

ERMERA



District Profile

Gleno, April 2002

Contents

A - GENERAL BACKGROUND

1. Geography
2. Demography
3. Ethnic Groups and Languages
4. Religion
5. Political Parties

B - ECONOMY

1. Employment and Business
2. Development initiatives - NGO or Donor Projects
3. Tourism
4. Agriculture

- 4.1 Crops
 - 4.1.1. Coffee
 - 4.1.2. Vanilla
 - 4.1.3. Other spices
 - 4.1.4. Medicinal Plants
 - 4.1.5. Other crops

- 4.2 Agroforestry
- 4.3. Permaculture
- 4.4. Livestock
 - 4.4.1. Pig farming
 - 4.4.2. Fisheries
 - 4.4.3. Slaughterhouse

C- INFRASTRUCTURE

1. Water and Sanitation
2. Electricity
3. Roads

D - SOCIAL SERVICES

1. Education
2. [Health]

ANNEXES

A- GENERAL BACKGROUND

1. Geography

Spread over an area of 746 sq km, Ermera district is divided administratively into five sub-districts: **Atsabe** (164.82 sq km), **Ermera** (114,41 sq km), **Hatolia** (249,58 sq km), **Letefoho** (108,52 sq km) and **Railako** (108,67 sq km). Ermera District has a common border with Liquica (north), Bobonaro (west - south), Ainaro (east – south) and Aileu (east –north). Atsabe is in the southwest of the District, Ermera in the east-center, Hatolia in the northwest, Letefoho in the southeast and Railako in the northeast. The district has 52 “sucos” (villages): Atsabe 12, Ermera 10, Hatolia 13, Letefoho 8 and Railako 9.

Horse riding in Olpana-Ducurai, Letefoho sub-district.



Gleno, in Ermera sub-district, is the administrative center for the whole district. Ermera town is the administrative center for Ermera sub-district only.

The climate is characterized by two seasons, rainy (from October to May) and dry. As Ermera is a mountainous region, the climate is temperate. The sub-districts, which are higher (Letefoho, Atsabe), are colder than the other sub-districts. During the rainy season in these areas the temperature is around 15-17 degrees during the night.

2. Demography

The population of Ermera is about 84,510 (registered), 42,462 females and 44,127 males. The following is the breakdown of the figures based on the results of the initial registration in Ermera (2 July 2001):

Sub District	Population	Population (%)
Atsabe	12112	14%
Ermera	21185	25%
Hatolia	24682	29%
Letefoho	16813	20%
Railako	10451	12%

3. Ethnic Groups and Languages

The main ethnic group is the **Mambae**, predominant in Railako, Ermera, Letefoho, and Hatolia. The **Kemak** are predominant in Atsabe sub-district, and represent a strong minority (around 30%) in Hatolia.

Most of the population is bilingual, speaking their own language (either Mambae or Kemak) plus Tetum. Portuguese is still spoken by the intellectual leadership and by a few older people, and the majority of the population understands Bahasa Indonesia.

4. Religion

The vast majority of the population (more than 90%) is **Catholic**. According to 1997 figures, around 2% of the population professed Islam and nearly 2% were Protestants. A minority of the rural population professes Animist beliefs. After the Popular Consultation a large majority of the population professing Islam, and some Protestants, left for West Timor. Consequently, the percentage of Catholics has increased.

5. Political Parties

Seven political parties are present in Ermera District: FRETILIN, PD (Partido Democratico), PSD (Partido Social Democrata), PST (Partido Socialista de Timor), PL (Partido Liberale), ASDT, and KOTA.

B - ECONOMY

1. Employment and Business

Segments of the working population not engaged in agriculture were formerly traders, civil servants, or private employees (primarily in transportation). There were two kinds of traders: a) those who gained their subsistence income by selling agricultural goods at local markets, and b) professional traders who imported goods from Dili and exported traditional cloth from Atsabe.

Before the Popular Consultation, Atsabe sub-district produced high quality textiles, which were traded throughout the country. The entire economy of the Atsabe sub-district relied more on trade than agriculture, and many traders living in the others towns of the District were in reality working out of Atsabe. Most of them went or were deported to West Timor. The resumption of normal trading activity would depend on how soon a majority of these traders would return and restart their activities.

Over thirty businesses have created a business association based in Gleno. In the past these businesses implemented projects financed by the Indonesian government using an amount in the vicinity of 10,000 – 20,000 USD.

Examples include the market in Ermera, road rehabilitation, and public works. The first tender has been made and a bidding process conducted. The first contract was for the partial rehabilitation of the Hatolia road, a project funded by ADB.



Ramelau mountains, between Atsabe and Letefoho sub-districts.

However, most key businesses, such as trading (including coffee), agriculture, tourism, catering, and construction, remain under foreign, not Timorese, ownership. Furthermore, not one of the 30 hotels or 52 restaurants registered nationwide are located in Ermera.

