

Beneath Paradise

BENEATH PARADISE

VOLUME 1 | ISSUE 1 | JULY 2013

THE MAGAZINE OF THE PACIFIC WOMEN'S NETWORK AGAINST VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Standing up to violence
against women in PNG

Crying Meri Arise!

Tougher penalties needed
against violent crimes but
death penalty a step back



Why PNG is a failed state for women



Shamima Ali

Welcome to the first edition of the rebranded magazine of the Pacific Women's Network Against Violence Against Women. The name *Beneath Paradise* is from the title of a poem written by Tina Takashy in 1993. Two years later the poem formed the centrepiece of a Pacific women's documentation project in the lead up to the Fourth UN World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995. Tina Takashy's poem (reproduced on page 12) alludes to the tightly intertwined feelings both of hope and tragedy when it comes to the status of women in the region.

There's hope because increasingly around the region an awareness is growing at all levels of society about the problem of violence against women. More and more the systems of governance, and communities themselves, are recognising the great injustice and economic cost linked to violence against women.

And this is where the feeling of tragedy comes in. When we think of countries like PNG, a shiver runs down our spines at the thought of being a woman there. By the government's own admission, violence is a "shameful reality of daily life" for Papua New Guinean women.

For women, Papua New Guinea is a failed state.

Our focus in this issue is on the ongoing tragedy for women in that Melanesian country. A recent survey conducted by the country's Constitutional and Law Reform Commission concluded that nearly two-thirds of PNG's married women suffer violence inflicted by their husbands or partners.

Global attention was focused on the country in February 2013 when news broke of a 20-year-old mother burnt alive at a rubbish dump by a mob which accused her of being involved in sorcery. It happened on the eve of the country's appearance before the 57th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women in New York.

At that appearance, PNG's Permanent Representative to the UN, Robert Aisi could not sidestep the level of violence against women in his country and acknowledged the incident "symbolises the savagery of some of the forms of violence ... women and girls face today."

In reaction to the such violence, the government hastily passed amendments to the law to bring back capital punishment for robbery, rape and murder. Although well meaning, the move cannot be considered as anything other than a huge step back for human rights in the country. However while PNG's challenge may seem insurmountable in the face of this violent onslaught, as optimists we tend to believe that things can change. That we can reclaim the right to freedom from violence that we all possess and that we no longer have to linger *Beneath Paradise*.

We welcome your news, comments, letters, photos and suggestions to fwcc@connect.com.fj

Beneath Paradise is the quarterly magazine of the Pacific Women's Network Against Violence Against Women, published by the Fiji Women's Crisis Centre as the Network's secretariat. The FWCC has published a newsletter for the Network since its founding in 1992 although this is the first edition under a new title and design.

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Network News

UPDATES FROM OUR PARTNERS

VANUATU

Tahi meets Governor-General Bryce

To mark International Women's Day, Marilyn Tahi, the Coordinator of Vanuatu Women's Centre was invited along with Samoan President of the Pan-Pacific and South East Asian Women's Association, Dr Papalii Viopapa Annandale, and representatives from Fiji and the Solomon Islands as guests of the Governor-General of Australia Quentin Bryce. Tahi and the others attended various programmes in Canberra and Melbourne, the highlight of which was the celebration hosted by the International Women's Development Agency in Melbourne. The theme was 'Half The Sky' and IWDA patron Governor-General Bryce delivered the keynote address, while there were performances by women musicians. Activities included a visit to the Children First Foundation Farm in the countryside of Kilmore, while Tahi visited and spoke to staff at crisis centres, services and shelters for women and girls affected by violence.

FIJI

Preliminary survey results released

A summary of findings from a major survey conducted by the Fiji Women's Crisis Centre over a period of two years from 2010 to 2011 was made public on 31 January 2013. The yet unpublished survey found that more than three in five (64 per cent) of women who had ever been in a relationship have experienced physical or sexual violence or both by a husband or intimate partner. Some 3193 women between 18 and 64 years old were interviewed across the country using World Health Organisation methodology. The survey showed that violence against women cuts across all aspects of women's lives but with some groups more at risk than others. It is the most extensive survey on violence against women in Fiji in more than a decade.

SOLOMON ISLANDS

AusAID supports for Family Care Centre

Australian High Commissioner to Solomon Islands Matt Anderson announced on International Women's Day on 8 March his country's commitment to increase support for programmes that tackle violence against women. AusAID will support the 'Standing Together Against Violence' campaign through funding a partnership with the Family Support Centre and Oxfam Australia. The funding will support the operation of the Family Support Centre (the only independent resource counselling and support centre in Solomon Islands) which also works with communities to understand and take action against

violence against women. The funding also helps supports the government's initiative appoint a coordinator for a referral network of service providers that includes the Family Support Centre (counselling) and the Christian Care Centre (crisis accommodation). A toll free 24-hour advice line for survivors of violence was also set up.

BOUGAINVILLE

Leitana Nehan leads protest over beheading

Helen Hakena of Leitana Nehan Women's Development Agency in Bougainville, who is also president of the North Bougainville Human Rights Committee in Buka, led a protest against sorcery-related killings in May after the beheading of Helen Rumbali. Rumbali was the leader of the South Bougainville Women's Federation, a former school teacher and strong advocate for women's rights and the development of Bougainville. Several hundred Bougainvillians gathered on 8 April to condemn the killing of Rumbali and other innocent women.

