issue may be relatively easily fixed by placing the ballot box on a lower piece of furniture.

**Figure 12** – Per cent of polling stations monitored with specific barriers to voters with a physical disability



### **Hearing disability**

In around one-third (36%) of the polling stations monitored, the access monitors saw at least one person with a hearing disability voting. In 42 percent of polling stations where voters with a hearing disability were observed, election officials were communicating with the voter by writing or gesturing, and in 53 percent the officials were speaking very distinctly and slowly to communicate with these voters. This support to voters with hearing disabilities was much less likely to be provided in the polling stations visited in Covalima and Liquica.

### **Intellectual and psychosocial disabilities**

In around half of the polling stations monitored the access monitors saw at least one person with an intellectual or psychosocial disability voting. It should be noted that psychosocial disabilities are often nonapparent. In 39 percent of polling stations where voters with an intellectual or psychosocial disability were observed voting, these voters appeared to have difficulty understanding the ballot paper, and in 50 percent these voters appeared to be unsure of what to do to cast a vote. In three polling stations (two in Ermera and one in Liquica), the access monitors observed persons attempting to prevent a voter with an intellectual or psychosocial disability from voting.

### **Assisted voting**

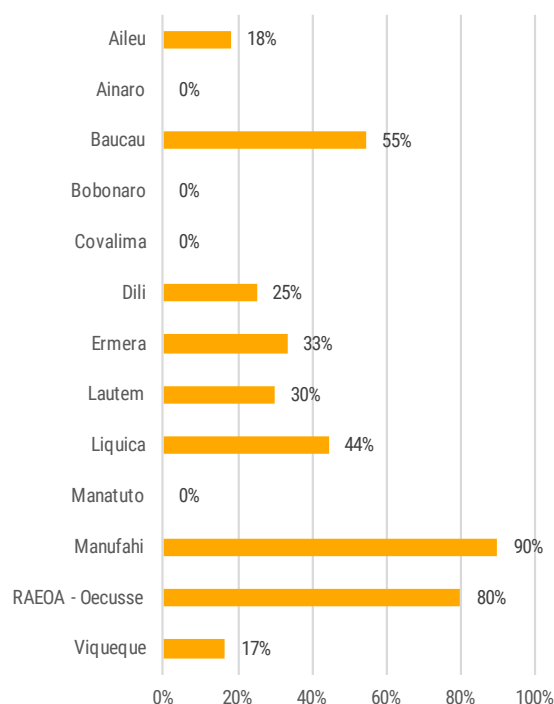
Article 31 of Government Decree 21/2017 allows voters who are blind or have another disability to choose freely someone to assist them to vote. This article was amended in March 2018 by Decree 4/2018, so that political party or coalition agents must be present when the polling station secretary checks if the voter has chosen the assistant freely.

In 88 percent of the polling stations monitored, the access monitors observed at least one voter with a disability requesting to be allowed to vote with an assistant. In 75 percent of the polling stations in which requests for assisted voting were observed, election staff allowed each of these voters to vote with an assistant. Polling stations monitored where voters' requests for an assistant were denied were more likely to be in Covalima, Ermera and Manatuto. The access

monitors observed 280 voters voting with an assistant.

In two-thirds of the polling stations where the access monitors observed at least one person requesting to vote with an assistant, the polling station secretary checked with the voter that the voter had freely chosen the assistant. This legal requirement was implemented in all such polling stations monitored in Baucau and in most in Manufahi (90%), Liquica (80%) and Manatuto (80%). On the other hand, this was implemented in a much lower proportion of such polling stations in Bobonaro (8%) and Dili (33%). In almost all (91%) of the polling stations monitored where the polling station secretary checked whether the voter had freely chosen their assistant, political party agents were present at the check. While this is now required by law, this can provide a further opportunity for political party agents to try to influence a voter in his/her choice of assistant, which is not good electoral practice. The access monitors reported that political party agents had made at least one attempt to influence voters on who should assist them to vote in 30 per cent of polling stations where assisted voting was observed.

**Figure 13** – Percentage of polling stations where assisted voting was seen where political party agents attempted to influence assisted voters in their choice of assistant



## ASSISTED VOTING ISSUES

In polling stations in which assisted voting was seen:

- In 25 per cent, at least one voter with a disability was denied an assisted vote
- In 30 per cent, political party agents attempted to influence at least one voter with a disability on who should assist them to vote

In 79 per cent of the polling stations in which voters with disabilities were observed voting, election staff were explaining the voting procedures to voters with disabilities. Election staff were less likely to explain voting procedures to voters with disabilities in Dili (43 per cent of these polling stations), Manatuto (50%) and Baucau (55%), while in Bobonaro, Liquica and Manufahi this was done in all such polling stations. Election staff were also observed in 79 per cent of these polling stations offering to assist voters with disabilities to vote if they had not brought an assistant with them.

