

Report 2006-2007



International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

Timor-Leste

Appeal No. MAATP001

4 April 2008

This report covers the period of 1 January 2006 to 31 December 2007 of a two-year planning and appeal process.



First rate first aid: volunteers of Los Palos branch of the Red Cross in Timor-Leste (CVTL) practice their lifesaving skills.

In brief

Programme summary: The two-year programme got off to a challenging start with a series of severe storms from December 2005 through January/February 2006. The consequent disruption to the national society, Cruz Vermelha de Timor-Leste (CVTL) plans was significant. These storms were then followed by major civil unrest which began in February 2006. In total, tens of thousands were displaced. By the end of 2007, there was still a degree of instability: the situation, while relatively more stable, was still fragile. As a result of this series of disasters, the capacity of CVTL was stretched throughout the period. Nevertheless, during the second half of 2007 significant progress was witnessed.

A new organizational development (OD) strategy evolved in 2006. As a result, 12 of the 13 CVTL branches are stronger. In particular, branch volunteer activities in the community increased. In 2008, CVTL's capacity to achieve its strategic plan, and the Federation's Global Agenda, should continue to grow steadily.

Financial situation: The total 2006-2007 budget was CHF 2,839,843 (USD 2.54 million or EUR 1.72 million)¹, of which 98 per cent was covered.

Click here to go directly to the attached financial reports:

[<2006>](#)

[<2007>](#)

[<2006/07>](#)

No. of people helped: 57,459 (comprising the following: 8,937 in disaster management, 30,342 in health, and 18,180 in organizational development).

Our partners: Key supporters of this appeal were the New Zealand, Australian, German, Norwegian and Japanese Red Cross societies as well as the Avian Influenza Global Fund. Partner national societies engaged in other support beyond this appeal included the Australian, Austrian, Japanese, Norwegian and Spanish Red Cross societies. ICRC continues its work in Timor-Leste. Among the external partners who worked with CVTL were WHO, National Disaster Management Office, the ministry of health, ministry of agriculture, Seeds for Life, and University of Timor-Leste.

Current context

Poverty – compounded by the deep wounds in Timor-Leste society – remains the principal barrier to progress in this fledgling country. One-fifth of the population lives on less than USD 1.00 per day. Unemployment (particularly among youth) and the lack of opportunities exacerbate social tension. Only 15 per cent of those aged 18 and above hold a high school diploma, two per cent of the population has a university degree and half of all adults are illiterate. Massive migration to Dili saw the population double between 1999 and 2004, further adding to the stress. As stated above, the country was again vulnerable to disasters, both natural and man-made. An estimated 100,000 people (ten per cent of the total population) remain displaced 18 months after the unrest of May 2006.

National parliamentary and presidential elections in 2007 passed off relatively incident-free. There was evidence, however, of longstanding political rivalries/factions and it is clear that ongoing national reconciliation/dialogue initiatives face major challenges into 2008 and beyond.

Considering such a scenario, CVTL performed admirably. There are clear signs of progress and cause for optimism. Relations between the Federation delegation and national society counterparts continued to blossom, playing their part in the development of CVTL's capacity.

Achievement of objectives

Disaster Management

Programme Objective: Strengthen the disaster management capacity of CVTL to respond effectively to natural and man-made disasters, and enhance the capacities of high-risk communities to mitigate the impact of these disasters on their life and property.

Achievements:

CVTL capacity was severely tested and at times, stretched during the two years. Nevertheless, there was progress overall on several levels. Emergency operations were conducted after three bouts of storms and floods as well as during the ongoing severe unrest. All this added up to a significant challenge for CVTL. These unforeseen factors diverted focus from the national society's longer-term disaster management programme.

