

Part 10: *Acolhimento* and victim support

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Part 10: *Acolhimento* and victim support

10.1 Introduction

1. This chapter reports on the programmes of the Commission's *Acolhimento* and Victim Support Division. As its name suggests, this division worked to fulfil two central, but quite different, functions of the Commission. Both functions cut across all aspects of the Commission's mandate in that both *acolhimento* and the support of the victims of human rights violations were core principles of all the Commission's programmes.

2. The importance of *acolhimento* to the Commission's work is reflected by inclusion as the first of the three guiding principles mentioned in the name of the *Comissão de Acolhimento, Verdade e Reconciliação de Timor-Leste*. Unlike truth and reconciliation, *acolhimento* is not directly mentioned in Regulation 10/2001. Unlike reconciliation, victim support and truth-seeking, it was not an explicit function of the Commission, but something both less tangible and more far-reaching. *Acolhimento* was the spirit that informed all aspects of the Commission's work. It became the centrepiece of the Commission's work out of recognition of the importance of East Timorese people accepting each other after so many years of division and conflict. Most immediately it was a response to the situation of East Timorese who had gone to West Timor in 1999, those who had returned to Timor-Leste as well as those who remained in camps and settlements in West Timor. Two specific programmes were developed in response to their needs:

- A monitoring and information programme for recent returnees
- An outreach programme, implemented with NGOs in West Timor, to those East Timorese still living across the border.

3. Victim support, by contrast, was an objective of the Commission that was specifically spelt out in Regulation 10/2001. Section 3 of the regulation provided that the Commission was to "help restore the dignity of victims of human rights violations". The regulation did not, however, prescribe how the Commission should go about achieving this objective.

4. Like *acolhimento*, the principle of supporting victims of human rights violations was integral to the way the Commission worked in carrying out its other functions of truth-seeking, reconciliation and producing its Final Report. Helping individuals and communities who had suffered to recover, and restoring their sense of dignity, was inseparable from the task of repairing relationships damaged by conflict and of building lasting reconciliation. The Commission was to be the voice of the victims, who had for so long been unable to express the suffering that they had experienced, and to make a practical contribution to their healing.

5. The *Acolhimento* and Victim Support Division also carried out specific programmes. These included:

- Public Hearings at both the national and sub-district level
- A series of Healing Workshops at the Commission's national headquarters
- An Urgent Reparations scheme for victims with urgent needs
- Village-level participatory workshops, called Community Profile workshops, to discuss and record the impact of the conflict on communities.

10.1.1 Structure of the Unit

6. The *Acolhimento* and Victim Support Division was based in Dili. The national office of the Commission coordinated all the *Acolhimento* programmes. Although Regional Commissioners sometimes made visits to villages where recent returnees lived, or to camps in West Timor, most of the work was managed from the national office.

7. Victim support work, however, relied on staff in the districts to implement the programme at the district level. It was fundamental to the work of supporting victims to reach out to all communities in Timor-Leste. This was particularly important in the rural areas, where many communities are isolated and where those who suffered violations during the conflicts may now feel forgotten by those at the national level. District teams were made up of people from the local area. Two members of each team, one man and one woman, were responsible for outreach and district support.

8. The structure and responsibilities of the *Acolhimento* and Victim Support Unit are described in detail in Part 1: Introduction.

10.1.2 Interpretation

Acolhimento

9. National Commissioners did not try to reduce *acolhimento* to a single concept. It was both part of the spirit of the Commission's approach to its work and the spirit it hoped to foster in the community. *Acolhimento* involved people embracing each other as East Timorese, of coming back to our selves, living under one roof, after many years of division and violence.

10. The concept therefore had meaning for our East Timorese brothers and sisters who remained in Indonesia after the exodus of 1999, and to those who fled in 1975 or later and lived in exile in countries around the world. But it had a wider resonance for all of us, whether we left Timor-Leste or stayed. Twenty-four years of conflict dispersed East Timorese people across the world, divided families and communities, and created divisions even within individuals. *Acolhimento* represented something of the spirit of respectful acceptance of each other and ourselves as human beings, as people responsible to ourselves and to each other. *Acolhimento* is a precondition for both having the courage to speak, and for hearing the truth and seeking reconciliation.

11. *Acolhimento* grows from an appreciation and celebration of our rich cultural heritage. This heritage includes our traditional culture that was suppressed for so many years, as well as our experiences of colonialism, war and occupation. It is a way to help us accept the many dimensions of being East Timorese, living with what we have been through, and creating a society that includes all of us, even those who have done wrong in the past. In this sense, the behaviour of the father in the Biblical parable of the prodigal son is a demonstration of the spirit of *acolhimento*.

12. While in English the Commission was called the Commission for Reception, Truth and Reconciliation, it is the view of the Commission that the word "reception" does not adequately

reflect all that we mean by “acolhimento”. For that reason, “acolhimento” rather than “reception” will be used throughout this chapter.

The victim*

13. Regulation 10/2001 defines “victim” as:

a person who, individually or as part of a collective, has suffered harm, including physical or mental injury, emotional suffering, economic loss or substantial impairment of his or her rights as a result of acts or omissions over which the Commission has jurisdiction to consider and includes the relatives or dependents of persons who have individually suffered harm. [Section 1]

14. Victims of human rights violations committed by all sides to the conflict were recognised by the Commission. They included East Timorese civilians who suffered at the hands of different East Timorese political parties in the civil conflict of 1975, East Timorese who suffered from violations by the Indonesian military and its various auxiliaries, and those who suffered violations committed by members of Fretilin or Falintil after the Indonesian invasion.

15. The Commission also sought to honour those who had died as a result of the conflicts, and to offer support to their families and communities. A huge number of people died in Timor-Leste over the 25 years of the Commission’s mandate, both as a result of the war-related population displacements, bombardments and starvation, and as a result of more targeted violence. In such a context, the risk that the individuals who died will be submerged in global statistics is real. Recognising the dead by identifying and honouring them was an important part of the Commission’s work. The limited time and resources available to the Commission has meant that it is an undertaking on which much more remains to be done.

* The Commission acknowledges the debate around the use of the term “victim” which can denote passive victimisation, as opposed to the more empowering term “survivor”. The Commission has chosen to use the term victim, partly for linguistic consistency between the three languages of the Final Report, and partly because it is of the view that many East Timorese were victims in their experience of the political conflicts in Timor-Leste. Many East Timorese did not survive. As this Part describes programmes for empowering those who have survived, the term “survivor” has also been used interchangeably here.

Acolhimento

Acolhimento is an unusual element to include in a truth and reconciliation commission. It is the process of wholehearted welcoming, accepting and showing unreserved hospitality in East Timorese culture. This formal courtesy is given to all human beings, even to those who have caused harm. It is noble behaviour in the face of being hurt or feeling anger. It creates space for both parties to change. It is the basis for understanding, for saying sorry and seeking forgiveness.

The East Timorese sense of *acolhimento* comes partly from Luke 15: 11-32, the story of a wealthy father and his two sons. The younger son leaves home, taking his share of his father's wealth, which he squanders. Impoverished and feeling remorse, he decides to return home. He is prepared to beg for mercy. As an unworthy son, he thinks he deserves treatment as a servant in his father's house. Seeing his son at a distance, the father has true compassion. He runs to embrace him and welcomes him home with extravagance, without blame or judgement. The older son witnessing this is hurt by his father's manner. Feeling resentment, he challenges his father. The father replies, "Son, you are always with me. All I have is yours. We should make merry and be glad as your brother was dead but is alive, was lost and is found." The parable teaches that reconciliation can be more difficult if one feels wronged than if one is in the wrong, seeking forgiveness.

Toward reconciliation and stopping the cycle of hate

Communities can be strengthened in the spirit of *acolhimento* by making connections and providing a space for justice and reconciliation. This is a long and complicated process. It needs truthfulness, admissions of wrongdoing and efforts to put things right by mutual agreement. Only then, can there be the possibility of forgiveness and the restoration of balance in community relationships.

The perpetrators of human rights abuses in Timor-Leste since 1974 who are prepared to admit their crimes and who wish to seek mercy from their communities can find reconciliation through an established process. Some do want to return to their families, to their land, to their communities to help rebuild Timor-Leste. Violence diminishes the perpetrator. In a quest to return to live together again, truth-saying is part of the path to personal recovery and to community justice.

People in communities who experienced deprivation and who faced a long struggle to survive need healing. Violence wounds the body and also harms the spirit. It is possible with time to recover. People need to express their true losses and to be heard. But forgiveness is not forgetting or giving amnesty. People become free as the truth is told, and from a mutual resolve that things can be better. This takes time and effort on both sides.

East Timorese in West Timor

A truth commission was proposed in late 1999. One third of the population of Timor-Leste had been driven into West Timor, Indonesia. There were serious concerns for the safety and early return of these people. In the three months after October 1999, about 100,000 people returned spontaneously, and since then a further 120,000 have come. About 30,000 East Timorese remain in West Timor. If they were free of intimidation, negative propaganda and the effects of five years' privation as refugees maybe they would return to Timor-Leste. Many are ordinary people, missing their family and friends, and missed by their communities.

The process and practice of forgiveness

The return and reintegration of militia, ex-TNI and pro-autonomy supporters is a serious challenge. Perhaps less of a challenge is the case of the civil servants from the 1974-1999

period. Some may want to remain in Indonesia; others may want to return. The East Timorese government has said that the welcome of *acolhimento* can be extended to those who decide to return while the process of truth and reconciliation occurs. Many groups and communities have worked hard for the peaceful reintegration of returnees from West Timor. This is a tribute to their strength and patience.

The Commission has sought to mediate the return of perpetrators of minor crimes to their communities through the formal community reconciliation process, which allows the parties to interact, discuss and seek to resolve outstanding issues and concerns. The spirit of *acolhimento* has informed the design of this mediation process, combining it with the East Timorese tradition of *lisan*^{*}, restorative compensation as a part of social responsibility. Over 1,400 returnees have submitted to this healing process, which was monitored by the Commission's District Teams and by local authorities to forestall problems experienced by recent returnees. With time, too, survivors can have understanding and regain confidence on their path to forgiveness.

However, those guilty of serious crimes have to accept the requirements of legal justice in the East Timorese Courts as mandated by the Constitution. Survivors must wait for justice in these cases.

The challenge for individuals, families and communities, indeed for the nation of Timor-Leste, is to accept the process of re-establishing trust in relationships, to live well together, and to work to create a just society.

10.2 Reception and outreach

10.2.1 Background

16. In addition to its programmes for community reconciliation, truth-seeking and victim support, the Commission also established a programme called *Acolhimento*. The *Acolhimento* programme was created to respond to the situation of East Timorese who had moved or been moved to West Timor in 1999, both those who had returned to Timor-Leste and those still living over the border. East Timorese began crossing into West Timor as early as April 1999, settling in camps and settlements in Belu District, which borders Timor-Leste. However, by far the largest influx of refugees into West Timor occurred in the early weeks of September 1999 after the announcement of the result of the Popular Consultation. Most of these refugees were forcibly evacuated by armed militia and Indonesian troops. The approximately 250,000 refugees who fled or were forcibly evacuated to West Timor were accommodated in several large refugee camps, such as Noelbaki, Tuapukan and Naibonat in Kupang, two camps in Kefamenanu as well as about 200 other smaller camps or shelters.¹ They represented about one third of Timor-Leste's population at the time. Indonesian soldiers and East Timorese militia tightly controlled the refugees' movement in and out of these camps, as well as their access to humanitarian aid.

17. Refugees returned from West Timor in two main phases. In the first, a three-month period after October 1999, over 100,000 people poured back into Timor-Leste. Then, over the next three years, another 120,000 refugees returned in smaller groups.² Returnees came back to an uncertain reception in their communities. Many had been supporters of integration before the Popular Consultation and some had been active members of the militia in their communities. Some found that their land and property had been taken over for use by other families. How to minimise conflict between returnees and their communities featured prominently in the Steering

^{*} *Lisan* is a combination of beliefs, customs and traditions of East Timorese people. *Lisan* varies from community to community and is generally an important aspect of community life, especially in rural areas. It is often referred to as "adat" in the Indonesian language.

Committee's discussions as it went about its task of designing the Commission's mandate (see Part 1: Introduction, section on Origins of the Commission, for more detail).

18. Despite the large numbers of refugees who returned home, many remained in Indonesia. In February 2002 when the Commission was established, there were more than 60,000 refugees still in West Timor. On 31 December 2002, all remaining refugees were formally declared residents of West Timor and lost their status as refugees. There were still between 25,000 and 30,000 East Timorese in over 150 locations throughout West Timor at that time. UNHCR estimates put the number remaining in West Timor, as of 30 November 2004, at about 25,000.³

19. Life is not easy for most of these people. Many live in sub-standard conditions. Most survive through subsistence farming or by running small stalls selling agricultural produce and essential goods, such as cooking oil, soap, salt and sugar.

20. Further, local communities in West Timor often resent their presence. East Timorese sometimes farm with the permission of local residents, sometimes without. In some areas, East Timorese have encroached on forested land, which has placed a strain on both the dry West Timor environment and on relations between the newcomers and local communities. Where East Timorese in West Timor have prospered economically, there have also been instances of local jealousy. Finally, the refugees themselves include former militia indicted for serious violent crimes.

21. However hard the refugees' lives and however unwelcome they may be in West Timor there are many reasons for them not to come home. Those with a pro-autonomy background fear political and economic discrimination, not being accepted back into their village communities, and prosecution. Those with government positions enjoy relative economic security in Indonesia. Many lack confidence in the economic future of Timor-Leste. Moreover, for those in the camps and settlements, the decision to stay is sometimes not theirs to take. Rather a group or camp leader, who has his own reasons for deciding to remain, makes it for them. Importantly from the Commission's point of view, many refugees do not have access to clear or accurate information about the true situation in Timor-Leste.

22. The fact that so many East Timorese are still in West Timor is one indication that the divisions surrounding the political conflicts endure. The Commission, as an institution for *acolhimento*, was concerned with reaching across this divide to help create the conditions for East Timorese people from all political sides to accept each other. Therefore the West Timor programme focused on information, dialogue and creating better understanding.

10.2.2 Monitoring recent returnees

23. Under its monitoring programme, Commission staff met recent returnees to monitor their situation, provide information about the community reconciliation process, and bring matters raised by returnees to the attention of local authorities, Regional Commissioners and Commission staff in the districts, as well as UN agencies, such as UNHCR and IOM (International Organisation of Migration).

24. During 2003, staff made 20 visits to returnee transit centres run by UNHCR and IOM: 19 to the centre at Batugade in Bobonaro, and one to the Ambeno centre in Oecusse. Commission staff also visited 33 villages in seven districts where returnees had recently arrived from West Timor.

Table 1 - Villages visited by Commission Staff to meet returnees

Villages	Date
Leolima (Hatu Udo, Ainaro)	1 April 2003
Palaka, Memo, Balibo, Raifu (Bobonaro)	9 February 2003
Maumeta (Liquiça)	10 March 2003
Atabae (Bobonaro)	10 March 2003
Balibo (Bobonaro)	11 March 2003
Maliana (Bobonaro)	11 March 2003
Lauala (Ermera)	24 March 2003
Cassa (Ainaro)	2 April 2003
Ainaro Vila (Ainaro)	2 April 2003
Manutasi (Ainaro)	2 April 2003
Maubessi (Ainaro)	3 April 2003
Suai Vila, Fohorem, Fatumea, Maucatar (Covalima)	7 April 2003
Saburai (Maliana, Bobonaro)	4 June 2003
Marobo, Aidaba-Leten, Maliana (Bobonaro)	23 June 2003
Cailaco (Bobonaro)	27 June 2003
Vatuboro, (Maubara, Liquiça)	1 August 2003
Riheu (Ermera)	2 August 2003
Marobo (Bobonaro)	3 August 2003
Leber (Bobonaro, Bobonaro)	8 August 2003
Beco, Holabolo (Suai, Covalima)	9 August 2003
Guguleur (Maubara, Liquiça)	10 August 2003
Hudilaran (Dom Aleixio, Dili)	12 August 2003
Gleno (Ermera, Ermera)	16 August 2003
Lospalos Lore I (Lautém)	1 December 2003
Lospalos (Lautém)	1 December 2003

25. Monitoring was not a high-profile programme. Rather it took the form of low-key visits to returnees and their families to see how they had been received and whether they felt that they had reintegrated into their communities. Commission staff also visited village heads and other community leaders to check, informally, whether the return of refugees had created any problems in their communities.