COOK ISLANDS

Punanga Tauturu questions anonymity

Punanga Tauturu spoke out in April after name suppression was granted to a senior public servant accused of assaulting his wife. Counsellor Rebecca Buchanan said aspects of the case could set a bad precedent. This was the official's third time in court on similar charges. He was charged with injuring with intent. The case was called on a day the courts do not usually sit, which Punanga Tauturu believes was an attempt to avoid media coverage because of the man's job and so-called community standing. The case drew public interest and despite the name suppression, a letter to a newspaper by the man's wife was published following an earlier letter calling for the man's sacking that did not name him. The prosecutor opposed name suppression on the grounds of open justice but the Justice of the Peace hearing the case decided name suppression could continue.



ON THE COVER

A woman and her baby look down the valley from Kassam Pass, Morobe Province, PNG.

Photo courtesy Vlad Sokhin

The Pacific Women's Network Against Violence Against Women members women's rights groups and agencies in Bougainville; Cook Islands; Fiji; Federated States of Micronesia; Marshall Islands; Kanaky; Kiribati; Niue; Papua New Guinea; Solomon Islands; Vanuatu; Tonga; Samoa. Send your Network News and photos to fwcc@connect.com.fj



Linda grieves the death of her 25-year-old daughter Amanda, who died at the emergency section of the Port Moresby General Hospital after being raped on the street by members of raskol gangs. The raskols stabbed Amanda multiple times and she died without regaining consciousness. PHOTO COURTESY: VLAD SOKHIN

What's to be done about PNG's violence?

By UME WAINETTI

Recent data shows that 50 per cent of Papua New Guinean women have been raped in their own homes and 68 per cent of women have been subjected to physical violence.

The Family and Sexual Violence Action Committee (FSVAC) was established in 2000. This was because the women of Papua New Guinea were saying, when the country was celebrating independence, that we had nothing to celebrate. We were being beaten, raped and murdered. So we decided that there should be a peak body established to reduce the violence in our country. The committee involves various sectors, with 81 member organisations. Through this network, we have also established committees in the provinces.

Why do we call this problem 'family and sexual violence' when we could just say it is gender-based? Because when we talk about gender-based violence, we mostly see this as intimate partner violence. It lets the other violence that is seen in our families fall through the cracks – when our brothers beat us up or kill us, where we are beaten by fathers for falling pregnant to men they don't approve of, honour

killings. Incest is a traditional practice allowed in our matrilineal societies to retain land by the brother's family. None of this is reported to the police.

This is why we say family violence. And when we are talking about combatting family and sexual violence, we are also talking about changing our own way of life (for example, the practice of incest in matrilineal societies). Men are expected to have control over their women and it is accepted that a man should correct his wife or sister to conform to the expectation of the community. In PNG community rights are more important than women's rights and hence we see many times women agreeing to do things that would violate their rights. For instance, a woman will keep quiet about sexual abuse because she does not want to see her family hurt.

How do we help to change women's minds and attitudes so they do not think it is OK for their husbands, brothers and fathers to beat, rape and even murder them?

There are many myths about this violence. When a woman goes long-long (mad), people say it's sorcery, it's never the husband's fault. And sometimes we Papua New Guinea women believe that when a husband hits us, it means that he loves us or is jealous. Often you will

see even our highly educated women continue to live their lives through their husbands, with everything being about him. But tomorrow, if he walks out, he will leave her with nothing. Many times we make excuses for the violence that we see, blaming it on culture or alcohol and drugs. So our own understanding of domestic violence is confused, and we continue to accept living like this.

From what we see, the age group that is witnessing the most sexual violence – whether it is gang rape, rape in the home, or rape by a father or step-father – are those between the ages of five and 19.

The other thing that we are now seeing, because the status of women is so low, is a lack of interest from parents to make sure their daughters have opportunities. So, many young girls are getting married at a very early age.

In Papua New Guinea, we have 733 maternal deaths for every 100,000 births. More women die in childbirth in PNG than in any other Pacific country. One of the many reasons for this is because women are having babies at such a young age, when they are still girls. By the time they are 21 years old they might already have three children.

► Continued on Page 5



Death penalty a 'knee-jerk' reaction to violence

PNG's media have documented some of the horrors women in the country face, including the torture and burning of a woman accused of sorcery in February 2013. ■ The mob murder sparked national, regional and international shock and outrage. Incidents like this led to the call for the PNG Parliament to revive the death penalty for violent crimes, despite the protests of advocates who said the executions would have negative repercussions for human rights in general. ■ In late May, Parliament hastily approved laws to expand the use of the death penalty to robberies, rape and murder. ■ The legislation was adopted by Parliament with little debate, during the same session that repealed the country's controversial Sorcery Act which provided a defence for violent crime if the accused was acting to stop 'witchcraft'. ■ The Pacific Women's Network Against Violence Against Women (PWNAVAW) described the move as a "gross violation of an individual's right to life" as protected under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. ■ PWNAVAW Chairwoman Shamima Ali said while the Network welcomed the decision to repeal the Sorcery Act, the decision to bring back the death penalty was a "knee-jerk reaction" to the appalling violence against women in the country. Death sentences can be carried out