## Comments on the voting process from election access monitors

The election access monitors were also asked to provide comments on their monitoring of voting in the polling stations to which they were assigned, and 123 comments were received. Around half of these comments (62) reinforced the assessments of accessibility they had made in the closed questions in their accessibility checklist, and almost all of these (59) referred to features that made the polling station not accessible to persons with disabilities, mainly stairs, the poor condition of access paths and lack of accessible toilet facilities.

Twenty-four comments praised the way in which voting was being managed by the election staff, of which 10 comments noted the assistance being provided by election staff to persons with disabilities. In nine polling stations the access monitors noted that election staff were effectively preventing under-age registered

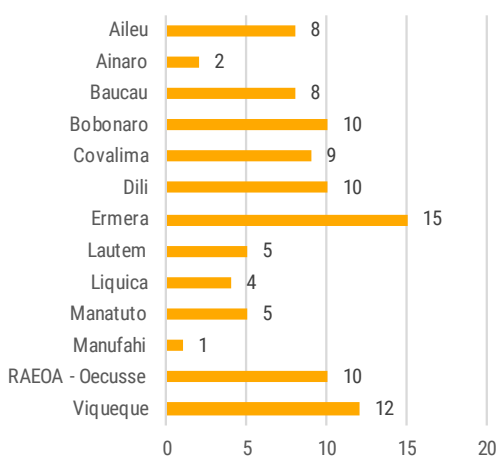
voters, people without voter registration cards and a voter attempting to vote more than once (using a 'false finger') from voting, and in another that a voter photographing the ballot paper was caught.

On the other hand, in nine polling stations the election access monitors noted that election staff were not acting professionally towards voters with disabilities, by not assisting them or treating them rudely. In one polling station in Baucau the election access monitor noted that the election officials were laughing at and teasing voters with visual disabilities. One monitor noted that he was not allowed to take photos of areas of the polling station that were inaccessible to persons with disabilities.

## 10. SURVEY OF VOTERS WITH DISABILITIES

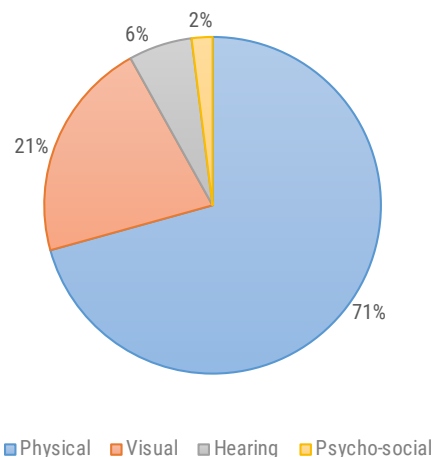
The post-voting questionnaire for voters with disabilities asked 11 questions about their election experience. In a number of polling stations monitored, voters with a disability were reluctant to participate in the survey. Election staff did not place any obstacles in the way of the access monitors conducting the survey with voters willing to participate. A total of 99 voters with disabilities completed the survey, broken down by municipality as follows:

**Figure 14** – Number of respondents to post-voting survey of voters with disabilities by municipality



The breakdown of the respondents' gender was 54 per cent men and 46 per cent women. The respondents' disability types were as follows.

**Figure 15** – Respondents to post voting survey of voters with disabilities by type of disability



The majority of respondents had a positive response to the election process, even though the reports from the election access monitors indicate that very few of the polling stations observed were fully accessible to persons with disabilities.



