

Emergency Activities in Timor Leste: Measles Immunization

(Oct – Dec 1999)

**Training for Improved Practices: Public
Health, Nutrition and WES in Emergency**

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I. Background

- ◆ All infrastructures destroyed
- ◆ UNICEF/WHO co-chaired Health & Nutrition Committee (NGOs/ICRC)
- ◆ EPI stopped functioning since April 1999
- ◆ Children haven't received any immunization for more than 6 months
- ◆ Measles outbreak reported in refugee camps of West Timor
- ◆ Expected huge influx of returnees from W. Timor

II. Emergency Measles Campaign

- ◆ An urgent request for supplies to reinstate the routine EPI and Measles Campaign
- ◆ MSF-H and UNICEF started Measles Campaign in 19 October 1999, only for one day in Dili, the Capital
- ◆ A total of 2,845 children, between 9 months and 5 years immunised. (>20,000)
- ◆ Problems with Data/Info, Soc.Mob, HR, IEC development, limited cooperation from CMOC/Interfet

III. Mass Measles Campaign

- ◆ Influx of returnees arrived
- ◆ UNICEF continued MMC in Dili and other districts for children between 9 months to 15 years
- ◆ Worked with WHO disease surveillance team
- ◆ 18 cases reported with 2 deaths in Dili (UNICEF confirmed)

III. Mass Measles Campaign

- ◆ Intensify to conduct sweeping (mopping-up) activities in Dili (divided into 3 areas: east, West and outskirts)
- ◆ MMC carried out for three weeks in Dili
- ◆ Vitamin A provided to only those who haven't received it during the last 6 months (Decision made by committee)

III. Mass Measles Campaign

- ◆ Worked with MSF-H, MDM (France and Portugal) and WVI for MMC in other 9 districts
- ◆ Up to 29 November 1999, approx. 33,400 children between 9 months to 15 years immunised by UNICEF teams
- ◆ Problems with Population data, mobility, irregular repatriation, HR and supplies

IV. Setting up the Routine EPI

Human Resources

- ◆ UNICEF worked with Lahane nursing School with a huge network of nurses and midwives in Dili and elsewhere
- ◆ 2 supervisors and 60 nurses/nurse-midwives/student-nurses are working in Dili and other districts

IV. Setting up the Routine EPI

Temporary immunisation centre

- ◆ Lahane Nursing School as temporary UNICEF immunisation centre
- ◆ ICRC hospital as cold chain room

Logistic support for routine EPI

- ◆ Transportation
- ◆ Supplies for safe injection and waste disposal
- ◆ Perdiems/Travel allowances
- ◆ Limited storage at ICRC Hospital/Vaccines stored in Darwin

V. Achievements

- ◆ Implemented Mass Measles Campaign followed by setting up of routine EPI programme
- ◆ Initiated a national immunisation team for planning, implementation, monitoring and supervision of Measles immunisation program
- ◆ Avoided an impending Measles epidemic
- ◆ Strong collaboration with counterparts for future EPI and H & N project activities

VI. Constraints

- ◆ Lack of HR especially national staff and technical expertise
- ◆ Communication as major constraints for implementation
- ◆ Unstable population, and difficulty in getting demographic data
- ◆ Delayed arrival of UNICEF own cold chain units, vaccine carriers and ice packs
- ◆ UNICEF's initial institutional support compared to NGOs

Thank You