26. Liaison work with UNHCR and IOM was mainly to coordinate visits to returnees and to share information about returnees' needs. UNHCR and IOM advised the Commission if they were

giving support to cross-border initiatives that the Commission could participate in, including presidential and other official visits.

What the Commission found

27. Many returnees came back with mixed feelings of alienation, disempowerment and trauma, as well as uncertainty about their economic survival and social status. When they arrived, they found a Timor-Leste that was strange to them in many respects, whose legal, government and economic systems, for example, were unfamiliar.

28. The Commission noted that most returnees were well-received by their communities. In some villages the population helped the returnees to build temporary shelters, or provided accommodation to those in need. Returnees enjoyed access to communal resources such as water, health clinics and schools. Returnees could also compete for jobs in the districts, as teachers, nurses or police officers.

29. In some cases returning ex-militia leaders were received with harsh words from the young people in their communities. However, in most cases, local police were quick to take control of the situation and regularly patrolled areas where there were recent returnees to prevent violence. Often conflict between returnees and the local population arose not because of recent political differences but due to long-standing family or clan disputes over land or other supposed breaches of traditional law.

30. The greatest challenge facing the returnees was that of making a living. Many had lost assets during the violence in 1999 and were not able to recoup their losses during the years they spent in the refugee camps. Disputes over land and property were often a major issue. Some returnees had been civil servants during the Indonesian occupation and had received a monthly wage. On their return to Timor-Leste they found that others had already taken up most of the limited employment opportunities in the districts. They and their families frequently had to relearn the skills of subsistence agriculture. Consequently, many returnees chose to rebuild their lives away from their home village, moving to Dili or other urban centres in search of other ways to meet their daily needs.

31. For single women and their children, daily survival was more difficult. In some cases, women and children returned to Timor-Leste in poor health caused by long-term malnourishment in the camps. On their return, they had to plant and wait for the next harvest in order to feed themselves. Although local authorities, UN agencies and NGOs gave special attention to these families, there were some who slipped through the net of support.

32. The Commission is aware of a small number of returnees who eventually chose to go back to West Timor. This occurred, for example, in the villages of Lauala (Ermera, Ermera), Leimea (Hatulia, Ermera), Maubara (Maubara, Liquiça) and Balibo (Balibo, Bobonaro). The Commission visited these villages and found that returnees had decided to go back to West Timor for different reasons. In some cases, the returnee still had immediate family members living in West Timor. In other cases, the returnees were ex-militia leaders who had not yet had an opportunity to be part of a community reconciliation process and had experienced intimidation or minor assault by the local population.

Accompanying returnees home

Commission staff, in conjunction with UNHCR and IOM, accompanied a number of returnees on their journey home. Usually these were returnees who were seen as vulnerable in some way and were accompanied to decrease their anxiety. The following are just three examples from the months of May-June 2003:

On 29 May 2003 Commission staff accompanied a woman and her children to Laga, Baucau. Her husband, who was a *Milsas* (a member of Hansip trained to become a soldier) attached to the sub-district military command in Kupang (West Timor), came on this visit on his Indonesian passport. He wanted to bring his family home and then return to West Timor. When they arrived in Laga, the family was greeted warmly and the local population helped unload their belongings.

On 10 June 2003 a 19-year-old man returned home to Leopa (Dato, Liquiça), by himself. Commission staff accompanied him to his house, where his parents received him warmly.

On 12 June 2003 Commission staff accompanied a 34-year-old man and his five-year-old son to his village in Aidabaleten (Atabae, Bobonaro). He had been a member of the militia group, Armui, but although he had taken part in patrols he had not committed any crimes. He had visited his family six times before deciding to return permanently. His family and the local population received him well and helped him unload the IOM truck carrying his belongings.

Reflection on monitoring programme

33. East Timorese communities have shown acceptance and a willingness to receive returnees. However, this should not be taken for granted. A significant number of East Timorese still in West Timor may choose to return in the coming years. In addition, it is likely that for some of those who have already returned they will encounter difficulties in fully reintegrating into their communities. The strong demand that community reconciliation hearings should continue indicates that there remain many unresolved issues at the local level, including ones concerning those who have returned since 1999.

34. It is important to continue monitoring the situation of new returnees and to work with communities to provide support as required. This may involve civil society, NGOs and various government agencies. The need to monitor the reintegration of returnees and to be alert to potential conflicts arising from their return is addressed in Part 11: Recommendations.

10.2.3 Outreach to West Timor

35. The Commission was not designed to help repatriate the East Timorese in West Timor. Nevertheless, the tasks of promoting *acolhimento* and reconciliation provided it with a strong justification for reaching out to refugees and informing them about the Commission and the situation in Timor-Leste. As an independent national institution, the Commission wanted to demonstrate to the remaining refugees that the new nation of Timor-Leste was serious in its commitment to build an inclusive society based on rule of law and the universal principles of human rights. It was also considered important to give the East Timorese in West Timor an opportunity to participate in the truth-seeking programme by giving their statements to the Commission.

36. In late 2002 the Commission conceived and designed its West Timor programme. It began to implement it in early 2003, working with Indonesian NGOs that were already engaged with the refugee communities in West Timor.

The West Timor outreach programme

37. The Commission's West Timor programme had four main objectives:

1. To increase awareness and understanding of the Commission's mandate among refugees and community leaders.
2. To facilitate the dissemination of information on the Commission's activities in its two main tasks of truth-seeking and community reconciliation.
3. To ensure that the Commission listen to East Timorese from all sides of the political conflict in the preparation of its Final Report.
4. To share with East Timorese refugees in West Timor the message that Timor-Leste is serious about healing past divisions, and normalising personal and community life based on the principles of inclusiveness and respect for human rights.

38. The Commission's West Timor programme mainly involved disseminating information to refugees about the community reconciliation process and engaging them in truth-seeking. In respect to the reconciliation work, the aim was not to conduct reconciliation procedures in West Timor. Rather it was to ensure that communities, including perpetrators of less serious offences, understood how the Commission could help reintegrate people into their home communities if they chose to return to Timor-Leste.

39. The objective of offering people the opportunity to give their statements was to gather information that was both accurate and important for the Commission's truth-seeking work. The Commission wanted to be sure that it had listened to the stories of people from all sides of the political conflict. By acknowledging that East Timorese in West Timor were also heard, it hoped to contribute to their personal healing process.

40. The programme targeted specific groups within the communities in West Timor. These included pro-autonomy political and former militia leaders, individuals and groups who had not yet made their decision on whether to return, women as the group most likely to be unable to make a free choice about repatriation, and those who had chosen to stay in West Timor but who had experience or knowledge of human rights violations to share with the Commission.

Programme implementation

41. In January 2003, the Commission invited five West Timor NGOs to its Dili headquarters to plan a programme based on the four objectives outlined above. Each of the NGOs had experience working with East Timorese refugees in West Timor. They were:

- CIS (Center for Internally Displaced Persons Service),
- TRuK-Flores (Tim Relawan Untuk Kemanusiaan Flores), Flores Volunteer Team for Humanity
- Lakmas (Lembaga Advokasi Masyarakat), Cendana Wangi People's Advocacy Institute,
- Yabiku (Yayasan Amnaut Bife 'Kuan'), Village Women's Care Foundation
- YPI (Yayasan Peduli Indonesia) Concern for Indonesia Foundation

42. With support from PIKUL (Foundation for Strengthening Local Institutions and Capacities) and CRS (Catholic Relief Services), these five NGOs formed a coalition to carry out its work with the Commission.

43. The Coalition divided into four teams, each of which was to work in one district of West Timor. Three of the four teams worked in the districts where they had long-standing relationships with refugees. CIS worked in Kupang, Lakmas and Yabiku in Kefamenanu (North Central Timor District), and YPI in Atambua (Belu District). The fourth team relocated from Kupang to Soe (South Central Timor District), and was quickly able to establish relations with key figures in the refugee community.

44. Representatives of the NGO Coalition came to Timor-Leste in February 2003 for a two-week orientation programme. The programme included briefing and planning sessions with National Commissioners and Commission staff, and developing an understanding of background, mandate and organisation of the Commission. Training was also provided in areas such as human rights and transitional justice, and in specific skills such as statement taking. The group made field trips to districts in Timor-Leste to observe Commission district teams working in communities. It also attended the Commission's first national thematic hearing, on political imprisonment.

45. A five-month work plan was then developed with the Commission that ensured that all refugee communities in West Timor would have an opportunity to learn about the Commission and participate in the statement-taking process.

46. Once the programme started, National and Regional Commissioners made monthly visits to West Timor to monitor the Coalition's progress, to help with any problems and to contribute to the public information process. The Coalition noted in its final report to the Commission that "the Commissioners' visits were like a locomotive that drew refugees to attend focus-group discussions". The first monitoring visit, at the end of March 2003, was also used to launch the programme and publicise its objectives. Commissioners met leaders of the provincial government and the church, NGOs and the media in order to build support for the programme's activities. A written recommendation from the governor of the province of Nusa Tenggara Timur was particularly helpful to the Coalition in gaining access to camps and obtaining the cooperation police and military in providing security.

Informing the refugee community about the Commission

47. The first aim of the programme was to share information with refugee communities about what the Commission was, and how it might be relevant to them.

48. The two primary methods used to inform refugees about the Commission's work were direct discussions with refugees and their leaders (see Table 2 below) and dissemination of information through the press, radio and videos. To build relationships and trust, the Coalition teams made private visits to refugee leaders and camp coordinators, before holding community meetings. National and Regional Commissioners and CAVR staff also visited camps and met former militia commanders and pro-autonomy political leaders.

49. Fifteen episodes of the Commission's radio programme, *Dalan ba Dame* (The Road to Peace), were broadcast by a Kupang station. West Timor radio also broadcast dialogues featuring Commissioners and various figures known to the refugees, such as members of the Coalition, a West East Timorese priest and refugee leaders. Films made by the Commission, including an introduction to the Commission entitled *Dalan Ba Dame (The Road to Peace)* video recordings of community-based reconciliation meetings and several of the Commission's National Public Hearings, provided an appealing way for refugees to learn about the Commission's work. For example, the films of local village reconciliation hearings gave the refugees the chance to see scenes of their home districts or even their villages. The videos showed how communities were working to achieve reconciliation. Film and radio were especially important in reaching the refugee audience, given the generally limited level of literacy.

Table 2 - Breakdown by district of focus group discussions/community meetings

West Timor District	Total	Participants	
		M	F
Belu	33	2681	373
North Central Timor	31	365	163
South Central Timor	17	1084	318
Kupang	18	860	146
Total	99	4990 (83%)	1000 (17%)

Source: NGO Coalition Activity Report, 13 February 2003 – 23 July 2003

50. Printed material distributed in the four targeted regions included Commission bulletins, posters, magazines, pamphlets about the community reconciliation process, Commission t-shirts and a special pamphlet produced jointly by the Commission and the West Timor NGO Coalition.

Taking statements

51. Taking statements on human rights violations proved difficult for all the West Timor teams. In the first months of their work, no teams took statements, but instead focused on developing relationships in the refugee communities, explaining the mandate of the Commission and the ways that people could participate in its work. In this way people could decide if they wanted to give a statement.

52. The team set a modest target of taking 272 statements, although this was consistent with the target in Timor-Leste where statements were also to be taken from about 1% of the community. In the end only 90 statements were taken. There were a number of reasons for this outcome but, above all, it reflected the caution displayed by people in refugee communities in dealing with the NGO Coalition and the Commission. This is discussed further in the next section, Refugee responses.

53. Table 3 shows that the team in Soe, in South Central Timor District, took the most statements. Interestingly, 12 of these statements were taken in the district military headquarters, from East Timorese refugees working with the military. The team in Atambua, which is close to the border with Timor-Leste and has the highest concentration of refugees, took the next highest number of statements.

54. While the number of statements taken was low, it was important that the Commission gave the refugees an opportunity to give statements. Moreover, the content of the statements was an important contribution to the Commission's truth-seeking work.

Table 3 - Table 3 - Breakdown by district of statements taken

West Timor District	Total	Participants	
		M	F
Belu	28	23	5
North Central Timor	9	8	1
South Central Timor	50	43	7
Kupang	3	3	0
Total	90	77 (86%)	13 (14%)

Source: NGO Coalition Activity Report, 13 February 2003 – 23 July 2003

Refugee responses

55. Many of the refugees were eager to know about recent developments in Timor-Leste, particularly the Commission's community-based reconciliation work. However, the overwhelming response to the West Timor programme was one of caution. In a few cases, Coalition members were refused access to camps. In other cases refugees did not participate in discussion groups when given the opportunity.

56. The NGO Coalition found that in their responses to the Commission's work in West Timor the refugees fell into three broad groups: the majority who remained silent; those who gave enthusiastic or guarded support to the Commission; and those who rejected the NGO Coalition and the Commission. This section includes quotations from responses from East Timorese people in West Timor, as documented in the NGO Coalition Activity Report, 13 February to 23 July 2003.⁴

57. Most refugees were silent. Some had definite views about reconciliation, but because the issue had become politicised, they chose to remain silent. Others, "the floating mass", did not have a position of their own but took their lead from the small elite in control of the power structures within the camps. The NGO Coalition was careful not to pressure people to ask questions or give their opinions, to protect their personal safety. The primary objective of the outreach programme was to inform.

58. Some refugees were proud that Timor Leste had achieved independence. A man from Maubisse (Ainaro) commented:

We greatly value what our brothers have shared and greatly respect the Commission. This can honestly be said to be seeking the truth. We also struggled for the people of Timor-Leste although our opinions are different. Now that Timor-Leste is independent, we hope that over there they feel they themselves have won, that they themselves possess Timor-Leste. Even we pro-autonomy people actually wanted independence, perhaps in 15 years, but our brothers there weren't patient - they wanted independence immediately...We also respect Fretilin. The gift that Fretilin's struggle has given us is that Timor-Leste has become known and has become independent. We must all be proud of their struggle.

59. Among those in the “rejectionist” group were refugees who may once have believed that reconciliation was possible. As a leader in the Naibonat Camp outside Kupang said:

I am bored of hearing about reconciliation. I myself attended such a process in Bali, but what were the results? There were none. We don't know what the final outcome of Commission's reconciliation process will be...but if reconciliation remains only on one's lips, revenge will continue.

60. Others were more hostile. One refugee described the Commission as nothing more than a project to use up money from donors with a hidden agenda, namely to make Timor-Leste their puppet state. He asked how the Commission, with a mandate of only two years, could possibly fully investigate cases of human rights abuses that had occurred over a span of more than 20 years. Others said that they felt that supporting the Commission's programme was tantamount to a betrayal of Indonesia. The Coalition teams noted that some camp coordinators and leaders, although seemingly supportive of the Commission during group discussions, would later say that all the Coalition said was a lie.

61. While Commissioners heard many negative or sceptical comments about the Commission on their visits to West Timor, they also heard some positive ones.

62. Discussions with refugee communities suggested that their preoccupation before independence with the political status of Timor-Leste had been replaced by economic concerns. There was deep scepticism about the country's ability to develop due to limited human resources, inadequate technology, poor infrastructure and heavy dependency on foreign aid. Concern was expressed about the obstacles to repatriation.