However, CVTL continued to gain experience in disaster management (DM) in general, including approaches to community-based disaster preparedness, disaster risk reduction, livelihood support and increased access to shelters, safe water and sanitary facilities. Other achievements included:

¹ Exchange rates: USD1.00 = CHF1.118, EUR1.00 = CHF1.65

- Effective support to storm-affected families through shelter construction and water well rehabilitation
- Increased community access to safe water and sanitary latrines
- Progress on a five-year partnership for disaster risk reduction programming
- The continued long term and participatory approach taken on community preparedness for disaster response supported by ongoing branch development and stronger human resources at national headquarters.
- A consistent adherence to the Fundamental Principles while delivering services. Indeed, emergency support was provided without discrimination and based squarely on need.

The specific progress is as follows:

Community preparedness:

The national society has had limited capacity to strengthen community-based preparedness. There was, however, some progress to note:

During 2007, CVTL trained 76 volunteers (47 men and 29 women) who can facilitate community activities and support communities in preparation for disasters. Four rounds of regional training were conducted, involving staff and volunteers from all 13 districts. Those volunteers and staff visited communities regularly and increased awareness about disaster preparedness. They have supported the development of five community action plans, which will be implemented in 2008.

Livelihood support:

- 800 people in the Hatabulico community organized into 16 self-help groups have been able to secure their livelihood through CVTL programming. These groups produce vegetables for consumption and sale in the local market. Each group has a reserve fund of USD 80-125 (CHF 89-140), which they use for the procurement of food during dry seasons. In addition, a women's group has started a shop, giving a good example of entrepreneurship in a remote area.

The above community was provided with tools, skills, disease-resistant seeds, small-scale safe drinking water and irrigation facilities for gardening. Many who did not participate in self-help groups have also started kitchen gardening. It has been observed that the nutrition intake has improved. With these activities in place, the level of disaster resilience capacity of the community has increased.

- 48 families in Manufahi, 25 in Funar, 53 in Aubion/Uma-Boco and 28 in Teras gained access to safe water through four gravity-flow water supply schemes. Three community maintenance groups were trained in the Funar and Manufahi sub-villages. Four private latrines in the Manufahi sub-village, two public ones in the Funar sub-village and one in the Aubion/Uma Boco sub-village were built. With an increased access to drinking water, families (mainly women) saved time for other household chores such as cooking, taking care of children and fetching firewood. Some 49 people were trained on personal hygiene, water-borne diseases and control, environmental cleanliness and disease prevention through first aid sessions in three communities of the Manatutu district.

With the above activities in place, CVTL as a new national society gained valuable experience. Similarly, the capacity of CVTL staff and volunteers to design and implement disaster management programmes has increased. In addition, the programme has raised political will at governance and management levels which will underpin future effectiveness of DM programmes.

Despite the above progress, the CVTL programme faced many challenges as well. The maintenance groups did not function well; thus, the water schemes were not maintained as planned. Water sources were contaminated during the rainy season while civil unrest restricted people from visiting the remote areas, thus limiting the monitoring of activities. Furthermore, the CVTL's limited staff were stretched because of their engagement in emergency flood response, which shifted the focus away from community preparedness.

Disaster response:

The building of CVTL emergency response capacity did not progress as planned, partly because of the succession of emergencies that Timor-Leste experienced. This observation needs to be balanced

with the fact that the national society gained significant experience through the operations themselves. However, despite such invaluable experience, branches in particular still lack the capacity to respond to disasters. There were, however, several achievements including the reconstruction of over 700 houses (for about 8,400 people) in six districts, construction of 12 tube wells and rehabilitation of 100 wells in the Oecusse district, distribution of 2,000 mosquito nets and 500 jerry cans to people affected by floods, training of a 35-member team on emergencies through National Disaster Response Team (NDRT) and Regional Disaster Response Team (RDRT) courses, the preparation of draft standard operating procedures for response and participation of CVTL as a board member on the national disaster management coordination committee. *(A separate report will be generated to detail the progress made under emergency response in 2007)*

Environmental protection:

This is a long-term priority, and present CVTL capacity was not enough to plan and manage such activities during the reporting period. Land ownership issues and lack of a national policy on community forestry were also concerns. However, CVTL supported communities in preparing nurseries and beginning plantation to prevent landslides and conserve water sources. Communities thus carried out such related activities including planting in nearby water catchment areas.

