



Rapid qualitative assessment in Timor Tengah Selatan district

East Nusa Tenggara Province

November - December 2015

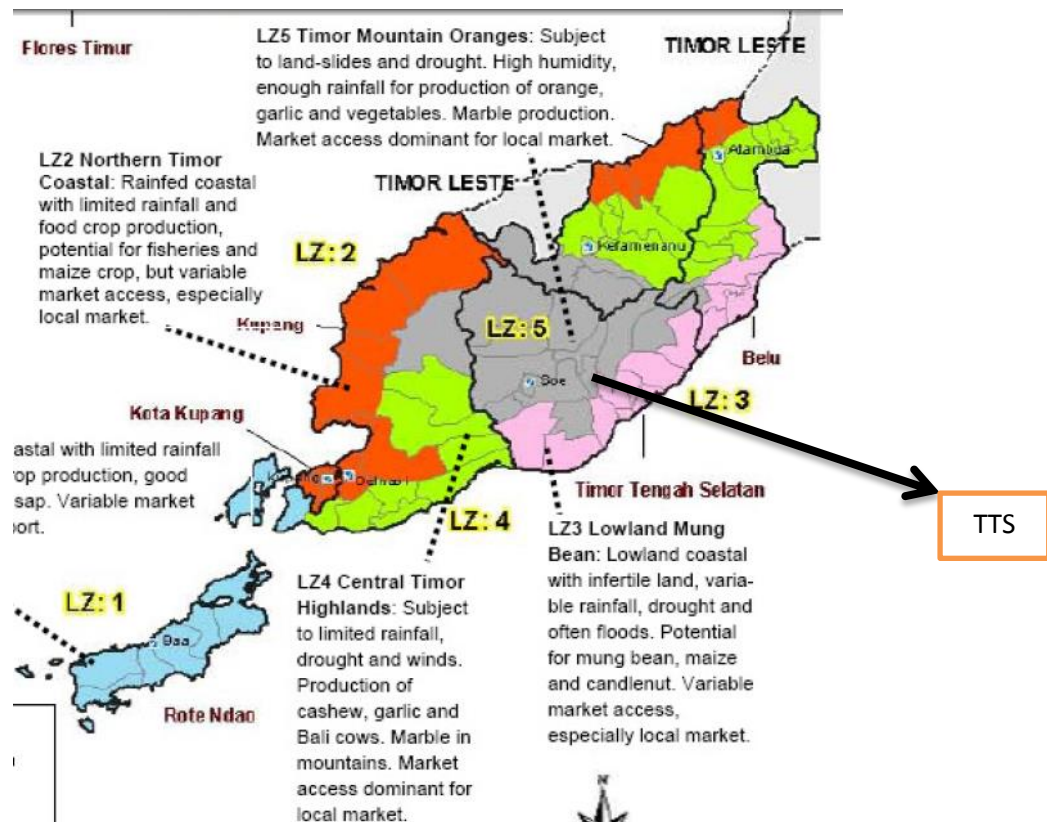
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The rapid qualitative assessment focused on **Timor Tengah Selatan (TTS district)**, where CARE has been working for many years in the development sector, and where the impact of El Nino might be potentially high (this district is chronically food insecure, mainly dependent on rain fed agriculture, very vulnerable to cyclical droughts and heavy winds).

Context

- Like most of Eastern Indonesia, **Timor Tengah Selatan (TTS)** district is receiving much less rainfall and has longer and more pronounced dry period than the rest of Indonesia. Rainfall has become very variable and unreliable over time, and this climate change is exacerbated during El Nino event.
- There are 2 livelihood zones in TTS (Coastal/Lowland Mung bean LHZ and Mountain LHZ); see map below:



- The main constraints facing the farmers are the need to cultivate sloping land and a short rainy season (4 months – mid-November to mid-March in a normal year); the main risk factors are associated with unpredictable rainfalls (late start, erratic rainfall, dry spells, and early end) and heavy winds in January-February (affecting standing maize)¹. Livestock rearing (poultry/ducks, pigs, goats and cattle) provides an important source of income during the hunger season (October-March), but approximately 20% of the families only raise chicken and ducks (table below):

¹ “Farm risk reduction assessment for Nusa Tenggara Islands” – Asia Research Center – July 2010