63. During their visits to West Timor the Commissioners and Commission staff observed that refugee communities had what amounted to a consistent set of reservations about returning to their homeland. They included:

Fear

64. Many refugees said that they were afraid to return to Timor-Leste because they had heard of visiting or returning refugees being the victims of terror and intimidation, even murder. Some said they would return to Timor-Leste only if their security was guaranteed. Others were afraid to return for fear of prosecution. Those who did not want to give statements also expressed this fear. These people often called for reconciliation based on forgetting the past, a sort of historical amnesia or *kore metan massal*

Social ostracism

65. Some refugees doubted the sincerity of Timor-Leste's professed commitment to embracing former supporters of Indonesian rule. They had heard that pro-autonomy supporters in Timor-Leste were treated as second- and third-class citizens, suffering discrimination in employment and access to social services. Others felt that the new social hierarchy would greatly disadvantage them. They placed foreigners at the top of this hierarchy, followed by East Timorese who had lived in Portugal, and then by the pro-independence elite and other pro-independence supporters, with pro-autonomy supporters at the bottom.

* “Kore metan massal” is a phrase mixing Tetum and Indonesian languages which was used by some East Timorese in West Timor camps. “Kore metan” (Tetum) is the ceremony to denote the end of a 12-month mourning period (lifting of the black). “Massal” (Indonesian) means mass or large-scale. This was a phrase used by some East Timorese people when they talked with the Commission in West Timor.

Economic considerations

66. A recurring complaint made during group discussions was the high cost of fees required to enter Timor-Leste, something perhaps more pertinent to refugees contemplating visits rather than repatriation. Those still working as Indonesian civil servants said that as long as they remained in West Timor they would earn enough to educate their children. One man asked: "Why return to Timor-Leste where I have no guarantees of work?" Another concern was the status of former assets. Many said that they were hesitant to return if they could not have their former land and property back. Others voiced concerns about Timor-Leste's dependence on donor countries. One refugee from Lospalos (Lautém) in the Tuapukan camp close to Kupang told Commissioners and staff:

Brothers, you should be giving information about the actual situation in Timor-Leste. Over there life is full of suffering, continual suffering...There, you brothers suffer far more than we do.

67. He continued by addressing the refugees present:

Probably the white people feel sorry for them and give them money to carry out this [reconciliation] task...Do these brothers want to progress or fall back? For us, life together with the Republic of Indonesia is progress, [not with] these brothers who only come with false promises.

Race

68. Some refugees expressed total rejection of white foreigners, who were seen as the ones really in charge of Timor-Leste. Some said they would not return to Timor-Leste as long as there were whites still residing there.

Political issues

69. Although the sovereignty of Timor-Leste did not dominate group discussions, refugees did express political concerns. Some refugees felt that the use of Portuguese as the language of instruction in schools would put their children at a disadvantage if they returned. Others took the view that unless the three major parties of 1974-1975 - UDT, Fretilin and Apodeti - took responsibility for their actions during that period, reconciliation could not take place. Others insisted that reconciliation had to begin among political leaders before ordinary people could be expected to be reconciled. By focusing on leaders, some refugees sought to absolve themselves of their own responsibility for criminal acts, arguing that they were just "little people" who either knew nothing or had simply carried out orders. A refugee from Baucau in the Tuapukan camp summed it up when he said:

If the pro-autonomy and pro-independence leaders are united we will definitely return because the things we did in the past were ordered and we little people just carried them out, and it is precisely us who have suffered the most as a result.

70. There was a tendency to see the Commission's truth-seeking mandate as limited to abuses committed in 1999. This was accompanied by demands that history could only be "made straight" if abuses committed in 1974-1975 were also thoroughly investigated.

Women refugees and reconciliation

71. Women were especially constrained in their freedom to engage with the NGO Coalition by the power structures that existed within the camps. The positions women took on reconciliation and repatriation were almost entirely determined by their husbands, fathers and uncles who had brought them to West Timor. They were economically and physically dependent on these male figures, who often both intimidated them and acted as their ultimate protection from other men.

72. Tables 2 and 3 above both indicate that outreach to women was less effective than to men. NGO Coalition teams noted that, even when women attended focus group discussions they seldom spoke or simply agreed with what was said by their husbands or leaders. The NGO Coalition thought that there were several factors explaining women's limited participation. One was East Timorese patriarchal culture, in which the woman's role does not extend beyond the family. Reconciliation was seen as a political issue to be dealt with by men. Women also generally had lower levels of education and poorer health than men, as well as often being the victims of physical and psychological abuse.

73. Much work remains to be done in giving women access to information and the capacity to play an active role in the decision on whether to return to Timor-Leste.

Reflection on the programme

74. The six-month West Timor programme in partnership with Indonesian NGOs was an important part of the Commission's work. Within its limited mandate, time and resources the Commission sought to reach out in a practical and meaningful way to East Timorese living in West Timor. The partnerships formed with West East Timorese government and institutions and the goodwill they often demonstrated provide the basis for future work, which should remain a priority for the governments of Timor-Leste and Indonesia, civil society and communities in both countries.

75. The Commission recognises the complexities and sensitivities surrounding the implementation of an outreach programme in West Timor. The caution with which most refugees regarded the Commission's work meant that it was not able to reach its target number of statements. Nevertheless, in the circumstances it was an achievement that many refugees were given an opportunity to tell their story, and learn about the Commission's reconciliation programmes and life in the newly independent Timor-Leste.

76. The Commission's experience in this area shows that achieving reconciliation with refugees in West Timor will require commitment and creative thinking. The complexities of the issues mean that the commitment will have to be over the long term, involving the government of Timor-Leste and non-governmental institutions and organisations, as well as the support of the international community. The Lessons Learned section at the end of this chapter proposes some principles that should guide this work, and the Commission's recommendations will address these issues in more detail (see Part 11: Recommendations).

10.3 Restoring the dignity of victims

10.3.1 Introduction

77. Violence has damaged individuals, families and communities profoundly. The Commission could not hope to heal the deep wounds wrought over 25 years either quickly or completely, or through any single programme. It therefore developed a multi-faceted programme as a modest, initial contribution to restoring the dignity of victims of human rights violations.

78. Several parts of the Commission's entire programme sought to address the national need for healing. On some levels, all East Timorese people and the society as a whole were victims of the political conflicts of 1974-99. Therefore, the initial focus of the Commission's victim support work was to prepare district teams to take a victim-centred approach in their truth-seeking and community-reconciliation work. It was often said that statement-taking was the first step in the healing process the Commission was promoting. District statement-takers were trained to be sensitive to the needs of those giving statements, by, for example, being alert to their need for further support. They also referred vulnerable people to Victim Support team members, who in turn sought to link them to specialist assistance. District reconciliation teams worked closely with their Victim Support team members in preparing and supporting victims who participated in hearings.

79. The Commission also recognised that, without measuring individual suffering, some people's needs were greater than others' due to the nature of the violations committed against them. The Commission felt compelled by its mandate and principles to develop specific programmes aimed at those in most urgent need of help.

Public hearings

80. Public hearings offered recognition and healing in a symbolic way. This work began with the taking of a statement from a survivor by a member of a district team. Listening with care and recording their story were the first steps towards help in healing. Some survivors went further by telling their stories at a public hearing. At the national, sub-district and village level, hearings placed victims at the centre of their communities. The community listened to and honoured their stories, acknowledged their suffering, and helped them to feel that they were cared for and that their burden was shared.

Healing workshops

81. Healing workshops engaged with survivors in a deeper way and offered emotional and psychological support. They provided a safe forum for survivors to meet others who had suffered terribly, to share experiences and to lessen the feeling of isolation experienced by so many victims. These workshops were also a way for the Commission to get to know survivors better, and to learn from them about the challenges of their daily lives and the areas in which they need support.

Urgent reparations

82. Urgent Reparations was a scheme developed to address at least some of the urgent needs of victims. The Commission recognised that many survivors continue to suffer today as a result of the disabling impact of the violations committed against them. It is a fundamental human right of victims of violations to receive reparations. As an organisation founded on human rights principles, making some small contribution to realising this right for victims was considered an important part of the Commission's work. Sometimes the disability that needed urgent attention

was physical. Sometimes it was psychological and sometimes it was economic. Through the Urgent Reparations Scheme the Commission learned lessons which have informed the wider discussion on the kind of reparations programme that would be appropriate to the East Timorese context. Such a programme can be devised only by taking into account the real needs and expectations of those who are to benefit from it, as well as the capacities of those whose job it will be to deliver it. The outlines of such a programme are set out in the Part 11: Recommendations.

Community profiles

83. Community Profiles were a record of the collective experience of a village or sub-village over the 25-year period of the political conflicts. District teams facilitated the workshops and helped create a permanent record of them by collaborating with the communities in writing up their accounts and drawing sketch maps showing the location of key events. This process recognised both the depth of community experience of violence and the rich East Timorese oral tradition. They were initially created as a research tool in the Commission's truth-seeking work, but were soon acknowledged as valuable occasions for developing community understanding and healing.

84. This variety of approaches ensured that the Commission conducted support programmes to support victims across the country and down to the local level, that it conducted high-profile national events and more intensive activities with smaller numbers of victims. This section will briefly explain each of these aspects of the Commission's programme.

10.3.2 Public Hearings

85. Public hearings, at the national, sub-district and village level, were an important part of the Commission's work. Different types of hearings had different purposes, but a fundamental objective of all hearings was to create a process which respected and helped restore the dignity of victims of human rights violations.

86. The Commission held eight national public hearings receiving direct testimony from survivors. The first was specifically called a Victims' Hearing, the next seven were thematic hearings focusing on specific forms of human rights violations.

87. District teams conducted a public hearing in each sub-district at the end of their three-month programme. Known as Victims' Hearings, they focused on selected community members who had given statements to the Commission the opportunity to tell their stories to Regional Commissioners, community leaders and the community.

88. Community Reconciliation Process (CRP) hearings sought to help heal relationships in a community, partly through restoring the dignity of victims. These hearings were not initiated by victims, but by those who had harmed their communities. They were not technically dependent on the consent or participation of a victim. Nevertheless, the Commission aimed to make these hearings a process that would heal victims as well as repairing relationships within the wider community.

89. In some CRP it was the community as a whole rather than individuals that the perpetrator identified as the victim. When there were individual victims, the Commission involved them in the process. They usually sat in front of the community, to the side of the panel presiding over the hearing. They had the right of reply and were entitled to put questions to the perpetrator, and the panel sometimes consulted victims in determining what an appropriate "act of reconciliation" for a deponent would be. In this way the hearing gave social recognition of the victim's loss, and also conveyed that the victim had displayed his or her generosity by helping to reintegrate a former perpetrator back into the village.

90. Part 9 of this Report on Community Reconciliation addresses the role of the victim in community reconciliation hearings in more detail. This section focuses on national and sub-district hearings.

Objectives of public hearings

91. National and sub-district public hearings were a major part of the Commission's work. They were aimed at fostering national understanding of the truth of past human rights violations and the deep impact that they had had on the lives of individuals, families, communities and the nation. Through their focus on personal testimony from survivors, the hearings educated the public about human rights and the power of their stories to reach out to all in Timor-Leste. From the small number of survivors who testified, people across the country could recognise their own and their families' experiences.

92. The use of the mass media was important to the success of national hearings. National television and radio broadcast hearings live almost in their entirety across the country, and then replayed them regularly. This ensured that national decision makers also heard the stories and perspective of victims of human rights violations.

93. Public hearings were not formal investigative or judicial processes and did not follow legal rules of procedure and evidence. They did not hear testimony from perpetrators, or bring perpetrators and victims face to face. They aimed to demonstrate the full human dimension of the human rights violations committed in Timor-Leste, to stimulate reflection about the factors and patterns underlying these violations, and to build a national commitment to the refrain "never again." Truth-telling was used to promote a personal and community commitment to reconciliation.

Victims selected to testify

94. Commission staff selected people to testify at hearings from among victims who had provided statements to district truth-seeking teams. The criteria included whether a victim would feel comfortable testifying in public, whether they would benefit from such an experience, whether their statement was credible, whether the telling of their story could contribute to reconciliation through acknowledgment of the truth, and whether they would represent others who had similar stories but would not have the opportunity to testify.

95. Commission district truth-seeking teams took 7,824 statements and about 90% of statement-givers said they would be prepared to testify at a public hearing. Most people considered it important to tell their story before the community and before the Commission. This was one reason why the national public hearing format was extended to the sub-district level.

96. The story of Iria Moniz demonstrates how important many felt it was to give their statement and tell their story at a Commission hearing.

From a remote village to a public hearing

For Iria Moniz the opportunity to share her experiences at a public hearing was a prize won by commitment and perseverance. She recounts:

At first I didn't hear about the Commission coming to our...village because the village chief didn't let us know. I live in a remote village that it is hard for cars and motorbikes to reach because there is no road. This is why the information didn't reach us.

So after the Commission left...I went looking for them myself at the Commission's Maliana office in order to give my statement...I felt that their programme was important because I had suffered a lot during the time of the war...

When I went to the Commission's Maliana office they made me feel welcome and did an interview with me. I was not afraid to give my statement to the Commission. The Commission also provided me the opportunity to talk about my pain and suffering in public. They did not pressure me to participate in the Bobonaro public hearing. I wanted to myself in order to share the burden that I had been carrying all these years. After I did that, I felt lighter inside.⁵

97. In both national and sub-district public hearings the Commission also selected survivors with a view to having geographical balance, and covering events that occurred in different time periods and in which a the full range of perpetrator groups were involved. It also sought to have a balance of women and men victims. Meeting these criteria was important if the community was to understand that the Commission was a politically neutral body with a mandate to investigate human rights violations in the context of the political conflict regardless of who committed them.

98. Although hearings did not try to bring victims and perpetrators together, there was always the possibility that they might fuel local tension, especially at the community-based sub-district hearings. The Commission did not have the capacity to provide witness protection and relied on sub-district police to provide security. If a victim felt that his or her testimony might raise issues of personal security, the Commission discouraged him or her from testifying at a public hearing.

National public hearings

99. The first national hearing of the Commission was held on 11-12 November 2002, at the auditorium in the compound in Balide, Dili where UNAMET and later the CNRT had had their headquarters. Three years earlier, thousands of people had sought refuge in this compound in the days of violence after the 1999 ballot. The date was chosen to coincide with the 11th anniversary of the Santa Cruz Massacre of 12 November 1991. Both the location and date signalled that the hearings were to honour the suffering of victims of human rights violations.

100. This hearing was called a Victims' Hearing, and was given the title "Hear Our Voices" (*Rona Ami-nia Lian*, in Tetum). Six women and eight men from all 13 districts of Timor-Leste gave testimony. They ranged in age from the early 20s to late 60s, and told of violations that occurred throughout the 25-year period of the Commission's mandate. They told of violence during the internal conflict of 1975 by East Timorese political parties and of the years of violations at the hands the Indonesian military and its agents.

101. Radio Timor-Leste and Radio Rakambia broadcast the hearing live, and it was covered by a range of international media.

102. The hearing included traditional East Timorese ceremonies, choral singing, poetry and speeches. It closed with a mass and a procession to the Santa Cruz cemetery where wreaths were laid in commemoration of the victims of the 1991 massacre. This cultural element of the

hearing helped to create a supportive atmosphere for those testifying and to differentiate the hearing clearly from formal court proceedings. The inclusion of traditional and contemporary East Timorese culture became an important feature of all Commission hearings.

103. After being sworn in by National Commissioners, survivors were given the opportunity to tell their stories uninterrupted. At the end of each testimony Commissioners could put a few short questions if they felt the victim's story needed clarification. This format created a dynamic where those testifying spoke not only to Commissioners but also directly to those attending the hearing and the wider audience following it through radio and television. This opportunity to speak directly to the Commission and to the wider public was an important part of respecting the dignity of survivors.

