

## East Timor

### NGO Sector Strengthening Program



Since December 2005 ACDI/VOCA has been implementing a \$1.6 million, USAID-funded program to build NGO-sector capacity in East Timor, called the NGO Sector Strengthening Program. The Center for International Conflict Resolution (CICR) at Columbia University serves as a subcontractor on the five-year program. Together, ACDI/VOCA and CICR are working with BELUN, a national nongovernmental organization (NGO) in East Timor that was set up to implement the project, bolster civil society, and reduce the underlying tensions that can lead to violent conflict. The program conducts focused and highly participatory needs assessments to identify community priorities, since these may inform efforts to reduce tensions and prevent violent responses to community challenges.

The program places an emphasis on building sound relationships with community groups and NGOs based on open and transparent communication. BELUN has more than 150 NGO partners across all 13 of East Timor's districts, to which it provides specialized technical assistance. The program also fosters NGO networks, using technology and other resources to

### BELUN works to bolster civil society and reduce tensions in East Timor.

enhance cooperation, facilitate national linkages, and strengthen relationships among international and Timorese communities. Vehicles for institutional learning, collaboration and coordination include the National Database of Community Development Projects and the Small Grant Donors' Network, both of which are managed by BELUN.

BELUN works with the NGOs to reinforce areas of strength while addressing challenges faced by the organizations themselves and by the communities in which they work. To do this, BELUN has positioned five teams throughout the country in Ainaro, Baucau, Dili, Maliana and Oecussi. The teams facilitate interaction with BELUN's remote and isolated partner base, and improve monitoring and evaluation of partner activities. BELUN's goal is to increase civil society organizational capacity in order to improve service delivery across all sectors in East Timor. To help achieve this goal, a small grants program has been established to provide resources to innova-



# Project Profile

tive and sustainable initiatives that contribute to their communities. BELUN works with partners to implement projects across a multiplicity of development sectors, including agriculture, education, environment, health, infrastructure, media, sports, recreation, water and sanitation. In addition, BELUN seeks to establish collaborative relationships with academic institutions in Dili and abroad to facilitate institutional learning and information sharing.

BELUN works with partners to plan and implement programs in coordination with other donors and local government representatives. Consistent monitoring and evaluation of activities ensures quality. Of equal importance is BELUN's commitment to assisting groups beyond the implementation of short-term activities. Technical support, capacity building, and training services help ensure that development efforts are long-term and holistic, and that they involve true community participation.

*Updated: 2/08*