Community-based risk reduction:

With five-year funding support from the Norwegian Red Cross, the disaster risk reduction programme started in July 2007 to develop CVTL institutional capacity for disaster preparedness and response. With this programme in place, CVTL has been equipped with a radio communication system in the national headquarters as well as computers, printers, LCD projectors, motorbikes, and cars. Two new staff at the national headquarters and four staff in the districts have been recruited. Three key national staff attended a VCA course and have been putting their new-found knowledge to use. The other three disaster management staff attended a disaster risk reduction training course. Consultation meetings with other stakeholders were organized to collect feedback on community selection criteria and list potential communities selected for the programme.

Challenges and constraints:

Overall, the DM programme contributed to community resilience, but organizational capacity and the national context limited progress. In particular, there were constraints on the movement of staff and volunteers during periods of crisis as well as a significant diversion of resources.

The pace of developing branch capacity in terms of the community-based disaster management was steady, but slow. As such, service delivery fell short of plans. The programme will continue to reinvigorate the process in 2008. Nine districts do not have DM staff in the field, which makes implementation challenging. When funding permits, appointments will be made to have DM staff in these districts. Successive emergency responses placed severe strain on CVTL's DM capacity.

Best practices and lessons learned:

The following issues are important to take note of in 2008:

- Lessons from the livelihood promotion pilot project are relevant for other districts.
- A national emergency response team, trained in 2006, needs to be periodically tested via exercises. In support, the national society needs to develop its communication and basic logistics management.
- The disaster management programme should be oriented more towards a longer term development initiative so that people's exposure to different hazards (natural or technological) can be reduced in a planned way.
- Preparedness for emergency response at national level and risk mitigation at community level should increasingly go hand in hand.
- Branches are the main service delivery platforms. It is vital that their programme management capacity is increased in a planned manner.

Health and Care

Programme Objective: CVTL provides health services and education that meet the needs of the most vulnerable communities in Timor-Leste.

Achievements:

The CVTL's focus in previous years, including 2006-2007, has been on building capacity in health service delivery by training the volunteers in different fields and levels. However, the challenge in 2008 and beyond remains in branch volunteer management, crucial in realizing training outcomes and in the implementation of systematic activities that benefit communities. Hence, the focus of health activities in 2008 will be on community-implemented activities, supported by the Federation as well as bilateral donors. The Federation supported water projects in the three districts, Viqueque, Manufahi and Oecusse, under the health programme. Other water initiatives fell under the disaster management programme. Latrine construction in Ermera district achieved building 116 family latrines.

In Manufahi, the rehabilitation of four wells and a gravity-feed system was completed benefiting 140 families and 600 people. Progress was slow, hampered by a lengthy wet season and civil conflict earlier in the year

In the Oecusse district, two gravity-fed systems have been installed, serving some 500 people (about 94 families) and 672 people (about 161 families) respectively. The community participated actively in the process from planning (community action plan) to construction to future maintenance. As part of the future maintenance of the water system, the community has established a water management group. Each family in the selected village also makes a small financial contribution for system maintenance. Community-based first aid (CBFA) village education was also included in the project and was run parallel to the construction work.

In Viqueque, two existing water systems were rehabilitated, providing easier direct access to clean and safe water to some 1,000 people (or 188 families). The community actively took part in the process from the beginning. There were some delays due to civil unrest. Concerns over the safety of the technical team travelling to the project site arose, and several deliveries of construction material were delayed. With the financial support of Australian Red Cross, 200 latrines and a further one km of piping, which benefited approximately 1,000 people, were also provided. A joint Suai vulnerability project funded by the Australian Red Cross had to be temporarily stopped as the water and sanitation team needed to be urgently reassigned to an emergency response to floods and landslide in Suai. Continuation of the project was scheduled for January 2008.

Overall, progress was good. The unrest as well as extreme weather caused some delays. As the intended sites are normally in remote villages, access with materials and transport was sometimes difficult. The systematic monitoring of water and sanitation work in the field is also challenging and will be given more attention in the future.