Hear Our Voices - *Rona Ami-nia Lian*

The first national public hearing of the Commission heard from six women and eight men, victims of serious human rights violations from all districts of Timor-Leste. It was held on 11-12 November 2002, to help commemorate the Santa Cruz massacre of 1991 and honour the victims of this atrocity.

Teresinha da Silva of Aileu, a small elderly lady, spoke of the forced concentration of the civilian population in camps by Fretilin in 1975, before the Indonesian invasion, and the subsequent death by starvation of more than 20 members of her family.

VN told how she had been held captive in a situation of sexual slavery at an Indonesian military base in Ermera from 1977 to 1978. She spoke of how she bore two children, one of whom died. She also told of how she and her son continue to be ostracised in her community.

Atanaçio da Costa spoke of a militia assault outside his house in Oecusse in April 1999. Slashed repeatedly with machetes, he collapsed to the ground, where he was stabbed in the rectum with the barrel of a rifle. He re-enacted parts of the incident to show how he was assaulted as he lay helpless on the ground, and removed his shirt to show the scars from this attack. He told Commissioners of medical treatment he had received to repair the damage, including ten operations, and the debilitating effects that the attack still has on his daily life.

A young woman from Suai (Covalima) brought the auditorium to tears in the final testimony of the hearing. Speaking with quiet dignity, she recounted her experiences after the massacre of civilians at the Suai Church after the 1999 Popular Consultation. Taken to a nearby school with other women, she was repeatedly raped for a week in front of others. She was then taken to West Timor where the sexual violence continued. As a result of these attacks she bore a child. The young woman asked the gathering if she could present her one-year-old baby. The audience cried out, "Yes, please!" and her one-year-old child was brought on stage by her aunt. Named after a former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, who visited the young woman and other Suai women survivors in 2000, her child is truly a symbol of healing and human rights in Timor-Leste.

Around the auditorium groups of people cried and leaned on each other. Listening to these stories brought back others' traumatic experiences. One young woman, surrounded by a group of crying friends, recalled the murder of her husband only one day after her marriage in August 1999. A week after the Hearing, a Commission team visiting the hill-village of Nitibe in the enclave of Oecusse, one of the most remote parts of Timor-Leste, was told by people there how they had listened to the live radio coverage of the hearings and had wept at her testimony.

Aniceto Guterres Lopes, the Commission's Chairperson, summed up the response of all who were present,

You have told us of your suffering during these two days of hearings, but I want to tell you that you are not alone. Through your stories you have shared your pain with us, and now we all feel this with you. You can see here today how the stories of your suffering have affected us all. We open our hearts to you.

National thematic hearings

104. The other seven national hearings had a slightly different character. Each had a thematic focus, based on areas of the Commission's truth-seeking work. These themes were:

- Political Imprisonment (February 2003),
- Women and Conflict (April 2003),
- Forced Displacement and Famine (July 2003),
- Massacres (November 2003),
- The Internal Political Conflict of 1974-1976 (December 2003),
- Self-Determination and the International Community (March 2004),
- Children and Conflict (March 2004).

105. Most hearings took place over two days, though the hearings on Massacres and Self-Determination and the International Community each took place over three days, and The Internal Political Conflict of 1974-1976 was a four-day hearing.

106. The format for national thematic hearings was primarily the presentation of direct testimony by people who had survived violations related to the theme of the hearing. Around ten survivors gave testimony at each hearing. The Commission also heard expert testimony and submissions from organisations and individuals with special knowledge of the theme gained either through their work in Timor-Leste or through their study of the topic. Expert testimonies helped the Commission and audience to put the victim testimonies into context and to understand better some of the causes and patterns of violations.

107. Two hearings had a somewhat different format. The hearing on The Internal Political Conflict of 1974-1976 received the testimonies of four victims of violations during that period, but it also heard from people who themselves or whose parties had played an important historical role in the events of 1974-76. Among the speakers who had played a direct role in the events, referred to “historical actors” (“*agentes do processo*”), were the President of Timor-Leste, Xanana Gusmão, the Prime Minister Mari Alkatiri, the Nobel Peace Laureate and Foreign Minister, José Ramos Horta and the then President of Fretilin Francisco Xavier do Amaral.

108. Victims did not testify in the hearing on Self-Determination and the International Community, which was held in March 2004. Instead the Commission heard submissions about the policies of foreign governments on Timor-Leste in the years 1974-1999, and about the activity of international civil society on behalf of Timor-Leste during this period. It also heard testimony about the role of East Timorese in exile.

109. In the eyes of the public the national Victims’ Hearing and the national thematic hearings were perhaps the high point of the Commission’s work. They received full national media coverage, and were followed across the country and reported in the international media. Their high public profile made them an exceptionally effective vehicle for creating wider understanding and support of victims and of the Commission’s work. The principal voice that the public heard in this national dialogue about past human rights violations was that of the victims.

Highlights of the national hearings

110. Highlights of the hearings included the inauguration of the Commission’s national headquarters in the Comarca, the former prison in Balide. The headquarters were opened with a hearing on Political Imprisonment that featured testimony from ex-detainees, including several who had been held in the Comarca. The hearing on Women and Conflict provided an insight into the lives and the suffering of women during the years of conflict. In the hearing on Massacres, survivors testified about some of the most brutal acts of the mandate period. Eye witnesses described not just such notorious events such as Kraras Massacre of 1983, the Santa Cruz Massacre of 1991 and the Liquiça Church Massacre of 1999, but also less well-known incidents

that had occurred during the time of the internal political party conflict, after the Indonesian invasion of Dili, and during the late 1970s and the early 1980s.

111. The hearing on Forced Displacement and Famine focused on the experience of those who had survived the horrific events that caused the largest number of deaths during the 25-year mandate period. Victims' accounts of the relentless bombardment suffered by the population who had fled to the mountains after the invasion, the camps which held those who surrendered or were captured, and the prison island of Ataúro, had never before been given a public hearing.

112. For many the December 2003 hearing on The Internal Political Conflict of 1974-1976 will remain the indelible moment of the Commission's work. For the first time Timor-Leste's leaders came forward to speak publicly and in an official forum of the violence between East Timorese in 1974-76. Uncertainty as to how political leaders would react to this opportunity surrounded the hearing. In the end the former political foes expressed humility and sorrow at what had occurred, accepted responsibility and gave a public demonstration of the spirit of reconciliation, making the hearing a momentous event in the nation's history.

113. The hearing on Self-Determination and the International Community provided a rare opportunity for East Timorese to consider the wider international context and its influence on their long struggle for self-determination. The testimonies of old friends of Timor-Leste such as David Scott and James Dunn from Australia, Arnold Kohen from the USA, Sister Monica Nakamura from Japan, Luisa Teotonia Pereira from Portugal, and the UN official Francesc Vendrell, reminded us that even in the darkest days of the occupation there were people around the world who defended Timor-Leste's right to self-determination. The testimony of Ian Martin, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General during UNAMET, reminded East Timorese that their pain did not end once the international community had recognised its responsibility to allow them to exercise their collective right to self-determination.

114. The testimonies of Indonesian human rights defenders, such as the great friends of East Timorese political prisoners Ade Rostina Sitompul and Luhut Pangaribuan, the members and staff of the National Commission on Violence Against Women, the West Timor Humanitarian NGO Team, and the human rights activists Yeni Rosa Damayanti and Nugroho Katjasungkana, were compelling both in themselves and as powerful symbols of the hope of a new relationship with Indonesia based on the principles of human rights. They also reminded us that there were Indonesian citizens who took great risks to defend human rights in Timor-Leste.

115. Fittingly the theme of the final hearing was Children and Conflict, since it not only highlighted the tragic plight of child victims, but also conveyed the resilience and energy of the country's younger generation.

116. The impact that these public hearings had across Timor-Leste made them a keystone of the work of the Commission. The Commission has published booklets on each of the hearings. By making a permanent record available to the people of Timor-Leste and the international community, the Commission hopes that the lessons they offer will continue to resonate.

Bishop Basilio do Nascimento's opening address to the National Public Hearing on the Internal Political Conflict of 1974-1976

Why are we here today? Because of a historical time, because of the wounds of the past, all East Timorese people have waited, so that we can make reconciliation. Reconciliation for the past suffering, for our land. All East Timorese have suffered. We East Timorese people need to be reconciled within ourselves, with our land and with our history. We know this is a good idea, but it is very difficult to do. We hear words of justification and rationalisation: "Because of war I did this"...We need to examine this.

About morality - reconciliation within ourselves can only happen when we are able to let go of our remorse. Otherwise a voice will always be talking at us, always calling in our heads, in our minds. That is why I say that reconciliation can only be achieved when we are able to let go of our remorse. We can make up all sorts of intellectual reasons and arguments, but when we haven't got reconciliation within ourselves we are divided. Not just as a nation or as groups, but also within ourselves like a double personality: our mouths say one thing, our actions do another.

We know our dead will never return, but we need to know the circumstances of their deaths. What we East Timorese mean by justice is particular. I observe that East Timorese do not wait for those who have done wrong to be punished. This is up to the state when Aunt Maria's son is killed in the mountains justice for ordinary East Timorese people includes clearing their names, and making sure that people have not forgotten (the victims). [Excerpts from speech on 15 December 2003]

Sub-district victims' hearings

117. District teams worked in each sub-district within their district for about three months. During this time they took truth-seeking statements, facilitated community reconciliation hearings, conducted Community Profile workshops and provided support to victims of human rights violations.

118. At the end of the three-month period the team organised a public hearing in each sub-district. These were called Sub-district Victims' Hearings. Local civil administration officials, and traditional and community leaders from the sub-district and district were invited to attend the hearings, together with Commissioners and staff from the national office. At the hearings, the district team reported back to the community about its activities in the previous three months. The community then heard testimonies from selected community members who had given statements to the district team. Usually between four and six victims gave testimonies.

119. Sub-district Victims' Hearings were inspired by the powerful impact of the national hearings and the expressed wish of so many victims to testify. The hearings were a commemoration of people who did not survive, and a celebration of the survival of communities and their commitment to healing past divisions in a spirit of reconciliation. They were also an opportunity to share the results of the previous three months' work, to re-emphasise that the Commission's role included helping to restore the dignity of victims within their community, and to close the Commission's activities within the sub-district on a ceremonial note.

120. A total of 52 Sub-district Victims' Hearings were conducted. Sixty-five women, and 149 men gave testimony, and an estimated 6,500 community members attended the hearings.

A Sub-district Hearing: Natarbora

Natarbora is a sub-district in the remote interior of the south-eastern Manatuto District. The Commission district team for Manatuto worked in this sub-district from February to May 2003. The Sub-district Hearing to mark the close of the community's participation in Commission activities was held on 12 May 2003, and was attended by a large number of community members.

At this hearing three victims of human rights violations testified before the Commission and their community. Their testimonies were about events that took place at key stages of the conflict, between 1975 and 1999.

Senhora Filomena (surname withheld) spoke of her experience as a member of the women's organisation, OPMT, between 1975 and 1979, supporting Falintil soldiers. She told of how she was captured in 1980 after a member of her family told the military of her activities. She said he now lived in Indonesia. Sra Filomena told of how she was tortured during interrogation by Indonesian soldiers. She went on to say that in 1999 her kiosk was burned to the ground by the Indonesian military helped by East Timorese, including the Sub-district Administrator. She said that if they were to return to her community, she would be able to accept them back.

WN spoke of the tragic events that had befallen his family in 1977-78. He told of how after his father had surrendered to the Indonesian military, members of Falintil came and raped his aunt, who was a young, single woman at the time. He said that they threatened to kill him if he tried to prevent them raping his aunt. He said that soon after this violation, his mother and five younger siblings, together with his aunt, were all killed by the Indonesian military near the sea.

João Graciano told of his experience of imprisonment after surrendering to the military in 1982 in Soibada. He, his father, younger brother and seven other civilians were imprisoned for six weeks where, he said, they received barely any food. After they were released, he and his younger brother were taken to be TBOs (*Tenaga Bantuan Operasi*, Operations Assistants) by the Indonesian military. He said that they were forced to work as TBOs in the forest near Barique for four months. The military then ordered East Timorese Hansip members to arrest them in Soibada. While detained, the two of them were beaten so badly by more than ten soldiers and Hansip members that his brother still suffers from the physical effects.

The hearing provided a process of honouring the experience of individuals who suffered during the mandate of the Commission, and also of telling and honouring the wider community of the Natarbora area during these years, and of remembering those who died. The hearing was recorded and broadcast by the Commission weekly radio programme, and through this medium the experiences of community members of this remote region were shared with communities across Timor-Leste.

Impact of participation on victims

121. The Commission conducted a survey of participants in Sub-district Victim's Hearings between January and March 2004. This section includes responses given by East Timorese people, as documented in this survey⁶. Given that their participation in a hearing was voluntary, it is not surprising that the victims reported found the hearings a positive experience.

122. Seventy-year old Carlos Vitorino expressed a sentiment shared by many participants:

I feel happy because the people in Viqueque and the important people in Dili came to hear our words for themselves...I feel satisfied.

123. Dominggas Piedade, who participated in the Quelicai Sub-district Victim Hearing, stressed how important the recognition of his and others' suffering was for their healing:

I feel happy because I had the opportunity to speak out...Everything about the hearing was good because it healed our worries.

124. Teofilo da Costa Barros of Lolotoe (Bobonaro) talked of his burden being lifted by the hearing:

After I testified at the public hearing, I felt light because I had rid myself of an emotional burden. This burden has been cast off and now I have stopped worrying. I have also rid myself of the hatred that I had for the people who hurt me in the past. Now I will always welcome them with open arms.

125. Tito Soares de Araújo from Cailaco Sub-district (Bobonaro) commented on how much he enjoyed the hearing:

I feel that the hearing was fantastic, really good...now I feel light and happy because the burden that was in my heart has been lifted.

126. Lourença da Cunha Moniz of Maliana Sub-district (Bobonaro) expressed satisfaction that she had been able to put on record for posterity what had happened to her:

I am not keeping the bad things that were done to me hidden in my heart. I will tell them so that they can be recorded in history for our children and grandchildren.

127. Many victims talked of the hearings' significance for their family and community relationships. Usually, families and friends gave victims the support they needed before, during and after the hearing. Florentina Gama, who testified in the Balibo hearing (Bobonaro), said many members of her family and community rallied round her. She said:

When I participated in the hearing, a lot of my family supported me in my desire to speak in public. They didn't object. They were grateful that I could tell the story of the suffering that I experienced throughout my life and that the leaders could hear it and take care of us...After I testified in the public hearing, my neighbours and my family were not upset. They were happy because I represented the victims from my town and told of the suffering that every single household experienced.

128. The response of Lourença da Cunha's family was initially one of surprise, as they had not previously heard her story. At the hearing the family wept with Lourença:

When I testified at the hearing, my family was surprised because until then I had kept my story a secret from them. Only when the Commission came, did I share my pain and suffering in public and in front of the local authorities...When I testified at the public hearing my family members and friends were also sad and wept because of the suffering I experienced...

129. But others received more mixed reactions from family and community. The decision of Teofilo da Costa Barros of Lolotoe (Bobonaro) to take part in a hearing was met with the silence and indifference, though not the outright hostility, of his family and neighbours:

When I was going to participate in the hearing no one from my family gave support. They said nothing. After I testified in public at the hearing, I came home and my family and neighbours didn't threaten me or express anger.

130. In Bobonaro Sub-district (Bobonaro), Iria Moniz, a former clandestine leader in her village, said that initially her family accused her of betraying Xanana Gusmão by testifying at the hearing. After the hearing, however:

Many people felt sad and some came and hugged me and cried because my story had made their hearts ache.

