

Beneath Paradise

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



Kiribati confronts its violence

Shock over killings
of five women as
Government pushes
Family Peace Bill
through assembly

The reality of VAW in Kiribati



Shamima Ali

Welcome to another issue of the Pacific Women's Network Against Violence Against Women's regional magazine, Beneath Paradise. A lot has happened since our last publication and I commend our partners for the ongoing struggle against all forms of violence against women and girls.

The focus in this edition is the situation of violence against women in Kiribati. Violence against women is rife in the Pacific and Kiribati is no exception. It's been reported that through a national survey conducted using World Health Organisation methodology, Kiribati has the fourth highest rate of violence out of the 25 countries in the world that used the same survey methodology – and the highest in the Pacific.

One only has to refer to recent media reports to get a glimpse of this harsh reality. Over the last six months five women have been killed, allegedly by their partners. We cannot even try to imagine what these women went through before meeting their fate.

All succumbed to stab wounds and one of them was pregnant. It's alleged there were bystanders who did not intervene. What are we to do? What can we do?

I remain hopeful that the Kiribati Family Peace Bill that received so much support from the Kiribati parliament will have a positive effect to ensure the safety of women and girls in Kiribati.

In the meantime, the work of the Network will go on with the hope that one day every woman and girl will be able to live a life free from the fear of being victimised and that everyone in the Pacific will accept that women's rights are human rights.

In this edition we also bring you voices of women in Vanuatu, where network members have rejected the call to increase penalties on mothers who are said to be killing their newborn babies. We take you to Solomon Islands where authorities have been challenged to contribute towards women's development.

In PNG, governments in the Asia-Pacific region have been called upon by a network member to commit to development justice and in Fiji where men from around the region have been trained to speak the language of women's human rights.

In August this year, the FWCC marks 30 years of its establishment. This is not an achievement to be celebrated, but what should be celebrated is the resilience of the women (and some men) who despite many odds, in a region imbued with tradition and culture where religious considerations often override women's human rights have persisted in promoting and protecting the human rights of women and girls and actually have been the beacon for human rights, generally in the Pacific.

We can celebrate the fact that we have put violence against women and girls on everyone's agenda. We can also celebrate the strong advocacy and lobbying that has brought about changes in policy, legislation, ownership of the issue, donor partnerships and the recognition that violence against women and girls is a human rights and development issue.

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.

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International Events



Shamima Ali with Ivy Josaiah APWLD colleague and feminist in Malaysia.

REGION

Ali speaks at ADB

Fiji Women's Crisis Centre coordinator and chair of the Pacific Women's Network Against Violence Against Women, Shamima Ali was invited to speak at the fourth session of the Gender, Voice and Agency Workshop at the Asian Development Bank in Manila, Philippines in June. Ali spoke on combatting violence against women in the Pacific, focusing on innovative programs and initiatives including the regional training program and the male advocacy program. "Shamima Ali was the undisputed 'bestseller' of the conference. It was one of the two best presentations. Both Shireen and I were so proud. During Shamima's presentation people were riveted, watching her and listening to her," said Imrana Jalal, gender specialist at ADB and feminist human rights lawyer from Fiji. "She was from one of the smallest countries present but her presentation was outstanding. The Pacific could teach the world a thing or two about VAW," said Michaela Bergman, head of gender, IRBD. Ali was also invited to speak at the 19th Biennial Conference of Clubs at the Borneo Convention Centre in Kuching, Sarawak, Malaysia. She spoke on "Educating and Empowering Women to Eliminate Violence against Women". The conference was from 2-4 May.



Monica with other participants.

Feminist legal workshop for Waqanisau

FWCC legal research officer Monica Waqanisau attended the Regional Asia Pacific Feminist Legal Theory and Practice training in April. Organised by the Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development, the six-day training was held in Phnom Penh, Cambodia. Attended by about 100 people from different countries, Waqanisau said the training was a valuable experience. "It was such a refreshing course that allowed for interactive discussion on feminism, the influence of culture on a society's law structure, building movements and understanding the impact of globalisation on women and their holistic development," said Waqanisau. "It was an insightful training and one I believe was most useful not only for lawyers but any person working on advancing women's rights. There was a lot of information sharing and it was a great opportunity to share

on Fiji's legal developments in relation to advancing women's rights and give an account of the realities faced by women in Fiji and the Pacific," Waqanisau said. The training schedule ended with a solidarity event organised by APWLD in partnership with a women's organisation of garment workers in Cambodia. The solidarity event was organised to call on the government of Cambodia to release several garment workers who had been assaulted and imprisoned for protesting against the low minimum wage received by garment workers in Cambodia, most of whom are women.