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**Table 5** – Summary of responses to post-voting survey of voters with disabilities

QUESTION	YES %	NO %
Did you feel intimidated at the polling station?	8%	91%
If you needed an assistant, were you able to choose one freely?	44%	56%
Did you have enough time to vote?	85%	15%
Did you receive adequate information about the parties and candidate lists?	63%	37%
Was it easy for you to mark the ballot paper?	87%	13%
Was it easy for you to understand the ballot paper?	82%	18%
Were you able to vote without any difficulties or assistance at the voting booth?	59%	41%
Have you ever heard about/followed/attended a voter education held by STAE or CNE?	47%	53%
Do you think that the media has provided enough information that is accessible to persons with disabilities?	67%	33%
Do you think that the political parties have provided enough information that is accessible to persons with disabilities?	54%	46%
Are you aware of any friends, family members or relatives with disabilities who are not listed in the voters list?	21%	79%

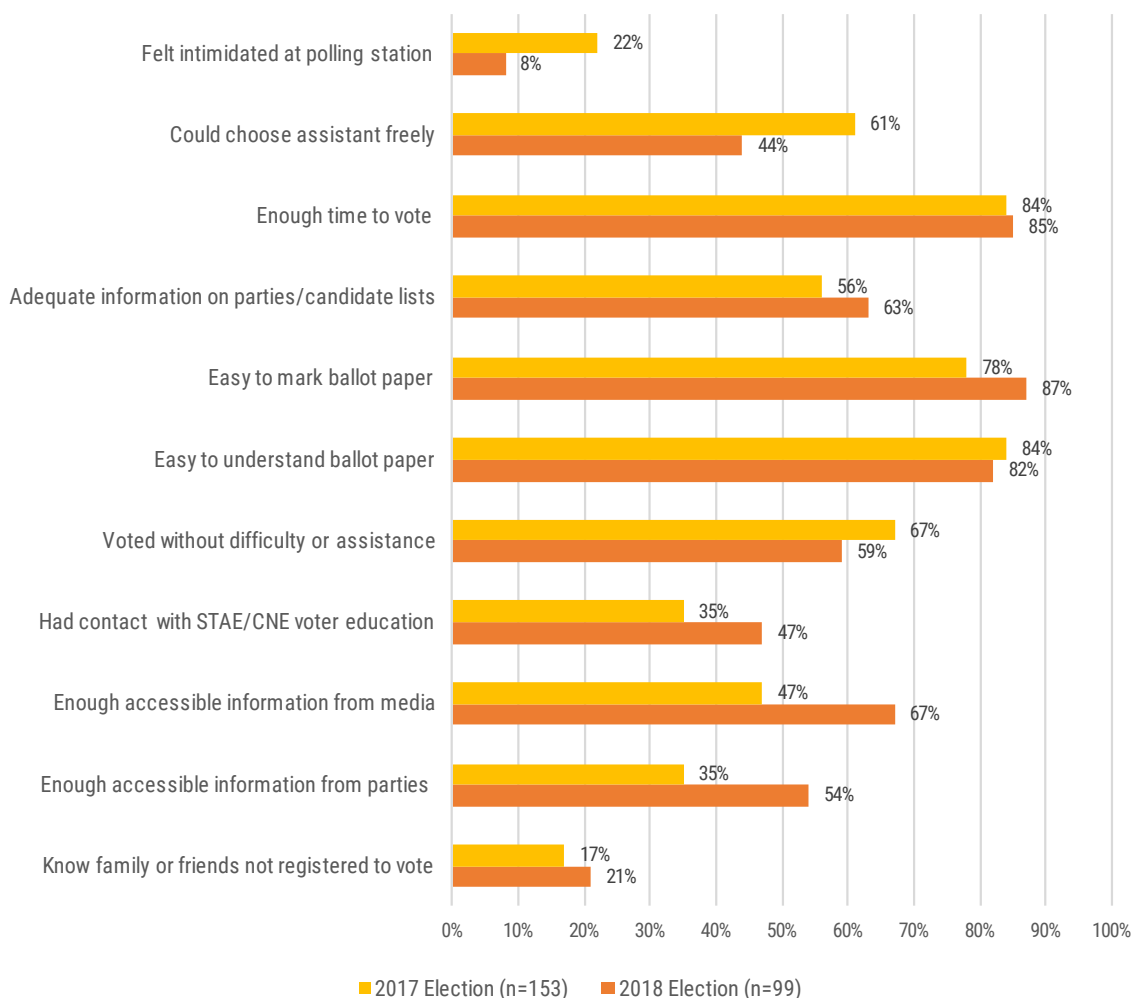


Almost all the voters with disabilities interviewed (91%) did not feel intimidated at the polling station. Large majorities of those voters with disabilities interviewed noted that they were allowed sufficient time to vote (85%) and that it was easy to understand (82%) and to mark (87%) the ballot paper. Over one half of those interviewed (59%) were able to vote without assistance, however 44 per cent believed that if they needed assistance they could freely choose whoever they wanted.