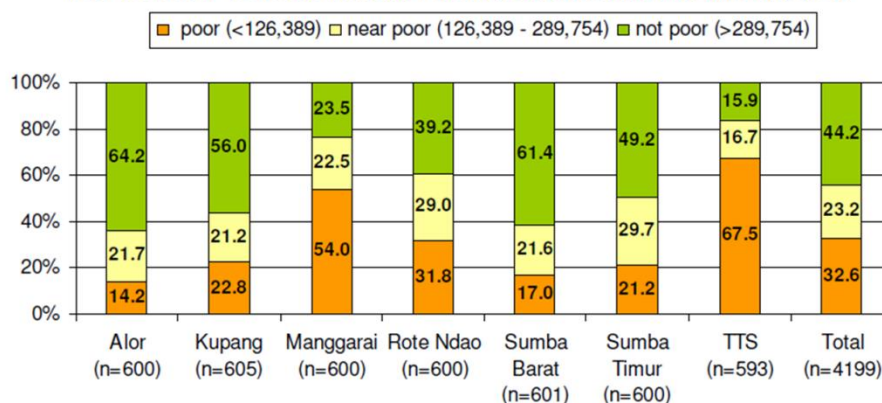
TABLE 14 - LIVESTOCK OWNERSHIP

District	Having animal husbandry (%)	n	Type of animal raised (%)					
			cattle	Goat	Chicken/duck	pigs	horse	Other
Alor	81.7	600	1.8	20.0	74.5	72.9	0.2	0.6
Kupang	83.5	605	26.5	16.8	76.2	74.5	1.8	2.6
Manggarai	54.7	600	9.8	9.5	56.4	57.9	0.0	10.1
Rote Ndao	80.4	601	18.4	20.9	88.8	67.1	2.1	10.2
Sumba Barat	86.9	601	8.6	9.8	80.5	83.0	10.5	34.5
Sumba Timur	87.5	600	20.4	22.9	86.5	75.2	12.8	11.3
TTS	93.0	600	35.1	8.8	82.4	80.6	1.3	17.4
Total	81.1	4207	17.9	15.7	79.1	74.0	4.4	12.7

Source: WFP – 2010

- Almost 80% of the agriculture is rain fed. In 2010 (WFP/VAM²), 67% of the population was below the provincial poverty line (compared to 23% in Kupang district for instance): this situation is unlikely to have changed:

FIGURE 50 - HOUSEHOLD INCOME COMPARED WITH THE PROVINCIAL POVERTY LINE, BY DISTRICT
(CUT OFF POINT = NTT PROVINCIAL POVERTY LINE, PER CAPITA PER MONTH, IN IDR)



Source: WFP – 2010

- By far, maize is the main staple food, followed by cassava (WFP 2010). The late planting of maize (normal time: end November to mid-December) can seriously affect its yield, in addition to extend the hunger season and increase food price on the local markets. There is only one planting season in the highlands; farmers who have access to water (river banks, water catchments) can produce a second growing season³.
- According to VAM/WFP and the Ministry of Agriculture / MoA, TTS district is one of the 22 districts classified as priority1 in terms of vulnerability to the forecasted El Nino event, and 127,000 persons are at risks (on a total number of 429,000)⁴.
- According to UNICEF⁵ more than 15 percent of children in NTT have acute malnutrition, while 51% are stunted. This is due to a combination of insufficient food intake, lack of awareness around the use of a diversified and nutritious diet, and water-borne diseases. Many families do not recognize severe acute malnutrition as a medical emergency and do not seek care when their children become very thin.

² Nutrition Security and Food Security in Seven Districts in NTT Province, Indonesia: Status, Causes and Recommendations for Response –WFP – MoA – October 2010

³ This second growing season was promoted in TTS by CARE PiR project, funded by the Dutch Government

⁴ Indonesia Food Security Monitoring Bulletin - Special Focus: The Impact of Drought related to El Niño – Oct 2015

⁵ UNICEF Indonesia website – October 22, 2015 – “A malnutrition crisis in NTT”

Seasonal calendar in NTT

FIGURE 44 - FARMING CALENDAR

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Rainy Season				Dry Season							
		Harvest of Corn/Dry Paddy									
		Harvest of wet land paddy *)									
									Ordinary Hunger		
*) depends on presence of irrigation											

Source: compiled from various sources (Muslimatun and Fanggidae, 2008)

Assessment

Methodology

- Information was gathered through available studies and reports, interviews and discussions with stakeholders in Timor (FAO, ACF, World Vision, Plan) and Jakarta (WFP, FAO, and ECB consortium members), as well as through Focus Group Discussions (FGD) conducted by CARE and CIS Timor with communities in order to understand the current situation, the likely impact of delayed rains on the men and women in the communities, and the coping mechanisms (with a gender lens).
- To conduct this rapid qualitative assessment, CARE and its partner CIS Timor deployed 2 assessments teams (one led by a man, the other by a woman), to conduct FGD with men or women over a period of 2 days in late on November 27 and December 7, 2015.
- CARE was represented by the national emergency coordinator, 2 development officers, and one CARE Canada rapid response team member. CIS Timor was represented by one field agent based in TTS.
- Based on the livelihood zones and secondary data information, question guides had been elaborated for the FGD that took place in 3 villages of TTS district (Oekiu, Naip and Limnamutu) where CARE has ongoing development projects. One village is considered lowland (Limnamutu), the 2 others as highlands.
- A total number of 6 FGD were organized (47 participants: 23 women, and 24 men). See table below.