Community-based First Aid: This project involves teaching basic health education to people in rural areas. Community-based first aid (CBFA) is preventive in nature, and health promotion and education activities are its most important aspects.

Community-based first aid training-of-trainers (ToT) began in February 2006, funded by the Japanese Red Cross Society (JRCS). The aim is to have trainers in all 13 districts. In addition to ToTs, the Federation secretariat supported an eight-day community-based first aid community facilitator volunteer training in the Ainaro district and Dili. Altogether, CVTL has now 14 CBFA trainers, 13 assistant trainers, and 250 facilitators throughout the country.

Village volunteers are the people taking care of the most important part of the community-based first aid project. They educate people in their houses, go door-to-door or conduct focus group discussions about relevant health and hygiene issues in the villages. The Federation supported village volunteer training in four districts: Oecusse, Bobonaro, Liquica and Aileu. To date, CVTL has trained village volunteers covering 12 of the 13 districts. The village volunteers implemented activities that benefit communities in the Oecusse, Aileu, Bobonaro, Ainaro, Ermera and Manufahi districts.

Additionally, trained volunteers conducted activities in internally displaced people (IDP) camps. A dengue outbreak in December 2007 resulted in over 150 cases of dengue and five deaths. CVTL in partnership with the government disseminated dengue prevention information to more than 4,000 households. Some 8,000 people received community-based first aid education through village activities and schools visits.

Although CVTL has community-based first aid volunteers available in all districts, there were challenges in implementing activities at the village level. The results in different districts varied greatly, subject to the capabilities and motivation of staff, local board involvement in the activities and volunteer efforts.

Furthermore, almost all activities stopped during the unrest. The biggest challenge, however, was in volunteer management and in branch level supervision, critical to the effective implementation of community-based first aid in communities. It should also be noted that CVTL does not have a separate mother and child health programme because the national society lacks sufficient funding and trained available staff. However, the community-based first aid project does cover some areas related to the health of mothers and children. Provision of safe water also works towards improving conditions for this vulnerable group.

The project will continue to increase the CVTL's capacity by training volunteers. Future focus will be to support village volunteers in the implementation of community-based first aid education and reach the most vulnerable in the community.

First aid: The CVTL has a functioning first aid programme. Over the past years, first aid training has been carried out in all districts. ToT began in February 2006, funded by JRCS with support from the Federation secretariat, and the number of qualified first aid trainers reached 52, in addition to ten assistant first aid trainers.

Through the ToT, the trainers helped strengthen first aid training held throughout the country, which is divided in four regions. The Federation supported a regional first aid training that lasted two weeks in the Ainaro and Oecusse regions, while the Maliana and Baucau regional training sessions were supported by JRCS. More than 300 people have been trained as first aiders through the regional training sessions, and almost 900 people have participated in a three-day basic first aid training course. CVTL also provided first aid training to two external organizations.

The CVTL first aid volunteers gave basic first aid information in 11 schools in nine districts, reaching some 1,300 students. Dissemination also took place in communities in nine districts, reaching more than 700 community members. The CVTL volunteers also provided first aid services at a number of public events.

It is worth noting that CVTL first aiders were active and received recognition of their activities during the period of unrest in the country, earning CVTL some positive visibility. Work on identifying accident-prone areas started in 2006 and will continue.

As with the community-based first aid programme, first aid faced challenges in volunteer management, which will be a future focus. To build first aid programme capacity further, CVTL is also looking to have the most qualified trainers developed as master trainers.

HIV/AIDS: The CVTL is one of the most active organizations in implementing HIV/AIDS projects in Timor-Leste, supported by the Federation secretariat and other partners. National peer education and life skill training with invited trainers from the Indonesian Red Cross (PMI) and participants from all 13 districts, was conducted. In addition, the Federation supported a three-day youth peer education training in 11 districts for 275 participants.

