



IN PICTURES

STRENGTHENING PROPERTY RIGHTS IN TIMOR-LESTE



Informing communities

In November 2008 the USAID funded Ita Nia Rai ('Our Land') project and the National Directorate for Land, Property and Cadastral Services began collecting land claims in two pilot areas, Liquica and Manatuto.

Over a period of several months, a media campaign on radio and television provided information and background about the process. In the pilot areas, the project met with community leaders and local authorities to gain their understanding and support. Before beginning data collection, the team conducted a total of 18 public meetings in the two pilot areas, reaching over 400 men and over 300 women. Each meeting featured a film screening and a detailed question and answer session to help community members understand and prepare for the process.



SPREADING THE WORD

- Top: Public Information manager Jose Caetano Guterres speaks at a community meeting;
- The project created a comic-strip style poster as a visual aid to help people understand the claims collection process.

Involving women

To increase women's awareness about land rights, two workshops for women only were held in each pilot area. These gave women an opportunity to learn about their right to land and the claims collection process. Participants were invited to discuss the challenges that women might face in taking equal part in the land claims collection process, and come up with strategies to increase their voice. The meetings also encouraged local women in leadership roles to spread the word to other women in their communities.

All public information materials emphasize gender equality and the importance of women's participation in the process. At community meetings, the outreach team makes clear that women's participation is a fundamental right, and encourages women to make claims as individuals or together with their husbands or families. In addition, the project distributes materials such as posters and brochures that clearly state women's equal right to take part in the process.

By taking these measures, Ita Nia Rai hopes to promote women's participation as equals in the land claims collection process and to raise awareness about women's equal rights to land.



MAKING OURSELVES HEARD

Clockwise from top:

- Women from the pilot districts discuss the cultural challenges that women face in securing land rights.
- Given a mainly patriarchal culture in Timor-Leste, women's only meetings provide a forum for women to freely express themselves.
- A man reads a flyer outlining women's rights to participate in the process.

Volunteers helping their communities

The Ita Nia Rai project trains community volunteers to collect land claims. 22 volunteers selected from both target communities undertook a 4-week training course in which they learned the skills they would need to help record land claims in their community. Using volunteers from the local area gives communities a personal stake in the process, and builds valuable knowledge and skills at a grassroots level.



APPROPRIATE TECHNOLOGY

The Ita Nia Rai project is using innovative new technology, such as the electronic pen pictured above, to make recording land boundaries more accessible.



BUILDING CONFIDENCE

Step-by-step field simulations gave volunteers the confidence they needed to take their skills into the community. The field simulations were conducted as a final exercise to evaluate all the skills the volunteers were taught during their training course.



HANDS-ON SKILLS BUILDING

Volunteers tested their skills in a series of practical exercises.



USING MULTIMEDIA TOOLS

Training simulations were filmed and played back to the volunteers so that they could review their activities. This proved to be a useful and innovative tool for improving performance in the field.



TRAINING FOR THE FUTURE

Training Coordinator Duarte da Silva (right) worked to coordinate a team of international and national trainers.

Making a claim

Julio and Rosa live in Vila, Liquica, a town about 35km west of the capital, Dili. Since 1999 they have lived on land that belonged to Rosa's family. They made a marital claim as representatives of relatives who are still abroad. Follow the process - in pictures.



FOR THE RECORD

Left to right, from top:

- First, the data collection volunteers discuss the process and options with Julio and Rosa. Since Rosa's family abandoned the land in 1999, Rosa and Julio decide to make a joint claim as representatives of the land owners;
- A current identity or electoral card is the only documentation needed to make a claim. Since Julio and Rosa have no other documents, they can also make an audio statement;
- All claimants sign or thumbprint their claim form once they have made their initial declaration;
- Once the claimant's details have been recorded, the data collection volunteers measure the boundaries of the land;
- A photograph of the family will accompany the record of their claim.

FOR THE RECORD (PART II)

Left to right, from top:

- Julio and Rosa's neighbor witnesses the survey process. Claimants are encouraged to make sure their neighbors agree to the boundaries;
- The volunteer team measures all boundaries of private land and records the corners. Teams consist of 3 volunteers, and there is at least one woman on each team;
- Creating a sketch of the parcel grabs the interest of the whole family;
- Both claimants sign the sketch once it is done, to indicate their approval;
- Finally, a receipt is issued with a unique number that references the claim. Julio and Rosa can use this number to update information if necessary. They still do not have a land title, but if their claim remains undisputed, they will be eligible for one when the Land Law is approved.



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