

Framework for investment

Four pilot communities



City Upgrading Strategy for Dili primarily sort to achieve two key objectives which enable the economically, socially and environmentally sustainable development of Dili and in so doing having general implications for National Development:

- Provide a city upgrading strategy for the future development of Urban Dili that meets the needs and aspirations of Dili's residents. The strategy has as key objective the identification of areas in high need of assistance, these being poorest and most disadvantaged areas of the city. This is an important first step in a city where slum/low-income areas are not immediately self evident, Dili is a city where many of the poorest areas are scattered and to some degree "hidden" through-out and its peripheries.
- Provide a model for overall sustainable finance through the selected pilot projects for replication through-out the city and other urban centers of the country. This multifaceted model could be readily adopted in other locations where small-scale community infrastructure and small-scale economic development are priorities for community development.

The Dili CUS among other objectives, establishes a framework for investment in under-served settlements across the urban area of Dili. The project has identified some 98 local community areas or 45% of the rapidly growing population of the city requiring upgrading to meet minimum service requirements. The Dili CUS provides the Government, which is struggling to respond to these growing service delivery expectations both in Dili and indeed throughout the country, with a strategy of how to identify, plan for and implement strategies for the efficient and equitable development of the city. Central to this approach is an emphasis on the active participation of communities in meeting these needs. Community Action Planning (CAP) provides a tool for local communities to participate as partners in upgrading of their local communities and in so doing, assist in the realization of the Dili CUS.

Pilot Community Upgrading

The formulation of CAP guidelines allowed the team of Dili CUS to pilot upgrading activities with four local communities in Dili (Alecrim, Au-Hun, Sao Jose and Boamorena). By following the step-by-step process laid out in the CAP, the team was able to partner with the newly formed Community Development Associations to implement a range of small-scale community infrastructure projects. CAP forms part of an integrated approach to the establishing of a comprehensive housing and urban development program for Timor-Leste.

Community Development Activities



Local communities, particularly in urban Dili, can be very wary of people outside of their communities offering assistance. Communities are often suspicious of the motivations of those assisting and the misappropriation of stems from systemic corruption during the period of occupation of Timor-Leste. Overcoming this perception requires a cautious and slower approach to build community trust before the CAP process can begin in earnest. It became clear early in the piloting of the CAP process that local communities would require very regular meetings and considerable assistance to work through this process.

Local communities had previously demonstrated limited proactive outputs in improving their conditions due partly to a legacy of a dependency mentality, and lack of skill and knowledge due to preservation of rural custom in the community. Through the establishment of CDA, implementation of CAP and Community Contract, the community have developed local leadership to become actively involved in the development of their area, learned basic skills in accounting, project management and construction of simple community infrastructure.

Through the implementation of Dili CUS pilot project communities have worked together with relevant government agencies. This experience has served to develop a link between the community and government.

Comprehension of key terms

Community Action Planning

Community Action Planning (CAP) is principally a process for local communities to identify issues affecting their local community and agree a plan of action to achieve improvements. These issues can be many and varied and may include infrastructure, land ownership and occupation, income and livelihood, and health and education. The CAP process seeks to empower local communities to become active partners with the Government in the development of their areas.

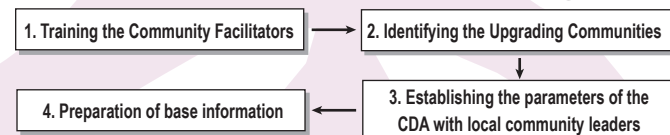
Community Development Association

A Community Development Association (CDA) is essentially an organizing committee made up of members of a local community, as elected by the community. The CDA is primarily responsible for assisting the community to formulate and implement the CAP.

Community Contracts

A key tool in the implementation of a CAP is the issuing of community contracts. These contracts act as agreements between the local community (represented by the CDA) and the partner agency, which for the pilots was the Dili CUS team, but in future CAP's will be the Community Development Unit representing the Government.