The CVTL HIV/AIDS volunteers provided information to 1,700 students in eight districts and to some 500 community members in six districts. CVTL also actively took part in celebrating World AIDS Day, cooperating with the ministry of health and other organizations. It involved schools and communities, and activities included camping, emergency response simulation exercises, parades and leaflet distribution, sports and games. It involved 1,129 volunteers and 10,715 community members. In 2007, it was celebrated in all of Timor-Leste's 13 districts.

Avian Influenza: The avian influenza programme finally started in June after long delays related to civil unrest and staffing difficulties. Major achievements have, however, been made in the short time frame. A June workshop, attended by national CVTL health staff and volunteers with presentations from the ministry of health (MoH), WHO and the ministry of agriculture, forestry and fisheries (MAFF), was an excellent platform to launch the project. Four regional two-day training workshops were

conducted in September with each having 25 participant volunteers represented from all districts. CBFA facilitators, DM, first aid representatives and new volunteers were chosen, aiming for equal representation of men and women. Volunteers have since reached 3,256 community members and 4,400 students in delivering avian influenza prevention messages through information dissemination, drama performances and brochure distribution. Some 40,000 United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) brochures have been reprinted and distributed to 13 districts. Although some districts have been actively working with MAFF, this remains ad hoc due to some districts not conducting vaccination programmes and in other districts, links between MAFF and CVTL not being explored. Monitoring of activities has been conducted by the avian influenza programme manager and in December, an evaluation of community knowledge was made.

A CVTL workshop to develop a CVTL continuity plan in the event of an avian influenza outbreak was held in November. The information gathered was used in a November taskforce meeting where membership and the role of the group were identified. Participants were from the national headquarters (all departments; communications, logistics, finance, administration, security, disaster management, health, and organizational development) as well as representatives from branches, ICRC and the Federation. A template was developed to classify CVTL activities that will be continued or suspended and to identify new activities to be started by CVTL during a pandemic. Further taskforce meetings will refine the process and assist in writing the preparedness plan.

CVTL has been accepted as a member of the national avian influenza taskforce. The national society is the only organization outside the government that has been included. However, the taskforce has not met since the parliamentary election and change in government. The NGO forum attended by international NGOs in Timor-Leste and CVTL was disbanded as a result of last year's unrest and not reconvened this year. It is unlikely to do so in the near future with many international NGOs turning their attention to other priorities. Protection equipment has not yet been purchased but this is planned for the end of the year.

The avian influenza project is funded by the German Red Cross through the Global Fund. An extension of six months is being requested so that activities can continue for the first half of 2008.

Constraints and challenges:

The biggest ongoing challenge is the rebuilding and consolidating of capacity in the national headquarters. The staff members are mostly new and steadily growing into their role. There is a need to build programme-specific technical knowledge as well as planning, reporting and monitoring and evaluation skills. This is expected to take considerable time. A study tour to Cambodia in December 2007 was part of the process.

Programming was also hampered because of financial system concerns between CVTL and the Federation. Short-term financial consultants are supporting a process to address the issues, including the upgrade of the national society's financial system, funded bilaterally by the Australian Red Cross. The anticipated arrival of a water and sanitation delegate in early 2008 should also help in the area of capacity-building.

Best practices and lessons learned:

In general, all health activities contributed to the overall goal of improving the quality of life and health conditions in Timor-Leste. The programme objective was only partially achieved due in large part to the challenges of volunteer management and implementation at the community level. These issues need to be addressed in the future. The issue of mother and child health requires re-evaluation, keeping in mind the realistic capacity of CVTL to implement new programmes.

Capacity development

Programme Objective: CVTL has become an effective and efficient volunteer-based grassroots organization delivering targeted services to the country's vulnerable communities.

Achievements:

Branch coordinators and staff in health and disaster management have more confidence in their roles as a result of their increasing experience and regular opportunities to share and discuss this with peers and the organizational development (OD) team.

The allocation of small amounts of money to achieve clearly defined objectives (e.g. branch maintenance, volunteer incentive, and transport to communities) has strengthened branch staff financial management capacity and the ability to prioritize, plan and report effectively, as well as the fundamentals of good project and programme management.