131. Iria Moniz's experience highlights the fact that discussing violence committed by East Timorese against East Timorese in their communities remains a sensitive subject, even when the incidents discussed took place many years ago. Pressure to remain silent can be strong and can further isolate victims in their suffering. This reality needs to be borne in mind when considering future programmes to foster reconciliation at the community level.

The impact of public hearings

132. Victims' Hearings were a shared national experience of listening to the voices of victims and confronting the truth and impact of past human rights violations. They have built a basis for further national and community-level dialogue on dealing with past violence in a spirit of reconciliation. Sub-district Hearings were particularly important in taking this process out of Dili and into local communities.

133. National Public Hearings were a new experience for victims and the nation. Most victims came from rural communities and had never spoken at any kind of national public event. The hearings were shown on television in Dili and broadcast across the country by radio, allowing the victims' words reached into communities and homes throughout Timor-Leste. The hearings gave victims a unique opportunity to speak directly to national leaders when National Commissioners asked them if they would like to give a message to the nation. The hearings therefore placed ordinary people at the centre of the national debate on healing, reconciliation and justice.

134. The Commission raised sensitive issues at public hearings, especially National Hearings. For the first time the community heard direct testimony about terrible violations committed by East Timorese political parties in 1974-1976. Victims told of violence committed by East Timorese in the Indonesian military and its auxiliaries. The family and community dimensions of this sort of violence are profound. Women spoke openly of the sexual violence committed against them, challenging the widely-held view that East Timorese culture forbade discussion of this subject. Hearings brought home the personal dimension of the massive and prolonged violence of the Indonesian military over the period of the Commission's mandate. The way that this process of

public truth-telling gained the respect of the wider population augurs well for future peace-building initiatives.

135. The Commission offers its profound gratitude to those victims who courageously contributed to this process of community dialogue and education. We hope that the people who participated in this process feel that it has helped them on their journey of healing.

10.3.3 Healing Workshops

Background

136. Healing Workshops grew out of the Commission's experience in working with victims from the first three National Public Hearings. District teams working in villages came to understand how past violence continued to affect victims' lives. They saw that some victims needed more sustained support than that offered through statement-taking and brief follow-up visits. Before each National Public Hearing the Commission held a workshop with participants to help them prepare emotionally for the experience of telling their story in public. The NGO Fokupers supported these workshops.

137. Taking those experiences as its starting point, in May 2003 the Commission conducted an evaluation of its work with victims. It looked at the way it had been offering assistance to victims of human rights violations and decided to try to offer more intensive support to people trying to rebuild their lives. To meet this need the Victim Support Team developed the Healing Workshop programme.

138. Because the workshops were to involve intensive work with victims, it was clear that they would reach only a small number of people. Criteria for participation were therefore drawn up, which focused mostly on the vulnerability of the victim and the judgment of district Commission staff that he or she would benefit from such a process.

139. As the Commission did not have professionally qualified mental health workers on its staff, it formed its partnership with Fokupers. A number of other organisations and individuals also contributed to the workshops, including the Dili-based art group Arte Moris, the Canossian Sisters of Balide, who provided accommodation, East Timorese musicians and the International Organisation of Migration (IOM), which assisted with transport. District and national Victim Support staff played a key role in facilitating the workshops and providing support to participants.

Objectives

140. The Healing Workshops had four main objectives, all related to developing a deeper relationship between the Commission and victims of human rights violations. They were to:

- Provide more support to victims within the Commission's capabilities
- Refer survivors to other services and organisations for further assistance
- Help survivors plan the use of their Urgent Reparations grants
- Listen to survivors' perspectives on what the Commission should recommend for further action in its Final Report.

141. Within these objectives, the Healing Workshops specifically aimed to:

- Create a safe place for survivors of serious human rights violations to come together and reflect on their past experiences and their current situations
- Allow survivors to share their stories and hear the stories of others
- Provide an opportunity for survivors to participate in group work and other creative activities to aid in healing
- Create a process that allowed survivors to explore a range of emotional dimensions as diverse as fun and laughter and the celebration of the strengths of survivors as individuals and as community members
- Assist survivors in planning the expenditure of funds provided through the Urgent Reparations Programme
- Identify the needs of survivors and make referrals to other organisations capable of helping them
- Elicit recommendations from survivors to assist the Commission in compiling a Final Report that reflects their experiences, preoccupations and needs.

Healing Workshops: a deeper level of support

The objectives of the Healing Workshops were modest, and intended to be realistic. We tried to address the needs of the participants on a variety of levels. A three-day workshop could never pretend to offer a panacea, especially as each participant who came to a workshop was at a different stage of the healing process. Within a group process, encompassing a variety of activities, we tried to create a range of ways of reflecting and interacting that allowed different people to find the way that suited them.

It was important to create a space where survivors could feel cared for and respected, and where they could simultaneously offer that care and respect to their peers. Connecting with others who had suffered was an important part of the programme. It enabled survivors to feel less isolated and to understand they were not alone in carrying their heavy burden. It also helped show that healing is not just about specialist care, but also about reaching into ourselves and supporting each other.

It was, however, also important to address material obstacles to the well-being of survivors, and so the Commission endeavoured to link up victims with institutions offering appropriate medical and other care. For some who attended the workshops this entailed nothing more than a visit to the doctor. For some it meant more complex drastic medical interventions such as being fitted with a prosthetic limb in Indonesia.

Assistance with physical health problems and the provision of a safe environment that promoted trust and sharing formed the foundation for achieving the primary objective of the Healing Workshops, that of helping survivors to recognise that inner healing is a process that requires attention and energy, assess what stage they had reached in the process of healing, and take some further steps forward in that process. Kieran Dwyer, Advisor, CAVR

Participants

142. Six workshops were held at the Commission's national headquarters in Dili. Five brought together mixed groups of men and women, and one was for women only. Participants came from all districts of Timor-Leste, and efforts were made to involve survivors from some of the most remote parts of the country.

143. All participants had initially given statements to District Truth-Seeking Teams. District Victim Support Teams had then identified them as meeting the criteria for the Urgent Reparations

Scheme. While only a small number of Urgent Reparations Scheme recipients participated in Healing Workshops, the workshops were a part of this Scheme.

144. In total 156 people participated in the six workshops, 82 women (52%) and 74 men (47%).

The workshop programme

145. The first step in a workshop for most participants was getting to Dili. Many participants from remote rural communities had never been to the national capital, and simply to travel to Dili, away from family and community, was a big step. Providing participants with the support they needed from the time they left home until their return at the end of the workshop was therefore crucial to the success of the programme. Commission district teams were responsible for travel arrangements and for supporting participants during this process.

146. Participants in the first workshops from outside Dili stayed in the teacher training college in Balide, which had previously been the site of the UNAMET and CNRT headquarters. Participants in later workshops stayed in the residence of the Canossian Sisters, also in Balide, near the Commission's national office. The pastoral care given by the Sisters was an especially valuable contribution. Participants usually arrived in Dili the day before the workshop began. These practical arrangements were important in establishing a feeling among participants that they were cared for and valued.

147. Bringing participants to Dili was a deliberate decision. It allowed them to step out of their daily lives and dedicate some time just to themselves. For many, especially women participants, this was a rare opportunity to be free from the daily routine of hard domestic work. In addition, by bringing participants away from their villages, it was hoped that they would feel able to speak more freely of their experiences and feelings. It also allowed people from all over the country to meet each other, thereby breaking down the sense of isolation felt by many survivors.

148. The workshop took place over three days. The programme provided a combination of formal and unstructured activity. Each group of participants was different, and within each group individuals responded differently to the experience, so it was important for the workshops to be flexible in this way. The mixture of structured activities and informality allowed participants to mix with each other in different ways, to talk to each other informally and give each other support.

149. Most workshop activities took place at the Commission national office. This brought survivors into the centre of the Commission's daily work, creating a sense of involvement with and ownership of the Commission. Each time workshops were held, the former-prison-turned-national-office was transformed by the presence of survivors. They personalised the issue of human rights violations and inspired with their resilience and support for each other.

Day one

150. The workshop began with a welcome by a National Commissioner, usually Commissioner Isabel Guterres, who had special responsibility for victim support work. The first session focused on introductions, on gently creating a sense of ease amongst the group, and outlining the three-day programme.

151. Commission staff then explained what was called the journey of healing. This helped participants understand that healing is a process that they themselves could begin and move through. It gave participants a framework for the activities to come and a reference point for discussions over the following three days.

152. The main activity of the first day, called “group counselling”, was the sharing of personal stories. Women counsellors from Fokupers facilitated these sessions with support from Commission staff. Fokupers has much experience of working with survivors of violence in this way, and their contribution was critical to the effectiveness of the workshop. Counsellors then worked with small groups, using creative techniques to help survivors find ways of talking about their experiences. There was no obligation to speak, and if participants chose to speak, they could say as much or as little as they wanted. Listening was an important part of these sessions, creating a sense of respect and care.

153. These sessions were emotionally taxing for both participants and workers. The impact on each participant was monitored and extra support provided when necessary.

The journey of healing

On the day before the first healing workshop, the Commission had the good fortune to be visited by the New Zealand Anglican priest, Father Michael Lapsley. Father Lapsley is a human rights activist, who has lived in South Africa for many years. In the dying days of the apartheid regime he survived a letter bomb posted to him, but lost both hands and an eye, and had to undergo extensive surgery and rehabilitation. He learned of the suffering of the East Timorese people at first hand in 1999 when he visited Timor-Leste in 1999 as an observer of the Popular Consultation, after meeting Xanana Gusmão in Cipinang prison in Jakarta

From close observation of the work of the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) Father Lapsley concluded that survivors of human rights violations needed more than the short period of support that the TRC offered. He established the Institute for the Healing of Memory to continue the work of healing in South Africa. Father Lapsley told National Commissioners and Commission staff about his own experience as a victim, and how it had influenced his work with fellow victims. His message inspired the Commission's own approach to survivors.

Fr Lapsley's idea of a journey of healing was taken up by the Commission, and helped give shape to the Workshops. Fr Lapsley spoke of four stages in the survivor's experience:

- First was the time in a person's life before the violation, involving supportive family and other relationships.
- Then was the violation, often involving many acts over a long period, which caused a fundamental break in people's lives. Many people do not survive and these are truly victims.
- Those who live are survivors, but they often become stuck in their lives, constantly recalling the pain and suffering of the violation. Many survivors are unable to move beyond this pain for the rest of their lives.
- Finally, survivors embark on what can be the work of a lifetime, moving from being a victim to becoming a victor over the pain and violence.

These four stages were used in a practical way to develop a framework for activities and discussions in the Healing Workshops.

Many victims' artwork reflected the underlying theme of a journey. Marcelina Poto drew two pictures in her workshop. Of the first picture she said: "I painted this house because it is the house they killed my husband in front of." Of the second she said: "This flower represents my desire to move out of this suffering."

Regina Freitas, explained her three pictures:

The house represents the time when my family was complete. The tree represents my life. The tree with no leaves represents the time when they killed my husband, and the gun represents the weapons the Indonesian men used to kill him.

Marta Ximenes presented two of her pictures:

The house with the garden represents the time when they killed my husband in this house and shot me in the leg. The flower represents the happiness I feel because I have shared my suffering with the authorities.

A chance to develop understanding

Sharing stories of past violations was a difficult experience for participants. The respectful listening and support of fellow participants was an important part of the process. At times victims' stories concerned sensitive matters that made their fellow-participants deeply uneasy. In such circumstances other members of the group could provide the support needed to break the tension. In this way the workshop provided a supportive forum to discuss difficult issues.

At a workshop in March 2004 a small group were sharing their stories. A young woman from Suai (Covalima) was telling the painful story of being raped by members of the Indonesian military in 1999. The group listened attentively, as the young woman told her story through tears. One young man interrupted, politely, to say that he felt that in East Timorese culture it was not appropriate for women to talk about these sorts of experiences. He was himself the survivor of severe torture on a number of occasions throughout the 1990s.

The facilitator asked the young woman and rest of the group what they thought. An older lady sitting between the young man and the young woman put her hand on the young woman's shoulder, and said that women had been abused in the past and that if now they felt they wanted to talk about it, then there was nothing in East Timorese culture to say that they should not do so. She said that now was the right time for women to talk. She said this gently, while also patting the young man on the shoulder in a comforting way. She herself was the survivor of rape. The group and the young man nodded assent, and the young woman continued her story.

Day two

154. The activities on the second and third days were designed to provide a balance to the narratives recounted on the first day by allowing participants both to express their stories and feelings in other ways and also to experience other emotions such as joy and celebration.

155. On the second day participants were encouraged to find creative ways of expressing feelings in a relaxed atmosphere. Singing, theatre games, and drawing and painting were the main activities. The focus shifted a little from past experience to how survivors experienced their lives today, and what they hoped for the future. The youth art group Arte Moris attended some workshops, as did the East Timorese musicians Gil and Jimmy Madeira. Music is an especially rich part of East Timorese culture, and even participants who came from different districts of Timor-Leste with their own distinct languages tended to know the same songs in Tetum. The songs were linked to personal experiences and emotions, and became the catalyst for discussions about how survivors felt the past in their present lives, about the good and difficult things in their lives, and about the support they did or did not receive from their families and communities.

156. Singing and theatre games also allowed participants to give gentle physical expression to their feelings. This was especially important because many survivors continue to suffer physical disability or feel constricted in their bodies after terrible physical and emotional suffering. These activities aimed to help participants to identify and celebrate their capacity to survive and their courage in rebuilding their lives. Recognition of participants' strengths and beauty, and learning from this as a group, was at the centre of this second day.

157. At the end of the second day, participants were taken on a tour of Dili. This excursion was the first opportunity many participants had had to see such national landmarks as the statue of Christ on the outskirts of Dili, the Santa Cruz cemetery, the national parliament, the national university and the Dili waterfront. This time was also used to refer people to medical and other services at the national hospital.

Day three

158. The third day began with participants sharing their artwork with the group, and talking about what their pictures meant to them. Discussion about what this meant for people's journey of healing followed, again with a focus on celebrating the achievements, small or great, of each participant. Participants were then informed about the financial aspect of the Urgent Reparations Scheme. It was decided not to inform participants about this earlier, to prevent the workshop becoming too heavily-focused on financial issues. Commission team members facilitated small group discussions with participants to share ideas about how they could use the grant to improve their lives in a sustainable way. Following this, participants joined a group discussion in which they identified recommendations that they thought the Commission should put forward in its Final Report.

159. The workshop concluded with a ceremony of reflection, sometimes a mass, at which participants were awarded certificates for their participation and contribution.

Dance of the wounded

A Commission team member recalled a moving moment on the second day of the first healing workshop in June 2003:

This was the first time we had tried the singing activity, with Gil Madeira on the guitar. We were sitting in a circle, about 15 of us, and as we talked about different times in our lives, times of happiness and times of suffering, Gil would ask the members of the group if they knew any songs that they associated with feelings from this time. Slowly, we would sing together as people gave suggestions or just started to sing.

One older lady from Aileu had asked during the coffee break if we could find a time to dance together, to share the different tebe-tebe from different parts of Timor-Leste. While we were singing she stood up and gently started to dance her tebe. Participants were a little shy, and no one got up to join her. So I joined her, but told her she would need to teach me. We held hands, and slowly moved in a circle. One by one participants joined in. It was a very slow dance. Some of the participants had very damaged bodies from the violations against them, even long ago. We didn't talk, just looked at each other and with our eyes we encouraged participants who hadn't joined in. Finally we were a full circle, rocking gently and moving to the rhythm of the Aileu tebe of our older sister.

When we eventually finished we all sat down in happy silence. We knew we had shared something special.