FUJI/TONGA

FWCC staff attend feminist forum

Two staff of the Fiji Women's Crisis Centre, travelled to Chiang Mai, Thailand for the 2nd Asia Pacific Feminist Forum from 30 May-1 June 2014, joining 300 other women's human rights activists from around the Asia Pacific region. Selina Momoyalewa, project officer of Rakiraki Women's Crisis Centre and Lili Vuiyasawa, FWCC Legal Officer, were accompanied by Lesila To'ia of the Tongan Women and Children's Crisis Centre. Selina, Lili and Lesila facilitated a workshop sharing FWCC's innovative advocacy strategies on the elimination of gender-based violence in Fiji and the Pacific. Assisted by FWCC's Legal Research Manager, Vandhna Narayan, they spoke about the Pacific Women's Network Against Violence Against Women, the Regional Training Program, Community Education, and the Male Advocacy Program on Women's Human Rights, while To'ia spoke about the TWCCC's newest development, the adoption of the one-stop shop crisis-response model, the first-ever in the Pacific. The workshop was attended by activists from Nepal, Cambodia, Malaysia, India, Thailand, Pakistan. "There were many requests in particular, for the Male Advocacy Program," said Lili Vuiyasawa. "Participants were quite impressed with the work of FWCC and their programs, and expressed keen interest in including countries in the Asian Region under the Male Advocacy Program." They also attended a number of other side events. "Attending the APFF was a great experience for us and allowed us to build our capacity in understanding gender-based violence and development justice," said Momoyalewa.



Vandhna, Lili, Selena and Lesila.



ON THE COVER

An iKiribati woman looks for shellfish on the shore at Bairiki in Kiribati.

Photo courtesy Lorrie Graham/AusAID

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

Five women lose their lives in Kiribati

Five women in Kiribati have been violently killed in the past six months, all allegedly by their partner or former partner.

The killings come as the government attempts to push through the Maneaba ni Maungatabu (House of Assembly), a Family Peace Bill which it hopes will address the shocking levels of intimate partner violence in the Polynesian country.

The Minister for Women in Kiribati Tangariki Reete says people had misunderstood the intention of the bill which was not biased against men, but aimed to address the problem of violence but also aimed as far as possible to keep the family unit together.

“What I heard from people - the bill is something that has made a barrier between a wife and husband and we are working on that, at the ministry, to do an awareness programme to tell people that the bill does not support women only. The bill is for men and the family as a whole.”

Tangariki Reete says the ministry is doing all it can to stop domestic violence but it cannot be blamed for the actions of individuals.

In June this year the Kiribati Family Health Association (KFHA) requested the assistance of the Fiji Women's Crisis Centre to train its board members and staff as it works towards developing a three-year strategic plan for essential crisis services.

KFHA is a registered NGO and an accredited member of International Planned Parenthood Federation, and are supported by Department of Foreign Affairs Australia to establish essential crisis services for victims/survivors of sexual and gender based violence in Kiribati.

A survey using World Health Organisation methodology published in 2012, found that Kiribati had the highest prevalence of physical and sexual partner violence in the Pacific. The data indicate that more than two in three (68 per cent) ever-partnered women aged 15 to 49 reported experiencing physical or sexual



Kiribati lawyers learn about FWCC services

Three Kiribati lawyers for the Public Solicitor's Office in Tarawa visited the Fiji Women's Crisis Centre in July. Teetua Tewera, Fuatino Noa, Arian Vaitafusi, *pictured*, aimed to learn more about the services provided by FWCC. This included:

- The rights-based approach to developing advocacy strategies on eliminating violence against women;
- The internal procedures for dealing with clients who are DV survivors in terms of counselling and legal assistance;
- Lobbying for law reform;
- The Domestic Violence Decree and the application of the Domestic Violence Restraining Order;
- The Crimes Decree on sexual offences;
- The Bail Act on police powers to bail suspects and some of its challenges, and; Access to justice issues experienced by clients and counsellors of the FWCC.

violence or both by an intimate partner.

Thirty participants were taken through a five-day training by FWCC staff, focusing on violence against women and how to respond to survivors with setting up essential crisis services within the human rights framework. They also examined some of the challenges inherent in setting up a crisis counselling service.

In January this year, Kiribati police arrested two men in connection with the violent deaths of two women in the capital Tarawa.

The assistant head of the crime branch at the police headquarters, Raoranti Randolph, says the first case involved a 30-year-old pregnant mother who was suspected to have been beaten to death.

The police report says her husband took her to hospital but she had already died.