2. Development Initiatives - NGO and Donor Projects

The first program initiated in the District was the USAID-funded Temporary Employment Projects (TEP). Ermera was chosen as a pilot District. At one point in time, there were 3400 workers engaged under the TEPs. The amount of US\$ 400,000 disbursed under the TEP program came at a crucial time when the road infrastructure was in dire straits, not to mention the then prevailing unemployment situation in the district.

The first phase of the TEP program was between March and July 2000, and mainly concentrated on the rehabilitation of roads, and cleaning up of destroyed houses, centers and market places. The second phase (July to September) with an amount of US\$ 20,000, catered, inter alia, for Hatolia road rehabilitation works under the supervision of Bangladesh Engineers. This 31-kilometre stretch is a major link to the most important coffee-producing sub-district. Another project is Letefoho road expansion, which will involve a shorter route from Ermera to Letefoho. High priority was also accorded to the rehabilitation of the irrigation system in Talimoro and Railako. With the rehabilitation work the productivity of rice will be enhanced thereby improving the food safety net. Lately under TEPs-II, USAID has approved three projects while three more are pending.

3. Tourism

Ermera is one of the most beautiful districts in a country, which in its own unique way is as entrancing and spectacular as the best tourist destinations in the region. We can mention its cool climate and dreamlike mountain and river scenery, its waterfalls, its benign and colorful wildlife, and its friendly and hospitable people.

It is tailor-made for cultural, adventure and agro-tourism, and a convenient location near Dili with its international

airport and other facilities, and to the renowned beaches of Liquica, makes it ripe for promotion and the careful and controlled fostering of additional tourist infrastructure.

We have space to mention only a few of the specific attractions in Ermera:

- Mount Ramelau, the highest peak in Timor, with views taking in both ends of the island, is on our southern boundary. It can be climbed in four hours from a convenient parking space on a clear route through tropical forest, as an unaccompanied adventure or with experienced guides
- Swimming and fishing in clear sparkling pools and under gushing, high waterfalls

Traditional Sacred House in Eraulu, Letefoho sub-district.



- Hiking, backpacking, and camping in pristine forests and colossal, verdant, jungle-like coffee plantations
- The hot water springs of Fatubesi and Koliati
- Traditional Timorese culture, including sacred houses, food, “tais” (traditional, colorful textile garments for men and for women), wood and stone carvings, hospitable guest houses and guest rooms, many of which embody and preserve traditional and Luso-colonial architecture
- The National Shrine and Monument at Mertutu, redolent of the long heroic struggle carried out by the Timorese people in the mountains and forests against several historical invaders

4. Agriculture

The agriculture of Ermera district has been dominated historically by coffee. However, plans are in hand for diversification, both in cash crops and livestock.

4.1. CROPS

4.1.1. Coffee

Most of the district’s population works in agriculture, predominantly growing, and harvesting coffee. Ermera produces approximately two-thirds of East Timor’s coffee. Normally each family owns a small area of land, approximately 1-3 hectares. Each hectare will produce, on average, 250 kg of dry coffee. Last year the price for one kg dry beans was USD 1.00.

Therefore, a family could generate an annual income of USD 200-250 from a small to medium-sized allotment. This is supplemented by cultivation of food crops, in particular, cassava, and rice in the lowlands and sweet potatoes in the mountains. Vegetables, maize, and bananas are also produced for local consumption.



Tropical forest, Olpana-Ducurai, Letefoho sub-district.

The production pattern of Ermera’s coffee as a percentage of the total of East Timor’s production over the past few years (measured at intervals of four years) is as follows:

	Ermera MT (Metric Tones)	East Timor MT	Ermera (%)
1989	4307	7497	57.40%
1993	5500	7774	71.10%
1997	6200	9723	63.80%

Ermera's productivity level is similar to the rest of the country (0.14 MT per ha in 1993) and yet the number of coffee farmers per hectare is considerably smaller. This reflects the fact that the farmers' main activity in Ermera is coffee as opposed to other regions where coffee cultivation is a complement to other kinds of farming:

1993	Ermera	East Timor	Ermera (%)
Extent (ha)	34909	55316	63.1%
Production (MT)	5500	7774	71.1%
MT per ha	0.16	0.14	-
Number of farmers	6752	21044	32.1%
Farmers per MT	1.23	2.71	-
Farmers per ha	0.19	0.38	-

Being a coffee-growing region the economy of Ermera District is strongly exported-oriented. However, it has an adverse impact on food provision in the district itself. While the District has about 12% of the country's population, it does not produce an equivalent amount in terms of the main staple crops (maize, rice, and cassava).

The population normally relies on income from the sale of coffee for purchasing additional quantities of rice, maize, and beans. Only cassava and sweet potatoes are not imported in big amounts from Dili or other districts.