Unlike in 2017, a majority of those persons with disabilities who answered the questionnaire believed that there was sufficient accessible information about the election available to them. Sixty-seven per cent believed that the media had provided enough accessible information, and 54 per cent thought the same of political parties. Almost one half of the respondents (47%) had had contact with some form of voter or civic education conducted by the STAE or CNE. Almost two-thirds of these voters (63%) believed that they had sufficient information about the parties and the candidate lists.

While the data is not fully comparable, it may be that more voters with disabilities are positive about voting at the 2018 early parliamentary election than at the 2017 parliamentary election.

**Figure 16** – Comparison of post voting survey results, 2017 and 2018 elections



There were differences in the pattern of responses from men and women voters with disabilities on a few questions. Women respondents were less likely to be positive about whether sufficient information was available on the parties and candidates on the ballot and from media and political parties, and on whether they could vote without difficulty.

Voters with a visual disability who answered the questionnaire were less likely than voters with other types of disability to agree that they could choose an assistant freely, that they understood the ballot paper, that the ballot paper was easy to mark, that they could vote without difficulty and that political parties provided sufficient accessible information.

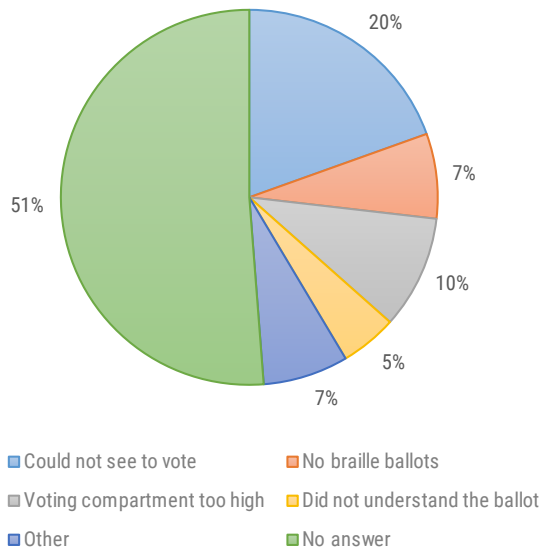
Older respondents with a disability (over 60 years old) were more likely to feel intimidated

by the voting process, while young respondents (under 21 years old) were less likely to agree that they could choose an assistant freely and more likely to agree that the media provided sufficient accessible information. Respondents in Baucau, Lautem and Manatuto were less likely than those in other municipalities to feel that they could freely choose an assistant for voting. In Liquica, Manatuto, Manufahi, RAEOA and Viqueque respondents were less likely to have had contact with STAE and CNE voter education programs.

The voters who answered the questionnaire were asked to provide some additional information, if they wished, in relation to some of the questions. Almost half of those who stated it was difficult to vote provided a reason for their assessment, with difficulties in seeing the ballot, the lack of braille ballots and inability to access the voting compartment being most frequently mentioned.

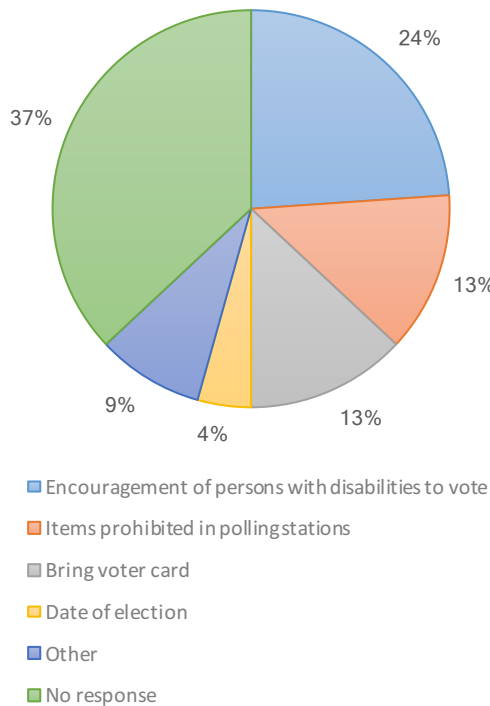


**Figure 17 – Reasons why voting was difficult**



The 47 percent of respondents who stated that they had attended/attended or listened to a STAE or CNE voter education session were asked to state what information they obtained from this session. The most frequently mentioned information was that persons with disabilities had equal voting rights and were encouraged to vote.

