



**Press Release**  
**26 February 2021**

**JSMP conducts training on democracy, access to justice and the freedom to access information in Uma Ana Ico Village, Baucau Municipality**

On 18 February 2021 JSMP conducted training for members of the village council and female residents in Uma Ana Ico Village, Venilale Administrative Post, Baucau Municipality on “Democracy and the role of sovereign organs, public participation in the law making process and access to formal justice in Timor- Leste”.

There were 20 participants, comprising 15 women and 5 men, including one female resident suffering from a disability.

This training was aimed at increasing the knowledge of members of the village council and female residents who have influence in the community about democracy, the role of sovereign organs, public participation, access to formal justice including knowing their rights about the freedom to access information.

“JSMP believes that this training increased the knowledge of the participants, namely members of the village administrative structure and female residents about democracy, the law making process, access to justice and the freedom to access information or how citizens use their rights to properly request and receive information from State organs,” said the Executive Director of JSMP, Ms. Ana Paula Marçal

The training was split into sessions, with the first session on democracy and the role of sovereign organs. The next session was on access to formal justice in Timor-Leste, including the roles of Judges, Prosecutors, Public Defenders, Private Lawyers and the Police, and the last session was about the freedom to access information.

In each session the participants were given an opportunity to ask questions, make comments and raise concerns. In the session on democracy the participants asked questions and raised their concerns about the political system in the country, and JSMP’s thoughts about some of the sovereign organs violating the law and the constitution.

In the session on access to justice the participants raised issues such as the actions of police officers who always use violence and also how to process cases of child neglect, and also how to obtain certificates for children born out of wedlock.

In response to these concerns JSMP said that as an independent organization that is non-partisan this issue is also a concern for JSMP and now JSMP is analysing the mechanisms that provide constitutional guarantees.

Regarding the actions of police officers who always use violence, JSMP explained that when community members see the police acting in this way, they can make a complaint to the police or can make a complaint directly to the Public Prosecution Service which is responsible for criminal actions. Regarding the process for child neglect, JSMP explained that exercise of parental authority needs to be initiated against the parents.

In response to the question about children born out of wedlock, JSMP explained that Article 18 (b) and (c) of the Constitution state that children shall enjoy all rights that are universally recognized, as well as those that are enshrined in international conventions ratified by the State. Every child born inside or outside of wedlock shall enjoy the same rights and social protection, therefore children born out of wedlock cannot be discriminated against.

Acting Village Chief, Mr. Antonino da Costa, in his speech stated that he was very grateful to JSMP for giving priority to Uma Ana Ico Village and facilitating training to provide important information to the community, especially to members of the village council to increase their knowledge about issues of democracy, formal justice and the freedom to access information. The Village Chief added that they will pass on this information to community members who did not participate in this training, because the information provided by JSMP is very useful for them and they really need to increase their knowledge.

During the closing ceremony JSMP and the Village Chief asked the participants to pass on the information they were given to other community members who did not attend the training, so that the information could reach everyone in Uma Ana Ico Village.

JSMP observed that the participants were interested in participating in this training because for most of the participants this was the first time they had an opportunity to attend training on these topics.

JSMP conducted this training activity with funding from the European Union, with partner support from CEPAD.

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