

ICFJ training at Baucau Media House

The International Centre for Journalism (ICFJ) last week provided media training to members of the Baucau Media House. Fifteen participants participated in the training including staff from community radio in Baucau, Lospalos and Viqueque, Timor Post, Diario Nacional, and representatives of the Secondary School in Baucau District.

The five-day training (09-14 February) concentrated on basic journalism techniques, how to write news and feature articles, news coverage of events and how to conduct interviews. The aim of the training was to increase the skills and professionalism of existing journalists as well as introducing journalism to students who may one day wish to pursue journalism and media studies.

Paulo Amaral, an ICFJ trainer, said he believed that such training is crucial to achieving a high-standard of journalism. "The news must be balanced and based on facts. Because the basic principles of journalism have not yet been addressed, the journalists cannot write proper stories."

One of the participants, Pedro Ximenes from the Baucau Community Radio, Lian Matebian, was very encouraged by the training. "I feel that I now know better how to get information from the field and how to write stories. We are really happy with the training and will apply what we learned at our radio station and train our other colleagues."

This training is part of ongoing training planned every two months by ICFJ.

New infrastructure boosts Prisons

In the last two years, the prison system in Timor-Leste has undergone a remarkable transformation. Following the escape of several high profile criminals from Becora Prison in 2006, the Government with support of the United Nations Development Fund, undertook a complete review and evaluation of prison security.



» UNMIT Photo/Martine Perret
Portaun Seguransa nian iha prizaun Becora.

Led by the Ministry of Justice, a new program to improve security was incorporated into the existing UNDP Justice Program in May 2007. The new program focused on improving the physical infrastructure of Timor-Leste prisons in Becora and Gleno. The improvements have included significant upgrading of the perimeter security, improved water and electrical systems, clearance of vegetation around the prison, proper signage and lighting and strengthened security systems. The healthcare centre at Becora Prison has also been significantly renovated and the refurbishment of staff houses in Becora and Gleno are currently underway.

Almost two years into the programme, the results have greatly improved the security of the prisons and the way that the prisoners are treated. "Prisons are a vital part of the entire justice system," said Dave Bramley, Senior Prison Advisor to the Minister of Justice and UNDP. "The support that the Government has given to this program

demonstrates a real commitment to ensuring that Timor-Leste meets international standards."

In addition to the physical changes, the UNDP Justice Program provides for the training and mentoring of prison staff together with prisoner rehabilitation and training. Programs such as carpentry, sewing and tailoring, furniture repair and construction along with computer classes are implemented with more courses

planned.

"We are helping the Government to achieve two main goals in Timor-Leste," says Alan Swaine, Corrections and Criminal Justice System Advisor with the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT). "The most visible is that prisoners will be housed in secure and humane facilities. The second goal is to ensure that prisoners have access to literacy and vocational training programs. This not only helps make productive use of their incarceration, but helps prisoners prepare for their release back into society."

Given the success of changes made to Becora and Gleno prisons, the Ministry of Justice is now considering a five-year strategic plan (2009-13) that includes plans to refurbish former Indonesian prisons in the districts of Baucau, Aileu, Suai and Oecusse.

Livelihood activities in the Oecusse Lagoon



Photo by Hipolito da Cruz/UNMIT