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Disaster relief emergency fund (DREF)

Timor-Leste: Dengue outbreak

 International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

DREF operation n° MD RTP003 24 January 2014

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent (IFRC) Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) is a source of un-earmarked money created by the Federation in 1985 to ensure that immediate financial support is available for Red Cross and Red Crescent emergency response. The DREF is a vital part of the International Federation's disaster response system and increases the ability of National Societies to respond to disasters.

CHF 32,204 has been allocated from the IFRC's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) to support the National Society in delivering immediate assistance to 17,000 beneficiaries. Un-earmarked funds to repay DREF are encouraged.

Summary: A dengue fever outbreak has occurred in the Timor-Leste capital Dili, with an escalation in the number of dengue cases in early January 2014. As of the second week of January, the number of confirmed cases at the national hospital was 67 people and one death. The actual number of cases however is much higher as dengue is heavily under-reported and many people do not visit the hospital. The Ministry of Health (MoH) expects the numbers will continue to increase in the coming months due the wet season. Following the recent situation, the MoH, with support from the World Health Organisation (WHO), has been focussing on vector control activities across Dili to control mosquito breeding. The MoH invited the Red Cross and other organizations to conduct a joint campaign to reduce the spread of dengue infection.

In response to the government's request, Cruz Vermelha de Timor-Leste (CVTL) has mobilized 28 trained volunteers in two target areas in Dili. The volunteers have started to visit households and disseminate information related to dengue fever and its prevention. The proposed MoH campaign will include environmental cleaning in target areas. CVTL plans to strengthen the capacity of the volunteers by providing refresher training on dengue knowledge and behaviour change communication skills. In relation with awareness campaigns, CVTL will distribute brochures, erect banners with appropriate health messages in strategic locations and further disseminate key messages to target groups and the general public through the use of local radio.



Cruz Vermelha de Timor-Leste (CVTL) volunteers conduct house-to-house visits and share knowledge on dengue prevention. Photo: Victor Lacken / IFRC

This operation is expected to be implemented over a three months period, and will therefore be completed by April 2014. A final report will be made available three months after the end of the operation, by 23 July 2014.

[<click here for the DREF budget and contact details>](#)

The situation

Following the continuous rainy season which started in November 2013, the number of dengue cases has been increasing in Timor-Leste, especially in the capital Dili, the most populated city in country. Dengue fever is endemic in Timor-Leste; however outbreaks can occur particularly during the wet season and in

more populated areas such as Dili (population 137,879 or 26,785 households) this presents a large risk to the population.

As of 21 January 2014, a total of 67 people were reported with dengue fever in Dili, of which one fatality, with cases continuing to rise. The reported and official numbers reflect only a small proportion of the cases, as dengue is typically heavily under-reported. The Ministry of Health (MoH) conducted an assessment in Dili and identified the highest number of cases occurred in Comoro sub-district followed by Bairro Pite, Becora and Area Formosa sub-districts.

Coordination and partnerships

The Ministry of Health conducted a meeting with several humanitarian organizations operating in country - including the Cruz Vermelha de Timor-Leste (CVTL), Futura Timor Hari (FTH) and Alola Foundation, to request for support for a dengue prevention campaign in Dili to control the outbreak. The MoH, with assistance from WHO, is conducting vector control activities, including abate distribution (to kill mosquito larvae in wells), fogging and providing training for selected people to become Promotor Saude Familia – health promoter for family (PSF) - to conduct the activities. The IFRC country representative for Timor-Leste is in close contact with WHO to coordinate joint activities and to avoid duplication. Due to limited funding, other organizations are involved; Alola Foundation and Future Timor Hari donated their technical staff and transportation to the MoH campaign.

In recognition of its role as auxiliary to the government, CVTL has been asked to support the awareness campaign in two selected areas in Dili District.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

Since August 2002, Cruz Vermelha de Timor-Leste (CVTL) has been working to improve the humanitarian situation and to date has provided continuous support to vulnerable communities in 13 districts throughout Timor-Leste. As auxiliary to the Government of Timor-Leste (GoTL), CVTL is often requested by the Ministry of Health to support them with campaigns to reduce dengue fever and malaria outbreaks through CVTL's volunteer network. Previous outbreaks and subsequent campaigns have typically been smaller and confined to smaller areas.

Since the numbers of confirmed dengue cases started escalating, CVTL has been in close contact and coordination with the Ministry of Health and other partners to discuss the situation and plan the campaign. A total of 28 volunteers have been mobilized to start health education and promotion activities.

