

INCREASING COMMUNITY RESILIENCE IN OECUSSE



Triana

World Neighbors Timor Leste



Introduction

Oecusse Region is characterized by low food production levels, an absence of adequate clean water supplies, and isolation from the rest of the country. As is typical of Timor-Leste upland areas, the ecology is fragile and bears the negative impact of slash-and-burn agriculture, which also negatively impacts already inadequate water resources. The lack of clean water sources and sanitation and hygienic practices in the area leads to health problems, particularly for the elderly and children.

This is the background to the **Increasing Community Resilience in Oecusse Project (ICROP)** that is currently being implemented by World Neighbors (WN) through the financial support of USAID. ICROP builds upon the work WN has been performing in Oecusse since 2005, working through long-term local partners to improve food security, and to increase the resilience of communities to respond to the negative impacts of climate change.

Objectives

The goal of the project is to contribute towards improving the health and quality of life of people in Oecusse, by increasing clean and safe water availability through the adoption of community-based water management techniques and a community-based natural resources management approach.



WN is working in 13 sucos, 25 aldeias and 80 water sources

Approach

An integrated and participatory approach is implemented throughout the project. WN through our local partners facilitate communities from vulnerable upland households to plan, implement, and maintain sustainable watershed management programs. This entails the rehabilitation of already established water sources through tree planting around springs and ponds and blocking off from livestock to prevent contamination; the use of micro-watershed management techniques for water harvesting and soil conservation; and improving water productivity through sustainable agricultural practices. Capacity building of community-based organisations and the enactment of local laws to protect and maintain water sources are also strengthened through the project.

Activities and Preliminary Results

► Community-based organisations formed and trained

Building the capacity of local organisations is important for improving community resilience and self-reliance, therefore ICROP aims to improve the capacity of more than 250 of community based groups.

WN is currently working with multiple water management committees through both institutional and technical trainings and assistance in the function and rehabilitation of their village water systems.



► Water sources protected and conserved

In the target communities, less than 10% of people are currently using safe and clean water from protected water sources. The project aims to increase this to more than 70%.

In less than one year, 32 water sources have so far been protected and conserved, where communities themselves have planned and designed their own activities which have included fencing, terracing, application of micro-watershed and soil and water conservation techniques, and establishing tree nurseries as well as tree planting.



► 40 farmer groups have been trained in contour and organic farming

WN trains farmer groups to establish and manage permanent garden plots and to practice sustainable agriculture through applying soil and water conservation and organic farming techniques.

