



JUDICIAL SYSTEM MONITORING PROGRAMME  
PROGRAMA MONITORIZASAUN BA SISTEMA JUDISIÁRIU

**Press Release**

**Covalima Municipality**

**09 September 2015**

**JSMP facilitates training in 16 Villages across a number of municipalities on access to justice and women's rights**

Between 19-31 August 2015 the Judicial System Monitoring Programme (JSMP), organized continuous training for a total of 42 members from a number of village councils, comprising 17 women and 25 men from 16 villages. The participants included village chiefs, elders, women's representatives and administrative officers from villages in the sub-districts of Maucatar, Fatululik, Tilomar, Fohoren, Fatumea and Zumalai.

The first training took place in Ogues Village, between 19-21 August 2015, and involved members of village councils from the villages of Holpilat, Belecasak and Ogues, Maucatar Sub-District and also the villages of Maudemu and Casabauk, Tilomar Sub-District.

In addition to members of the village councils from Fatululik Sub-District, JSMP also invited members of village councils from the villages of Taroman and Fatululik, however they did not attend because the training was quite far and it was difficult for them to access public transport. 13 members of village councils attended this training, comprising 6 women and 7 men.

The Administrator of Covalima Municipality, Augusto Mendonça, testified that the community needs to increase its awareness through training to be able to enjoy the rights that are protected by the law, in order to guarantee justice for women and men.

The elders often do not attend training sessions like these and therefore they do not really understand their role. He also said that this training is important because even though the people who perform functions within the village administration may be replaced, the elders are never replaced, so this type of training can increase their understanding.

The Community Policy Council was established in the village to address problems faced by the community in relation to legal issues. Therefore the Administrator of the Municipality also requested for JSMP to provide training to members of the Community Police Council.

In the opening session of the training the Maucatar Sub-District Administrator, Sebastião Guterres, stated that it is important for everyone to have access to the courts, because women and men understand their rights but they do not understand their responsibilities, and therefore this because can uphold the public interest for all people.

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The second training took place in Lalawa Village, Tilomar Sub-District between 24-26 August 2015. During the opening session of the training the Tilomar Sub-District Deputy Administrator, Edianos Mau, stated that this training is important because it will help the community leaders to resolve problems in the community.

In the final session he thanked JSMP and the donors who have supported this training because they can facilitate training in their village.

This training took place in Zulo Village, Zumalai Sub-District between 28-31 August 2015. The Zumalai Sub-District Administrator, Manuel Agostinho Freitas, stated that this training can increase the knowledge of community leaders so they can work properly to serve the community.

During the training the most commonly discussed issues concerned marriages that were carried out in accordance with tradition and the law, women's and men's rights to property, land and inheritance. In addition, public and semi-public crimes were discussed, in accordance with the law and general customs.

When questions and concerns were raised in each of the training sessions, explanations were provided in accordance with the training modules for village councils that had been prepared beforehand on the law and legal regulations in Timor-Leste.

The clarifications provided by JSMP provide reference points for all of the participants so this training can continue at the village and sub-village level to change cultural customs in the community that do not uphold equality.

This training was made possible due to the support of the BELUN Coordinator and Counterpart in the municipalities of Liquica, Ermera, Oecusse and Covalima. The BELUN Coordinator and Counterpart will continue to coordinate the final training in Baucau Municipality.

This training was conducted in Liquica Municipality between 09-20 June 2015, in Ermera Municipality between 25 June - 06 July 2015, in Oecusse Municipality between 27 July - 07 August 2015 and in Covalima Municipality between 19-31 August 2015, and this activity will be continued in Baucau Municipality on 15 September 2015.

This training was implemented by JSMP with the generous support of the people of the United States through the USAID program '*Ba Distrito*', to strengthen the ability of the members of the village councils in relation to women and their rights, including access to justice.

For more information, please contact:

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