through a range of methods including hanging, electrocution, lethal injection and firing squad. ■ "The death penalty is state-sanctioned violence, and is a major setback to the efforts being made by civil society organisations within PNG and the Pacific to promote human rights and eradicate violence against women in PNG. ■ "All violence should be equally abhorrent, whether it is the brutal killing of a woman suspected of sorcery, the brutal rapes and sexual assaults against women or the killing of a person by the state." ■ Ali said the death sentence was not the answer to ongoing violence against women in PNG. ■ "Research has shown that capital punishment does not deter crime. On the contrary, the death penalty may encourage more violence, as perpetrators may kill their victims to ensure no evidence can be established against them. ■ "Furthermore, state-sanctioned violence further desensitises people and contributes to the acceptance of vengeance and retribution as legitimate sanctions." ■ Amnesty International described the new laws as "a horrific and regressive step". ■ On the day the PNG *Post-Courier* reported the new penalties, it carried a photo on its front page of an unidentified man attacking a woman with a bush knife in a Port Moresby sports ground (above).

Hellen (about 38 years old), lost her leg in 2005 during a fight with her drunk husband, Alai Kawa. Alai chopped off Hellen's right leg with a bush knife in front of their young children, who later called for help. Alai was arrested by police, however, after receiving treatment, Hellen left her home out of fear that her husband might be released. She only returned in 2010 when she found out that Alai died in prison. She now lives with Alai's sister and they both run a small shop in Kundiawa town, Simbu Province. PHOTO AND WORDS VLAD SOKHIN

■ Just a day after the bill approving harsher penalties for violent crimes was passed in parliament, a nine-year-old girl was raped in Mt Hagen. She followed a young man who promised her a job, but instead she was raped, and left at a bus stop. Johnny Poiya writing in the *Post-Courier* on 31 May said the suspect would probably be the first to be sentenced to death if he is arrested and successfully prosecuted. Also in June an 18-year-old Highland girl who had been repeatedly raped by her father allegedly chopped off his head and could also face the death penalty.

▶ ACTION

In solidarity with PNG women

The Fiji Women's Crisis Centre (FWCC), the Fiji Women's Rights Movement and other women's organisations gathered at the FWCC's head office on 14 May in an event to stand in solidarity with the women of PNG as reports of violence against women there increased.

A mock casket was carried into the room at the start of the event to signify the ongoing deaths of women who suffer horrendous crimes in PNG.

Also present were Papua New Guineans in the police force and other organisations who were in Suva for the month-long Regional Training Programme.

The day after the event, representatives from women's groups, led by FWCC walked the short distance from the Centre to the PNG High Commission to present a petition to second secretary at the embassy Hera Kevau who did not accept the petition, which called for justice and an end to violence against women and girls in that country.

Despite informing the High Commission beforehand no other representative of the PNG government was available to accept the petition which was eventually left with an administrative officer.



Women gathered in December 2012 to support new PNG laws to increase the number of women in politics, but discrimination and violence remain a national crisis, a point highlighted with a mock casket during an event to stand in solidarity with the women of PNG at the Fiji Women's Crisis Centre in Suva in May 2013.
PHOTOS: FWCC/STUART MCEVOY/NEWS LIMITED

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And so the story goes on. Whether we are living in mining areas, in villages or in the towns, this is the story of life for PNG women.

The only laws now available in the country are assault laws and these are currently used to charge perpetrators for physical injuries, while sexual abuses are addressed under the 2002 Amended Criminal Code and Evidence Act. We are now working on the Family Protection Bill. We hope it will go through so that we can actually take those causing violence within families to court and have them charged for an offence under the term 'domestic violence'.

Some people ask me why we haven't mobilised and protested as a nation of women, like what has happened in India. In a nation of 800 languages, how can we do that? Even if we send out written information or go on TV or radio, not everybody listens and 68 per cent of our women are illiterate. So how can we reach them?

We need more facilities to help women and families. We can't just look to developed countries for examples, we need to look at what we can offer ourselves. We have established Family Support Centres (FSCs) where battered women and children can go for immediate medical treatment and psychosocial support. There are now about 15 of these centres in the country and we have seen around 12,000 women come through them in six years. But this only counts those who are willing to come, and these centres are not available everywhere. We have safe houses (Meri Safe Houses), but there are only two in Port Moresby and they can take up to

10 women. There is one in Alotau that can take four women, while in Lae, there is room for one woman only. With all the problems we are seeing, we do not have enough services. It makes it more difficult for us to reach our people and to give them the support they need.

Another thing that we urgently need is to establish services for men. For example, if a man cannot get an erection, he then blames his wife and beats her up. So we need men to also understand their own health problems. We have about 1000 men now trained as advocates for women's rights and we need to do more work to help to change men's behaviour and to help them educate each other.

We are getting support to roll out FSCs and Meri Safe Houses across the country, but what is really lacking are our skills to manage cases so that good and proper assistance is given to survivors. We have stories of so many of our women who we have been treated at FSCs and kept at safe houses, and then when we send them home they have been murdered. That is because we lack the facilities and skills to manage the cases properly so that proper assistance is given to these women before they are resettled in their communities.