Cooperation and collaboration between branch coordinators and health and disaster management staff in the branches have improved. Regular contact with the OD team and other national society management staff through branch visits and monthly branch coordinators' meetings at the head office has meant problems are identified earlier, roles are clarified and issues are addressed collaboratively.

Overall, the branch structure is emerging as an effective platform to deliver programmes that reach communities throughout Timor-Leste. This is the result of the structure functioning better as it is reinforced and supported in programme implementation, as well as increased understanding of the potential of branches by CVTL management as results begin to show. This evolving dynamic is expected to enable better coordination of work at branch level in the coming year, consistent with CVTL policy to improve integration, collaboration and cooperation across and between programmes. This in turn will result in better access for beneficiaries to Red Cross activities and improved targeting of these initiatives to those people who are most vulnerable.

Job descriptions have been developed for all branch staff and regular monitoring and support visits to branches by OD staff have provided opportunities to sort out any issues, and further clarify thinking regarding the coordination role.

Improvement in systems for the quality of feedback from branch volunteers, members and staff to governance, and a growing understanding of the governance function has meant progress towards more member- and community-led governance. This is expected to be demonstrated in the implementation of more responsive and relevant activities as CVTL grows.

Branches are being supported in a more consolidated and effective way as a result of better communication between national programme coordinators in health, DM, OD, information dissemination and tracing sections. This is particularly important as many national society management staff are in the early stages of their working lives and are new to Red Cross work.

One of the key support services, fleet management, is now running more effectively in support of CVTL work as a whole rather than being 'turf-loyal' to particular programmes. Fuel management has also improved as a result of strengthened monitoring and a better supply system.

The development of consistent policy across all programmes in areas such as remuneration for staff and volunteer selection, training and management is making good progress and will be a priority for the early part of 2008.

Branches, through volunteer mobilization, have carried out dissemination activities and membership drives in all districts. It is a credit to the commitment of volunteers and branch staff as well as the guidance from the head office that many districts have attracted hundreds of members. Branch assemblies were held in all districts in December and provided an opportunity to review and share the achievements of CVTL in 2006 and 2007 with members, volunteers, community leaders and others, and to discuss priorities for 2008. Key points arising from branch assemblies were able to feed into the proceedings of the general assembly held in Dili with the participation of branch boards and other stakeholders.

Financial management has improved. A simple journal system has been implemented for branches to record all financial activity, and monitoring visits have confirmed this is being used. Early problems with money being used for purposes other than those designated (e.g. using volunteer incentive money for transport) as a result of a lack of clarity about appropriate spending and lack of systems for tracking and reporting on the use of funds have been resolved. The improvement is attributable both to improved monitoring systems (such as regular HQ visits to branches, income and expenditure journals and monthly reporting requirements) as well as increased understanding and confidence of branch staff.

Furthermore, as confidence increases, there is ongoing innovation in use of volunteer incentives and community appreciation funds in some branches. Several branches have initiated fundraising activities such as renting out rooms and facilities, and one branch has a rice plantation tended by volunteers.

An audit of CVTL accounts was carried out in 2007 by an external auditor from Indonesia, and an annual external audit will be carried out henceforth. The initiation of regular national society management meetings has begun to provide a forum to discuss and streamline financial management systems at the society management level, further strengthening the organization-wide financial management capacity.

Branch offices have begun to build relationships with locally active NGOs for information-sharing, cooperation and collaboration. As the trained volunteer base in branches has increased, NGOs have approached CVTL branches to request Red Cross-trained volunteers for their own activities and/or to work together toward common objectives (after negotiation with the branch and head office). This is further evidence of CVTL's growing contribution to civil society more generally, as well as a sign that other organizations recognize the quality of Red Cross training. It further strengthens the Red Cross profile in the community.

