

# The process of adapting LIVES for health provider training in Timor-Leste

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## THE USE OF MEMORY AIDS IN TRAINING

LIVES is an English language memory aid developed by researchers at the World Health Organisation (WHO) to help health providers remember the steps in a good response for survivors of violence. A memory aid is an effective way for people to link new information to a familiar word or concept so that it is much easier to retrieve at a later point.<sup>1</sup> The human mind more easily remembers information it can relate to, rather than more abstract or impersonal forms of information.<sup>2</sup>

Research has shown training that uses a memory aid results in higher recall and performance scores,<sup>3</sup> and these findings persist across different age groups<sup>4</sup> and over long periods of time.<sup>5</sup> Memory aids have even shown to increase student comprehension and create a deeper, more conscious learning experience.<sup>6</sup>

## THE IMPORTANCE OF ADAPTING LIVES

This ability to quickly recall the steps in a good response is particularly important in stressful situations, which can arise when assisting victims of violence. When our working group began the adaptation of the WHO curriculum (as part of a multi-country pilot funded by the WHO and a Rotary Global Grant) we knew we had to put a lot of thought and care into translating LIVES into a memory aid that was easily understood and remembered in Tetum, especially under times of intense pressure. We needed to first figure out a suitable Tetum version of LIVES because, from a teaching perspective, those steps form the foundation of the curriculum structure.

We began with breaking down each of the LIVES steps and looking at the Tetum equivalent. We found several problems with the word Validate. In English Validate has two different meanings:

- 1) to check or prove the accuracy
- 2) to recognise the worth of a person's feelings or opinion and cause them to feel valued.

The intension of the V step in LIVES is the second meaning. The first meaning is the *opposite* of what health providers should do, that is the role of the police and courts. A health provider's role is to listen and believe her. This is particularly important in the context of Timor-Leste because data from the pre-training survey of student midwives and nurses found that 92% thought 'the health worker must verify how accurate a woman's story is by asking the alleged abuser or the woman's friends or family'. We then asked a random sample of English and Tetum speakers what they thought Validate/*Valida* meant, *all of them* said the first definition, to check the accuracy of the information. We therefore concluded that using Validate or *Valida* had potential to foster a bad response and could actually cause harm.

Based on our previous qualitative research with 56 midwives and community leaders and 28 women survivors of violence, we knew there were several important things occurring in Timor-Leste that should be taken into account when adapting the curriculum to the context of Timor:<sup>7,8,9,10</sup>

- There is a tendency to blame the victim for the abuse she has suffered
- Women survivors of violence want understanding, kindness and empathy from their health providers
- Women often do not speak up or seek help about abuse because they are concerned about confidentiality and privacy

## DEVELOPING A TETUM MEMORY AID

A lot of thought and specialist input went into translation LIVES into a meaningful memory aid in Tetum. We gathered together a Tetum language specialist, experts in pedagogy (the study of how people learn), experts in GBV health response and native Timorese speakers with health and training expertise. Given the problems with Validate and the research on what care women value, Validate was replaced with the concepts Respond with empathy, Don't blame the victim and Professional

secrecy<sup>11</sup> (confidentiality). The memory aid *Hahú Relasaun di'ak* was found to fit all the necessary steps of a good response, as well as reinforcing the importance of having a good relationship with clients and good relationships within families.

English memory aid		Tetum direct translation		Tetum adapted memory aid		English translation	
L	Listen	R	<i>Rona</i>	Ha	<i>Hatene sinál ba violénsia</i>	Ha	Know the signs of violence
I	Inquire	H	<i>Husu</i>	Hu	<i>Husu kona-ba problema</i>	Hu	Ask about problems
V	Validate	V	<i>Valida</i>	Re La S	<i>Reasaun empátiku Labele fó sala vítima Segredu profesionál</i>	Re La S	Respond with empathy Don't blame the victim Professional secrecy
E	Enhance safety	A	<i>Aumenta Seguru</i>	Au	<i>Aumenta Seguru</i>	Au	Enhance safety
S	Support	S	<i>Supporta</i>	N	<i>Nafatin tau matan</i>	N	Continue support

An additional benefit of *Hahú Relasaun* is the use of syllables instead of single letters, which makes the associated word much easier to remember. The wording also breaks up the response into two main aspects *Hahú* (identifying) and *Relasaun* (first-line response), which fits well with the curriculum structure and learning sequence of the modules.