Internal trafficking is also a big issue. When men have money they bring other women back from the cities. We don't even have services for referral or repatriation of these women. We also need to better connect these services to the community advocates who are on the ground. These are people we have trained to be the first to intervene when a woman is abused.

So we need to have FSCs, safe houses and



TAKE ACTION

Write to the PNG Prime Minister Peter O'Neill condemning the spate of violence against women in his country and demanding that his government doesn't just pay lip-service to its commitment to eliminate violence against women and children but make measureable progress to enact and enforce laws that should protect them.

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case management centres to work together to support these victims of violence. We also need an advocacy strategy that can be taken up at the national level. Just by speaking different languages, it makes us different.

When we are trying to do these types of programmes, we need to start looking at how we can create awareness and bring people together, so that we start thinking about this problem like a nation instead of just focusing on what we do in our own little pockets and communities.

▶ Ume Wainetti is the National Coordinator of the PNG Family and Sexual Violence Action Committee (FSVAC), a member of the PWNAAV. This article is based on a presentation she made at a Development Policy Centre event on 22 May and first posted on the DevPolicy Blog on 7 June.

What's happening across the Pacific

MARSHALL ISLANDS

The Marshall Islands has been red-flagged as a sex trafficking destination, and the US State Department has put RMI on a "watch list." In last year's State Department Trafficking in Persons Report, the RMI was listed as a "Tier 2" country, the middle designation in a report that lists countries as Tier 1, 2 and 3. But in the 2013 report, the RMI's status is downgraded to "Tier 2 Watch List," according to the one-page section on the RMI. "The Republic of the Marshall Islands is a destination country for women from East Asia subjected to sex trafficking," the report states, adding: "The government made no efforts to prevent trafficking during the year. It did not conduct any public campaigns or take other steps to raise public awareness about the dangers of trafficking."

PAPUA NEW GUINEA

Superintendent Joanne Clarkson is the first woman to be appointed to a senior position in the Royal Papua New Guinea Constabulary. She was appointed assistant commissioner for reforms, a new position to oversee the changes being implemented in the force. Clarkson has been a police officer for 17 years.



SOLOMON ISLANDS

Australia signed a memorandum of understanding in March with government ministries and social welfare groups to set up a referral network on violence against women called SAFENET. Solomon Islands has one of the highest rates of violence against women in the world, with 67 per cent either victims of domestic or sexual violence. At least 37 per cent of women reported being sexually abused before the age of 15. SAFENET will coordinate services to rehabilitate victims of domestic violence and sexual abuse. The network includes Ministry of Police and National Security, Ministry of Justice and Legal Affairs (Public Solicitors Office), Ministry of Health and Medical Services, Family Support Centre (FSC), Christian Care Centre (CCC) of the Anglican Church of Melanesia.

VANUATU

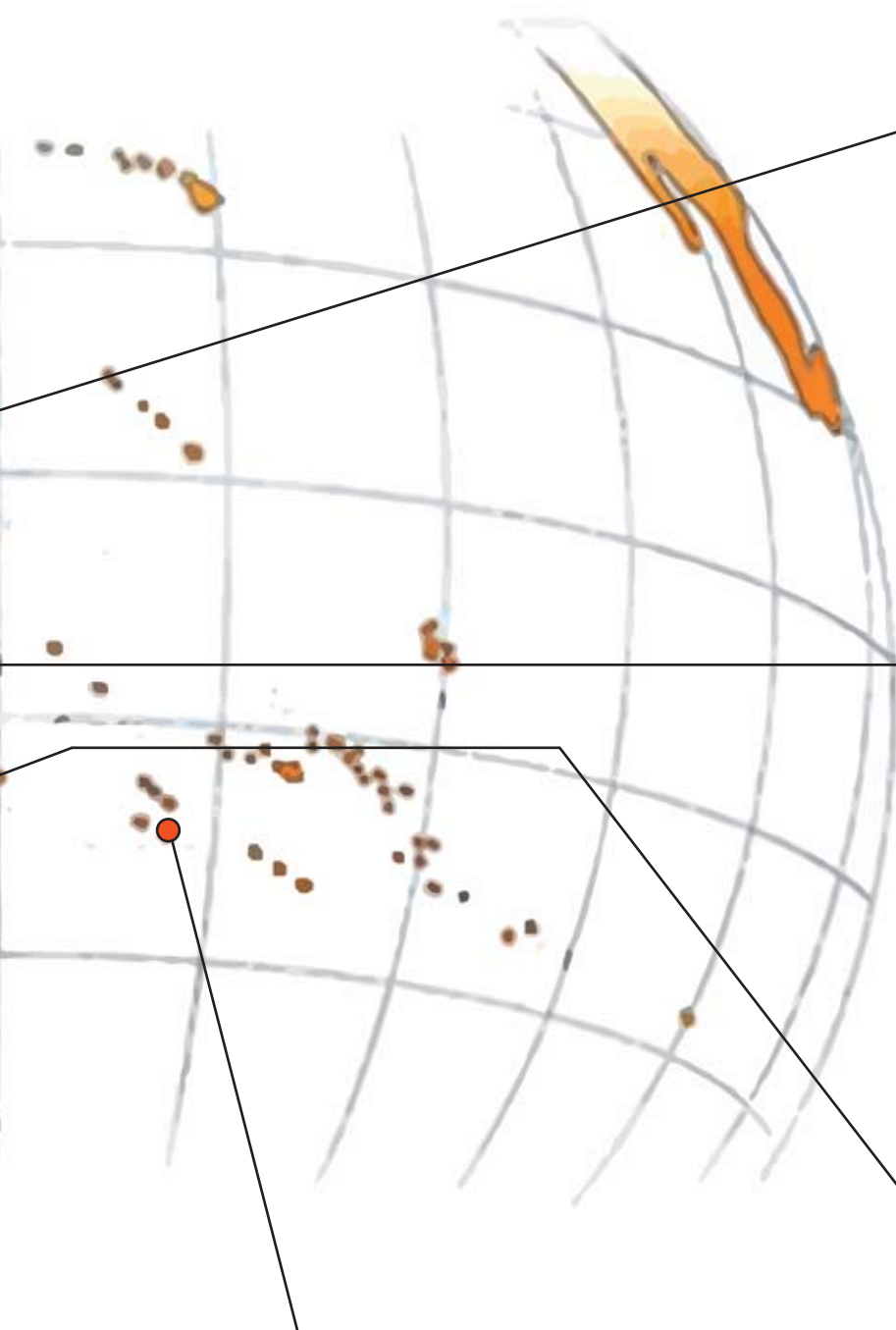
New Justice Minister Toara Daniel ruled out introducing the death penalty for serious offences as it would contravene Vanuatu's Constitution. Calls were made by a chief made to follow PNG's lead to institute capital punishment following recent murders, including that of two women.