In the second incident, a 40-year-old woman died from knife wounds after she was

stabbed in front of her relatives. Police arrested her husband.

A few months later in June, two women died also from knife wounds.

In the first incident, it is alleged that a woman was stabbed to death in front of a group of people in Teoraereke.

A reporter with the Kiribati Independent, who happened to be at the hospital in Tarawa, says the woman died instantly. The suspected killer was believed to be her husband who was taken into police custody.

A week later a woman on Kiritimati Island died from stab wounds after she was allegedly attacked by her mentally ill husband.

According to the Ministry of Women it is now looking at how to promote awareness on domestic violence, and to consider assistance for the children of the four women.

Proposed Kiribati DV law clears first hurdle

The Kiribati parliament, *pictured below*, had the first reading of the Family Peace Bill in December last year.

The bill aims at eliminating violence against women and children by setting up a ministry of women and youth.

Maere Tekanene, *pictured right*, a government minister and member of the Pacific Women's Network Against Violence Against Women, says it was pleasing to hear positive contributions from fellow MPs.

Tekanene, who has been a strong advocate and supporter of the bill, told parliament that it was not easy to raise domestic violence as a public or political matter in Kiribati because

some male politicians may themselves have been perpetrators. The Kiribati Independent says former president Teburoro Tito supports the bill but asked government to also focus on youth-related problems.

Meanwhile, the Kiribati labour minister, Boutu Bateriki, resigned a week after he was in court on charges of beating his former wife.

The move comes after calls by two MPs for him to step down. One MP, Patrick Tatireta, says government has supported the family bill to protect children and women from abusive men and the behaviour of the minister undermines the confidence of people in the government.

SOURCE: Islands Business



Pollard urges Solomon government to support women's development

Dr Alice Pollard, a prominent women's leader in the Solomon Islands, has called on both provincial and national governments to contribute to women's development because this has proven to grow the economy.

Speaking at the launch of the Gizo women's savings club in June in the Western province, Dr Pollard, a specialist in gender and development, said leaders should understand that women are the undisputable contributors to this economy, yet are victims of inequality and unfair treatment. "Women contributed millions of dollars in unaccounted amount to the economy in what they produce year in year out from their gardens and what they produce. But yet the government overlooks this. "If only more money is given to women with the provision of better equipment, facilities to boost their activities, they will sure make huge impact to this country's economy," Dr Pollard said. She said this country relies on subsistence economy, which accounts for two-thirds of Solomon Islands' growth and yet the government ignored the contributions of women. Dr Pollard said more cash should be injected to women in this

country because by far, millions of unaccounted value through women's subsistence contribution has driven this country this far. She said the government should not waste money on projects that did not contribute to the country's economy. She said initiative of women like the savings clubs have played a significant role in the livelihood of women than projects handed out to individuals. Dr Pollard urges leaders to think deep and pour money on women's projects. "How much more will they contribute if the government and leaders prioritize them with support that make impact that improves, empowers and make positive changes within communities," Dr Pollard added. She stressed that if women can come up with a savings club and later on take out small loans to invest in their livelihood projects or income generating activities, it implies how important women's roles are in the family, communities and the nation. Meanwhile Dr Pollard challenges women to save the little they have and treat it as their baby because one day when the baby matures, she will care for them later in life and the years to come.

SOURCE: Solomon Star



Hakena: Development justice must lead new agenda

Governments in the Asia-Pacific region need to commit to development justice as the framework for the global development agenda and there needs to be an equitable redistribution of wealth, power and resources.

Helen Hakena, *pictured above*, made the statement while presenting at the 2014 UNESCAP Asia Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development on 19 March.

Hakena, the executive director of Leitana Women's Development Agency, Bougainville, is a long-time member for the Pacific Women's Network Against Violence Against Women and is the network's representative to the Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development.

Development decisions, she said must include women and those of the most marginalised, and efforts must be reflected in targets and indicators.

Hakena, shared her own life experiences from back home.

"Bougainville suffered a 20-year war when one of the world's largest open pit mines dominated our land, destroying not only our lands and environment but our communities. The environmental devastation of our river and our land has been well documented."

"Less than one per cent of the profits of the mine went to the local communities. This unfair, unsustainable and exploitative environment ignited a war. The Bougainville Revolutionary

Army burnt my home in Ieta Village. I was seven months pregnant and suffering from malaria," she said.

"I was petrified and gave birth to my fourth son prematurely on a bare floor with no medical help. I witnessed other mothers suffer, dying in childbirth with no medical attention before my eyes. Women were raped as a weapon of war. This conflict led to militarised communities, a whole generation of children missed out on going to school – they have no chance of getting 'the future they want' with no education and no chance to learn community knowledge or skills."