The following data reflects the state of the state of the food crop production compared to the rest of the country.

1997	Ermera	East Timor	Ermera (%)
Population	89885	891000	10.1%
Maize (MT)	6549	106616	6.1%
Rice (MT)	3123	52607	5.9%
Cassava (MT)	4919	66486	7.4%
Sweet Potato (MT)	2229	16166	13.8%
Coffee (MT)	6200	9723	63.8%

In terms of cultivated hectares of land, the imbalance in favor of coffee is still more striking; 56% of the total land extension is in fact unproductive, 37% is occupied by coffee plantations and only 7% is dedicated to the production of food crops.

1997	Extension (ha)	(%)
Rice (MT)	886	1.2%
Maize (MT)	2993	4.0%
Cassava (MT)	514	0.7%
Sweet Potato (MT)	292	0.4%
Others (beans, vegetables)	476	0.6%
Coffee (MT)	27821	37.2%
Not cultivated	41728	55.9%
Total extent	74710	100%

Efforts are in hand to rectify this imbalance without compromising the coffee production. A number of irrigation schemes are being rehabilitated. These would considerably increase rice production in the wet season and maize, corn and vegetables in the dry season. Potential

areas for food crops are also being tapped. Improvement of the coffee plantations is planned with the objective to enhance both productivity and quality. The Portuguese Mission has set up a Coffee Plantation Nursery at Fatukero, near Gleno, as a first step in this direction. (Picture: wooden pots)



The organic element of Ermera coffee is an advantage. Through campaigns organized locally as well as by the Dili Agriculture Unit the farmers are being educated on the importance of the quality of organic farming and the increase in yield per hectare. The low quality has remained a hindrance in attracting many overseas buyers. Prior to the Popular Consultation the largest coffee buyers were Indonesians. Their preference appeared to be lower prices for domestic consumption rather than higher quality for export.

One solution for improving the production of coffees is for each village or preferably household to be provided with a simple coffee-grinding machine, whether from wood (cheaper) or iron (imported).

Before the Popular Consultation the USAID-financed NCBA (National Cooperative Business Association) monopolized the coffee trade in this district. NCBA established good relations with CNRT and reinvested in Ermera, mainly by establishing medical clinics and plants for coffee processing. Recently a Portuguese coffee company, Delta Café, started buying dried coffee. They are also investing in coffee-related infrastructure in the District.

It is also planned to concentrate on arabica rather than robusta coffee, as this attracts a higher price on the world market.

Harvesting of coffee occurs between June and August, and the families receive coffee payment at this time. Many families do not budget effectively producing very lean times at the end of their financial year. Food sufficiency is sometimes a problem in the region, because the income produced by coffee is normally spent within a few months, and the more important food crops are normally harvested shortly after that (rice in August – September, sweet potatoes in October). For this reason, access to food is difficult for many families between November and March or until the maize harvest. Even during normal times, most of the population lives just above subsistence level

4.1.2. Vanilla

Vanilla has perhaps the greatest potential for the future prosperity of the district. Already introduced in Liquica District, it is proposed to provide farmers in Ermera District with this crop, which has a more favorable and stable price than coffee on the world market.

4.1.3. Other Spices

A project is in hand to involve women in cultivating spices and other herbs in household gardens. This will enhance the role of women in the community, and the world market is

favorable for the production of spices from a non-polluted climate. The climates of Ermera and Letefoho sub-districts are particularly suitable here.

Spices and other plants with a well-developed root system, for example bay leaves, can also help bind the soil in an area as prone to landslides as Ermera.

4.1.4. Medicinal Plants

Related to this, it is planned for each household to have its own garden of medicinal plants, including quinine, and herbs, to help prevent fever, for example, especially in young children.

4.1.5. Other Crops

Increased irrigation facilities, especially in three villages in the uplands of Atsabe, would support the introduction of such crops as onions, peas, and cabbage.

Furthermore, conditions in Hatolia and Letefoho are extremely conducive for the introduction of natural, non-hybrid seeds of such crops as tomatoes, peas, and beans.

4.2 Agroforestry

Diversification is the keynote here, and a pilot project has already been started in Ermera sub-district. Canopies of acacia and other types of trees would provide shelter for such crops as tomatoes, pineapple, sweet corn, cassava, and chili, with, lower down, grass for livestock fodder.

Totem poles in Eraulu.



In Railako, Hatolia, and Gleno, it is proposed to plant coconut trees, which have a multitude of uses, such oil for cooking, in medicine and also in construction.

It is also proposed to replant other trees such as sandalwood, (which first attracted overseas merchants to Timor centuries ago), teak, and iron tree, all of which have high export potential.