FIIJI

Two task forces on women have been reactivated in Fiji. The task forces, on women and the law and the other on violence against women, involve government agencies, NGOs including the Fiji Women's Crisis Centre, and academics to focus on improving the state response to issues relating to women.



The work to eliminate violence against women in the Pacific is incremental with several steps forward, and sometimes backwards as well. Here we document some of the issues dealing with violence against women highlighted in countries across the region in the past several months.



KIRIBATI

It may be a small country in terms of population but Kiribati is looking to be on par with much larger countries when tackling the problem of violence against women, where 73 per cent of women aged 15-49 have experienced some form of physical or sexual violence. Draft legislation on violence against women has been prepared entitled Kiribati *Te Rau N Te Mweenga* Bill 2012, or the Family Peace Bill. The bill is being taken through community consultations and is expected to go before Kiribati's parliament this year. The government requested SPC Regional Rights Resource Team to draft the violence against women legislation and, with support from AusAID and the Sexual and Gender based Violence (SGBV) Reference Group, the Family Peace Bill was drafted in 2012.

SAMOA

A film that explores gender equality issues in Samoa was launched at the National University of Samoa in March. Produced by Galumalemana Steven Percival, with the support of the Pacific Media Assistance Scheme (PACMAS), the film is part one of a two-part documentary exploring issues of gender equality in Samoa mainly through the lenses of culture and faith. The film features the society's opinion about gender equality in a country where 46 per cent of women who have ever been in a relationship have experienced one or more kinds of partner abuse.

TONGA

The kingdom's government says it is committed to eliminating violence against women with the introduction of a landmark Family Protection Bill, a move that women's rights activists have commended. The bill was undergoing public consultations earlier this year and was expected to be introduced in a recent sitting of parliament. And for the first time in 13 years, a minister of government participated in the Commission on the Status of Women in New York this year. Activists say the passage of the Family Protection Bill will be a step towards ratifying the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women. Tonga is one of only seven countries that has not ratified CEDAW despite many years of pressure to do so. The Ministry of Police and other service providers estimate that an average of 300 domestic violence cases are reported every year, with a national survey reporting that 77 per cent of women and girls have experienced physical and sexual violence in their lifetime, the majority of times in their homes.

COOK ISLANDS

The High Court ruled in early July 2013 that it would not hesitate to jail domestic violence offenders even if they were breadwinners. Justice of the Peace Carmen Tema-ta made the remark in sentencing a man for assaulting his wife and child while drunk and for causing damage.

Send news from your country on women's development issues, gender, violence against women policy and other newsworthy items for inclusion on this page to fwcc@connect.com.fj



47 graduate from flagship course

The FWCC completed the 37th instalment of its flagship Regional Training Programme in Suva in early June with participants from eight Pacific countries returning to their homes enlightened on the issues surrounding violence against women.

Forty-seven participants from the Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu graduated after a month-long intensive training programme in gender awareness and gender sensitisation, basic counselling skills, prevention strategies against violence against women and media relations skills.

The chief guest at the graduation ceremony was the outgoing UNDP Representative, Knut Ostby, who congratulated the participants on their successful completion of the training pro-

“As a broadcaster on local radio in Papua New Guinea, I plan on taking back the gender sensitisation skills learnt from this programme and sharing that knowledge with fellow broadcasters and colleagues in local media. I want to be part of the solution and not the problem.”
> CHARLIE TOGIA



gramme, which is known among participants for its total immersion techniques of training.