Pre-Community Action Planning Steps



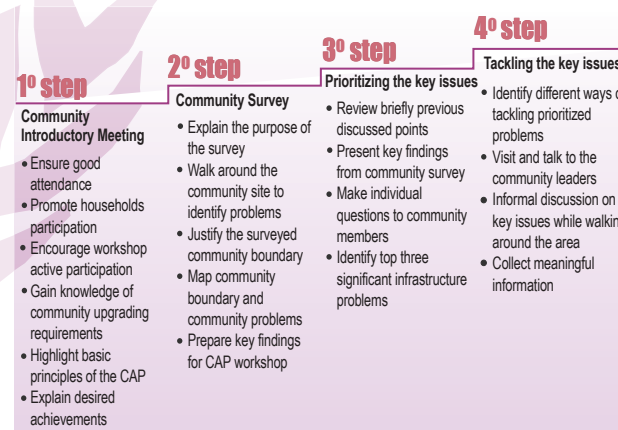
1. The Dili CUS team undertook intensive daily training sessions over two-week period in the CAP process. It was ensured that all facilitators were very clear on the process and the outcomes of CAP. The resident UN-HABITAT advisor then assisted the team through the piloting of the CAP process.

2. The process for identifying communities for the design and implementation of a CAP needed to be cognizant of a number of key considerations. Identifying target communities was initially found to be quite difficult in urban Dili. The project team examined various models for selecting communities and formulating and implementing projects that had been undertaken by past donor projects. Most often there were issues associated with each approach. This step was essential to present to the local government - District Dili Administration - the results of the Dili CUS's assessment of needs.

3. Key to gaining community participation, in the early stages at least, is ensuring that the jurisdictions of each stake holder in the process is very well understood by community leaders and subsequently by their communities. Project facilitators needed to ensure the roles and the responsibilities of the CDA were made clear to local leaders or they have assumed decision-making powers well beyond the parameters of the Dili CUS and this will cause some concerns within the various levels of government.

4. The aid of visual aids was of real benefit to the Dili CUS. Before meeting with the community the team prepared detailed aerial photography and building line maps of each of the four communities. Multiple copies of black base maps were also printed to allow communities to draw on issues and details during meeting discussions. For all communities this was the first time they had seen a map of aerial photo of their location, however most developed sufficient map reading skills to identify their own property and surrounding land uses.

Community Action Planning Steps



A very important measure in ensuring good attendance is to engage each member of community individually right from the beginning. Understanding not only the broader characteristic of the community through surveys and workshops but gaining knowledge of and the building an affinity with individuals in the community is key to better understanding what they really require from upgrading. The broad parameters of the Dili CUS, the role of the CDU and the parameters of the level of assistance should be clearly stated. Once the CAP process is understood, communities were asked to nominate individuals for the key positions of chairperson, secretary and treasurer.

Community surveys were conducted after the establishment of CDA. The first step was to explain to the community about the purpose of the survey and request the CDA to undertake their own preliminary surveys concerning the community boundaries and areas that need to be upgraded. After the preliminary survey, the CDA members assisted the project team, local leaders and community members to survey the areas that they have identified as a problematic and to the community boundary that they had surveyed.

The facilitators identified and presented key findings from the community survey and explained to the community that will be asked to identify what they individually believe are the top three most significant infrastructure issues facing the local community. The active participation of the community in the tallying process encourages the community to feel actively involved. The results are then discussed for clarity and agreement is sort that tabulation is a true reflection of the group's views. During the week (s) leading up to the meeting, the CDA team visits the community leaders and the CDA informally to become better acquainted with the people and the issues of the community. It was clear from the pilot communities that most of the community leaders had thought quite a lot about the key issues for some time, had a good understanding of the nature of the problem and had some good ideas on how to resolve them.



The Community Contract Process

Once the full budgets for each of the priority projects have been clearly itemized the project team can begin issuing community contracts for specific types of activities. The project team devised three types of community contracts based on the differing needs for engaging of services: community contracts, private contracts and government contracts.

The community contract process in the pilot phase of the project evolved a simplified process. From the budget worked out in the CAP process the project team would prepare a draft contract for a specific work package based on discussions with the relevant CDA. This is a simple contract presented in Tetum (the local language) first as a draft for discussion. Once reviewed by the CDA and any modifications made to it is presented to the community for signing. The contract is signed in triplicate by a number of people to ensure transparency and that no collusion has taken place. Signatories are 1) the CDA chairperson, 2) the CDU project manager, 3) the CDA organizing secretary or the CDA treasurer and 4 and 5) are two witnesses. Where the contract is for works by a contractor outside of the community e.g. government or private contractors, then theirs is an additional signatory. Once all signatures are on the document a copy of the contract is placed on the community notice board.

Upon completion of all works associated with the contract, the work of the contractor is assessed by the CDA and the project team. If agreed that is has all been completed to the satisfaction of all parties then the contract is passed on to the funding agency with a cover note from the project team requesting payment.