In some cases, NGOs have offered funding to support CVTL branches prompting the development (in progress) of guidelines and procedures for ensuring that relationships with funding organizations are consistent with Red Cross Red Crescent principles as well as CVTL strategic objectives.

Funding in 2007 has supported small improvements to facilities, and provision of basic assets to all branches including chairs, table, desk, whiteboard, and filing cabinets, as well as the repair of branch water systems and lavatories so that each branch now has running water and a functioning toilet. These efforts were carried out to ensure that branches could function pending the securing of property titles and more substantial renovation work.

A significant achievement - and the result of a persistent effort on the part of the CVTL OD coordinator - is that the legal right of use in perpetuity has been secured from the government of Timor-Leste for 13 of 14 buildings claimed by CVTL. The remaining building for which CVTL is seeking to confirm rights is the Dili branch property.

With this major hurdle cleared, work has begun in planning and carrying out the renovation and rehabilitation of branch facilities. This process contributes to building branch capacity as needs identification, prioritization, planning, budgeting and oversight are being carried out by a sub-committee at branch level, with technical support and monitoring from head office. Funding for this is secured through the support of the Norwegian, New Zealand and Australian Red Cross societies.

Constraints and challenges:

The branch structure, and many staff members are still relatively new and sustained support will be needed to embed and build on the systems and practices developed over this reporting period. There remains much work to be done particularly in developing systems for coordinated planning, monitoring and evaluation to ensure the quality and effectiveness of branches and community level activities. Volunteer development and appreciation must remain another ongoing priority.

The relative newness of many staff means that programme teams are often on a steep learning curve. An action learning approach is being pursued to enable staff members to learn on the job and to ensure that investment in staff development is directly relevant to staff roles and programme objectives.

The challenges associated with the post-conflict, 'developing nation' context of Timor-Leste will continue to impact on CVTL OD strategy and require ongoing monitoring and a degree of flexibility.

Best practices and lessons learned:

Improved communication and cooperation between staff and volunteers at branch level has strengthened staff and volunteer morale and subsequently, programme implementation. As a result, more beneficiaries and communities are involved in activities, and the capacity for implementing increasing programme activity is developing steadily.

As relations and links with communities improve, more grassroots feedback to branches begins to emerge. This in turn will enable the national society to strengthen – and adapt if necessary – activities to serve the most vulnerable.

An incremental model of development and action learning approach for personnel providing specific, practical and incremental learning opportunities appropriate to existing capacities, as well as opportunities for regular review, discussion and guidance have proven effective in achieving real progress for this young national society and its staff.

For 2008-2009, the focus will be on improving the quality of activities. This will be backed by developing a consistent approach to monitoring and evaluation throughout CVTL programmes.

Working in partnership

Committed Movement partnerships provided effective Red Cross Red Crescent support to CVTL. Fortnightly coordination meetings focused on first aid, humanitarian law, relief distribution, and water supplies to displaced populations. In addition to CVTL, the Federation and ICRC, other Movement partners such as the Austrian, Australian, German, New Zealand, Japanese and Norwegian Red Cross societies joined in when they had a programme interest.

CVTL has also been working with the United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA) and the Australian Red Cross for funding of HIV/AIDS programmes. A contract was due to be signed with the Global Fund in December 2007 for HIV/AIDS programming in four districts. Other health partners include the ministry of health and Alola Foundation. The disaster management team has linked up with the ministry of agriculture and forestry, Seeds of Life, the University of Timor-Leste on food security programmes, apart from the national disaster management office of Timor-Leste.

It is worthy to note that during the period of unrest, CVTL and the Federation were major partners in the joint committees set up by the government, gathering information from various regions. CVTL was the only organization with branches and staff capable of obtaining this critical information, on which relief and food distribution in the early stages was based.

Unfortunately, the cooperation agreement strategy (CAS) process did not progress because of the various crises. A cooperation agreement however has been signed between CVTL and the Federation for future programming. In the meantime, a status agreement with the government was signed in February 2007. Service agreements were also signed with the Austrian Red Cross and Japanese Red Cross.

