PRESS RELEASE

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PRADET- Refresher Training for Accredited Medical Forensic Examiners.

On 6 – 8 and 13 – 15 November 2017, PRADET facilitated Refresher Training in Dili to 30 Medical Forensic Examiners, (MFE), working with Fatin Hakmatek in nine sites across Timor-Leste.

PRADET’s program, Fatin Hakmatek (Safe Place) provides safety, counselling, medical treatment, forensic examination and documentation of injuries providing corroborating evidence in court, emergency accommodation and basic needs for all people experiencing domestic violence, sexual assault, child abuse and abandonment. A socio-economic program supports women, particularly victims of domestic violence, to be reintegrated into the community.

There are 5 Fatin Hakmatek facilities in Timor-Leste all funded by the Australian government through The Asia Foundation’s Nabilan Program. Nabilan is an eight year commitment by the Australian government which aims to reduce the number of women and children experiencing violence and to improve the well-being of women and children affected by violence in Timor-Leste. Nabilan funds Timorese service providers to respond to people experiencing these crimes, (Fatin Hakmatek, Casa Vida and Uma Mahon Salele.) TAF Nabilan provides support for prevention, legal services and monitoring, (PRADET, ALFeLa and JSMP.) These services are all part of a comprehensive referral pathway providing client centered care, both crisis and long term.

PRADET’s Fatin Hakmatek (FH) are based in the hospital grounds of Dili HNGV, Suai, Oecusse, Maliana and Baucau. The Dili service covers the Municipalities close to Dili, Liquica, Ermera, Aileu and Manatuto. The Fatin Hakmatek in Baucau covers the Municipalities of Baucau, Viqueque and Lospalos. The Fatin Hakmatek in Suai covers the Municipalities of Covalima, Manufahi and Ainaro. Oecusse and Maliana cover the Municipalities of Oecusse and Bobonaro.

In partnership with Institute Nasional da Saude, (INS), since 2010, PRADET has trained a total of 51 doctors, midwives including nurses who are employed in the Fatin Hakmatek facilities as nurse /counsellors, to become accredited Medical Forensic Examiners, using the Medical Forensic Protocol, produced by PRADET and approved by the Government of Timor-Leste’s Ministries of Health and Justice and the Office of the Prosecutor General. Of those accredited, despite attrition due to study overseas and moving jobs, 16 are working in the referral hospitals in Oecusse, Maliana, Suai and Baucau, 8 are based in the Sentru Saude Internamentu in Ainaro, Same, Viqueque and Lospalos, and 7 work in the Fatin Hakmateks in Dili and Maliana. This is a total of 9 sites. In the regional areas those doctors and midwives are contracted to Fatin Hakmatek to provide medical forensic examinations when needed and refer back to the Fatin Hakmatek. The Directors of all referral/regional hospitals have welcomed this integrated service to respond and treat patients injured from family and sexual violence, who present in their clinics and hospitals.
Supported by TAF Nabilan, PRADET provides site visits, individual monitoring, audits and mentoring as well as group refresher training for the MFE. The cases presenting are often complex and it is essential to provide regular professional development and a chance for the group to discuss individual cases and challenges, to build confidence, expertise and a sustainable service.

The recent Refresher Training agenda included group discussion and feedback of their experiences, a review of some topics that emerged from auditing protocols, such as drawing correct descriptions of injuries, contraception and treatment of sexually transmitted infections (STI) as well as new topics. Marie Stopes International facilitated a session on family planning and social constructions affecting attitudes and CODIVA (Coalition for Diversity and Action) facilitated a very lively session on sexual diversity.

The third day was spent with JSMP, (also supported by TAF Nabilan) facilitating a role play of a mock court situation where the MFE is giving evidence. JSMP monitoring shows that the evidence obtained from the MFE is being used more often in the Tribunal. TAF Nabilan access to justice staff presented information about the difference between sexual exploitation, procurement for sex and human trafficking.

Participants are very committed and enthusiastic. It is hoped that the government of Timor-Leste, will recognize the importance of ongoing learning for health workers and continue to support Refresher trainings twice annually after the Nabilan program has finished. Access to medical care and the documentation of injuries to serve as corroborating evidence in court is an important part of total victim care.

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