"And what do you think it leads to? It leads to the world's highest rates of violence against women. Last year, a UN study found that 62 per cent of men admitted to raping women in Bougainville. I ask each of you, what kind of development agenda allows for this to happen?"

To allow for genuine, equitable, sustainable and just development, Hakena said its purpose must shift to delivering development justice, aiming to provide every human being with an equal right to development.

"To realise this we cannot allow the interests of some, of the powerful, of the rich to impose on others and take their natural resources, their lands and livelihoods from them. Development justice is an approach that doesn't focus on economic growth but on fair distribution of

resources and wealth, on environmental justice, economic justice, social and gender justice and accountability to the peoples."

She said there must be mechanisms that make the powerful accountable.

"How can we make the company that polluted our land and ignited conflict accountable when they are a foreign company with changing parent companies, different countries and with millions of dollars for lawyers? How can we make governments accountable for the human rights commitments they have made? How can we make men accountable when they commit violence either at home or in war? How can we make the countries responsible for climate change accountable to the communities from the Cateret Islands whose island has already disappeared? Those people are now living in Bougainville in a completely different environment without their traditional ways of survival. Accountability to the people is what is really missing from our current framework."

Hakena has called on regional governments to commit to a new model of development – a model of development justice where women are central to decision making around any development matters, locally, nationally, regionally and internationally.

SOURCE: UN Sustainable Development

Bougainville police urge reporting of rape

The Bougainville police are calling on residents to report cases of rape and sexual offences rather than try to mediate cases within the village.

The North Bougainville police commander, Spencer Aili, said 13 sexual offences were reported between May and June this year, but there are many more cases not reported.

He says three out of 13 suspects have been formally arrested and charged.

Inspector Aili says alcohol and drugs are the main cause behind the offences, but he is also concerned about the factors causing people to address the problem within the village.

"So any such offences committed in the

community, they can report it quickly to the police station so that we can attend to it, rather than solving this matter back in the community by way of mediation."

Inspector Spencer Aili says awareness programmes are needed so people understand the seriousness of sexual crimes.

SOURCE: RNZI

What's happening across the Pacific

International Women's Day around the Pacific

PAPUA NEW GUINEA

To mark International Women's Day in Papua New Guinea, the Women in Public Service Project at the Wilson Centre launched a two-day series of workshops as part of the Papua New Guinea Women's Forum, co-hosted by the US Embassy in Port Moresby and the Government of PNG's Department of Community Development. The program focused on the transformative power of women's leadership and provided attendees with tools to advance their careers in public service. The event brought together approximately 200 women, including NGO leaders, university students, PNG government representatives, members of the diplomatic corps, and international NGO representatives. The forum was the result of ongoing efforts between local NGOs and the PNG government to spur increased representation of women in the public sector.

SOLOMON ISLANDS

In the Solomon Islands, the Australian High Commission hosted a breakfast to celebrate International Women's Day. High Commissioner to Solomon Islands Andrew Byrne said he was honoured to host such an important event. As part of the celebrations, Byrne awarded the inaugural Australian High Commissioner's International Women's Day Award to the Correctional Services Women's Network, which will become an annual feature of International Women's Day in Solomon Islands. It recognises pioneering Solomon Islands women who show leadership, innovation and courage, and whose achievements have opened the way for others.

"International Women's Day reminds people of the importance of gender equity and celebrates the significant economic, political and social achievements of women in Solomon Islands and around the world. I've met many impressive Solomon Islands women since I arrived here. We in the Australian High Commission want to acknowledge and support women in leadership roles," said Byrne.