Name of village	LHZ	# of participants	Gender	remarks
Linamnutu	Lowland	11	men	Better-off and poor
Linamnutu	Lowland	5	women	Better-off and poor
Oekiu	Highland	9	men	Better-off
Oekiu	Highland	6	women	Better-off
Naip	Highland	4	men	Poor
Naip	Highland	12	women	Female-headed

Limitations:

- Limited geographical coverage: 3 villages in one district (TTS), none of them being really high altitude.
- Limited sample (see table above).

Timing of the assessment: the latest FGD took place on December 7. The rains had not started yet, and farmers were not worried (in 2014, they planted on December 9). It was too early to ascertain that the delay of the rains would severely affect the crops.

Findings

West Timor is currently experiencing the effects of an El Niño event, which include warmer weather and delayed rains. According to the BMKG, WFP/VAM and other institutions, this dry hot spell, which began in May 2015, will continue into early 2016.

There is a juxtaposition of a below normal cropping season in 2014-15 and a potential failure of the crops in 2015-16.

- Normally, rains start in November and last until April (with some drizzle in May-June).
- But since last 5 years rains are delayed until end of December and tend to stop early (March-April).
- For last ten years, the crop's failure happened in 2005 and 2013. In 2013 (Limnamutu) the rainy season started at the end of January and ended in March, resulting in the loss of the harvest.
- With the climate change, planting starts on December- January and harvest is take place in March-April. This year, no rain at all in November, but participants of FGD were not worried yet during the FGD (were expecting rain in December).
- When rain is delayed, planting starts in January or early February. The direct consequence is an extended lean season and an additional risk of poor harvest if the rain stops early.
- 2014-15: Planting started first half of December, and rains stopped early (March), almost no rain in April. Production below normal (50% for maize?). Cassava failed in highlands.
- Only few families plant vegetables around their houses during the rainy season; not clear why (lack of seeds?). Most families are cultivating their quintal (house garden) and grow chili, pumpkin, cassava, sweet potatoes, papaya, bananas, ginger, tamarind, etc. during the rainy season.
- In the quintal, it seems that the use of grey water is quite common, and that seed access (vegetables) is a bottleneck.
- The poor families do not have cows or even pigs; they have chicken. High mortality of chicken during the dry season (vaccine necessary). Animals currently suffering from heat wave and lack of water, especially pigs.
- Farmers have cereals and beans seeds.
- Health: no cases of diarrhea reported to date.
- Lowlands have more access to rivers and wells: therefore they can better cope with the situation than the highlands.
- Most poor families receive food aid from the Government (raskin = Rice for the Poor), and may have access to BLT (Bantuan Langsung Tunai / Direct Cash Assistance).

Level of information of the population

- At the time of the assessment, there was very little information transmitted to the communities regarding the forecasted weather (delayed and erratic rains), and almost no action taken by the local authorities ("business as usual"). Local authorities in TTS advised farmers to plant hybrid maize (2-month cycle).
- This is probably due to the fact that Indonesian authorities are little familiar with slow onset disaster; in addition, in West Timor, the population and authorities are now used to a late start of the rainy season (climate change) as well as an unpredictable end (usually April, but sometimes March).
- Most farmers were still optimistic about the upcoming season, and are relying on the observation of the stars and other traditional indicators to predict the rains.
- Preferred information channels to spread information: church (Sunday service), village meetings and radio. Some mentioned SMS.
- Malnutrition is chronic, but it was not possible to get data on acute malnutrition.

Coping strategies / livelihoods alternatives

- These coping strategies occur every year for a majority of the households in TTS: with one (short) rainy season, reduced field size, erosion, etc., food insecurity is chronic and almost all households do not produce enough to cover their food needs.
- The most common strategy is to sell animals (pigs, chicken, ducks). Usually they start to sell these assets during the lean season (January-March). In normal years, pigs are usually sold for social events (weddings,

funerals). Poor families only own chicken. As one participant said: “agriculture is for our food needs⁸, and livestock is for cash”. The number and type of animals is a good indicator of the wealth status.

