



Press Release
26 March 2024

The neglect of children and wives, adoption and land disputes are concerns raised by participants in Bonuk Sub-Village, Labarai Village, Covalima

On 12 March 2024 JSMP conducted an activity to disseminate information to local authorities and community members from Bonuk Sub-Village, Labarai Village, Suai Vila Administrative Post, Covalima Municipality. This activity was held at the Bonuk Sub-Village Hall through the Community Security Support Program (PASK), as part of collaboration with The Asia Foundation (TAF) which is financed by the Embassy of New Zealand in Timor-Leste.

The aim of disseminating this information was to increase the knowledge of community leaders and community members about human rights, definitions of the law, the nature of gender based violence (GBV) crimes, the work of referral networks and how to access formal justice, so that community leaders and community members can understand and manage their cases through the formal justice system.

“JSMP considers that it is important to provide information about how to access formal justice to community members and the administrative structure in sub-villages, to help them to resolve their problems and process their cases in accordance with formal justice both at the community level and the national level,” said Ms. Ana Paula Marçal, Executive Director of JSMP.

During this activity to disseminate information the participants conveyed their concerns about the neglect of children and wives, adoption and land disputes.

In relation to the neglect of children and wives, JSMP stated that if a person hears, sees or is a victim of such acts and wants to take the case to court, then he or she can make a complaint to the Public Prosecution Service as a representative of the minor to initiate the process to ensure the alimony rights of the minor. Also JSMP can help follow up the progress of the case so that the minors can have their rights respected, and it is important to obtain documentation about the children and the parents.

In relation to the issue of land disputes, JSMP responded that according to the law all citizens have the rights to property, however only in relation to their own property. This means that land is obtained through a purchase, an inheritance from their parents or a donation. For those community members who have faced land disputes, it is better for them to cooperate with the local authorities and judicial authorities to resolve these issues in accordance with the mechanisms that have existed to date.

Regarding the adoption of children, JSMP explained that in order to adopt a child there must be an adoption letter from a notary, so that in the future if any problems arise the letter can provide a basis for the court to make a decision.

JSMP requested for community members who have adopted a child without using a notary to resolve their problems through traditional mechanisms that are already established, so that no problems occur in the future.

32 people participated in this activity to disseminate information, namely 12 men and 20 women. The participants comprised members of the Sub-Village administrative structure, the Sub-Village Chief, the Village Chief, male and female youth leaders, male and female delegates, and community members including a customary elder.

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