



Press Release

Dili Municipality

26 February 2019

JSMP conducts training for members of the LGTB community in Dili Municipality

Iha 22 February 2019 the Judicial System Monitoring Program (JSMP) conducted training for members of the Lesbian, Gay, Transgender & Bisexual (LGBT) community in Dili Municipality. The participants were from LGBT organizations such as CODIVA, Hatutan and Arco-Iris. There were 24 participants in total.

The topic of this training was "Democracy and the Role of the National Parliament in the law making process and access to formal justice Timor-Leste and the rights of LGBT persons".

"This training for members of the LGBT community is a way to build the capacity of these citizens and promote their knowledge about their rights and obligations so they can participate actively just like any other citizen in the democratic process and also to ensure their access to formal justice without discrimination based on their sexual orientation or expression", said the Executive Director of JSMP, Luis de Oliveira Sampaio.

Members of this community are subjected to discrimination and marginalisation and all kinds of violence in society, even from their own family members, and therefore it is important to promote their knowledge about their rights, in order to combat discriminative practices in the community.

During the training members of the LGBT community were very keen to hear about the topics presented by the facilitators. In addition, they also voiced their concerns about the development of the system of democracy and laws in Timor-Leste, particularly relating to specific laws that recognise their existence in relation to their sexual orientation and expression which has not yet been formally and legally recognised based on interpretation of Article 16 of the Timor-Leste Constitution that deals with universality and equality.

In response to the concerns of participants in relation to Article 16 of the Timor-Leste Constitution, JSMP stated that these provisions guarantee that everyone is equal before the law and has the same rights and duties, and no person should be discriminated against on the basis of their skin colour, race, marital status, sex, ethnic origin, etc.

The issue about their rights is linked to the fact that they do not have the same sexual orientation and expression, and JSMP acknowledges that Timor-Leste does not yet have a specific law to respond to this situation, however JSMP believes that with extensive and intensive advocacy the State will one day address the LGBT issue seriously and create a specific law to deal with this issue. In reality the LGBT community has been increasing over time and this is a challenge and also a reason for legislators and members of government who need to give serious consideration and deal with this issue seriously in the future.

This training was aimed at increasing the knowledge of the LGTB community about democracy, human rights, the role of sovereign organs, public participation in the law making process and access to formal justice and their rights as citizens in Timor-Leste which is a democratic nation based on the rule of law.

This training activity was made possible through the financial support of the Australia Embassy in Timor-Leste through DFAT (Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade).

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