**Figure 18 – Information obtained from STAE or CNE voter education activities**



Respondents who noted that the media had provided enough information on the election that is accessible to persons with disabilities were asked why they thought this. Half of these respondents could provide a reason, most frequently mentioning that they received information on the voting rights of persons with disabilities, followed by information on how to vote. Respondents who noted that the media had not provided enough accessible information on the election were also asked why they thought this. Sixty-one per cent of these respondents provided a reason. The most frequent responses were that the media provided no information at all for persons with disabilities, or that the respondent did not have access to the media.

Respondents who noted that political parties had provided enough accessible information on the election were asked why they thought this. Forty-three percent of these respondents could provide a reason, with the most frequent response being that parties provided information on how persons with disabilities could access voting. Respondents who noted that political parties had not provided enough information on the election that is accessible to persons with disabilities were also asked why they thought this. Thirty-nine percent of these respondents provided a reason, with the most frequent response being that the parties provided no information in formats accessible to persons with disabilities.



## 11. RECOMMENDATIONS

Following its disability access monitoring of the 2017 parliamentary elections, RHTO made 36 recommendations for improving access to elections for persons with disabilities. Due to the short period and limited government activity between the 2017 parliamentary election and the 2018 early parliamentary election, many of the recommendations made by RHTO in 2017 were not able to be considered. However, it was noticeable that STAE and CNE had attempted to implement a number of the recommendations of RHTO's 2017 report.

Improving election access for persons with disabilities requires coordinated action from a wide range of electoral stakeholders. Many of the barriers to election access for persons with disabilities are not within the responsibilities of the electoral administrators, STAE and CNE. Removal of these barriers requires action by the Government of Timor-Leste, specific Ministries within the Government, political parties and other stakeholders.

Based on the findings of its disability access monitoring of the 2018 early parliamentary elections in Timor-Leste, RHTO makes the following recommendations for actions by the stakeholders in the electoral process designated below. Implementation of these recommendations will promote full access for persons with disabilities in Timor-Leste to the civic and electoral rights guaranteed to them under international law and the Constitution of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste.

### **Government of Timor-Leste**

1. Ratify the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD).
2. Improve the current electoral legal and regulatory framework to ensure that the electoral and political rights of persons with disabilities are fully protected in accordance with the principles of the UNCRPD.
3. Consider amending the current legal framework for elections to include accessibility standards for premises used

for voter registration and voting, and to provide alternative methods of voting, such as mobile ballot boxes or curb-side polling, that will be more accessible to persons with disabilities.

4. Ensure that the legal framework guarantees the right to lodge a complaint against any barriers to access or discrimination against persons with disabilities in electoral processes, and that CNE and other authorities are granted powers to impose related sanctions and require remedial actions.
5. Revise the regulatory framework to ensure that all persons with an intellectual or psychosocial disability who are otherwise qualified to register to vote and to vote may do so.
6. Conduct assessments of all public buildings, including local government offices and educational facilities, that may be used for electoral purposes to ensure they meet disability access standards.

### **National Election Commission (CNE) and the Technical Secretariat for Election Administration (STAE)**

7. CNE and STAE develop a Disability Access and Inclusiveness Strategy for Elections within the next twelve months, in consultation with DPOs and other stakeholders.
8. Ensure that all CNE and STAE offices are accessible to persons with disabilities.
9. CNE and STAE continue their cooperation and collaborative activities with DPOs in areas such as accessible civic and voter education, registration of persons with disabilities, and accessibility of all electoral processes, in order to increase election participation among voters with disabilities.
10. CNE and STAE increase the numbers of persons with disabilities employed by CNE and STAE as both permanent and temporary staff, including by designating within the



CNE Secretariat and STAE a permanent position with responsibility for disability inclusiveness.

11. CNE develops an accessible system for monitoring that the electoral rights of persons with disabilities are not violated, for filing of complaints by persons with disabilities, and for ensuring that any violations of these rights are remedied.
12. STAE assesses the accessibility of each polling center and polling station between elections and liaises with relevant government departments to improve accessibility where needed, such as by installing ramps, removing obstacles, having sufficient lighting available for voters, ensuring sufficient chairs for persons with disabilities waiting to vote, and providing accessible toilets and sanitation facilities.
13. Where an existing polling centre or polling station cannot be made accessible to persons with disabilities, STAE considers using more accessible premises.
14. STAE revises polling equipment specifications and polling station layout instructions to ensure persons with physical disabilities can access voting compartments and ballot boxes to vote in secret and without assistance, including considering the provision of one table-top voting compartment per polling station.
15. STAE continues to liaise with DPOs in its training programs to ensure that all election staff understand and implement the electoral rights of persons with disabilities, in relation to issues such as priority voting, assisted voting, and secrecy and confidentiality of voting.
16. STAE supplies magnifying glasses and braille and/or tactile ballot marking guides to all polling stations and trains election staff in their use.