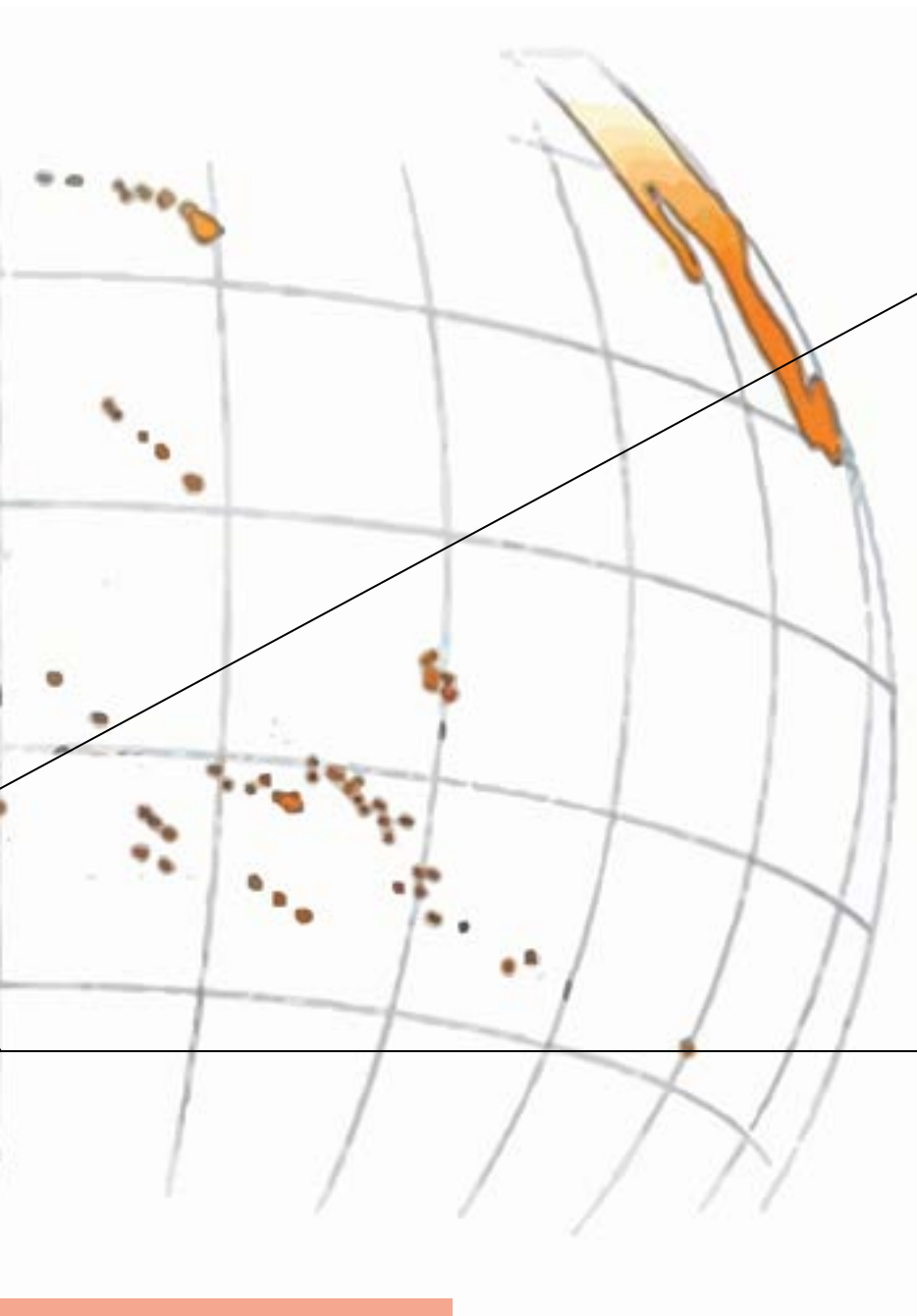
VANUATU

The Vanuatu Women's Centre marked International Women's Day by releasing a report on the high rate of women being abused on a daily basis in Vanuatu. Vola Kelekele of the Centre for Women's Rights, supported by QBE Insurance Vanuatu in Port Vila, where she shared the staggering statistics.

"Sixty per cent, or three out of every five women, are beaten or abused each day. There is also 44 per cent, or two out of every five women in Vanuatu, who are sexually abused by their partners, scarring them for life. Then, there is 68 per cent, of women who are sexually maltreated in a variety of serious ways by husbands or partners, with 63 per cent of women were maltreated, while the reported 90 per cent of every case listed 90 per cent were of a very serious nature and only



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.



TONGA

To mark International Women's Day in Tonga, the Tonga Women and Children's Crisis Centre community education trainer Lesila and male advocate 'Usaia took part in a radio program speaking on issues affecting women, the services provided by the TWCCC as well as the significance of IWD and its theme.

FIJI

The Fiji Women's Crisis Centre and all its four branches across the country held separate events to mark International Women's Day on February 8. In Suva, the FWCC held its Reclaim the Night march along the capital's streets where hundreds of people from all walks of life turned up. FWCC Coordinator Shamima Ali was impressed with the numbers that turned up to support the event, a year after the FWCC had its permit to march to mark IWD withdrawn at the last minute due to political concerns. A Reclaim the Night Vigil was held in Nadi. In Labasa and Rakiraki there were events held to create awareness on sexual violence including oratory from students in Rakiraki. And in Ba, there was a road show to provide advice and also create awareness on sexual violence.

reminding everyone of the harsh realities of
 VWC was a chief guest at a discussion hosted
 ng statistics of cases dealt with by the centre

d by husbands or partners who also maltreat
 ime of hard and difficult living," said Kelekele.
 who were sexually violated by husbands or
 in the country who have been emotionally
 effects lasting a lifetime. In rural areas alone,
 figure is 50 per cent in the urban sectors. Out
 10 per cent of a minor nature."

