



RAM – RAWCS Timor Leste Team

6th to 18th May 2014



RAM Maubara LLIN distribution and Adopt-A-School Project Team Report.

Introduction

A team of eight Rotary Volunteers travelled to Timor Leste in May 2014 to assist the National Malaria Control Program (NMCP) distribute bed nets in the Maubara Sub-District. This work formed part of RAWCS Project 143 - 2010 / 2011 and is a continuation of Rotarians Against Malaria (RAM) hands-on participation in the distribution of nets that RAM has supplied. Whilst in Timor Leste the team also distributed school resources to eight Primary schools in the Liquica and Maubara areas and assisted with several RAWCS building programs.

Team Members

David Pearson	RC Guyra D9650 Team Leader (D9650 RAM Chair)
Wendy Mulligan	RC Guyra D9650 (President elect)
Ian Klein	RC Coonabarabran D9650 (President)
Hugh Raadgever	RC Coonabarabran D9650 (AG elect)
Peter Rheinberger	RC Coffs Harbour South D9650 (President elect)
Rod Browne	RC Gunnedah D9650
Ian Dyball	RC Taree D9650 (PDG D9650)
Ruth Little	RC Rosanna D9790 (D9790 RAM Chair)

All members except Ruth arrived in Dili on 6th May and departed on 18th May, Ruth arrived on 4th May and departed on 19th May. National RAM Chairman Phil Dempster arrived in Dili on 29th April to coordinate our activities with the NMCP and departed on 10th May.

Logistics

Transport was provided by a Toyota Landcruiser wagon and a Rav 4 hired from Rentlo in Dili. These vehicles were in poor condition and the Rav 4 had to be replaced when it blew an engine at Maubara on the first day. The Landcruiser was found to have a dangerously loose wheel but was satisfactory after the wheel nuts had been tightened. It is recommended that a vehicle safety check list be developed by RAWCS for hire vehicles so potential risks can be averted at the point of hire.

Accommodation in Dili consisted of the RAWCS B&B dormitory at the Carmelite sister's Fatu Hada Convent. This was basic but well located and functional. Several repair and maintenance issues were identified with this complex, some of which were attended to, and a separate report has been

written on this and is attached as an appendix. During week days, in the field, the team stayed at Caimeo Beach camping resort at Liquica. This was cheap, well located, on the beach and had great food. Overall it was perfect for the job.

RAM bed net distribution Maubara Sub-District.

As part of it's ongoing work in Timor Leste, RAM agreed to supply 7,500 Long Lasting Insecticidal Nets (LLINs) in 2014 to protect 'at risk' populations from malaria. To fund the purchase of these nets D9650 contributed A\$22,000 and D9790 contributed A\$2,500; sufficient between to the two districts to buy nearly 5,000 nets. The team was formed to participate in the distribution of the nets in the Maubara Sub- District (of Liquica District) located 30km west of Dili and thus to be able to report back to our districts on the effective use of the funds.

Staff of the NMCP had been preparing for the bed net distribution for some weeks, before our team arrived, by selecting and training village volunteers to conduct information sessions in the villages and to collect up-to-date census information from which to compile distribution lists. A stock of LLINs from Global Fund stores in Dili was relocated to storage at the Liquica district office and the Maubara clinic. RAM purchased nets were due to arrive in Dili on the 11th but were delayed at sea until the 20th.

On 5th May Ruth and Phil travelled to Maubara and assisted with a briefing session for local volunteers before returning to Dili to meet the rest of the team. On the 7th the entire team travelled to the Liquica Ministry of Health office where we were briefed on the plans for the distribution by District Malaria Officer Fernando. Following this briefing we spent the rest of the day travelling to several village posts where we observed the local volunteers compiling the census data. This gave us a good understanding of the process and a great introduction to the landscape, the level of development, roads and housing conditions across the Maubara sub-district. As well as visiting villages close to Maubara we drove right around the Maubara headland, where a major road up-grade is taking place and approached the steep central ridges from the Loes River valley to the south west in the vicinity of Guico and the village of Vatuvei.

The following day we travelled to the Maubara Community Health centre and had a good look at it's functions which include diagnostic microscopy for malaria as well as general health services including a birthing unit. Just up the road the Community meeting hall was being used by the local volunteers to check their village data against the previous census and to complete compilation of the distribution lists. The volunteers then commenced writing out the individual net entitlement chits from the distribution lists so that they could be hand delivered to each household.