“We have come a long way since our first Regional Training Programme in 1995, and it is encouraging to see more and more people working in eliminating violence against women

and girls applying to attend the training,” said Shamima Ali, the Coordinator of the FWCC.

“This training session has been especially good as we have participants from diverse backgrounds including police officers from Fiji, Kiribati, Papua New Guinea, Tuvalu and Vanuatu; lawyers, broadcasters, journalists, activists and counsellors. The diverse range has allowed us over the years to tailor the programme to ensure that the training is conducive to the challenges of gender and VAW issues.”

Participants were sponsored by Barrack Mining (Papua New Guinea), Pacific Prevention of Domestic Violence Programme (New Zealand), AusAID, NZAid, UNWomen and the Fiji Women’s Crisis Centre.

The second Regional Training Programme for 2013 will be held in October.

Three men explain what the training meant to them



Iliavi Ratuvueti, 32, Koro Island, Fiji

A theological graduate, Ratuvueti was part of a group formed after the FWCC visited Koro. The chair of the Koro committee attended a previous RTP and Ratuvueti is the second from

that group to undergo the training, which aims to address the problem of violence on Koro in the Lomaiviti group. Ratuvueti had witnessed a growing incidence of violence against women and girls and wondered how he could be a part of the solution. It was a steep learning curve for him during the first week with the concepts and ideas for understanding the dynamics of violence against women. “By the second week I knew why I was here especially after learning and understanding the problem of violence against women and why it happens,” he said.



Joseva Maikitu Ravula, 22, Macuata, Fiji

Ravula came into working for women’s rights after experiencing discrimination and violence himself including in his own family. His interest grew after he attended a workshop organised

by the Red Cross which Labasa Women’s Crisis Centre facilitated. Since then he has worked to raise awareness of the issue in his province of Macuata on Vanua Levu, where the incidence of violence against women is high. He has helped with community outreach conducted by the LWCC and hopes to use the training to increase his work in advocating for women’s rights. He is the first male advocate from his village of Korovuli, Sasa and says the training has helped give him the confidence to answer questions on the issues rebut widespread myths about violence.



Koniu Polon, Royal PNG Constabulary

A police officer with more than 30 years’ experience, Polon is a prosecutor in the committal court in Port Moresby. He said he joined the police force because he wanted to help

people and saw many survivors of domestic violence and other attacks on women during his time in the force. He would often be frustrated with the inadequate systems and lack of resources in place despite his personal commitment to help women survivors of violence. Apart from professional development, Polon said the training has helped developed him personally so that he now understands the dynamics of violence against women and sensitised him to the issues surrounding gender, knowledge he will be able to use in his work.

Edwina moves on but the flame still burns

The Fiji Women's Crisis Centre said farewell in March to Edwina Kotoisuva, one of its longest-serving and dedicated members of staff and the Deputy Coordinator of the organisation.

Edwina served the FWCC and its branches around Fiji, as well as the FWCC's sister organisations across the Pacific including the Vanuatu Crisis Centre and the Tonga Women and Children's Crisis Centre for 18 years of her life.

She took up a post as the Family and Sexual

Violence Adviser to the Papua New Guinea Law and Justice Project funded by AusAID.

FWCC Coordinator Shamima Ali said although the organisation was sad to see Edwina go, she could not think of a person better suited or skilled to take up the job Edwina is going to.

"PNG has some of the highest rates of violence against women in the world, and Edwina's vast experience in the area of violence against women in Fiji and the Pacific will hold her in good stead," Ms Ali said.

"Edwina has been totally committed to the Crisis Centre for the past 18 years. It is extremely rare to find a young woman with the feminist values and beliefs, skills and knowledge that Edwina has," Ms Ali added.

"Edwina has set a precedent for young women in the Pacific who aspire to be part of the feminist women's movement, advancing women's human rights.

"We are happy that Edwina will remain associated with the FWCC, with her appointment as a Trustee of the Centre."

Vandhna rejoins the women's rights fold

Vandhna Narayan (pictured below, middle) has joined the Fiji Women's Crisis Centre as the Legal Research Manager, and Deputy Coordinator.

A lawyer, Vandhna is no stranger to FWCC having been involved as a volunteer since 1994 and a member of the FWCC Collective for many years.

Vandhna has 20 years' experience in commercial litigation, family law and banking and insurance law, and has worked in Fiji, New South Wales and New Zealand. She is admitted as a Barrister and Solicitor in Fiji and New Zealand and as a Solicitor in New South Wales.

She obtained her LLB from Victoria University of Wellington in 1993 and a Masters in Human Rights Law and Policy from University of New South Wales in 2013. She was previously the Deputy Registrar Legal in the Fiji Judicial Department between 1999 and 2001.



Wilma takes over as regional officer

Wilma Eileen, the project officer of the Ba Women's Crisis Centre in Fiji will take over as Pacific Regional Administrator at the Fiji Women's Crisis Centre in Suva.

Wilma has spent the past six years as project officer in Ba, one of the Fiji Women's Crisis Centre's five branches. Before that she worked as a counsellor at the FWCC's main centre in Suva.



Network reps attend CSW

Four members of the Pacific Women's Network Against Violence Against Women attended the 57th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women in New York in March.

