



**Press Release**  
**Dili Municipality**  
**20 August 2019**

## **JSMP conducted Training in Gari-Uai Village, Baucau Administrative Post Baucau Municipality**

On 15 August 2019 JSMP conducted training for members of the village council and the community in Gari-Uai Village, Baucau Administrative Post, Baucau Municipality on "Democracy and the role of the sovereign organs, public participation in the law making process and access to formal justice in Timor-Leste".

There were 30 participants, comprising 6 women and 24 men.

"This training is part of ongoing efforts from JSMP to provide training to increase the knowledge of members of the village council about the rule of law, the role of the sovereign organs of the State, the law making process and access to formal justice to promote community participation in the development of democracy and justice in Timor-Leste", said the Acting Director of JSMP, Casimiro dos Santos.

JSMP also believes that this training is a means to allow members of the village council and the community to convey their thoughts and concerns on relevant issues that they encounter in the village, especially linked to those issues mentioned above.

In the opening session of the training a representative of the Civil Society Coordinator, within the Office of the Prime Minister, Mr. Albertino Sarmiento, stated that the information provided by JSMP is very important and useful for members of the village council and the community, therefore he hoped that the members of the village council and the community who participate in the training could learn something during this training that can be passed on to other community members who did not participate in this training.

Also, a traditional elder from Gari-Uai Village, Mr. Sebastião da Silva, in his speech stated that the materials provided in this training are important for the village council, therefore he thanked the JSMP team for its great initiative and for choosing his village as a target group of JSMP training for members of the village council in Gari-Uai. Also, the sub-village chief asked JSMP to provide similar training at the sub-village level to involve even more community members.

During the training the issue of justice was a major concern. In particular, community members don't know which laws have entered into force, or how they can adhere to these laws, and they don't understand these laws, so they believe that there has not been enough awareness raising about the laws that are in force. In addition, there were other concerns that different treatment is given to important people in comparison with ordinary people during the judicial process. Other

concerns related to the application of democracy and its legality in Timor-Leste, whereby people are free to speak about others without any limitations.

In response to the issue of the lack of awareness raising about the laws that are in force, JSMP stated that this has been a failure of the Government and National Parliament, therefore JSMP has continuously requested for these two organs to be proactive in raising awareness about the laws in force so community members can understand them.

In relation to the law only applying to ordinary people, JSMP does not agree with this type of thinking, and JSMP explained that the law applies to all people equally and there is no discrimination against a person because he or she is an ordinary citizen or poor, as set out in Article 16 of the Constitution which is a principle that the State needs to guarantee, promote and protect.

In relation to the question about the legality of democracy in Timor-Leste, JSMP explained that in a system of democracy the people have the power and are in charge, and in principle our nation is based on the democratic rule of law founded on the principle that the law is above all people, therefore the system of democracy that applies in our country must be based on existing laws, which are rules established by the State as norms which must be respected by everyone who lives within the territory of Timor-Leste.

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