It became obvious that although the staff of the NMCP were happy to let us observe all these preparations they were not going to allow us to actually participate and if anything our presence was slowing them down. District Officer Fernando then informed us that we would not be needed on the 9th but that we could help with the handing over of the nets to start on the 14th. Although the team would have preferred to be actively involved, we accepted this arrangement as it allowed time for our School resource distribution side-project.

Over the weekend we were delighted to host the NMCP Manager Mrs Maria Mota to dinner where she gave the team a thorough briefing on the progress and strategies of the NMCP. The team was very impressed with her depth of knowledge and the thoroughness of the program. A separate report has been compiled on this and is attached as an appendix.

Unfortunately on the evening of the 13th the District Officer informed us that the net hand over had been postponed for another 24hours; however, following a few phone calls and the assistance of the

NMCP Manager, the original schedule was reinstated. It is possible that the District Officer was confused about the delayed arrival of the nets that RAM was supplying and perhaps he thought that the team only wanted to see those specific nets distributed.

Our team actively participated in the distribution of LLINs on the 14th, 15th and 16th May distributing 1300 LLINs at three distribution points covering eight village 'posts'. Team members participated in receiving the chits, reconciling them to the distribution list and having the representative for each household sign for and receive their allocation of nets. Signing sometimes involved an inked finger-print but the records were rigorous. At each distribution point the program commenced with speeches and training on net maintenance and care as well as general advice on avoiding mosquito bites and understanding the disease. The training was aided by excellent flip charts which the village people were able to look through, in more detail, as they waited in line for their nets.

On Friday 16th May the NMCP Manager Maria Mota joined us at the distribution point in the village of Pamatapua and we were all invited into several homes to observe the old nets (four and a half years old) being replaced by the new nets. This gave us a good insight into the longevity of the nets, how they are used, how they are maintained and even more importantly how they are valued by the people they protect. These houses were also a good venue for more in depth discussions with Maria Mota about vector control and other value adding that the NMCP delivers in the villages. It can be taken as a clear sign of the value that Maria places on RAM's contribution that she took a half day out of her busy schedule to join the team in the field.

Overall team members concluded that the NMCP is well run and thorough in its approach and that RAM has made a valued contribution to the ongoing success of the program. Since 2006 the national malaria infection rate has been reduced from 220/1000 people to 0.9/1000 and the Global Fund has awarded the NMCP an A+ rating. The program is now moving into the elimination phase in 5 of the 13 districts and hopefully in the near future cross border cooperation with Indonesia, for work in West Timor, will see malaria eliminated from the whole island. It will be great if Rotary can claim a stake in this future success but for now we can be well pleased with the progress that we have supported in Timor Leste.

Adopt-A-School project.

In planning the trip it was obvious that our activities with the LLIN distribution would put us into many poorly resourced villages where we could potentially contribute to schools by presenting boxes of school resources as suggested by the Adopt-A-School project kit list. Team members sought donations of materials and funds prior to travel and by combining items brought from Australia with items bought in Dili to a total of US\$1,000 we were able to make up eight boxes. Each reusable sealed plastic box contained numerous boxes of blue, red and black biros, plain and coloured pencils, sharpeners, erasers, rulers, set squares & protractors, 5 pairs of scissors, a ream of paper, exercise books, coloured paper, bulldog clips, pencil cases etc. The materials were purchased and the boxes assembled in Dili on 6th and 10th May.

In addition Rod and others bought enough soccer balls for the eight schools and other giving opportunities and a pump to inflate them. All team members also had various small gifts to put smiles on the faces of people we met along the way and these were joyfully received.

We commenced the distribution phase by visiting the Liquica District Ministry of Education office on 8th May where we met with the Deputy Director Mr Larini Lopez. Mr Lopez gave us blanket permission to enter the schools in the District and provided a detailed spread sheet listing each school, its range of classes and the student population of each class. From this we were able to select relatively small Primary schools to provide with our resource boxes.

On the 8th and 9th May we were assisted by a guide/interpreter who we had employed to assist with the LLIN distribution however when he failed to show up on 12th May we were lucky that two high school students from the Catholic school in Liquisa agreed to help us after we gained their teacher's permission. These two were Jay Nick, who we had met whilst visiting the famous Liquica church on 9th May, and his friend Nonky Lopez. On 13th May we were guided from Maubara to Vatuva, high on the ridges, by Zambinal who was one of the Maubara clinic staff. He also introduced us to a fascinating 84 year old Portuguese coffee grower Mr Jose Estaves who welcomed us into his home and provided us with morning coffee (his) and fruit from his tropical orchard.