The needs

Based on the assessment conducted by the government, CVTL has been asked to support the awareness and cleaning campaign in two selected areas of Dili: Cristu Rei sub-district in Becora area and Nain Feto sub-district in Formosa area. The campaign is aimed at reducing the spread of dengue infection and will reach 17,000 people from all levels of the community. Under this DREF operation, CVTL activities will reach 4,250 households and ten schools in the mentioned areas.

The proposed operation

Following the Ministry of Health's recommendations and request, with the technical and funding support from IFRC, CVTL will sustain the health education and promotion activities initiated specifically for dengue fever prevention over a period of up to three months to the end of the wet season.

To ensure the coverage and effectiveness of the campaign, CVTL will use its community-based approach. CVTL has mobilized 28 volunteers from CVTL Dili Branch to roll out the campaign in coordination with the Ministry of Health's vector control activities. In selecting the volunteers, CVTL ensures a gender balance. The selected volunteers have been trained in community-based health and first aid (CBHFA) as well as in behaviour change communication, with two volunteers recently trained in epidemic control for volunteers (ECV). A refresher training in dengue and behaviour change communication is planned to ensure the knowledge and skills of all the volunteers being used in this campaign are optimized prior to the planned field activities.

The volunteers will conduct household visits to share the basic knowledge on dengue twice a week as well as work together with target communities on elimination of mosquito breeding places in surrounding areas through cleaning campaigns. Volunteers will also join the mass communication campaign using handheld

speakers in strategic areas. To ensure a wider coverage, CVTL plans to record health messages to be aired on local radio.

In addition, CVTL will conduct dengue awareness sessions for its staff in headquarters and in the Dili branch office once a month, for three months until the end of the wet season.

The IFRC country office will provide: technical support as well as maintain coordination with WHO and other organizations involved in this activity; routine monitoring; coaching support and feedback to CVTL staff and volunteers to ensure that the operation is conducted effectively. A workshop will be held at the conclusion of the campaign to capture lessons learnt so that these can be incorporated into any future outbreak response or planned interventions.

Emergency health

Outcome: The number of dengue cases in Dili District is reduced through health education, promotion activities and environmental cleaning among 17,000 beneficiaries in Becora and Formosa areas of Dili District during the three months operation.

Outputs and activities planned

- Conduct refresher training in dengue and behaviour change communication knowledge and practices for 28 volunteers of Dili Branch
- Print 5,000 dengue fever awareness brochures, 100 posters and other information, education and communication (IEC) materials
- Provide education on environmental sanitation and dengue for 4,250 families in target areas
- Conduct cleaning campaign in target communities
- Conduct cleaning campaign in CVTL national headquarters and Dili branch office
- Conduct dengue awareness campaigns through radio and other communication channels
- Conduct dengue awareness session for CVTL national headquarters and Dili branch staff once in a month
- Monitor and evaluate activities
- Conduct lesson learnt workshop
- Conduct short baseline and end-line survey in communities to measure impact of the activities

Contact information

For further information specifically related to this operation please contact:

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How we work

All IFRC assistance seeks to adhere to the [Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organizations \(NGOs\) in Disaster Relief](#) and the [Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response \(Sphere\)](#) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable.

The IFRC's vision is to inspire, encourage, facilitate and promote at all times all forms of humanitarian activities by National Societies, with a view to preventing and alleviating human suffering, and thereby contributing to the maintenance and promotion of human dignity and peace in the world.



The IFRC's work is guided by [Strategy 2020](#) which puts forward three strategic aims:

1. Save lives, protect livelihoods, and strengthen recovery from disaster and crises.
 2. Enable healthy and safe living.
 3. Promote social inclusion and a culture of non-violence and peace.
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DREF OPERATION

23/01/2014

MDRTP003 EAST TIMOR : DENGUE OUTBREAK CONTROL

Budget Group	DREF Grant Budget CHF
Water, Sanitation & Hygiene	6,100
Other Supplies & Services	3,100
Total RELIEF ITEMS, CONSTRUCTION AND SUPPLIES	9,200
Transport & Vehicle Costs	1,500
Total LOGISTICS, TRANSPORT AND STORAGE	1,500
Volunteers	13,776
Total PERSONNEL	13,776
Workshops & Training	1,000
Total WORKSHOP & TRAINING	1,000
Information & Public Relations	1,500
Communications	225
Financial Charges	100
Other General Expenses	2,937
Total GENERAL EXPENDITURES	4,762
Programme and Supplementary Services Recovery	1,965
Total INDIRECT COSTS	1,965
TOTAL BUDGET	32,204