### **Political Parties and Coalitions**

17. Regularly review political platforms and policies in consultation with DPOs to ensure that these address the concerns of persons with disabilities.

18. Hold regular consultation meetings with DPOs to discuss and advance policies on persons with disabilities.
19. Review political party internal statutes and rules and take action to ensure that persons with disabilities are included in party executive and administrative structures, policy and decision-making processes, and are encouraged to be actively engaged in party administration and activities, and as party agents.
20. Ensure that a minimum percentage of persons with disabilities are included in winnable positions in the political party or coalition's candidate lists for elections.
21. Ensure that all political party administrative offices meet accessibility standards for persons with disabilities.
22. Publicize political campaign events among DPOs, and provide campaign information that is in accessible formats for persons with physical, hearing, visual, intellectual or psychosocial disabilities
23. Use venues that are accessible to persons with disabilities for election campaign events.

### **Mass media**

24. Consider means of making political and electoral information available in formats accessible to persons with physical, hearing, visual, intellectual or psychosocial disabilities, for example by providing relevant television programming in local sign languages.
25. Consider printing or broadcasting programming that promotes public understanding of the rights of persons with disabilities and their current environment.

### **Disabled People's Organisations (DPOs)**

26. Continue to conduct disability access monitoring for future elections to measure progress toward full inclusion of people with disabilities as voters, candidates, election officials, and others.

27. Continue to actively cooperate with CNE and STAE to promote the participation of persons with disabilities in electoral processes, provide civic and voter education to persons with disabilities, and provide advice on disability access issues.
28. Monitor the extent to which political parties, coalitions and presidential candidates address issues related to persons with disabilities in their policies and during campaigns and implement advocacy activities to ensure that political party policies promote the rights of persons with disabilities.
29. Monitor the extent to which the legal framework and its implementation by CNE and STAE, guarantees the electoral rights of persons with disabilities and implement advocacy activities to ensure the rights of persons with disabilities are respected.
30. Support the electoral rights of persons with disabilities by providing services to make up for shortfalls in state services, for example providing transport to polling centres, and physical and visual disability aids and information services at polling centres, to voters with disabilities.



# ANNEX 1 CHECKLISTS AND QUESTIONNAIRES USED FOR 2018 EARLY PARLIAMENTARY ELECTION ACCESS MONITORING

Form No:

## DISABILITY ACCESS MONITORING 2018 PARLIAMENTARY ELECTION POLITICAL CAMPAIGN ASSESSMENT

Disability Access Monitor Name:		Municipality:	
Suco		Administrative post	
Date		Type of Event	
Name of party/candidate		Event location	
Number of attendees			

### *Political Events*

No.	QUESTION	ANSWER	
1	Was the event publicized among disabled persons' organizations (DPOs)?	YES	NO
2.	Was as the information about the event provided in a manner accessible to people with physical, visual, hearing or intellectual disabilities?	YES	NO
3	Was transport to the event available (e.g. provided by event organizers or others) to people with disabilities?	YES	NO
4	Was the venue accessible to people with disabilities?	YES	NO
	Did the venue have the following facilities:		
	• Toilets suitable for persons with disabilities	YES	NO
	• Level access	YES	NO
	• If above ground level, a suitable ramp or lift	YES	NO
	• Sufficient and accessible seating	YES	NO
	• Obstacle free maneuverability for wheelchair users	YES	NO
	• No low-hanging objects on walls	YES	NO
5	How many of the speakers at the event had a disability?      NUMBER: _____ Types of disability:		
6.	Did any of the speakers focus on issues related to disability rights? <i>If yes, what issues were addressed?</i>	YES	NO
7.	How many people with disabilities were amongst the audience?	<i>Number(estimate)</i>	
8.	Did the event include a sign language interpreter so that people who are deaf or hard of hearing could participate?	YES	NO
9.	Were materials distributed in formats that would be accessible to people who are blind or have low vision?	YES	NO

