



Press Release

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School principal requests for students who participated in training to pass on the information they received to their friends who did not have the opportunity to participate

On 16 February 2019, through its Advocacy and training Unit, JSMP providing training to 10th grade students at the No.1 Suai Secondary School in Suai Vila Sub-District, Covalima District. 30 students participated in this training, comprising 15 girls and 15 boys. The students were from 6 classes, with 5 students from each class.

"JSMP believes that this training will help students understand their rights, the processes relating to children in conflict with the law and how to use the formal justice system if another person violates their rights or the rights of another child in the family, the school and or in society", said the Executive Director of JSMP, Luis de Oliveira Sampaio.

This training is part of an ongoing activity carried out by JSMP with the support of the Canadian Embassy. Previously JSMP facilitated some trainings in 2018 and early 2019 for students in the districts of Bobonaro, Baucau, Oecusse and finally in Covalima District.

This training aimed at increasing the knowledge of students about the rights of the child, access to the formal justice system and also to motivate the students to choose the law faculty at university when they finish their secondary studies.

During his opening speech the Principal of No.1 Suai Secondary School, Mr. Francelino F. de Carvalho, asked the students who were participating in this training to give their utmost attention so they could then pass on the information given to them to more than a hundred students who did not have the opportunity to attend this training.

He added the most of the participants in this training were young, because they were aged less than 17. Therefore this training was really good for them and he asked the participants to pay serious attention so that they could understand the important materials that specifically talk about the rights of the child and how to use the formal justice system if a teacher or friend commits an act of violence against a child in an educational setting.

The students fully participated in this training, and they conveyed their concerns about the responsibility of parents for minors and the responsibility of educators (teachers) towards students and how to access the formal justice system if parents or teachers commit violence against them.

In response to these concerns, JSMP clarified and explained that parents, society and the State have an obligation to provide specific protection to children. The Convention on the Rights of the Child that was ratified by the State of Timor-Leste sets out a number of obligations that have to be fulfilled by the State-Party to ensure that children are given proper assistance and protection because physically and

emotionally children are not yet mature, and don't yet have the capacity to make decisions and are not yet able to protect themselves. Parents have the obligation to look after, feed, supervise, take care of, and protect children from risk, without discrimination. Teachers have responsibilities as educators to educate and protect children and while children are studying at school they have to be given the opportunity to develop themselves based on their capabilities.

In relation to the issue of parents committing violence against their children and/or teachers committing violence against students, JSMP explained that parents, or family members in the home, who commit violence against children will be held responsible for the following crimes: the crime of simple offences against physical integrity provided for in Article 145 of the Penal Code as well as Articles 2, 3 and 35 of the Law Against Domestic Violence, the crime of mistreatment of a minor as provided for in Article 155 of the Penal Code, the crime of termination of pregnancy as provided for in Article 141 of the Penal Code, the crime of infanticide as provided for in Article 142 of the Penal Code. For crimes of a sexual nature perpetrators will be charged with the sexual abuse of a minor as provided for in Article 177 of the Penal Code, the crime of aggravated sexual coercion as provided for in Article 171 of the Penal Code as well as Article 173 (d) of the Penal Code, the crime of aggravated rape as provided for in 172 of the Penal Code as well as Article 173 (d) of the Penal Code, the crime of child prostitution as provided for in Article 175 of the Penal Code, the crime of child pornography as provided for in Article 176 of the Penal Code, the crime of sexual acts with an adolescent as provided for in Article 178 and the crime of failure to provide food assistance as provided for in Article 225 of the Penal Code.

The aforementioned crimes are public crimes except for the failure to provide food assistance as provided for in Article 225 of the Penal Code, and if this crime is committed by a family member the proceedings do not depend on a complaint, as any person who has information can make a report to the police or the Public Prosecution Service.

JSMP observed that this training activity went very well and the participants actively asked questions and shared their experiences about the family and society. This training was made possible through the financial support of the Canadian Embassy in Jakarta, Indonesia.

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