The following schools each received a resource box:-

Name of School	Grades	Total Students	Principal or Snr. Teacher
Liquica	1 to 6	406	Benedita Amarae De Araiyo
Lauhata	1 to 6	396	Andres Smak Sao Joao
Mauboque	1 to 6	427	Venceslau Dos Santos
Vatunau	1 to 6	320	Gabriela
Maumeta	1 to 6	677	Geraldo S Ximenes
Ediri	1 to 6	232	Yosorio Tomas Pinto
Maubara	1 to 6	662	Pasquale Baovida Lobo
Vatuvou	1 to 6	220	Coutino De Araujo

[All of these schools are designated E B (Eskola Basica) 1,2 (Primary and Middle).]

The team's arrival and the presentation were received with great enthusiasm by both Teachers and students and the balls were a great hit. We gave the kids at Maubara a Frisbee which caused a little consternation but they soon got the hang of it. At each school we were asked to fill in the visitor's book which we did in the name of Rotary Australia, to keep it simple. Each box was labelled Presente Husi Rotary Australia which is Tetum for Presented By.

Because of the reluctance of the local NMCP staff to let our team help with the pre-distribution paperwork the school project took up most of the spare time amounting to about 3½ days of very satisfying team work.

Building Jobs.

In addition a bit of sight seeing , the team members found time on the two weekends to assist for about half a day on each of the following construction jobs:

RC Inverell's building of a dormitory for the Dominican Orphanage at Hera: Here we were able to assist by preparing reinforcing steel and wire ties for the coming concrete pours freeing the project team up for more skilled tasks.

RC Dili's re-surfacing of a basketball court for wheel-chair athletes adjacent to the rehabilitation centre: Here we worked with the Dili Rotarians and their family and friends to clean out big cracks in the existing concrete pavement ready to fill and repair them with new concrete grout.

Carmelite Convent RAWCS barracks at Fatu Hada: The accommodation block built by Rotarians from D9800 and D9790 in 2003 is a great facility but several plumbing repair jobs needed to be attended to. Team members replaced a faulty float valve on the header tank which had been overflowing down the back side of the building long enough for a five foot tall tree to have taken root on the platform. The tree was removed and a surplus 300lt tank, which had been left sitting on the roof, was secured by being brought down to ground level for storage. Other minor plumbing jobs were completed and a pedestal fan was bought for one of the back rooms.

Further maintenance and improvements are recommended for the Fatu Hada facility. These observations and recommendations are listed in a separate report appended.

Conclusions

The Timor Leste National Malaria Control Program is a well-run organisation delivering impressive results. RAM's contribution is gratefully acknowledged and has made a meaningful contribution.

Any assistance that poorly resourced schools receive helps kids get more out of their time in class.

It is always advisable to have back-up plans where RAWCS projects rely on cooperation with other organisations.

It is recommended that a vehicle safety check list be developed by RAWCS for hire vehicles.

David Pearson. RAM Chairman D9650, Team Leader.25th May 2014.

Attachments

Photographs.

Report: "Report on progress of the Timor Leste National Malaria Control Program." David Pearson.

Report: "Fatu Hada Timor Leste Repairs & Maintenance Observations." Ian Dyball.

Photographs



Rod, Peter, Dave, Ruth, Wendy, Ian K., Hugh Ian D.

RAM Maubara LLIN Distribution;



Local volunteer collecting data at Vatuvei.



Malaria education at Morae distribution point.



Signing with a fingerprint at Maubara.



Mum and Bub receiving nets for a big family.



Checking lists and flip-chart at Pametapua.



Two precious bundles.



Chits exchanged for nets at Pametapua.



She got this special net when pregnant last year.

Adopt-A-School Project;



Shopping in Dili.



Box of goodies for Primary schooling.



Meeting with Deputy Director Mr Lopez.



School kit and frizbee at Maubara E B 1,2.



Rod doing what he does best.



Happy kids and Rotarians at Vatunau E B 1,2.



Peter with student guide Nonky Lopes.



Presentation at Ediri EB 1,2.

Building Jobs;



Plumbing maintenance at Fatu Hada.





Preparing 're-o' steel at Hera.



Repairing basketball court with RC Dili.



Liquica District. Maubara sub-district occupies the western end and the headland.