



PRESS RELEASE

Swedish Dads and Timorese dads– a photo exhibition about gender-aware modern men

Timor Leste, 24 November 2018: The upbringing of children has traditionally been the preserve of women, but both men and women stand to benefit from parents sharing the responsibility of caring for their children. The Embassy of Sweden, in close collaboration with UN Women and UNICEF, will bring the Swedish Dads photo exhibition to Timor Leste from the 24th to the 30th November 2018. The Embassy's Deputy Head of Mission, Johan Hultquist, Valerie Taton, Representative of UNICEF Timor-Leste and Sunita Caminha, Head of Office of UN Women in Timor-Leste, will be inaugurating the exhibition, which explores how Swedish fathers and Timorese dads view role of the modern man, in contrast to the traditional, stereotypical view.

The photos exhibited in Swedish Dads were all taken by the award winning, Swedish photographer Johan Bävman. When he became a father, he found there was a lack of role models that men could relate to as parents. This led him to put together a photo book, Swedish Dads, which portrays men on parental leave with their children. The book in turn led to the Swedish Dads photo exhibition, based on portraits of some of the few fathers who have chosen to stay at home with their children for at least six months. The exhibition looks at what caused these particular dads to remain at home with their children so much longer than most fathers in the world.

The Swedish Government's overarching goal of the gender equality policy is that women and men are to have the same power to shape society and their own lives. Under this policy, women and men must have the same responsibility for housework and have the opportunity to give and receive care on equal terms.

The Embassy's Deputy Head of Mission Johan Hultquist stated, *"Having both parents equally share the housework is also a vital step toward recognition of the importance of sharing caregiving for children, and it is an important means of promoting the well-being of children, as well as gender equality at home, the workplace and in the society as a whole."*

Highlighting the importance of exposing positive models of parenting, UN Women Head of Office Sunita Caminha noted, *"Children notice how their parents share responsibility, decisions and power in their homes. As individuals, we have an important role to model equality and respect for the future generations to create communities that are free of violence and discrimination."*

Preceding the exhibition, UNICEF and UN Women organized a one-day workshop on *"Good Parenting and Respectful Relationship"* which were attended by 10 fathers who submitted the photos, along with their partners. The workshop focused on share responsibility on caregiving, positive discipline, and communications between parents and their children,



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Early moments matter in the life of any child” said Valerie Taton, highlighting the role of fathers in child rearing and caring. “Evidence suggests that when fathers bond with their babies from the beginning of life, they are more likely to play a more active role in their child’s development. And when children positively interact with their fathers, they have better psychological health and self-esteem and life-satisfaction in the long-term. I would call both parents to spend quality time with their children to help them to grow with full potentials.”

The exhibition portrays 25 fathers in Sweden and is showing at Timor Plaza, Dili’s largest shopping centre, from the 24th to 30th of November 2018, and is a joint undertaking between the Swedish Institute, the Embassy of Sweden to Indonesia and Timor Leste, UN Women, and UNICEF, and part of the **16 Days of Activism to End Violence Against Women and Girls**—an international campaign that is organized annually from 25th of November to 10th of December.

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