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Human Rights Adopted as Compulsory Subject at the UNTL



On 15 July 2020, the Council of Management of the National University of Timor-Leste (UNTL) unanimously approved the syllabus of the new “Human Rights and Democratization” course, which will be introduced as a new transversal discipline mandatory in all undergraduate programs of the National University’s nine Faculties, from the academic year 2021/22.

This provision is a direct outcome of the Global Campus capacity-building project [Development of Human Rights Education and Research at the UNTL](#), implemented since 2019 in cooperation with the [Global Campus Asia-Pacific Programme](#) lead by Mahidol University, and with the support of the European Union and its Delegation in Dili.

The mainstreaming of human rights education on this scale means that each future graduate of the country's only National University will have acquired the fundamentals of human rights as part of their formal education. In a country where nearly half of the population is under the age of 18, the potential for transformative societal contribution of such an innovation bears the highest significance.

Thanks to the new course, Timorese students will gain insight into human rights core concepts, international and regional HR protection mechanisms, as well as rights of specific groups and various thematic issues that are particularly relevant locally. To ensure a highly collaborative process, the development of the curriculum and teaching materials is conducted in cooperation with the local beneficiaries of the ongoing [Human Rights Studies & Training Programmes](#) and relevant local Civil Society Organizations, whose expertise on the situation on the field has proved priceless in rooting the discussed topics into the Timorese context. In this regard, particularly notable is the cooperation with the two main pillars of human rights protection and promotion in the country, the [Provedoria of Human Rights and Justice PDHJ](#) (the Timorese NHRI) and the Centre for Dealing with the Past [CNC](#) - Chega!.

This paramount achievement, however, would not have been possible without the excellent cooperation developed during the project with the UNTL bodies, and the high degree of co-ownership over the implementation process. In this regard, it has to be stressed that the initial impetus for the introduction of human rights as compulsory disciplines emerged as a request from UNTL Faculty Deans, during a comprehensive mapping and consultation which took place in the inception phases of the project, and which represents a key element of the working methodology applied locally.

For more about the project: <http://gchumanrights.org/hrc-untl>

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