160. Time off from organised activities was also valuable to participants' overall experience of the workshop. For many participants, a coffee or meal break was a time to reflect on what they had gained from a session. Commission staff members were ready to listen, and offer comfort or assistance during these times. These times also allowed participants to sit together and develop friendships. In the evenings, participants returned to their residence at the Canossian Sisters. Commission staff accompanied them and continued to offer care and support.

161. For some participants, the day's activities re-opened emotional and psychological scars, and they were monitored and supported as needed. National Victim Support staff played an important role in this work. Having travelled with participants from their home districts, District Victim Support staff members were able to give particularly valuable support throughout the workshop. They had already developed a relationship with participants that would continue upon return to the district.

Peer support

Creating an environment where survivors could meet other survivors, share stories and support each other was essential to the success of the healing workshops. Each group developed its own dynamic, but mutual care and support was always at the heart of the workshops.

The special role that some survivors played in creating this atmosphere suggests how peer support could be used in the future work in this area. Olga from the central mountain village of Mauchiga (Hatu Builico, Ainaro) gave testimony at the Commission's National Public Hearing on Women and Conflict in April 2003. Her story of sexual violence and sexual slavery in 1982 was the first time the nation had heard of the suffering of the women of Mauchiga after villagers joined an uprising against the Indonesian military. In January 2004 Olga and her young daughter accompanied an older lady from Mauchiga to an all-women healing workshop. Throughout the workshop Olga supported the older lady and other participants, and also shared her experience. Her daughter joined in the singing and painting activities, and was a favourite of the other participants.

Olga's role as a support person helped her friend from Mauchiga, and was a further step in her own healing. She showed others too how survivors could move, however slowly, along the journey. She also showed how networks of survivors could support each other.

Reflections on the healing workshops

162. Comments made throughout the workshops as well as an internal Commission evaluation on victim support work carried out with selected participants indicate that the Healing Workshops had a significant and positive impact on the participants. While retelling their stories was often painful, participants nevertheless expressed gratitude for the opportunity to share their experiences. For example, Marcelino Poto from Oecusse spoke of watching the murder of her husband and the burning of her home by militia. She said:

As I speak here, I feel deep pain, but I also feel a little happiness because I have the chance to speak with friends whose suffering is the same as mine.

163. A woman from Viqueque also found the experience difficult but valuable. She told of being raped daily over an extended period by a total of about 40 men. She said that from these rapes she conceived and bore four children. She said:

When I remember and tell this story I feel embarrassed and my heart aches, but I must speak out so that I can lessen my suffering.

164. When asked more directly how they felt about the Healing Workshops, participants said they were satisfied with the programme and thanked the Commission for providing them with the opportunity to participate.

¹ This section and the section on the CAVR Urgent Reparations scheme below include quotations from East Timorese people who participated in the victim support evaluation conducted by the CAVR *Acolhimento* and Victim Support Division. CAVR Archive, March 2004.

Programme highlights from participants' perspectives

For many participants the most important part of the programme was group counselling - the opportunity to share their story with others. When asked what they hoped to gain from the three days, the vast majority of participants responded like Rosa Kolobere from Suai:

I have come to share my experience with friends. When we share with each other we can alleviate our suffering and our daily lives can become easier.

Or as Angelina da Costa from Ainaro said simply: "I want to tell my story."

Reflecting on the programme, Veronica Moniz of Bobonaro said she enjoyed it because of its wide variety of activities.

The Healing Workshop made me happy and stopped me worrying because they got us to do lots of things like drawing flowers, singing, and other things.

"I liked it all" remarked Bernadino Loeleto of Maliana, "but my favourite part was the funny skit about inviting people to come to a wedding. I got to play the role of the godfather."

Luis Afonso from Lolotoe (Bobonaro) commented on how much he learnt from the workshop in general. For him and others an important part of the experience was the visit to Dili.

Quotes from CAVR Acolhimento and Victim Support programme evaluation, January to March 2004.

165. The three-day residential Healing Workshops were the most intensive interactions the Commission had with victims. From these and other interactions with victims the Commission learned some important practical lessons that can be used in future work in this area.

166. The Commission's expectations of the Healing Workshops were modest. From its work with survivors, it was aware that their needs were usually far too great to be addressed in three days. The Commission aimed to make a contribution to each victim's recovery by helping them to recognise their potential to grow beyond the pain of their suffering. At times in this work, the Commission felt overwhelmed by the terrible experiences endured by participants, as the support it was able to offer was clearly inadequate to their needs.

167. Victims of human rights violations need support of many kinds. These include economic assistance, educational and health services, symbolic recognition, and justice. There are also more personal needs such as the need for personal recognition, to raise self-esteem, and to offer care and love. Health, both physical and mental, is a critical issue for many victims, and is so basic as to affect all other aspects of their lives. Though small, the Commission's contribution should be seen as the foundation on which future institutions and programmes can build. The Reparations Programme recommended by the Commission seeks to address the many needs of survivors of the 25 years of conflict.

10.3.4 Urgent reparations

Background

168. As district teams began working in villages across the country, it quickly became clear to them that many victims of human rights violations had pressing needs directly related to the violations they had suffered. Victims looked to the Commission as perhaps the only national institution that could help them. It did not seem enough to tell survivors to wait until the

recommendations of the Commission's Final Report had been acted on for help to come. Therefore, the Commission developed an interim means of addressing some of the urgent needs of victims, the Urgent Reparations Scheme.

Reasons for a reparations scheme

169. The foundation of the scheme was the principle of international human rights law that the victims of wrongful acts have the right to reparations. The body of international law suggests that the core elements of reparation are:

- Restitution;
- Compensation;
- Rehabilitation;
- Satisfaction; and
- Guarantees of non-repetition.

170. As an independent national institution with a mandate based on international human rights law, the Commission sought to respect the right of victims to reparation by establishing the Urgent Reparations Scheme. The Commission emphasises that the scheme was developed only as a temporary measure to be carried out during the life of the Commission. It does not prejudice in any way any right of victims to full reparations as part of a long-term settlement. The small size of the monetary grant component of the scheme clearly does not meet the requirements of a full reparations scheme under the principles listed above.

171. As the new nation of Timor-Leste seeks to establish a democracy founded on the equality of its citizens, it has a moral duty to ensure that those citizens who currently suffer disadvantage due to past violations are able to take up their position as fully participating citizens of Timor-Leste. The state should take whatever action it can to assist the achievement of this goal. The social imperative for the state to make reparations also derives from both its peace-building and development objectives. Helping the victims of violence repair their lives is an essential step towards healing the rifts that exist after years of conflict. Without such repair, disadvantage and isolation may create an underclass, whose disaffection could fuel social unrest. Equally, the national priorities of development and poverty reduction require that all citizens are able to play an active and constructive role in building the new nation. Victims of past violations are among those at greatest risk of being left behind in this process of development.

Funding

172. The Commission itself had no funds to develop a reparations scheme. It was assisted through a partnership with the Community Empowerment and Local Governance Project (CEP), a project managed by the Ministry of the Interior and funded through the Trust Fund for East Timor (TFET) administered by the World Bank. The CEP had a programme for helping "vulnerable groups" and its support of the Urgent Reparations Scheme was managed through that programme.

Programme objectives

173. The main objective of the Urgent Reparations Scheme was to provide reparations to survivors of human rights violations, whose needs were both urgent and could not be easily met by other means. Through the provision of health or other services or a small financial contribution, the scheme sought to meet the most pressing needs of some of these people. The reparation on

offer was not regarded as full restitution. Nor was it considered to extinguish the duty of the state to provide reparations for victims of human rights violations.

174. The Commission was under no illusion that it was fixing the problem. It was offering short-term alleviation and helping victims move forward in the longer process of healing and restoration. In addition, the scheme developed a community-focused approach, working with national human rights NGOs and community organisations, in funding a number of pilot community development-oriented approaches to healing and restoration.

Who could receive assistance

175. District teams identified potential beneficiaries of the programme from among those whom the teams had come into contact with through their truth-seeking and reconciliation work. Primary beneficiaries were direct survivors of human rights violations such as rape, imprisonment and torture, as well as those who suffered indirectly through the abduction, disappearance or killing of family members. Potential beneficiaries had to meet the following eligibility criteria.

- The need had to be severe, immediate and related directly to a human rights violation that had occurred within the mandated period of 1974-1999. For example, a person still suffering from an injury sustained during torture or a widow with inadequate income due to the killing of her husband would meet this criterion.
- The person had to be clearly vulnerable - for example, a widow, orphan, person with a physical disability, or someone isolated within her or his community. Those who were vulnerable were considered to be persons whose daily life continued to be stunted by the physical, psychological or economic consequences of the human rights violations committed against them.
- Other resources to meet the need either did not exist or were not easily accessible.
- The assistance would help the recipient in a sustainable way. For example, it would facilitate the restoration of the person's dignity, prevent further abuse or would contribute to empowerment or healing that would improve the long-term quality of the person's life.

Forms of reparation

176. The types of reparation that the Commission could offer included:

- An emergency grant of US\$200
- Urgent medical and/or psycho-social care
- Equipment and/or training for the disabled
- Setting up of survivors' self-help groups that might engage in any of a range of activities ranging from theatre work to small business that would help restore their dignity
- Commemoration of an event, with the aim of providing recognition and the restoration of dignity to victims
- The provision of tombstones or monuments to promote community recognition of victims who had disappeared, thereby helping to provide a sense of emotional closure for victims' families
- Contracts with local organisations such as churches or counselling groups that could provide sustained help to survivors.

Implementation of the scheme

177. In May 2003, the Commission established a Working Group for Victim Support to devise and oversee policies around victim support, including reparations. It consisted of two National Commissioners, the Commission Victim Support Division Coordinator, the CAVR Programme Manager, a representative from each of the East Timorese human rights NGOs Fokupers and Assosiasi HAK (Rights Association), and a Sister from the Carmelite nuns.

178. District staff identified prospective individual or community recipients of the cash grant, and referred them to the Reparations Committee. Once the Committee approved a referral, the Commission distributed the funds.

179. The Commission also contracted other organisations to provide support to victims. In ten districts, the Commission contracted NGOs or religious groups involved in providing health services to offer support to identified victims over a six-month period. The ten organizations were SATILOS (*Fundação Saude Timor-Leste*, East Timor Health Foundation) in Dili, the Canossian Sisters in Ainaro, Manatuto and Lautém, the Catholic Peace and Justice Commission in Maliana, the *Centro Feto Enclave Oecusse* (Oecusse Enclave Women's Centre) the Congregation of the Infant Jesus Sisters in Manufahi and Baucau, the Franciscan Sisters in Viqueque, and the PRR Sisters (*Putri Renha Rosario*, Daughters of the Virgin Mary) in Liquiça.

180. As the Commission closed its district offices in March 2004, it decided to continue the Urgent Reparations Scheme but to limit it to specific communities or groups. It funded three East Timorese NGOs to provide these support services: Assosiasi HAK, Fokupers and the women's NGO ET-Wave. A six-month programme was developed with each of the three organisations, using community development principles to offer support to victims. These programmes sought to work with victims and their communities, rather than singling out victims for individual support.

Results – the assistance provided

181. The cash grant component of the Urgent Reparations Scheme was distributed between September 2003 and March 2004. In this period, 516 men (73% of the recipients) and 196 women (27%) each received US\$200 for a total of \$142,400 to 712 survivors of human rights abuses.

182. All 156 participants in the healing workshops at the national headquarters of the Commission received the Urgent Reparations grant. Staff accompanied two of the recipients to Yogyakarta, Indonesia, where each was fitted with and trained in the use of a prosthetic limb.

183. In ten districts, 417 survivors - 322 men (77%) and 95 women (23%) - received the continuing support and assistance offered by local NGOs and church groups. This support included medicines, referral to district hospitals, and basic counselling and support, including home visits. The Commission hoped that once such links to local support mechanisms had been established, they would continue to provide assistance to the victim, although it recognised that the scarcity of resources at the local level might prevent that from happening.

184. The three NGOs, which the Commission contracted to provide support services after it left the districts, concentrated their efforts on particular groups or communities. Assosiasi HAK focused its work on the Kraras-Lalerik Mutin community of Viqueque. The Kraras community had suffered a series of massacres in 1983, and survivors were relocated to nearby Lalerik Mutin. Most of those who survived were women, and Lalerek Mutin is frequently called the “village of widows.” In the six-month programme, Assosiasi HAK worked with the community to identify its particular needs, and established a community education centre.

185. Fokupers and ET-Wave offered follow-up support to the women who had given statements and participated in hearings or the Urgent Reparations Scheme. Fokupers worked in five districts: Dili, Liquiça, Bobonaro, Ermera and Covalima. ET-Wave worked in Lautém. In addition to following-up with individual women, the organisations worked with communities to address the isolation that many victims, especially rural women, suffer.

David Rodrigues, recipient of a prosthetic limb

David Rodrigues was a young man at the time of the Indonesian invasion in 1975. He and his father were severely wounded during attacks from land and air by the Indonesian military. David's father's arm was injured so badly that he eventually died from infection. David had a leg wound that was treated with traditional remedies such as corn leaves and he survived. But, because he was trapped in the mountains without any access to medical services, infection set in and David's leg started to rot. For seven months his leg disintegrated, giving off such a powerful stench that he was forced to live in isolation. Each day his family brought him food and then left him. Eventually the rotten limb dropped away, and David treated the wounded stump with traditional medicine. He learned to walk again by using a stick. In 1979 he surrendered to the Indonesian military in Rotutu (Same, Manufahi). The Indonesians treated other wounded East Timorese; some were taken to Indonesia to be fitted with prosthetic limbs. However, because David was from the village of Mauchiga (Hatu Bulico, Ainaro), which was known to be strongly pro-Fretilin, he did not receive any assistance.

After independence David gave his statement to the Commission. He participated in a Healing Workshop, where he was provided with a \$200 Urgent Reparations grant. A Commission staff member accompanied him to Yogyakarta (Indonesia) where he spent two weeks being fitted with a prosthetic leg and trained in its use. On his return to Timor-Leste, he appeared at the Commission national office with a beaming smile. He proudly peeled off his shoe and sock to display his new leg to staff and friends. He commented to the Commission staff member who accompanied him to Yogyakarta:

Sometimes I think I'm dreaming. I am an illiterate, uneducated man, yet here I am riding airplanes, visiting other lands and getting this kind of assistance. I would like to thank Commission from the bottom of my heart for this.

Carmina dos Santos, a house of her own

When Indonesia invaded Timor-Leste in 1975 Carmina dos Santos, together with her husband and two young children, fled to the forest where her husband died.

On 14 July 1993 Carmina and her older brother were arrested by Indonesian soldiers and taken to the Koramil post in Bobonaro under suspicion of aiding their uncle, Martinho, who was a guerrilla in the forest. Carmina was also accused of involvement in the destruction of a statue of the Virgin Mary at the Malilait Grotto in Bobonaro Sub-district. Carmina and her brother were beaten severely. Their heads were smashed against a wall; they were kicked with army boots and their bodies trodden on. Since that time Carmina has suffered from convulsions.

After Carmina's home was looted and burned by militia in 1999, she and her daughter moved in with her older brother, but they were never completely comfortable because her brother constantly argued with her. Carmina felt that she and her child were neglected. They did not have their own house and neither the local government nor her own family helped her.

When the Commission district team began to take statements in Bobonaro, Carmina's daughter, Regina dos Santos, gave a statement that included the story of how in 1993 her mother and uncle had been tortured by soldiers at the Koramil in Bobonaro. She told about Carmina's nervous condition and loss of memory. Commission Victim Support staff visited Carmina to offer counselling. She was also given \$200 as part of the Urgent Reparations Scheme. On a return visit several months later, Commission Victim Support staff observed improvements in Carmina's life. She had her own house, and her nerves and memory were returning to normal. Carmina was very happy and expressed profuse thanks to the Commission. Even if she and her daughter lived in only a small hut, it was their own.