Implementation and coordination

The national society strategic plan remained the main guide for CVTL. As stated, the first 18 months were particularly challenging but tangible momentum was generated in the second half of 2007. Federation support, via the country delegation and assistance from the regional office, focused on mentoring national society counterparts. This was one factor that helped CVTL programme coordinators grow considerably in their roles. This bodes well for the future but it must be remembered that all the coordinators still have less than a year's experience. The head of delegation supported CVTL senior management with an expectation that a 'step back' will occur at some point in the future. Throughout this process, CVTL showed that it needed space to make small mistakes as part of the growing process. Ultimately, it must be in control of its own destiny.

Contributing to longer-term impact

The challenge of meeting the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) by 2015 is huge in general and daunting in Timor-Leste in particular. However, it can be said that CVTL is beginning to play an increasing part with the strengthening of its service delivery and organizational wherewithal at the community level.

The International Federation's Global Agenda feeds into a wider achievement of the MDGs and CVTL's performance was noteworthy in terms of goals 1, 2, and 3. For example, DM strengthened livelihoods and economic security to support safer and more resilient communities. Likewise, ongoing

community-based first aid, HIV/AIDS, and water and sanitation interventions demonstrated the unique community reach of CVTL beyond a regular clinic/hospital system. Finally, volunteers were mobilized to work with communities beyond the reach of other organizations.

A defining characteristic is the involvement of male **and** female volunteers in each programme. The voice of women volunteers is increasingly heard during many decision making processes. Implicit in all the programmes is an awareness of the serious wounds and divisions in Timor-Leste society. Initiatives are alive in the endeavour to contribute – as the Red Cross should – to the healing of differences.

Looking ahead

The 'ownership' of the planning process – and consequent production of plans – was at a higher level during 2007 (for 2008-2009). This is cause for optimism; progress and momentum evident towards the end of 2007 should signal further achievement in the next two years. CVTL coordinators increased their independence and confidence during the decision-making process. It is planned that Federation support will remain over the next two years but be a little less proactive than before. The team plans to guide a little more from behind, highlighting gaps, and providing informed advice. The crunch is whether the progress in branch development will see sustained service delivery to communities. The security situation has stabilized and the signs are that this could continue in 2008. However, circumstances mean that this relative calm is by no means guaranteed. Further emergencies – natural or otherwise – would significantly affect the performance of the national society.

How we work

All International Federation assistance seeks to adhere to the [Code of Conduct](#) and is committed to the [Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response \(Sphere\)](#) in delivering quality and accountable assistance to the most vulnerable. For support to or for further information concerning Federation programmes or operations in this or other countries, or for a full description of the national society profile, please access the Federation's website at <http://www.ifrc.org>

The International Federation's activities are aligned with its Global Agenda, which sets out four broad goals to meet the Federation's mission to "improve the lives of vulnerable people by mobilizing the power of humanity".

Global Agenda Goals:

- Reduce the numbers of deaths, injuries and impact from disasters.
- Reduce the number of deaths, illnesses and impact from diseases and public health emergencies.
- Increase local community, civil society and Red Cross Red Crescent capacity to address the most urgent situations of vulnerability.
- Reduce intolerance, discrimination and social exclusion and promote respect for diversity and human dignity.

Contact information

For further information:

- *Cruz Vermelha de Timor-Leste (Timor-Leste Red Cross): Isabel Amaral Guterres (secretary general); email: sec-gen@cvtl.tp; phone: +670.724.8963; fax: +670.332.1688*
- *Federation delegation in Timor-Leste: Arne Jacobson (head of delegation); phone: +670.723.1434; fax: +670.332.2010*
- *Federation Southeast Asia regional office: Alan Bradbury (acting head of regional office); email: alan.bradbury@ifrc.org; phone: +66.2.661.8201; fax: +66.2.661.9322*
- *Federation Asia Pacific zone: Jagan Chapagain (deputy head of zone), email: jagan.chapagain@ifrc.org, phone: +60 3 9207 5700; fax: +60 3 2161 0670*