## During and/or post event: Questions for any people with disabilities present

Access Monitor Name		Party/ candidate	
Date		Event Type	
		Event Location	

<b>Respondent Number:</b>	
How did you assess the accessibility of the event? Why do you think it was ....(quote respondent's assessment)?	<input type="checkbox"/> Very good <input type="checkbox"/> Good <input type="checkbox"/> Fair <input type="checkbox"/> Bad <input type="checkbox"/> Very Bad
What is your assessment of the party's program towards persons with disabilities? Why do you think it is..... (quote respondent's assessment)?	<input type="checkbox"/> Very good <input type="checkbox"/> Good <input type="checkbox"/> Fair <input type="checkbox"/> Bad <input type="checkbox"/> Very Bad

<b>Respondent Number:</b>	
How did you assess the accessibility of the event? Why do you think it was ....(quote respondent's assessment)?	<input type="checkbox"/> Very good <input type="checkbox"/> Good <input type="checkbox"/> Fair <input type="checkbox"/> Bad <input type="checkbox"/> Very Bad
What is your assessment of the party's program towards persons with disabilities? Why do you think it is..... (quote respondent's assessment)?	<input type="checkbox"/> Very good <input type="checkbox"/> Good <input type="checkbox"/> Fair <input type="checkbox"/> Bad <input type="checkbox"/> Very Bad

<b>Respondent Number:</b>	
How did you assess the accessibility of the event? Why do you think it was ....(quote respondent's assessment)?	<input type="checkbox"/> Very good <input type="checkbox"/> Good <input type="checkbox"/> Fair <input type="checkbox"/> Bad <input type="checkbox"/> Very Bad
What is your assessment of the party's program towards persons with disabilities? Why do you think it is..... (quote respondent's assessment)?	<input type="checkbox"/> Very good <input type="checkbox"/> Good <input type="checkbox"/> Fair <input type="checkbox"/> Bad <input type="checkbox"/> Very Bad





<b>4.</b>	Are there stairs or steps at the entrance into the polling station?  If <b>YES</b> , how many stairs are there at the entrance <b>CIRCLE THE APPROPRIATE NUMBER BELOW</b>  <b>1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10   More than 10</b>	YES	NO
<b>5</b>	<b>ANSWER ONLY IF YOU ANSWERED YES TO QUESTION 4</b> If the polling station is located at a place which has stairs, is there a suitable ramp that is clear of obstructions?	YES	NO
<b>6</b>	Is the width of the polling station entrance at least 90 cm to allow easy access for wheelchair users?	YES	NO
<b>7</b>	Is the width of the polling station exit at least 90 cm to allow easy access for wheelchair users?	YES	NO
<b>8.</b>	Does the polling station have: a. Toilets or washrooms that could be used by persons with disabilities?  b. Enough accessible seating?  c. Enough space for wheelchair users to move around easily?  d. Entrance areas that are clear of obstacles, both on the ground and hanging from above?	YES  YES  YES  YES	NO  NO  NO  NO
<b>9.</b>	Is the area inside the polling station free of obstacles that would prevent voters with disabilities from accessing all parts of the voting area?	YES	NO
<b>10.</b>	Is there a help desk at the polling station that provides information to persons with disabilities?	YES	NO
<b>11.</b>	Are there any election officials that appear to have a disability? <i>If YES, note what type of disability they appear to have:</i>	YES	NO
<b>Visual Disability</b>			
<b>12</b>	Is there any barrier or obstacle that makes it difficult for someone with a visual disability to walk around inside the polling station?	YES	NO
<b>13</b>	Is there enough light in the voting cabins?	YES	NO
<b>14.</b>	Are any support materials for persons with visual disabilities provided, for example magnifying glasses, large print materials, braille materials? <i>If YES, please specify what is provided</i>	YES	NO
<b>Physical Disability</b>			