4.3. Permaculture

The target is for each village and eventually each household to have its own compost pit, after appropriate expert instruction

4.4. Livestock

Livestock plays an important role in the economy of Ermera. Between 1989 and 1997 a strong increase was registered in the number of livestock present in the district. In particular

the number of cows increased from 1500 to 6700, buffaloes from 1100 to 3600, and horses from 400 to 2700, while pigs registered a decrease from 17200 to 9100.

The following are complete figures for 1997.

Livestock (1997)	Atsabe	Letefoho	Hatolia	Ermera	Railako	TOTAL
Cows	1078	973	2581	1040	1020	6692
Buffaloes	493	419	1713	424	513	3562
Horses	477	488	835	424	441	2665
Pigs	2094	2004	2568	1281	1184	9131
Goats	2321	1746	2819	1064	1244	9194
Sheep	139	35	71	68	202	515
Poultry	7337	3807	7757	9787	8506	37194

The following are complete livestock figures for 2002:

Sub-district	Cows	Buffalo	Horses	Goats	Sheep	Pigs	Chickens	Chicken (farms)	Ducks
Atsabe	2536	1271	813	349	30	2802	5687	316	48
Hatolia	3602	1875	952	743	9	4751	7184	77	206
Ermera	1119	129	311	164	3	3198	5385	0	82
Letefoho	1574	964	1025	693	26	6060	9642	0	0
Railako	1610	246	370	628	0	2291	5371	0	15

4.4.1. Pig farming

It is proposed to introduce non-local (Macao) pigs in the suitable highland climate of Letefoho sub-district. Again, expert advice is necessary.

4.4.2. Fisheries

Inland fisheries are planned for Hatolia, Gleno, and Atsabe. Appropriate fish species include carp, “lele” (small rice paddy fish) and catfish. Expert advice will again be needed in this area.

4.4.3. Slaughterhouse

A slaughterhouse with stringent hygienic controls is needed, whether centrally located in Dili, or locally in Gleno. If centrally located, then logistics of conveying the animals for the District need to be examined. This is another area in which expert and veterinary advice is needed.

C - INFRASTRUCTURE

1. Water and Sanitation

In most areas, the main water source is spring water and it is plentiful all year round. Most of it is piped, often along open bamboo “pipes”. For storage, tanks are used. In most urban centers water pipes were damaged. At many locations these have now been repaired. **Unpaid workers who receive a small levy from users carry out most of the water maintenance.**

Ermera Sub-District: The water supply for Ermera town is seasonal and irregular, with the critical time being August - October

In Gleno town maintenance has been carried out and water supply extended to main locations in the town. However, an extra tank is needed.

Railako: This area, because of its location, does not enjoy as plentiful a supply of water as other sub-districts. Urgent expert advice is needed on deep well construction, and a bigger storage tank is also required.



Swimming pool under the waterfall.

Letefoho: Here the main problem is more socio-political than technical. Letefoho town should have sufficient water, but the villagers of Lukurai, and the local priest have illegally tapped both one of the pipes.

Hatolia and Atsabe: In these areas the water distribution network is in bad repair, because of the age of the pipes.

2. Electricity

All sub-districts have generators, providing, however, only six hours electricity per day

The exception is Gleno town, where the generator has been broken for several weeks resulting in no electricity for the community.

3. Roads

Ermera District is severely prone to erosion and landslides. The soil and rock structure of the area is notoriously unstable, and torrential rains, resulting in continual disruption of road connections exacerbate this every year.

As part of a nationwide plan to improve main service roads that link sub-district HQs with the district capital, the roads between Gleno and Hatolia, and between Gleno and Atsabe through Letefoho, have received attention. A Singapore-based company, W.P. Lorang Matang Holdings (PTE), Ltd. has been awarded the contract to carry out repairs of critical points on the Gleno-Hatolia road. Earlier repairs to some parts of this stretch were being carried out through local labor, paid for by ADB and supervised by Bangladesh engineers.

While attention to main roads is a welcome development, the secondary and feeder roads are in a very critical state particularly with the heavy rains this year. Often landslides and erosion block roads cutting access to a number of villages thus preventing ETTA from extending proper services to these communities. ADB funding for the Ermera-Fatubessi road was a significant help in making that road useable. Furthermore, the six projects on this section were awarded to local contractors who have performed well and demonstrated their competence.

The road between Ermera town and Hatolia, however, is still disrupted, and this is one of the most important links in coffee production and marketing. Another road that needs attention is the road linking Mertutu with the Gleno-Ermera road. Mertutu, with its associations with

the heroic guerilla struggle of the Timorese and outstanding natural beauty, is targeted as a National Shrine, and will in the future receive many generations of visitors.

D- SOCIAL SERVICES

1. Education

The process of education in Ermera district was disrupted at the beginning of the consultation process, with the departure of many Indonesian teachers and administrators. All schools were closed and later some of them were looted and burned by pro-integration militia. Formerly there were primary schools in the vast majority of the villages but only a few secondary schools.