The four were Helen Hakena (pictured above, right) of the Leitana Nehan Women's Development Agency in Bougainville; Tatavola Matas (left) of Vanuatu Women's Centre, Ofa Guttenbeil-Likiliki of Tonga Women and Children Crisis Centre and Vandhna Narayan (middle) of Fiji Women's Crisis Centre.

They were part of a network of women in the Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development (APWLD) who joined up in New York to discuss ways to present a united front from Asia and the Pacific, including those from the Fiji Women's Rights Movement.

In the lead up to CSW, the Pacific women joined their counterparts from other Asia-Pacific countries. One of the side events hosted by the Pacific Women's Networks

Against Violence Against Women was titled 'Whose Paradise? Pacific Women Leading Efforts to Eliminate Violence Against Women. At that event, Hakena spoke about violence against women with the context of post-conflict situations in the Pacific, Matas spoke of the prevalence of violence against women in Vanuatu and strategies for community mobilisation.

Narayan presented on the prevalence of violence against women in Fiji and strategies within military regimes and Guttenbeil-Likiliki addressed the event on the situation of violence against women in Tonga and the Pacific male advocacy for women's human rights.

Helen Hakena also presented in a side event addressing marginalised women, especially indigenous women, titled 'Between a Rock and Hard Place'. Hakena also spoke later the next week on her experiences of being a women's human rights defender and the constant threats she and her family faced because of her work.



A candlelight vigil and a symbolic walk around the premises of the Fiji Women's Crisis Centre in Suva was held despite a ban by police on the annual 'Reclaim the Night' March through Suva and other locations where the Centre has branches to mark International Women's Day on 8 March.

FWCC defies ban on IWD march



Despite having its permits to march cancelled on the eve of International Women's Day, the Fiji Women's Crisis Centre staged candlelight vigils at its Suva, Nadi and Labasa branches.

The permits issued by the police force to hold 'Reclaim the Night' marches on Friday March 8 were cancelled after they cited unspecified "security risks".

In Suva, about 40 women, men, young people and children joined the vigil. While officially banned from marching, the group nonetheless staged a symbolic walk from the front door of the FWCC's head office to the back gate before returning to the front entrance.

The FWCC says while the government has been making a lot of statements about sexual assault and the need for action, the withdrawal of the permit was in direct contradiction of this.

"Over the years we have seen families join in the march and this has been very reassuring because it is an indication that people want to join in and protest against rape and sexual assault."

"To not be allowed to march and gather to show our abhorrence for rape and sexual assault is truly an affront to the women's movement in this country," said Ali.

The FWCC says that while the police were concerned about the security situation surrounding the march, they should give some credit to FWCC.

"We have been doing these activities for nearly 30 years and we have done it in all different circumstances, including during times of instability. We understand the conditions of our permit and unlike other organisations and institutions we recognise the rule of law," said Ali.

► Watch a video of the IWD event at <http://tinyurl.com/FijiIWD2013> and follow FWCC on Facebook at <http://tinyurl.com/FWCC-Facebook>

Vanuatu women open new premises

Australian Foreign Minister Bob Carr opened new premises for the Vanuatu Women's Centre (WVC) on 13 February during a two-day visit to the country.

The WVC was able to purchase the premises in Port Vila through a new programme of support from Australia amounting to AU\$5.3m from 2012 to 2016. Australia has been a partner of the WVC since 1994, two years after the Centre was established.

The new premises allow the WVC to expand counselling, legal and training services and open a new branch in Malampa Province.

The Centre is now equipped to cater for some 15,000 survivors of violence providing them with counselling services, access to legal assistance and emergency accommodation. It hopes to reach 80,000 through community education and awareness programmes and provide counselling and human rights training to 650 members of the Centre's nationwide network.

The new Australian aid also marks a milestone for WVC in its management independence from the Fiji Women's Crisis Centre, which was contracted by AusAID to manage the earlier funding to them. Under this arrangement, the FWCC helped implement projects and monitor the work of the WVC.

In the past five years the Centre assisted 10,000 survivors of family violence with counselling, legal assistance and accommodation and its community education and awareness activities reach over 100,000 women and men throughout Vanuatu.

In addition to its Port Vila premises, the Women's Centre has three provincial branches, and 41 island-based committees WVC also has an active national network of over 100 male advocates who work actively to promote human rights and prevent and address violence against women and children in their communities.

Australia, under the regional gender equality initiative Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development supports the Vanuatu Women's Cen-



Merilyn Tahi, Coordinator of the Vanuatu Women's Centre welcomes Senator Carr to the new Centre in Port Vila, funded by Australian aid, on 13 February 2013. In the background is Shamima Ali, the Coordinator of Fiji Women's Crisis Centre. PHOTO: YOHANN LEMONNIER/AusAID

tre in its efforts to end violence against women in Vanuatu.

Violence against women in Vanuatu, like elsewhere across the Pacific, is widespread. A comprehensive 2011 national survey found that 60 per cent of women experience violence at the hands of an intimate partner, more than 20 per cent of women injured are left with a permanent disability. The Vanuatu Women's Centre was set

up as an independent civil society organisation in 1992, providing counselling, support and legal services to survivors of violence in Vanuatu.

The WVC has centres in: Port Vila, Luganville, Tanna and Vanua Lava and it also runs a vibrant rural network of 41 Committees Against Violence Against Women (CAVAWS) and a national network of male advocates.