How the grants were used

186. A grant US\$200 was designed to be a large enough amount of money to allow the recipient to improve their quality of life in a practical way by undertaking some activity or buying goods or services that could help their recovery. Of course it was not sufficient to fund the costly, long-term interventions needed by many victims of serious human rights violations.

187. Grant recipients spent the money in a variety of ways. Commonly the money was used to pay for medical treatment, the education of children, and starting up income-generating pursuits, such as animal husbandry or gardening. Other uses included the purchase of food, clothing and shelter.

Use of the Urgent Reparations grant

While recipients of Urgent Reparations were free to spend the money however they wished, it was emphasised that the Commission hoped that the money would be used to make lasting improvements to their quality of life. For many, this was indeed the case.

“I used the money to buy medicine to treat my illness and now I feel a bit better. I feel well enough to do some light work. I used to cough severely and now I hardly cough,” observed one survivor when visited several months after receiving her grant.

“When I received the money from Commission I used it to buy...traditional East Timorese medicine and also medicine from the pharmacy to treat my illness. Ever since then I have been well,” observed another survivor, adding that with the remaining money she also bought a pig for breeding and some groceries.

Manuel Laka Suri also used part of the money to improve his health. The rest he used “to pay people to tend my fields, buy groceries, and pay the children’s school fees”.

188. Most recipients were grateful to the Commission for the grant, although many also said that US\$200 was not enough money to meet their needs. In the most serious cases of victims suffering from chronic health problems or deep poverty related to the abuse they had suffered, the grant could not make a real difference. Such victims need a sustainable reparations scheme. The Commission’s recommendations on reparations address their plight (see Part 11: Recommendations).

Responses from community members

Giving grants to selected individuals in Timor-Leste where poverty is the norm always carried risks. While many family and community members were sympathetic when they learned that a recipient had received a grant, some were jealous. Because of the possibility of an unfavourable community reaction, the Commission did not publicise the grants, and told recipients that as far as the Commission was concerned, they were confidential.

A man from Maliana (Bobonaro), concealed the receipt of the money from his community: "The money was a secret, so I didn't tell anyone and no one asked me about it."

A woman from Bobonaro also kept quiet about her grant:

I didn't tell anyone about the money because Commission said it was confidential. I was afraid that if people heard, they would beat me up because there are many other victims who didn't receive money.

However, for some victims concealment was not possible. When community members heard that a neighbour had received money, their responses varied. Manuel Laka Suri's community, which fully appreciated his situation, praised the Commission for helping Manuel to treat his illness.

Members of Ponciano Maia's community were neither resentful nor actively supportive: "[The community] didn't create any problems for me because they know that I suffered greatly in the war, so they were silent."

Ponciano de Araújo had a very different experience. Some members of his community asked: "Why didn't we get any money? We are all victims."

Reflections on the scheme

189. The impact of Urgent Reparations assistance varied between recipients. It depended on, among other things, the person's physical and psychological state before receiving assistance, the type of need being addressed, and the person's family and social environment. Nevertheless, the commission believes that the scheme was successful in bringing about small, but meaningful, improvements in the quality of life of victims of human rights violations.

190. The scheme was also part of a broader strategy of giving official recognition to the suffering of victims and of seeking to develop a multi-faceted relationship with them. The first stage in this relationship began with victims giving a statement to the Commission. Some then went on to give testimony at public hearings; others participated in healing workshops, while others took part in community reconciliation hearings in their villages.

191. Many of the comments of people who participated in the Urgent Reparations Scheme emphasised the importance to them of this relationship with the Commission. A resident of the village of Ritabou-Tiimatan (Bobonaro) remarked: "I feel really happy because there are still some friends who take care of us." Expressing her feeling of vulnerability and lack of support as a victim, one resident of the village of Colegio (Bobonaro) commented:

I feel happy because the Commission is helping to keep an eye on the victims. Otherwise, we don't know who would. I feel happy because there is still a good Commission and NGOs like the Commission and CEP to help victims.

192. Ponciano de Araújo summed up the response of many victims when he said:

I want to thank all the friends working at Commission for recognising our struggle in the war and our great suffering and anxiety.

193. The number of victims who were direct beneficiaries of the Urgent Reparations Scheme was small compared with the 7,824 statements taken in the Commission's truth-seeking work. Nevertheless, the assistance made a practical difference to the lives of some of the most vulnerable victims. It also offered a degree of moral, emotional and spiritual support. As an interim measure that lasted only as long as the working life of the Commission, it demonstrated the commitment to ensuring that victims receive this kind of assistance. The Commission's Reparations Scheme, contained in Part 11: Recommendations, outlines the Commission's recommendations on what needs to be done to continue and develop this work.

10.3.5 Community profiles

Background

194. Community Profile workshops added a group dimension to the District team victim support and truth-seeking work. Small groups from village communities discussed the impact of human rights abuses at the community level. The workshops were facilitated and recorded by the Victim Support members of the District team. Communities were thus able to examine the history of conflict from their own local perspective. The communal focus of the workshops also acknowledged the fact that communities, just as much as individuals, were victims in the years of conflict and needed support.

195. In most areas District teams used Community Profile workshops to introduce their programme to a community. As well as discussing the Commission's mandate and programmes, they engaged the community in a practical exercise, which was community-based and therefore accessible. By choosing the workshops as the entry point into the broader programme, the Commission wanted to show its respect for and gain an understanding of the distinctiveness of each community. Teams also had the opportunity to ask questions about particular groups in the community who might need extra support and whether community reconciliation activities might be appropriate.

196. Community Profile workshops were an important and enriching part of the Commission's work for a number of reasons.

- In rural Timor-Leste activities focused on the community rather than the individual were often a more culturally appropriate and effective way to discuss important issues. They were also a way of tapping into the rich oral traditions of rural communities.
- They were an opportunity to seek community views about what victims could do to help their recovery from past human rights abuses. Even in communities where there was not much discussion of community healing needs, the reflection on past experience could itself be a healing process.
- From a truth-seeking perspective, Community Profile workshops complemented the taking of statement from individuals. They were particularly useful in identifying broad social, economic and political patterns and the profound impact of human rights violations on communities over the 25 years of the mandate period.
- The accounts that emerged from the Community Profile workshops revealed how different communities and regions suffered in different ways and at different times throughout the conflicts. The national perspective does not offer such fine discriminations between areas, while individual statements do not give the broader community perspective.
- These stories bring us closer to an understanding of the situations of local communities today and in planning how to prevent conflict in the future.

Selection process

197. The Commission trained two district Victim Support staff, one woman and one man in each district, in participatory methods for facilitating the Community Profile workshops. Teams aimed to hold five community discussions in each sub-district. Participants in at least one of the five discussions were to be recent returnees, with priority given to those who were being ostracised by the communities to which they had returned. Another discussion group was to consist exclusively of women. The purpose of having women-only groups was to overcome women's reticence about taking an active part in group discussions, especially when what is under discussion is the traditional male preserve of recounting history,

198. Victim Support district staff together with the District Coordinator and Regional Commissioners were responsible for selecting which villages and special groups should hold a workshop. Selection was often based on local team members' prior knowledge of the area, or on information that emerged from the sub-district level meeting held at the start of the three-month sub-district programme. At these meetings sub-district officials, village heads, and community elders often identified villages with a high concentration of recently-returned refugees. They also selected women to participate in the women's discussion group, with priority given to women who had experienced violations or had been active in the resistance.

199. In practice the number of Community Profile workshops held in each sub-district varied. Some teams did not meet the target of five community discussions, and others managed to hold workshops in every village in their district. Sometimes district staff held joint workshops in which two or more villages took part. In several sub-districts, as, for example in Natarbora Sub-district (Manatuto) and Bobonaro Sub-district (Bobonaro), communities with a history of conflict were intentionally brought together. Through truth-telling and the sharing of perspectives, communities were better able to understand the source of old enmities and so address them. In such cases, the workshops served as an instrument of reconciliation.

Community discussion eases historical tensions

Bobonaro is a large sub-district comprising 18 villages. The Commission District team decided it was important for all villages to take part in Community Profile workshops since all had suffered the impact of human rights violations between 1974 and 1999 and all agreed to participate. Some villages held joint discussions.

The neighbouring villages of Oeleu, Tapo, and Leber were intentionally chosen for a joint discussion because they had a long history of conflict. For many decades the men of these villages had fought each other over community land and boundaries. During the civil conflict of 1974-1975 the tensions among the three villages exploded into violence. Although the Indonesian invasion and occupation put a stop to open conflict, communal and political differences were expressed through their different relations to the occupier. Feelings of distrust and the desire for revenge continued to fester below the surface, only to re-emerge following the Popular Consultation in August 1999.

In the Community Profile workshop, participants from the three villages openly made accusations against each other, revealing more clearly the nature of their historical conflict.

The people of Leber regarded the villages of Tapo and Oeleu as UDT strongholds, loyal to the Portuguese colonial administration. Villagers from Tapo had long been suspicious of Leber, first as an Apodeti village and then as a base for the Indonesian army Special Forces. The Tapo group accused Leber of killing civilians, while the people from Leber reminded those present that in the mid-1970s Fretilin supporters in Tapo and Oeleu had attacked Leber, burning hundreds of homes and causing the people of Leber to flee to the mountains. The participants from Oeleu, in turn, blamed Fretilin for the displacement in 1975 of hundreds of UDT supporters who sought refuge in the mountains of Covalima or fled to West Timor. Although later Tapo and Oeleu were both assumed to be bases of Fretilin support, before independence they were also known as fertile recruiting grounds for the pro-integration militia.

These initial suspicions and tensions began to fade, however, as each community related its own horrifying history of violations.

The participants from Oeleu noted that the Indonesian military killed hundreds of people from the village in 1975-1976. In 1978-1979 several hundred more died from illness and starvation. They recalled that about a hundred men from their village were captured and forcibly recruited by the Indonesian military. In 1986 the introduction of the Indonesian Family Planning Programme resulted in the death of four women in Oeleu. In the late 1990s around 80 people from the village joined clandestine organisations. Many of the youth of Oeleu came under suspicion, and were caught and tortured. The Indonesian military also responded to this development by forcing villagers to join Hansip (*Pertahanan Sipil*, Civil Defence). Those who refused were beaten and slashed with knives. In 1999 several youths were intimidated into joining the militia group, Dadurus Merah Putih. In the weeks leading up to the Popular Consultation they burned around 200 houses, looted others and killed six people. Many residents fled to the mountains before and after the ballot. About 200 families were evacuated to Atambua after the announcement of the result of the vote, where around 50 people died of disease and one was killed.

Participants from Tapo explained how their village was a UDT stronghold in 1974-75. It suddenly switched to join Fretilin in opposing Apodeti supporters from Leber, who, having sided with the Indonesian military, had murdered civilians and flown the Indonesian flag in a neighbouring village. In 1976-1977, the Indonesian military and Fretilin were continually engaged in armed conflict resulting in deaths on both sides, as well as the destruction of hundreds of houses around Tapo. Like the residents of Oeleu, Tapo villagers recalled how hundreds of their villagers suffered, first after evacuating to the forests and later when they were settled in camps in the neighbouring district of Ermera. Hundreds died due to hunger and illness. Tapo participants also knew of men who were forcibly recruited by the Indonesian military during the 1980s to take part in "Fence of Legs" operations. They related how in 1999 youth from their village were captured and tortured at the Maliana military post, then forcibly recruited to become militia members. As in the case of Oeleu, Tapo's history of violation ended with villagers suffering from illness and hunger in refugee camps in West Timor.

Participants from Leber recalled how hundreds of their homes were looted and burned in August 1975 by a group of Fretilin fighters, including people from Tapo and Oeleu. Following the Indonesian invasion in December 1975, hundreds fled to the forests and neighbouring villages. In 1977-1978, about 100 Leber civilians died of starvation in the mountains and hundreds more died in ABRI attacks. In May 1982 all civilian males aged 17 and above were forced to take part in a "Fence of Legs" operation that lasted for up to one month. During the operation they were given no food but had to fend for themselves. as they looked for Fretilin fighters on Mount Ramelau and in Manufahi, Ainaro and Atsabe. The people of Leber complained that they were always blamed for violence perpetrated by the Indonesian military. In the 1990s several village youth joined clandestine networks and collected money from their fellow villagers to help Falintil. In 1998 Special Forces captured six youth from Leber, killing one and torturing the others. When the Indonesian military formed the Dadarus Merah Putih militia in May 1999, more Leber youth were captured and beaten and many houses looted.

These historical overviews helped the participants to realise that none of the villages had had allegiance to a single political party, and that all of them had suffered at the hands of the Indonesian military. All had suffered of displacement resulting in illness and starvation; all had experienced forced recruitment as well as forced evacuation from their homes; all reported instances of beatings and torture by Indonesian forces; and all had watched youth in their villages join forces with the Indonesian military to destroy their own communities. These common patterns of human rights violations gave villagers a new understanding their past and a way to move on with less communal animosity towards each other.

This account is compiled from the CAVR Community Profiles of Oeleu, Tapo and Leber, Bobonaro Sub-district, Bobonaro District, 24 November 2003.

Participation

200. Although the range of people who took part in Community Profile workshops varied, regular participants included the village chief, political party representatives, members of youth and women's organisations, community elders, and local church leaders, individuals previously active in the clandestine movement, as well as victims and perpetrators of human rights violations. The Commission sought to achieve a balance of perspectives, though at times this was difficult.

201. Of the 297 Community Profile workshops compiled, three did not include a list of attendees. In the remaining 294 an average of 16 people were recorded as having attended each meeting, meaning that more than 4,700 people participated in the workshops across the country.

* This was a series of large military operations launched to flush the Resistance fighters out of the forests. For more information on these operations see section 3.11 Operation Security

202. On average the proportion of men attending the workshops (76%) was far higher than the proportion of women. In 11.5% (31 out of 270) of the workshops open to both men and women, women did not participate at all. At the 24 meetings designated women-only meetings, an average of 15 women participated. In two of these women's meetings, a few men also attended and spoke.

203. All district teams noted that there was a lack of gender balance, both in attendance and in active participation in the discussion. Reasons given for the imbalance included the fact that women traditionally do not participate in public gatherings and that women's workload, particularly their responsibility for childcare, kept many at home. It was thought that even when women did attend, many may have felt unable to speak in public about the violence they had experienced or did not feel comfortable speaking in the presence of their husbands.

204. It was easier for women to speak directly about violations, such as rape, when men were not present. If sexual violence was raised at all in the presence of men it was usually done obliquely, as when women spoke of having been damaged or broken. District teams addressed this formally through women-only meetings and sometimes informally by having a woman facilitator meet separately with the women attending a mixed workshop.

205. The women-only workshops were a valuable forum for understanding community experiences during the conflict. Their success in presenting a perspective that was often less blinkered by political allegiance suggests that more workshops of this type would be useful.

Community profile methodology

206. Workshops varied in duration from several hours to a whole day. During the workshop, Victim Support staff used historical timelines, sketch maps and focused group discussion to help community members trace their experiences of human rights violations chronologically and geographically.

207. Most sessions began with a recollection of violations between 1975 and 1999. One facilitator explained how he would often begin discussions by asking participants questions such as: "Where were you in 1974-1975?" "Who introduced the different political parties into your village?" "How did you and your neighbours decide to join one party or another?" Such questions would stimulate further discussion, which generated historical overviews that, in general, were recorded as narrative text rather than drawn as an historical timeline.