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



Melkie Anton (PNG), Param Reddy (Fiji), Usaia Hemaloto (Tonga) and Clement Dari (Fiji).

Men remade and ready to take on advocacy against violence

Life changing is how participants have described the Fiji Women's Crisis Centre's Regional Male Advocacy Program.

Targeted at making men part of the solution to the problem of violence against women and girls instead of relegating them to the sidelines as only the main perpetrators, the program is the brainchild of Shamima Ali, coordinator of FWCC and her team at the centre.

Initiated back in 2000, the program has recruited men from around the Pacific region who deal issues relating to violence against women and children, training them to speak the language of women's human rights.

In February this year, male advocates from Tonga, Nauru, PNG, Vanuatu and Fiji gathered in Nadi for the fourth stage of the Male Advocacy training facilitated by masculinities expert Stephen Fisher from Australia.

"Because of this training I can proudly say that I am ready and I think I speak on behalf of my Pacific brothers that we are ready to go

back home and implement what we have learnt in trying to effect change in our communities and in our line of work," said Melkie Anton, a male advocate from PNG.

More than 90 per cent of perpetrators of violence against women and girls are men. And because of this, according to Ali, the Male Advocacy program was created.

"Men are always seen as the villain in instances of violence against women and rightly so as research has found that majority of perpetrators are indeed men. But what we have done is we have approached this problem from a different perspective," said Ali.

"We have attempted to reverse the situation where instead of always ridiculing men and shutting them out, we're training them and teaching them about women's human rights and about gender equality and in doing so, there was always the hope that these men would influence other men to treat women better and respect women and I can say that it is working to a great

extent." Funded by Australian Aid, the Male Advocacy program is fast becoming popular in the region.

"I definitely feel that the FWCC is doing a really, really good job and I think it should conduct more trainings like this. I grew up in a very male dominated society where even in my family, only the males got the best of everything, not just because they were the eldest but even if the girl is older, the father would pass down the land or the house to the boy although he was younger.

"So I am glad that through this training, I came to realise that men and women are equal in everything and they (women) too should get land and things like that, not just men and that's one aspect I will be championing when I go back home," says Saen Fana'i of Vanuatu.

The same group of male advocates participated in a two-day Perpetrator Program seminar facilitated by No To Violence acting CEO Rodney Vlaiss from Melbourne, Australia.

Fourth stage for male advocacy

The Fiji Women's Crisis Centre's convened the fourth stage of its flagship male advocacy training programme for 27 men from around the Pacific region in February.

The men gathered at the Hexagon Hotel in Nadi from 10-18 February.

The male advocates from Tonga, Fiji, PNG, Nauru and Vanuatu were specially recruited by the FWCC with the hope of them returning to make an impact in their communities and in their spheres of work.

FWCC Coordinator Shamima Ali says the Male Advocacy Training Program, is aimed at encouraging men to be part of the solution to violence against women and girls and most participants have been involved with the program since it started in 2002.

One such participant from Fiji is Clement Dari of the Anglican Church's Simeon Ministry, who says the training has changed him and many others in more ways than one.

"You know, I know most of these participants, especially the ones from Fiji because I've worked

with most of them and let me tell you, these were some stubborn men.

"Men who were never prone to change, men who believed in only their way. And I was just like them.

"But if you talk to them today, you will notice a huge change in the way they look at things, not just issues about women but about life as a whole and I believe that this program has been a blessing for us all because if it wasn't for the Male Advocacy training, we wouldn't be where we are today in as far as our ways are concerned in treating women," says Mr Dari.

Sharing the same sentiments is Daniele Lawakeli, a police officer in Suva, who says he is able to incorporate what he has learnt into his work as well as at home.

"Before when we had cases of domestic violence, I never really cared. I just wanted to sort the issue out as quickly as possible and most times it's reconciliation.

"But now, what I do, through what I have learnt is that no woman should be subjected to

any form of violence so when a case comes in and we have verified the facts, the perpetrator is taken in and dealt with on the spot."

Funded by Australian Aid, the Male Advocacy training program was facilitated by masculinities expert Stephen Fisher of Australia.

