

First WIPO Scholarship Recipient from Timor Leste Gets Her Master's in IP and Development Policy

Recardina Liliyana da Silva (Lily) is a determined young woman. On 17 December, she proudly graduated from the Korea Development Institute ([KDI](#)) School in Sejong with a Master's in Intellectual Property and Development Policy. She became the first WIPO scholarship recipient from Timor Leste. Lily's Masters is part of a World Intellectual Property Organization's joined Master's. The young woman is set on helping her country develop an efficient IP system that can help development.



Lily was born in Dili, Timor Leste, 26 years ago, and raised in a modest class family that considered education a high priority. Her initial dream was to become a doctor and in particular, to help rural populations with little access to hospitals. Short of making it to medical school for financial reasons, Lily was determined to study abroad and expand her personal and professional horizons.

After two years of what she describes as “unrelenting efforts”, she received a scholarship from “Shimjeon Foundation” at Kangnam University, South Korea for a bachelor's degree in business administration.

She realized that her country virtually lacked an intellectual property protection system. The Timor Leste law, she said contained all but one article on IP, providing general coverage. Lily became very interested in the subject and wanted to challenge herself so in 2020 she applied to the newly launched WIPO joined Masters in IP and Development Policy. The program is hosted by the KDI School of Public Policy and Management and is the result of the collaboration between WIPO, the Korean Intellectual Property Office, and the KDI University.

She was impressed by the curriculum, “I did not expect to study with experts from all over the world,” and she realized that many creations such as music, designs, inventions, and logos had been used in Timor Leste without consent or recognition to the creators due to a general lack of awareness.

As a young female professional, she now plans to return to her native country and use her knowledge to advocate for the creation of an IP system in Timor Leste that will serve creators and inventors to protect their intellectual property. Timor Leste joined WIPO in 2017 she noted, “the country needs IP experts to implement the IP systems.”

A well-established IP system will allow Timor Leste to attract foreign direct investment and facilitate technology transfer, “hopefully resulting in employment creation and revenue for the government.”

Already with a plan in mind, she said she “would like to recommend the government to focus on the most immediately useful IP fields to the country such as copyright, design, geographical indications, traditional knowledge, and trademarks.”

Timor Leste is made up of part of the island of Timor and the neighboring islands of Jaco, Oecusse, and Atauro. The largest industries of the country are agriculture; oil and gas, and small manufacturing such as coconut oil, handicraft, soap manufacturing, and woven cloth.

Since 2017, Lily said, the government has been focusing on diversifying the economy, attracting investors, and developing the tourism industry.

She wishes young people in Timor Leste can be inspired and motivated by her story and take a leap of faith and go study abroad. “Studying abroad not only helps us to learn new languages, appreciate other cultures, overcome the challenges of living in another country, gain a greater understanding of the world, but it can also guarantee our future career.”