208. The community experience was also elicited through the creation of sketch maps. In some cases, the sketch outline was drawn by a few individuals before the community discussion. For example, in Bobonaro District, team members and the village chief would survey the village before the workshop began to produce a sketch map showing areas of forest, gardens and rice paddies, markets, churches, health clinics and schools. This rough topographical/sociological map was then displayed during the workshop to help community members to recall human rights violations. As participants gave their accounts of violations in their community, more or less in chronological order, they were invited to show on the map where the violations occurred. This helped give a context for the discussion of specific issues. This approach tended to result in Community Profile reports that charted community histories better than they analysed the social and economic impact of violations on the community.

209. By engaging in these discussions at the beginning of their work in communities, Regional Commissioners and staff developed trust and understanding. This helped with the implementation of other work, such as individual statement-taking, community reconciliation hearings and individual victim support work.

Sketch maps

210. An important feature of the workshops was the production of sketch maps. The maps, sometimes drawn by workshop participants, sometimes by Commission district staff, served to record violations as well as elicit memories of them. They were a particularly useful tool for stimulating discussion between community members who had low levels of literacy. They also revealed the prolonged terror in which many communities lived for 24 years.

211. Some maps used colour coding to distinguish events and their impact. For example, in some maps Falintil posts were marked by yellow and white flags so that they could be distinguished from Indonesian military posts that had red and white flags. Pink crosses were used to indicate places where people were murdered by the Indonesian military and blue crosses to mark sites of death due to starvation and illness, or death counts were highlighted by using pink or red markers (see Sketch Map 11 below). Some maps focused on events over a period of only a year or two; for others a longer timeframe was shown in different ways. For example Diagram 1 - Sketch Map Iliomar I (Iliomar, Lautém) used annotation to record period information, whereas Diagram 2 - Sketch Map Pairara Moro, (Lautém) added arrows to record abuses at the same location but at different points in history.

Diagram 1 - Sketch Map Iliomar I

Diagram 2 - Sketch Map Pairara

212. Other communities spanned the distance of time by producing more than one map. When placed side-by-side, sketch maps 3 and 4 from the community workshop in Beco 2/Tasilin (Zumalai, Covalima) graphically depict the upheaval this community experienced at the beginning and end of the Indonesian occupation, in 1975 and 1999. The 1977 map shows an army tank moving into the area, the 1999 map shows trucks of refugees being evacuated to Atambua. Both maps show armed soldiers, houses burning, and villagers fleeing to the mountains.

Diagram 3 - Sketch Map Beco 2/Tasilin 1977
Diagram 4 - Sketch Map Beco 2/Tasilin 1999

213. Diagram 5 - Sketch Map from Guda village (Lolotoe, Bobonaro) and Diagram 6 - Sketch Map from Osso-Huna (Baguia, Baucau) give two renderings of aerial bombardment of villages and of villagers hiding in the mountains.

Diagram 5 - Sketch Map Guda
Diagram 6 - Sketch Map Osso-Huna

214. A few maps indicate victim counts by means of annotation and the insertion of crosses as seen in Diagram 7 - Sketch Map Uaitame (Quelicai, Baucau). More common, however, is the insertion of skull and crossbones, a simple technique able to convey trauma by the sheer weight of repeated images as seen in Diagram 8 - Sketch Map Caimauk (Turiscai, Manufahi), Diagram 9 - Sketch Map Ura-Hoci (Hatolia, Ermera), and Diagram 10 - Sketch Map Mahaklusin (Alas, Manufahi).

Diagram 7 - Sketch Map Uaitame

Diagram 8 - Sketch Map Caimauk
Diagram 9 - Sketch Map Ura-Hoci
Diagram 10 - Sketch Map Mahaklusin

215. Taken together, the sketch maps produced by Commission community meetings – from more rudimentary maps like Diagram 11 - Sketch Map Rasa (Lospalos, Lautém) to the more detailed Diagram 12 - Sketch Map Miligu (Cailaco, Bobonaro), to maps like Diagram 13 - Sketch Map Taiboco (Pantai Makasar, Oecusse) that charts violations in motion – offer visual images that begin to capture the collective impact of human rights violations in Timor-Leste from 1974 to 1999.

Diagram 11 - Sketch Map Rasa

Diagram 12 - Sketch Map Miligu

Diagram 13 - Sketch Map Taiboco

216. Sketch Map 14: Beidasi (Fatululik, Covalima) is a reminder that, despite the scope and magnitude of the violence in Timor-Leste, in local communities its impact was never anonymous. The map's poignancy is captured in the names written by each house that give identity by ownership, residency, and community. It is the juxtaposition between this close-knit community, where everyone knows and is connected to each other, and just a few short annotations – "Veronica died here" next to a double black and pink cross to indicate that she was killed by the militia, "82 killed by TNI" written below a pink cross, and "30 children die" written above a black cross to indicate death by starvation – that is striking. It turns an otherwise ordinary neighbourhood map into a document that records a history of violence and suffering in a community: for years violations occurred in the neighbourhood of Alberto and Carlos, Martinho and Mauseu, and to so many other individuals and families.

Diagram 14 - Sketch Map Beidasi

Impact

217. Community Profile workshops gave many rural communities a sense of respect and acknowledgment by listening to and recording their experiences as part of an official national truth-telling process.

218. All district teams reported positive feedback from village communities, which were grateful for an opportunity to speak about their experiences during the conflicts. Because the discussions were communal rather than private, moments of catharsis or insight about the past became part of the community's experience, much as they did in Victims' Hearings.

219. The workshops did not provide empirical data to be tabled and analysed in a way that would allow regional comparisons to be made. The value of the material gathered in these workshops is in its detail and local focus. Weaknesses in the information include that it was usually not possible for communities to give statistically accurate figures of the number of people who died from starvation or in the large military campaigns that totally disrupted community life. Dates of events were not always specific or accurate, and figures in relation to property, such as livestock destroyed, were often generalised. Further, the stories told depended on the participants who attended - their age and therefore the reliability and extent of their memories, their literacy, their gender, and also their political affiliation. For example, if most participants were members of a particular party, this could be an obstacle to discussion of violations committed by that party.

220. Whatever their shortcomings as tools for seeking the truth, at the very least Community Profiles were able to present the broad sweep of a community's experience over the 25-year span of the political conflicts. But they often did far more than that by giving insight into the impact on communities of both general phenomena like mass displacement and forced recruitment, and specific events like the Mauchiga uprising, and the Kraras and Santa Cruz massacres as well as many other incidents which had hitherto not been recognised outside the locality where they occurred.

10.3.6 Lessons Learned

Reception (Acolhimento), returnees and West Timor

221. State and non-state actors in Timor-Leste need to continue to work with East Timorese in West Timor. This work needs to focus on building trust and mutual understanding, sharing information, and helping those who decide to return to Timor-Leste. This work can be carried out only if there is cooperation between East Timorese and Indonesian state and non-state institutions. One essential element of building trust among East Timorese in West Timor is that the engagement between East Timorese on both sides of the border should not be fitful, but should display a continuing commitment to their needs.

222. The work of the Commission with East Timorese in West Timor represents a contribution to a process that began before the Commission came into existence, and will continue after its mandate has expired. While the support of the international community will be vital to achieving this continuity, that support will not be forthcoming without a clear, high-level commitment from the Government of Timor-Leste to this work.

223. Any future work in this area will have to address a number of difficult issues. They include:

- Finding ways to talk to refugees about reconciliation in a constructive manner. One obstacle to constructive discussion is the gap between those who see reconciliation as a political issue linked to amnesty for past crimes, and those who see it as a social issue of healing divisions between people and communities. The fact that the hierarchy of power in West Timor has solidified these differences of perspective makes them particularly difficult to remove.
- Continuing to seek ways to overcome obstacles to women participating fully in decision-making about their and their families' futures.
- Building on the partnerships, experience and good-will developed with individual Indonesians and Indonesian government and non-government institutions.

224. There needs to be continuing support to reintegrate those who return to their communities and to the communities that receive them. Reintegration is not an instant process, but one that requires constant attention and support over a period of time. Mutual trust and confidence will return only gradually. While much of the work of reintegration is essentially for individuals, families and communities to undertake, with help from locally-based institutions such as the Church and traditional leaders, the Commission's experience in this area is that the latter can benefit from the support of a legitimate and respected national institution.

Urgent reparations

225. The Commission's Urgent Reparations Programme helped a number of the most disadvantaged victims to meet their pressing needs. The scheme offered both financial and non-financial assistance, to individuals and communities. Through this work the Commission was able to develop a clearer understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of different types of reparations schemes in the East Timorese context, and thereby develop recommendations for a more comprehensive approach.

226. The Commission understands that its Urgent Reparations Scheme was a stop-gap measure that could in no way be regarded as a substitute for a comprehensive, long-term programme.

227. The Commission is convinced that there is a pressing need for a comprehensive and multi-faceted reparations programme to be established beyond the Commission. This programme should address the needs of victims by offering formal recognition of victims by preserving and honouring their memory, and the provision of social services and economic assistance. It should be targeted at individual and community levels.

228. The Commission has learned that it is hard to attract financial support for a reparations scheme, from national and international sources. Politicians, policy makers and others in a position to provide funding too often subsume reparations programmes within the domain of general national development. Reparations should not be treated in this way: they play a complementary role to national development, but also quite distinct in that they are fundamental to delivering justice and human rights protection in our post conflict society. This issue is addressed more thoroughly in Part 11: Recommendations.

Victims

229. In its work with victims over the three years of its existence, the Commission learnt much. The quiet strength and resilience of many survivors, their dignity and generosity towards others, and their wish to participate in shaping their new nation are inspiring. Families, communities and the values of East Timorese culture have sometimes been able to help sustain and heal victims. At other times they have been an obstacle to healing. We have also learned that many people's lives are difficult today because of the violence they have suffered. Once they have attained a certain level of security, whether physical, mental or economic, individuals, families and communities can do much to effect their own healing. But they also often need outside help, in the form of physical and mental health services, education and training, the means to restore economic sustainability, recognition and a sense that the state cares for their well-being.

230. Health, including mental health, is evidently an area for future victim support work. The experience of violence and loss can have profound consequences for victims' mental health and well-being. The Healing Workshops were an opportunity to learn more about victims' needs in this area, to provide support, and to refer people to specialised services when they were available. The Commission also worked with a combined community and mental health team from the University of New South Wales to develop a preliminary assessment of the needs of victims of human rights violations in light of the Commission's findings in this area.

231. The Commission found that many victims of serious human rights violations continue to suffer health problems as a result of their abuse. The Commission has encountered victims who have bullets lodged in their bodies, wounds that have not healed, bones that have not been properly set, gynaecological problems resulting from rape, and a variety of physical disabilities caused by prolonged or repeated torture. Without attention to their health needs, these victims will not be able to take up their rightful place as active citizens of Timor-Leste.

232. These findings highlight the need for a thorough assessment that can form the basis of a health support programme that would be part of the proposed reparations scheme.

233. The Commission has identified certain specific groups in the community that seem to be particularly vulnerable to mental health problems. These groups' problems are not confined to mental illnesses requiring clinical treatment, but cover the whole spectrum of mental well-being that allows a person to thrive and live a full life. Justice, compassion and the quest for a fair and inclusive society all demand measures to restore mental and physical well-being to victims who have lost them as a result of abuse. The groups that the Commission identified as high-risk and which should therefore be the focus of any future programme are set out below.

Rape survivors

234. Through the healing workshops and other activities, it became clear that women who had been raped were more likely to suffer symptoms of trauma than other victims of violations. This may partly be because many women raped or forced into situations of sexual slavery by the Indonesian military reported that they were shunned by their family and community, and thereby lost the support necessary for healing and mental well-being. The plight of women who had children as a result of rape, or being in a situation of sexual slavery, was even worse. There are communities, such as Suai, where women were subjected to mass rape after the Popular Consultation in 1999, where large numbers of women are in need of support.

235. The Commission found that in general young women raped during the violence of 1998-99 suffered more severe and more persistent symptoms of trauma than their older counterparts who had suffered rape in earlier periods of the conflict. The explanation for this difference may be that the older women were more often able to rely on support deriving from their established roles as family and community members, whereas the violation seemed to have prevented many of the younger women from developing these roles. At the same time, the older group were generally less forthcoming about their experiences and so, if in need of support, less likely to obtain it.

Young men, especially in urban areas

236. In the political conflicts in Timor-Leste young men constituted a group that frequently suffered and perpetrated violence. The emergence of the clandestine movement in the 1980s resulted in many young people becoming engaged in resistance activities. Others were involved in groups formed by the Indonesian military to respond to the resistance. The education of many of these young men was disrupted by their involvement in clandestine activities, periods of imprisonment and serious injuries suffered as a result of torture and ill treatment.

237. Many of these young people were teenagers in the 1990s, and are now in their twenties or early thirties. Lacking education and training, many today feel excluded from opportunity in the new Timor-Leste that they see themselves as having helped create. Unlike young women, who often have a social role maintaining household and family, many young men live on the margins of society. The Commission observed anger and frustration among many young male survivors. Their isolation is exacerbated by the cultural constraints that inhibit males from seeking assistance or speaking about emotionally difficult matters. Lack of work or educational opportunities intensify their problems.

238. These issues place many young men at risk of mental health problems. Coupled with their intense experience of violence in their younger years, this also raises issues of domestic and social stability. Such young men should be a high priority for future support.

Disabled middle-aged men

239. The Commission has observed that many middle-aged male victims had “broken bodies” as a result of torture or severe, often repeated, beatings. Especially for rural men, whose livelihood depends on being able to farm their land, these disabilities have serious economic consequences. Many expressed anxiety and showed signs of stress because they were not able to provide for their families, and the impact this would have on their children’s education and future opportunities. Unable to fulfil their social role of family provider, many of these men are vulnerable to mental health problems.

Ex-political prisoners and torture survivors

240. The Commission heard repeatedly how the Indonesian security forces routinely tortured those they detained. It also heard of torture and ill-treatment perpetrated in the early years of the conflict by East Timorese political parties. The psycho-social consequences of torture are well documented. The Commission worked closely with many ex-political prisoners and survivors of torture. In some cases, political prisoners showed themselves able to cope well with post-traumatic stress. However, the Commission also heard from many ex-political prisoners that they hold their suffering deep inside themselves. While they appear to cope in their day-to-day lives, they continue to suffer. Some victims told the Commission that their deep-seated feelings sometimes erupt in violence within the family. Former detainees are a high-risk group that should be supported in future programmes.

Victims and families of victims of violence by Fretilin/Falintil

241. The Commission heard about the silence that has surrounded violence committed by East Timorese political parties, especially in the 1975 internal conflict and then between 1976 and 1979 when Fretilin still controlled and administered territory in the interior. Many victims or families of those killed or disappeared have expressed their desire to clear the names of family members and friends. The lack of recognition of both the violence, the losses suffered by families and the injustice of their treatment has caused the deep suppression of feelings and the isolation of people in this category. Without public recognition that these events occurred, it is difficult for those affected to come forward to seek the support they may need.

The future

242. The identification of groups most in need of support is not intended to minimise the needs of individual victims or of communities whose experience does not fit into these categories. It does underline the fact that there are specific groups in need of support within the East Timorese community, and that support programmes tailored to their needs should be developed. A comprehensive needs assessment must be carried out before an appropriate reparations programme can be designed. It is also vital that the Government, East Timorese NGOs and other civil society groups, and religious organisations, as well as international agencies and donors, continue to provide support and step up their efforts to alleviate the suffering of so many victims of human rights violations. Based on the lessons we have learned from working with victims of human rights violations, the Commission has developed a Reparations Scheme which is outlined in Part 11: Recommendations.

¹ CAVR Interview with Manuel Cárceres da Costa, UNHCR Repatriation/Protection Assistant, Dili, 25 November 2002.

² Ibid

³ Ibid.

⁴ CAVR Archive

⁵ CAVR Interview with Iria Moniz, Ilat Laun Village, Bobonaro, Bobonaro District, 19 December 2003.

⁶ CAVR Archive