The district has 13 clusters of schools, each supervised by a Headmaster. Each cluster is composed of 4-5 primary schools and with a coordinator in each school.

At present Ermera has 64 primary schools and 9 secondary schools (2 senior high schools and 7 junior high schools).



SMP Gleno, Ermera sub-district.

2. Health

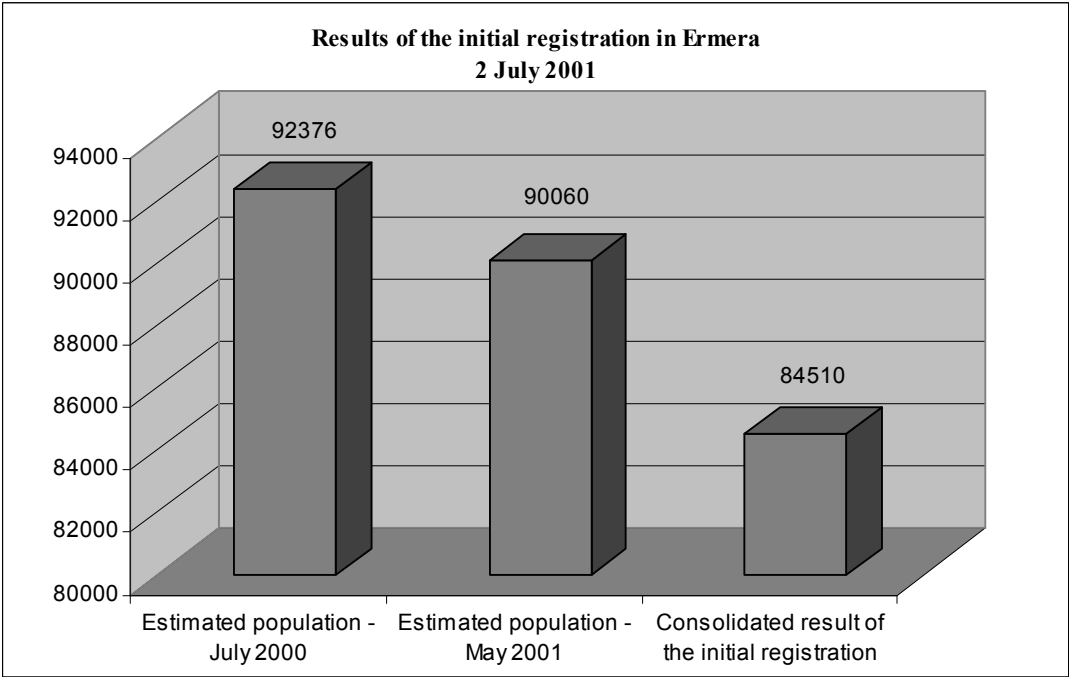
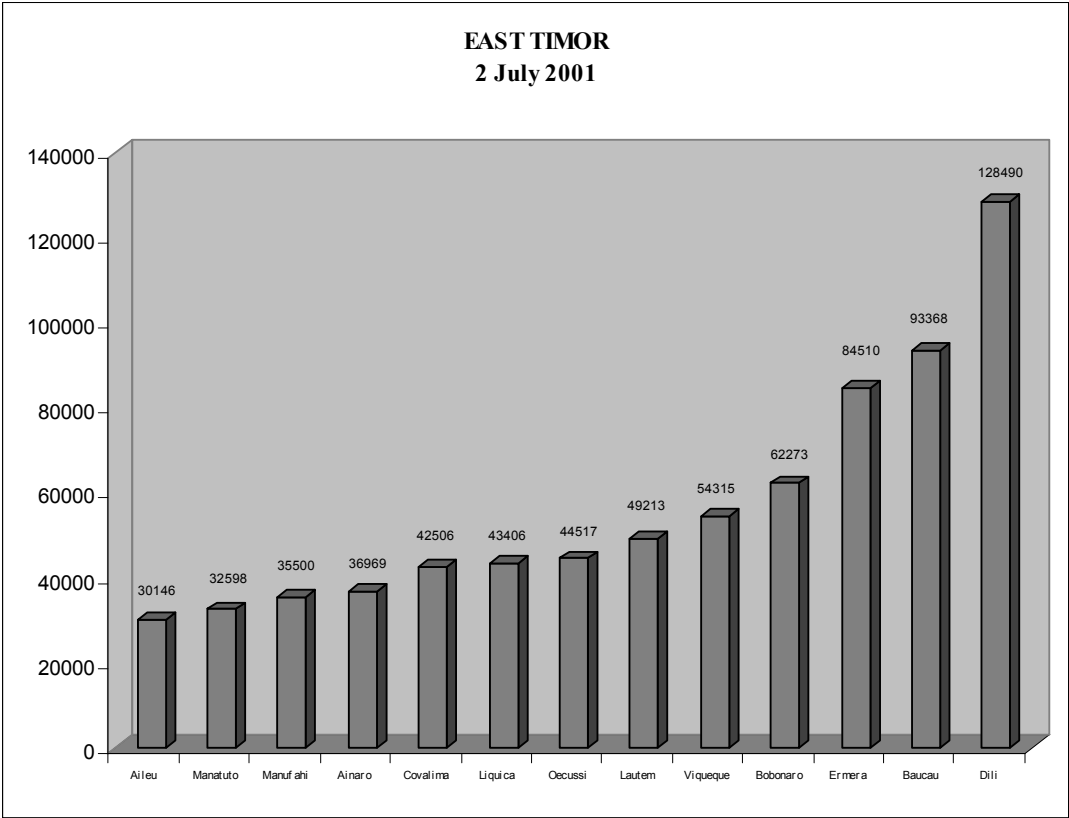
At publication date, no data had been received from the Health Sector.