"It's really great to see that these men have taken what they've learnt and are actually using it in both their personal and professional lives as police officers or as health workers or even as religious workers because at the end of the day, that's what counts.

"What we're doing may be seen as a drop in the ocean but even a small stone makes ripples and that's what I believe this program is doing.

"If we can make a small difference somewhere among these Pacific countries that we have invited participants from, then I am happy. But even then, our work to educate men on the effects of violence against women and girls and what they can do to help will go on," said FWCC Coordinator Shamima Ali.

Learning from the Pacific on male advocacy

By **RODNEY VLAIS**
Acting CEO
No To Violence, Melbourne, Australia

In February this year, No To Violence, an Australian organisation that works to reduce family violence among perpetrators, was asked to provide a two-day workshop in Nadi, Fiji, on Australian experiences with domestic violence perpetrator programs.

Organised by the Fiji Women's Crisis Centre (FWCC), in close partnership with the Vanuatu Women's Centre and the Tonga Women's and Children's Crisis Centre, the workshop was commissioned in the context of increasing pressure from some donors and other sources to run perpetrator programs in the region.

The three women's centres were concerned that this pressure could result in the premature development of programs that divert attention away from the deep cultural change projects occurring in the region, and result in 'under-done' programs and unsafe practice. Participants in the training consisted mostly of a network of approximately 30 male advocates from Fiji, Tonga, PNG, Vanuatu and Nauru. They had just completed stage four of a training program designed to support their participation as advocates for women's human rights within their communities and spheres of influence.

These advocates were drawn from national police services, corrections departments and a range of other civil service and community organisations. The training was also attended by a few other regional stakeholders.

I knew before embarking on the trip that I would learn at least as much as I would contribute. However, I wasn't expecting quite the extent to which this occurred. Returning from the trip, I am left pondering the things that make it difficult to conduct a male advocates program working towards women's human rights in Australia. This program is like nothing I'm aware of here. The male advocates program is accountable to the three women's services at all stages, and is run through the FWCC drawing largely on Australian aid funding. The accountability of the program to these women's services appears rock-solid and sincere. The women's services have the ultimate say on whether each male advocate is ready to do work in their community, and several have been dismissed from the program due to their lack of progression, or in some instances use of violence against women.

The advocates participate in a four stage training program totalling several weeks of training overall.

Stage one is run by the FWCC focusing on fundamental concepts of gender-based violence, women's human rights, and the central role of male entitlement and privilege in preventing women from exercising their rights. Violence against women, including family and domestic violence, is positioned strongly as a crime that results from men using coercive

control to maintain the privileges afforded to them through the virtue of being male. This first stage focuses on a range of issues required to assist participants to understand and respond to men's violence against women, given that lifetime prevalence rates of women experiencing violence in Pacific island nations is generally between 60 and 70 per cent, approximately twice the worldwide average.

This first stage of training, which in itself runs for approximately one month, is open to both women and men, with hundreds of women and dozens of men having participated through the various rounds of the training since 2002. Stages two to four of the training program, developed and delivered over the past 10 years by Victorian violence against women prevention specialist Stephen Fisher, focus specifically on training men through



Acting chief executive of the "No to Violence, Family Violence Prevention Association and Men's Referral Service, Rodney Vlais during the two-day seminar.

the male advocacy program. Run in blocks separated by many months or a year or more, these stages assist men to identify the ways in which male privilege and entitlement are deeply embedded in a range of cultural and structural contexts.

The advocates are taught in detail about the range of tactics that men use to coercively control women, and the community myths and excuses that absolve men of responsibility for their use of violence and control. Throughout this process, the advocates are encouraged to address the ways in which they use their own male privilege, coercively control women, or otherwise deny women the opportunity to exercise their human rights. While not a perpetrator program, for many men this is an important journey of self-discovery, and is essential for them to do the 'out there' work of cultural change in their communities and institutions.

The advocates use the training to practice ways in which they can challenge patriarchal beliefs within their networks of influence. This includes making presentations, raising the issues at local men's kava circles (kava is the local brew in Fiji), talking on community radio, influencing local churches, and working on attitudes within police and other government

services. The advocates practice how to talk about violence against women as a crime, the nature of coercive control, and the ways in which male privilege denies women's human rights.

Distinctively, the training does not focus on appealing to the advocates', or men's in general, self-interests or what they gain to benefit from advocating for women's rights.

Dominant models of masculinity, resulting from cultural influences and distortions, are definitely covered in the training, and indeed play a central role. However, there is no emphasis on how men can benefit from giving up their privilege. The focus remains consistently on the experiences of women and children, and the need for men to give up coercive control tactics, and to reflect on the ways they dehumanise, belittle and objectify women, so that women have space to exercise their fundamental human rights.