15.	Is the writing surface in the voting cabins low enough to be usable by voters who use wheelchairs or who otherwise need a low writing surface?	YES	NO		
16.	Is there enough space for voters who use wheelchairs or other physical aids to be able to get into the voting cabin to vote?	YES	NO		
17.	Are voters who use wheelchairs or cannot reach high able to reach the ballot box to deposit their ballot without assistance?	YES	NO		
<b>Hearing Disability</b> ANSWER N/A IF YOU DID <b>NOT</b> SEE SOMEONE WITH A HEARING DISABILITY VOTING					
18.	Are election staff offering non-verbal communication to support people with a hearing disability? For example, are they tapping people on the shoulder to get attention, or writing information down?	YES	NO	N/A	
19.	Are polling staff providing information on the voting process to voters with hearing disabilities by speaking slowly and with a clear expression?	YES	NO	N/A	
<b>Intellectual and Psychosocial Disability</b> ANSWER N/A IF YOU DID <b>NOT</b> SEE SOMEONE WITH THIS TYPE OF DISABILITY VOTING					
20.	Do voters with intellectual or psychosocial disabilities appear to have difficulty understanding the words on the ballot paper?	YES	NO	N/A	
21.	Do voters with intellectual or psychosocial disabilities appear to be uncertain about what they are meant to do to vote?	YES	NO	N/A	
22.	Did you see anyone trying to stop somebody with an intellectual or psychosocial disability from voting?	YES	NO	N/A	
<b>Voting Process</b> ANSWER N/A IF YOU DID <b>NOT</b> SEE ANY VOTERS WITH A DISABILITY VOTING					
23.	Are voters with a disability, the elderly and pregnant women given priority in casting their vote?	YES	NO	N/A	
24.	Were voters with a physical disability assisted by other people to overcome any physical obstacle at the entrance to or within the polling station?	YES	NO	N/A	
25.	Are election staff explaining the voting procedures to voters with a disability?	YES	NO	N/A	
<b>Assisted Voting</b> ANSWER N/A IF YOU DID <b>NOT</b> SEE ANY VOTERS WITH A DISABILITY REQUESTING ASSISTANCE TO VOTE					
26.	Are any persons with disability being assisted to cast their votes when they request this?  IF YES, how many did you see being assisted to vote: _____	YES	NO	N/A	
27.	How many voters who voted with an assistant were able to choose their assistant freely?	ALL	SOME	NONE	N/A
28.	Did the polling station secretary check with each voter who voted with assistance to check that the assistant was chosen freely?	YES	NO	N/A	
29.	Were the fiscals with the polling station secretary when he/she checked	YES	NO	N/A	

	that the voter has freely chosen his/her assistant?			A
<b>30</b>	Did any fiscals attempt to influence any voter with a disability about which person should assist the voter to vote?	YES	NO	N/A
<b>31</b>	Are any persons with a disability being refused an assistant to vote IF THEY REQUEST THIS?  IF YES, how many were refused: _____	YES	NO	N/A
<b>32</b>	Are election staff offering to assist voters with a disability to vote?	YES	NO	N/A
<b>33</b>	Other comments:			

## DISABILITY ACCESS MONITORING 2018 PARLIAMENTARY ELECTION POST VOTING INFORMATION FROM VOTERS WITH DISABILITIES

Ask voters with disabilities the questions listed below after he/she casts his/her vote AFTER THE VOTER HAS LEFT THE POLLING STATION.	
If the respondent cannot answer the question, leave the column empty. If the respondent has additional information on the situation and conditions of the polling station, please write it down in the additional sheet.	
<i>Introduce yourself to the respondent before beginning the interview. Explain that these questions are to obtain information on the experiences of voting by persons with disabilities. Do not force the respondent to answer the question. Do not forget to thank the respondent after the interview has ended.</i>	
Access Monitor Name:	Parliamentary Election May 12 2018
Municipality	Suco
Administrative Post	Polling Center Name
Polling station number	<b>Respondent number OFFICE USE ONLY:</b>
Respondent Gender:                    M                    F	Respondent Age
Respondent Type of Disability:	

1	Did you feel intimidated at the polling station?		YES	NO
2	If you needed an assistant, were you able to choose one freely?	YES	NO	L/A
3	Did you have enough time to vote?		YES	NO
4	Did you receive adequate information about the parties and coalitions?		YES	NO
5	Was it easy for you to understand which parties and coalitions are on the ballot paper?		YES	NO
6	Was it easy for you to mark the ballot paper?		YES	NO
7	Were you able to vote without any difficulties or assistance at the voting booth? <i>If NO, what were the difficulties:</i>		YES	NO
8	Have you ever heard about/attended a voter education held by STAE or CNE? <i>If YES, what information did you get from it?</i>		YES	NO
9	Do you think the media such as radio, television and newspapers has provided enough information about the election that is accessible for persons with disabilities? <i>WHY do you think this?</i>		YES	NO
10	Do you think the political parties have provided enough information about the election that is accessible for persons with disabilities? <i>WHY do you think this?</i>		YES	NO
11	Are you aware of any friends, family members or relatives with disabilities who are not listed in the voter list (if so, do you know why they are not listed)?		YES	NO



