

Timor-Leste performs poorly in Global Hunger Index

By Ashlee Betteridge

The 2013 [Global Hunger Index](#) (GHI) was released last week, and while most countries in the region had demonstrated a marked improvement in hunger levels since the 2005 index was published, Timor-Leste was among the worst performers.

Hunger levels in Timor-Leste were found to be 'alarming' and only 0.4 of an index point away from the 'extremely alarming' category. [Out of](#) the 78 countries in the index, Timor-Leste was ranked 75th. Timor-Leste's hunger index score was also 3.6 points worse than it was in 2005.

The GHI, published by the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), [measures](#) undernourishment, underweight children under five and under five mortality rates.

The index found that India and Timor-Leste had the highest prevalence of underweight children under five—more than 40 percent in both countries. Most Pacific countries were not included in the index due to a lack of data. In Southeast Asia, most countries had improved their score. For example, Indonesia's growth has seen it halve its index score since 1990, but it was still rated as having serious levels of hunger. Vietnam was another success story, reducing its index score by three quarters since 1990.

Lawrence Haddad has [provided some further analysis](#) of the index's findings on his blog, noting that South Asia had a better GHI score than Sub Saharan Africa in 2000, but now South Asia is performing more poorly.

About the author/s

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Ashlee Betteridge was the Manager of the Development Policy Centre until April 2021. She was previously a Research Officer at the centre from 2013-2017. A former journalist, she holds a Master of Public Policy (Development Policy) from ANU and has development experience in Indonesia and Timor-Leste. She now works as a development consultant.