Technology, social media and the portrayal of women

With the growing access to mobile phones, digital cameras coupled with the widespread use of social media platforms, the making and sharing of homegrown pornographic media has increased in recent years.

And since young people are usually the earliest adopters of new technology and trends, they have embraced new gadgets and technologies and the internet-connectivity that these devices enable.

But along with the access to an unprecedented trove of news and information, has come a darker side to technology use. In several Pacific islands countries over the past year, incidents of pornography made using camera phones have been reported. In Tonga last year, the issue was brought to the public's attention when a young man was charged with the production and distribution of pornographic videos on mobile phones.

This year in Fiji, a man was charged after he allegedly posted sexual images of his former girlfriend on an internet website. The case was later dropped against the man but the Fiji police confirmed to a radio station that its cyber crime unit was investigating five cases of locally produced pornographic material.

FWCC Coordinator and Pacific Women's Network Against Violence Against Women, Shamima Ali said the increasing access to pornographic material through the internet and the widespread use of mobile phone cameras has increased the risk for women of being filmed against their will or knowledge, or losing control of material consensually filmed.

In Fiji, where fourth generation mobile telecommunications connectivity has been introduced, Ms Ali says, the risk will become exponentially higher with broadband internet speeds available on mobile devices and touch screen tablets.

While the problem becomes apparent when it makes it into the news, anecdotal evidence suggests it is an issue not just in Tonga but in other Pacific countries including in Vanuatu. In some cases, the young women portrayed in the images are aware they are being photographed, but never expect their images to be shared around. In other cases, the women are unaware they are being filmed. Such a phenomenon, while a reflection of what's happening across the world, also appears to be an extension of the culture of pack-rape which still exists in Pacific societies, often passed off as a right of passage for young or adolescent males.

One Billion Women, Rising

I am rising
To stand together with one billion women
To lift up our hands,
End suffering and pain
And be counted as one billion women, rising

I am striking
To show one billion women
Can create change, end the drudgery and daily grind
From the sweat shops and menial jobs
And be counted as one billion women, rising

I am dancing
To celebrate with one billion women
The elimination of all forms of violence and discrimination
Against women and girls
To do the impossible, move mountains
And be counted as one billion women, Rising, Rising, Rising

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► Composed at the end of the 6th Pacific Regional Meeting on the Elimination of Violence Against Women, Novotel Hotel, Nadi, Fiji. 12-16 November 2012.



By **JULY
MAKINI-PURCELL**

Beneath Paradise

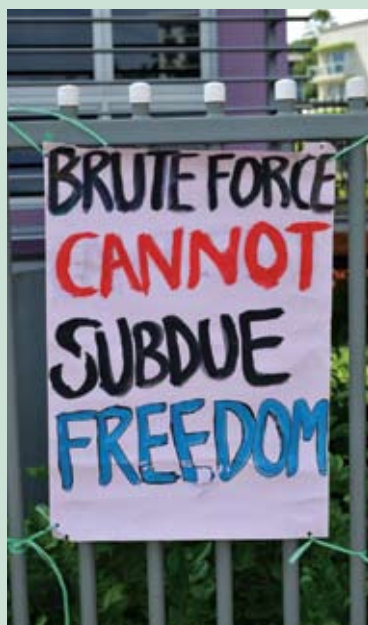
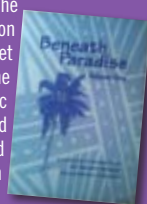
Pacific Women ...
Waves of struggle
Currents of oppression
Winds of change
Horizons of hope
Skies of optimism
Canoes of life
Sands of time

© 1993

► Tina Takashy is the Chief Executive Officer of the FSM Association of Non-Government Organisations based in Pohnpei, Federated States of Micronesia.

By **TINA
TAKASHY**

This poem formed the title of a documentation project and booklet that presented the experiences of Pacific women in the lead up to the UN World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995.



Sign language

A poster on the fence of the Fiji Women's Crisis Centre's headquarters in Suva to mark International Women's Day on 8 March 2013. The poster alludes to the human rights situation in Fiji where a military dictatorship enters its seventh year of rule this year. The Fiji police withdrew at the last minute a permit it had earlier granted for the annual 'Reclaim the Night' march to mark IWD, citing "security concerns" without specifying what they were.

FIJI WOMEN'S CRISIS CENTRE

APPLICATION FORM FOR THE REGIONAL TRAINING PROGRAMME

APPLICANT'S NAME:

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POSTAL ADDRESS:

TYPE OF TRAINING DESIRED:

TRAINING BY ATTACHMENT (4 weeks): **SHORT COURSE (3 weeks):**

SENDING ORGANISATION :

POSTAL ADDRESS:

PHONE: FAX:

APPLICANT'S POSITION IN ORGANISATION:

ENDORSED BY:

1. Name:

2. Position:

1. Name:

2. Position:

SPONSORING ORGANISATION:

CONTACT PERSON:

ADDRESS:

PHONE: FAX:

* List any requirements of trainee regarding health, diet, language, etc in an attachment to this application. Also attach a one-page summary with more details of the applicant's work and interest in working on violence against women, and include a brief statement of your position on women's rights.

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