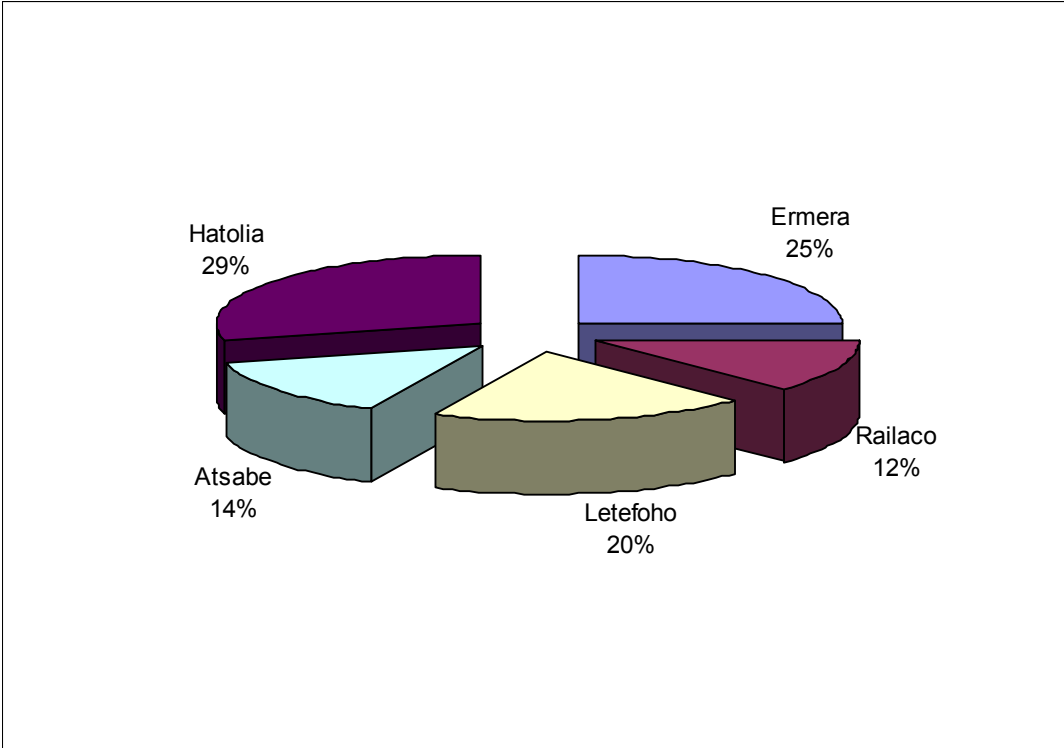
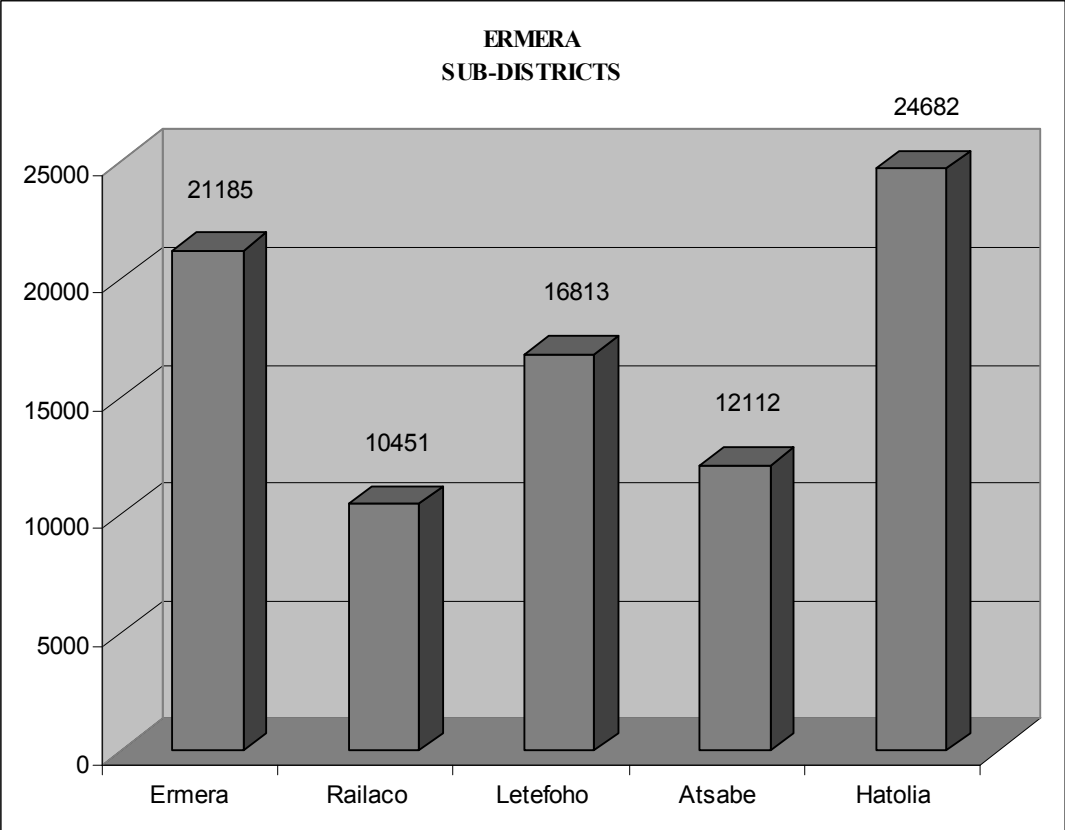
Annex 1: Civil Registry and Statistics data