## TESTING HAHÚ RELASAUN

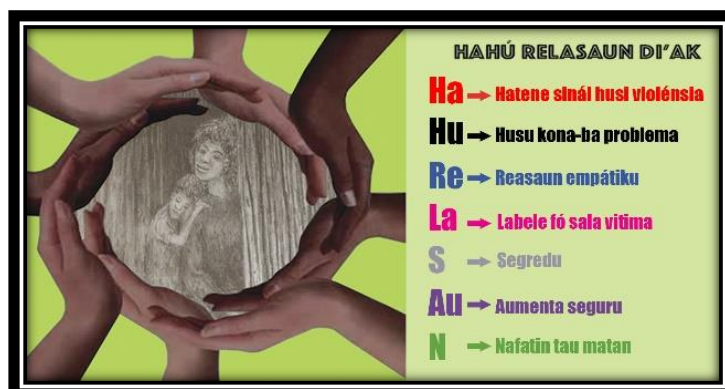
After it was first developed, *Hahú Relasaun* was initially tested for face validity (suitability and acceptability) with INS and a group of practising health providers in Dili. It was found to be both suitable to the context of the Timor-Leste and acceptable for use by nurses, midwives and doctors. The Tetum version of LIVES was then presented to WHO Geneva and the inventor of LIVES herself (Claudia Garcia-Moreno) confirmed this was a good approach, that it aligned with LIVES and was important to have something in the local language. WHO have now encouraged other counties to adapt LIVES as was done in Timor-Leste.

The effectiveness of *Hahú Relasaun* as a memory aid was then evaluated as part of the pre-service curriculum evaluation. In a sample of 114 nursing and midwifery students who had completed the training **99.7% remembered the exact wording in each step** of *Hahú Relasaun*.<sup>12</sup> This result was astonishing and confirmed the value of the work put into translating the memory aid in a way that has meaning in Tetum.

*"I like the steps of Hahú Relasaun, they are simple words but they have huge meaning for me." – UNTL student, Pilot 3*

## BENEFITS OF USING HAHÚ RELASAUN

*Hahú Relasaun* is the conceptual thread that underpins the adaptation of the WHO curriculum in Timor-Leste. We believe it is one of reasons we are seeing such good learning outcomes in the six pilot studies that were conducted with nursing and midwifery students and lecturers. We know that both verbal and visual cues are important for learning, so we had a graphic designer develop *Hahú Relasaun* as a visual logo using Timorese artwork, and this is repeated throughout the 14 modules of the curriculum to reinforce learning.



The curriculum, with *Hahú Relasaun* as its foundation, is now being taught at two Universities (UNTL and Cristal). This means around 200 nurse-midwives each year are learning and remembering *Hahú Relasaun* as the foundation for good practice. Another four universities are interested in teaching the subject, which means many hundreds of new health providers each year will be learning how to care for survivors of violence using the steps in *Hahú Relasaun*. It would be ideal if in-service training was aligned with what students are learning in their pre-service course because research shows that memory aids are more effective when practiced and reinforced over time.<sup>5</sup>

There are several additional learning resources developed as part of the pre-service curriculum, including a video demonstrating good responses for survivors of violence and one of the first university-level textbooks in Tetum. Both of these resources incorporate *Hahú Relasaun* to reinforce student learning and comprehension, and would be very useful resources for in-service training. These resources are available at [www.latrobe.edu.au/reducing-violence](http://www.latrobe.edu.au/reducing-violence).

Both the pre-service curriculum and the National Guidelines on Responding to GBV are based on the WHO Handbook and clinical guidelines and both have incorporated the additional aspects of responding to children and people with a disability. In adapting the curriculum for Timor-Leste we took great care to follow the National Guidelines (2017 draft at the time). For the reasons outlined above it was very important that LIVES was adapted to the Timorese context and language and it has shown to be very effective as a learning tool in the pilot studies.

*Hahú Relasaun* could readily be incorporated as an evidence-based translation alongside LIVES in the National Guidelines. It could be as simple as pasting the translation table above showing how the steps have been translated. In comparison, taking out *Hahú Relasaun* and restructuring the curriculum would require substantial thought, time and effort. In addition, not having an adequate memory aid in Tetum would disadvantage training participants and likely impact on their ability to remember how to respond well, particularly when they need to react quickly and in high stress situations such as providing care to women and children who have experienced violence.

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