- Men look for unskilled labour either locally (including in night time security guards for mining company⁹, house repair, field fencing, land preparation, and public works funded by village funds) or elsewhere in West Timor or Indonesia (many are going to Malaysia). Temporary labor migration usually takes place after the harvest.
- Loans: new school year and food crisis are the main reasons for poor families to lend some cash from relatives/neighbor. These loans are usually used for buying food.
- In the female-headed households groups, the participants said that if they could not get any support from their children, they usually borrow some cash from relatives who are living nearby. Just few women (2-3 participants from Oekiu) said that they borrow some cash from neighbor with 5-10% interest¹⁰.
- Adults decrease the number of meals (not the children), or eat less preferred food (bananas for instance). Some mentioned that they may eat the seeds (maize, groundnuts).

Water

- Drinking water available, but access issues. Some families buy water. Better-off families have water tanks where they can store water. Water scarcity is putting additional workload on women and children (long distances). Some conflicts around the water points. The situation of the water access and availability differs a lot from one hamlet to the other; in some hamlets, most families have individual wells; in others, there is a communal well, more or less distant from the village.
- In case of delayed rains causing the drying up of wells, families purchase water to neighbors who have reservoirs, or to bus drivers (they collect the water at the rivers, and sell 5,000 IDR / 5 liters).
- All women in Naip (female-headed-HHs) stated that currently they were not able to collect water from the communal well/ponds because of their physical conditions. Some of them said that sometimes their children or grandchildren are collecting water for them, but usually they buy a water (IDR 1000 - 2000 per 5 liters).
- Problem of time spent by women and girls to fetch the water for the animals and humans.

Women

- In the visited villages, the percentage of female-headed households varies from 7.5% to 10%. Villagers recognize these households (especially the widows) as being particularly vulnerable.
- Women are responsible to grow vegetables in the quintal and to raise the livestock (including watering).
- The communities assist the female-headed households (if they request) to rebuild the roof of their house, to do land preparation / clearing, transport the government aid, etc. The church provides cash in kind.
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- Women process the tamarind and acacia seeds during the dry season, and collect firewood. Some women also produce handmade traditional clothes as a livelihood during the dry season, sold on the local market (400,000 to 500,000 IDR).
- Women who are part of traditional savings and loans groups (arisan) can get access to cash during hunger time.
 - Except 3 women in Oekiu, all women stated they don't cultivate their quintal due to limited access of water, lack of manpower and the structure of soil.
 - For the women (Naip), their main constraint in livestock is the ability to purchase more piglets or chicken since they don't have any regular additional income or opportunities to migrate to find paid work. Usually women bought livestock's seeds (piglet and chicken) when they get some cash from their children or relatives. Compare with male-headed households, the men usually have additional work to do (e.g. casual worker in construction, temporary migrate to other places, etc) and the income will used to purchase the livestock.

⁸ But this is not true for groundnuts (cash crop).

⁹ 50,000 IDR / night (Naip)

¹⁰ One of the coping mechanisms not mentioned in these FGD is “Sistem Ijon” which plunge the marginal farmers in the cycle of indebtedness and poverty. Ijon is a form of informal loan to be repaid by crops. The interest rate is very high, between 10 to 40 percent.

- Men and women have equal rights in terms of work access. Women are able/allowed to do as much as men do in agriculture and livestock as well as to access the market (sell/buy).
- For female-headed-households, the main constraint during cultivation process is cleaning the land. For those who are able to pay or serve meals, they will ask some neighbor to help them. Otherwise, they only work as much as they can. Female-headed households stated that since their husbands passed away, the harvest reduced around 50% due to inability to land clearing

Planting window

- According to the participants, maize and rice are sometime planted as late as end of January.
- But of course, the harvest then depends on the rains received in March and April.
- Given that the local maize has a 4-month cycle, we can consider that a planting in late January will be a trigger for intervention.

Initial recommendations based on this rapid assessment

- Coordination between actors is essential and is not happening yet.
- Monitoring is crucial and data must be shared (market prices, rainfall, visual monitoring of the standing crops).
- Assessments must be coordinated, shared and cover all livelihood zones to have a better idea of the most vulnerable areas.
- Build on the wealth of experience gained by Resilience projects.
- Nutrition: important to compile data from Government and NGOs to have an understanding of the acute malnutrition hotspots.
- Support village authorities to identify relevant activities to be implemented with village funds.
- Consider unconditional cash transfer for most vulnerable households, and CFW activities for community works.
- Development projects must continue to support water harvesting, crop diversification, etc.
- The best option would have been to initiate mitigation activities before this growing season.