Annex 2: List of women and Youth Organizations by sub district.

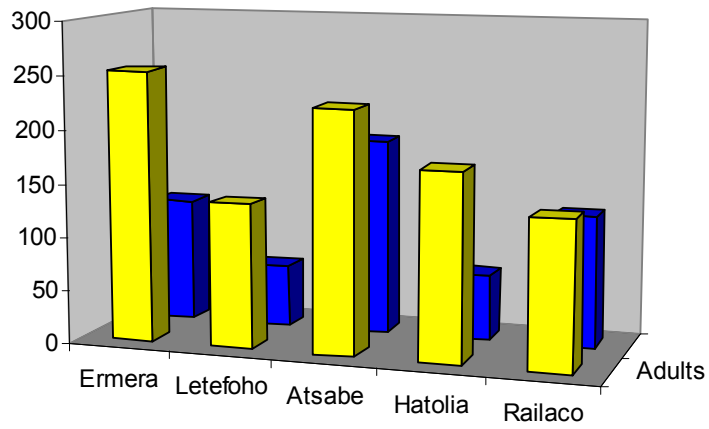
ANNEXES

1. Civil registration



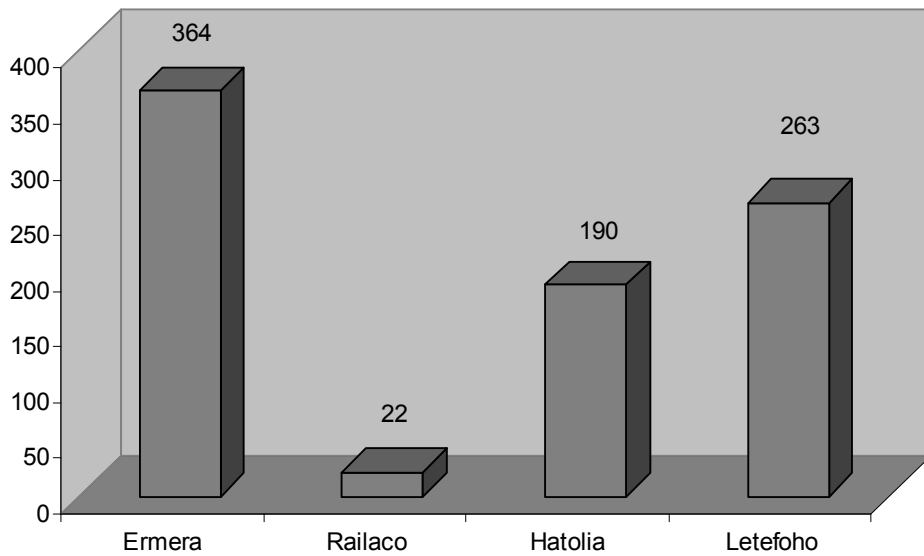


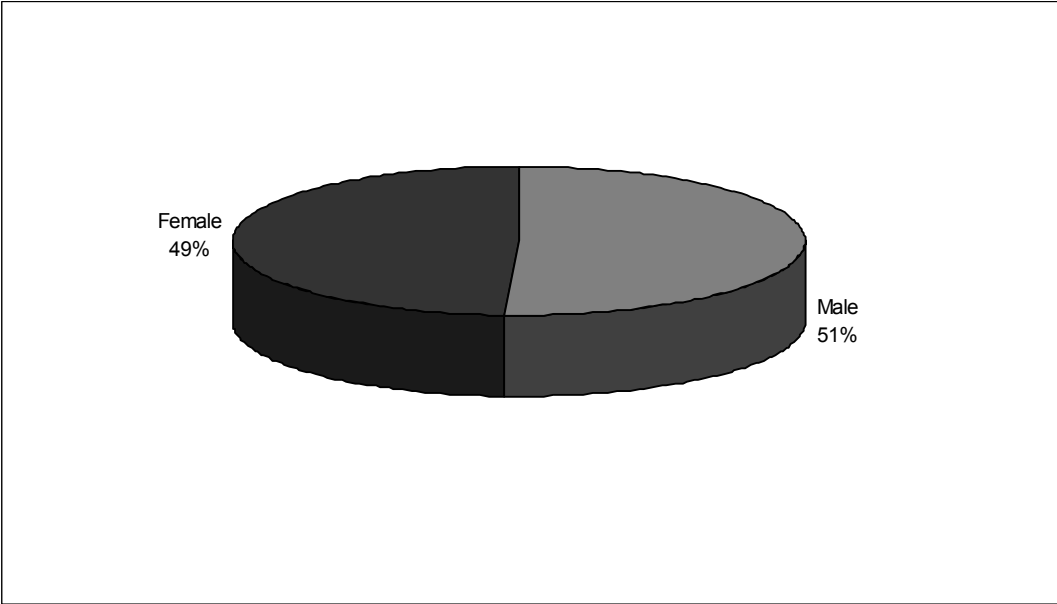
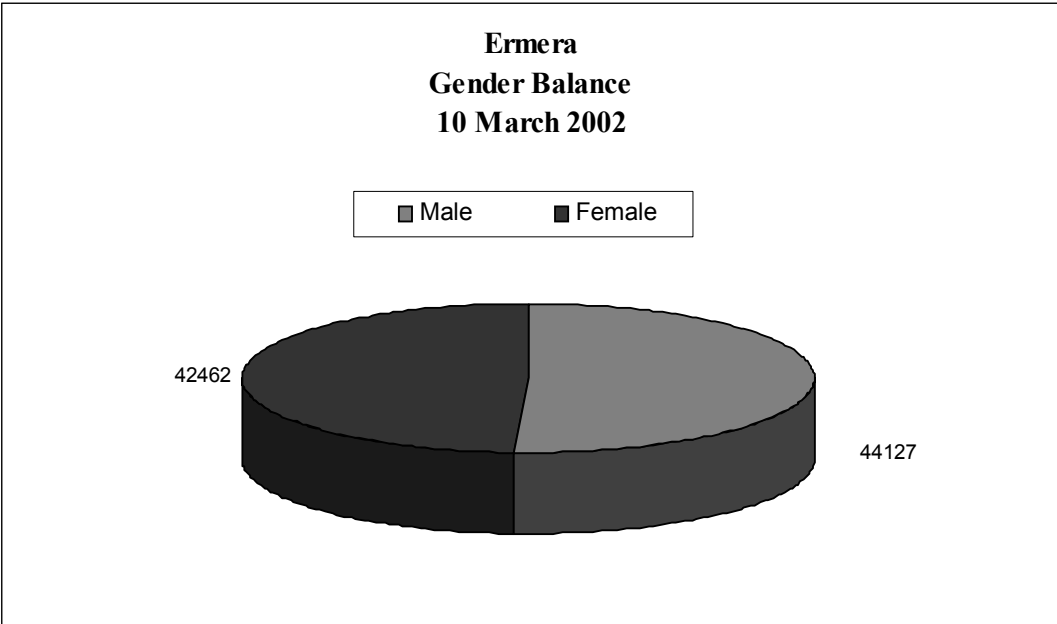
**Registration results
20 July 2001 - 10 March 2002**



	Ermera	Letefoho	Atsabe	Hatolia	Railaco
■ Adults	254	135	226	175	138
■ Children	117	58	184	62	124

**Applicants for Birth Certificates
20 July 2001 - 10 March 2002**





2: List of women and Youth Organizations by sub district.

Location	Women Organization (OMT)	Youth Organization (OJT)
Ermera District	Maria Santana T. Alves	Mauricio
Atsabe sub-district	Esmeralda Soares	Joao de Deus
Ermera sub-district	Clotilde Martins Tilman	Emidio Alves
Hatolia sub-district	Albertinha Martins	Tobias de Jesus
Railako sub-district	Julieta Dos Reis	Jose Almeida Da Costa
Letefoho sub-district	Ernestina Fatima de Deus	Antonio Manuel Soares