



JUDICIAL SYSTEM MONITORING PROGRAMME
PROGRAMA MONITORIZASAUN BA SISTEMA JUDISIÁRIU

Press Release

Oe-Cusse District

12 August 2015

Members of Village Councils in Oecusse Municipality received training from JSMP on access to justice and women's rights

Between 27 July and 07 August 2015 the Judicial System Monitoring Programme (JSMP) conducted training for 47 participants, comprising 16 women and 31 men. The participants included village chiefs, sub-village chiefs, village elders, women's representatives and representatives of the village administration support staff from the Sub-Districts of Pante Makassar, Nitibe, Pasabe and Oesilo.

The training in Costa Village started on 27 July 2015, and involved 16 members of village councils from the Villages of Lalisuk, Bobocase, Cunha, Naimeco, Costa, Lifau and Taiboco, comprising 6 women and 10 men. Meanwhile the representatives of Nipani Village were not present because they were attending other activities.

When opening the training the Sub-District Pante Makasar Representative, Gonzalo Eko, stated that this training for members of the village councils is really important because it can raise their awareness about the law. He added that this training can also help the members of the village councils to resolve problems in the community.

The training in Usitako Village, Nitibe Sub-District, started on 31 July 2015 and involved 16 members of village councils from the Villages of Ban-Afi, Lela-Ufe, Bene-Ufe, Suni-Ufe and Usitaco, comprising 3 women and 13 men. In this training the Village Chief organizer Julio Cael who was representing the Nitibe Sub-District Representative, thanked JSMP, Belun and International Counterparts for conducting the training in their village.

The training took place in Bobometo Village, Oesilu Sub-District on 05 August 2015 and also involved members of the village councils from Passabe Sub-District. The participants came from

the Villages of Bobometo, Usi-Tasae, Usi-Taqueno and Malelat. Members of the village council from Abani Village did not take part in this training. 13 participants attended the training, comprising 8 males and 7 females.

The Village Chief organizer, who was representing the Oesilu Sub-District Representative, in the opening session of the training thanked JSMP and the other stakeholders who provided support for this program which is aimed at raising the understanding of members of the village councils about the law.

This training discussed human rights and the right to equality. The participants questioned the right to subsidies, slander (accusations about using magic), abandoned wives and children, the responsibility to provide alimony, inheritance, customary practices that benefit sons or the stronger recognition given to the rights of sons in the community.

The village elders admitted that the customs in the Villages of Nipani, Bobocase, Naimeco and Taiboco Pante Makasar Sub-District have always recognized the equal status of sons and daughters in the family. Therefore, even though they marry and move away, their parents still give land to daughters, which acknowledges their rights. The village elders from the Villages of Lalisuk, Cunha, Lifau and Costa testified that their customary marriage traditions pass on land inheritance rights to their daughters.

In addition, the participants also raised the issue of those women who are impregnated and then the fathers refused to acknowledge their children, so they requested for the government to set up a DNA test laboratory to ensure the recognition of children's rights to alimony.

All of the questions and concerns that were raised in each training session were responded to in accordance with the training modules that had been previously prepared on women's rights and the applicable law in Timor-Leste.

This training was carried out with the support of the BELUN Coordinators in the Municipalities of Liquiça, Ermera and Oecusse. BELUN will continue to assist with the coordination of the next training sessions in Covalima and Baucau.

Previously, similar training was carried out in Liquiça and Ermera and training is planned for Suai at the end of August 2015.

This training was carried out by JSMP with the generous support of the American Community through its *Ba Distrito*-USAID program, to increase the capacity of the members of the village councils in relation to women's rights and access to justice.

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