



**Press Release**  
**2 March 2023**

**JSMP makes a visit to disseminate information about access to formal justice:  
Responds to the concerns of the community in Saburai Village about how to  
access formal justice**

On 28 February 2023 JSMP held training for village authorities and some community members in Saburai Village, Maliana Administrative Post, Bobonaro Municipality. The training was attended by a sub-village chief, a female delegate, male and female youths and a disabled person. There were 22 participants, comprising 17 women and 5 men.

The material presented in the training focused on access to formal justice, a definition of domestic violence, the Law Against Domestic Violence (LADV), the legal process and how to refer cases of gender based violence in accordance with the formal justice process.

The aim of this training was to disseminate information and increase the knowledge of members of the village authorities and the communities about gender based violence and procedures for cases according to formal justice.

“JSMP believes that it is very important to increase the knowledge of community leaders and community members about the issue of gender based violence and access to formal justice in Timor-Leste so they can have awareness about these issues and it can encourage them to process their cases in accordance with formal justice,” said Ms. Ana Paula Marçal, Executive Director of JSMP.

The Village Chief of Saburai, Mr. Vicente dos Santos, in his speech stated that many cases occur in their village, including minor crimes and crimes characterized as domestic violence and also cases involving the neglect of minors. The village chief said that a major obstacle that community members face is the problem of culture in the aforementioned village, which makes them resist processing their cases in accordance with the formal process and they don't want to make a complaint to the police. However the village chief hopes that the visit from JSMP to disseminate information on how to



process cases in accordance with formal justice, will mean that community members will know how to process their cases in accordance with formal justice.

The village chief added that he was very grateful to JSMP for their visit because they can share important information about the issue of justice especially in relation to gender based violence and access to the formal justice system in Timor-Leste.

The Deputy Director of JSMP, Mr. Casimiro dos Santos, in his speech was very grateful to the village chief and village authorities for allowing JSMP to conduct this training. Also, he introduced the work of JSMP including legal aid that JSMP is providing in Maliana Municipality.

During the question and answer session the participants asked about the procedure for cases involving spouses who are separated and have neglected their children (minors). In response to this concern, JSMP requested for the mothers of minors to initiate a civil claim on the exercise of parental authority that regulates the rules regarding visits, food support, residence and safety. When initiating such a claim with the Public Prosecution Service, which acts as the representative of the minor, documents belonging to the biological parents and the minor have to be provided, such as baptism certificates and RDTL certificates.

During this training a participant also questioned the decision in a case involving the neglect of a minor, and stated that the father of the minor should provide money each month for the minors, however in reality after a decision was issued by the court the father of the minor only gave money for one month, up until now. In response to this concern JSMP recommended for the mother of the minor to lodge a complaint against the father of the minor to the police because the father of the minor has committed the crime of failure to fulfill an obligation to provide food assistance.

In addition to the aforementioned issues, the participants also asked about victims who are very vulnerable such as those who live in remote areas and don't have any money to attend a trial. In response to this concern, JSMP explained about free assistance that JSMP has provided to date to victims so they can access formal justice starting from the outset of the process at the police, the public prosecution service and finally at the court.

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