The depth of training and self-reflection was apparent in the quality of participation the advocates demonstrated in the two-day NTV workshop on opportunities and risks in perpetrator program work. Participants had little difficulty understanding some of the concerns and risks of introducing these programs prematurely in cultural contexts that are so condoning of men's use of coercive control. Participants engaged in rich debate about the opportunities and risks of using strengths-based approaches (including cultural strength work), the complexities in integrating perpetrator program work within a currently under-developed criminal justice system context for violence against women, the local barriers towards providing a central role for partner contact, and the intense work required for men to take responsibility for their coercive controlling tactics. All this from men who are not family violence workers, and who have no experience running perpetrator programs.

Returning home from Fiji, I wondered about the barriers that prevent a program like this from operating in Australia. What makes it 'too' difficult here to recruit, or find, men who are prepared to do this depth of training, over such a period of time? (Many of the current advocates participated in the first stage of training at least 2-3 years ago, some as long as 12.) To focus on men's use of privilege and entitlement to violate women's human rights as the central organising principle of the prevention work? To develop programs in ways where male advocates are accountable to women's services? I do not want to romanticise the male advocates program nor dismiss the very valuable prevention work being done in Australia. Nor pretend that a program such as this can simply be adapted to Australia, when there are such marked cultural differences (at least with respect to European, colonising cultures). But it still leads me to reflect on what we can learn from this approach.

40 graduate from FWCC's 31st RTP

Participants from 10 Pacific countries graduated from the 31st installment of the Fiji Women's Crisis Centre's Regional Training Program on 19 June 2014 in Suva.

The 40 participants came from Fiji, Nauru, Kiribati, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Republic of Marshall Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga and Vanuatu. Participants went through an extensive four-week training on how to deal with issues relating to violence against women in their line of work as well as in their communities and in their individual homes.

They were taken through a wide range of topics from domestic violence to sexual harassment and child abuse to human rights laws as well as counsellor training, advocacy and lobbying to name a few.

The ultimate aim is to eliminate all forms of violence against women and children in the Pacific region, which is why all participants were strategically chosen from institutions and organisations that are at the forefront of dealing with such issues.

Fijian police officer Ulaiasi Tamanisau commended the work of the FWCC, saying he and his colleagues are now well equipped to deal with cases of domestic violence.

"The four weeks have been very helpful. It has broadened our knowledge on domestic violence and even the many different laws and how to use the different laws when we come across such cases.

"We will definitely return with more than what we expected and during our weekly briefing, I intend to share this knowledge with my fellow officers and even my seniors so we can use it in our daily work in trying to uphold the law and in this way we are contributing towards eliminating violence against women."

He thanked the FWCC and Australian Aid for being able to attend the workshop.

Sharing the same views was Leasuasu Young from the Samoa Victim Support who said he could not wait to go back home and impart the knowledge he has gained from the RTP.

"Back home, the rate of violence against women is said to be 46 per cent when compared to other countries, which is relatively low. But I strongly believe it can be lower and I intend to contribute to that effort by using all the skills and knowledge I gained from this one-month training. It's exciting and I can't wait to share this with everyone back at work," he said.

The RTP started in 1995 and since then has grown significantly, becoming renowned for its international standards, supported by the many success stories from communities and countries where participants have returned to make a positive impact using the knowledge they've gained from the program.



Kiribati police officer Merika Kannangaki receives his certificate from Nilesh Gounder.

Take advantage of FWCC expertise, RTP graduates told

The Fiji Women's Crisis Centre is one of the Government of Australia's key partners in efforts to address violence against women in the Pacific Region, says Nilesh Gounder, Program Manager for UN Partnerships and Gender at the Australian High Commission, pictured above right.

He made the comment while addressing 40 participants from 10 Pacific Island countries who graduated from the FWCC's 31st Regional Training Program (RTP) in June.

For four weeks, participants were trained on various topics relating to violence against women including domestic violence, sexual harassment and child abuse, Human Rights Laws as well as Counsellor Training, Advocacy and Lobbying to name a few.

In presenting their certificates, Mr Gounder encouraged the participants to continue learning as much as they can about violence against women and ways to prevent or deal with it, adding that they must make an effort to keep in touch with the FWCC.

"For those graduating, I commend you for your commitment to tackling one of the biggest issues in Pacific communities. The challenge of what you seek to do is daunting but we must continue to advance one step at a time," Mr Gounder said.



Participants at the 31st Regional Training Program.

"This training should not be the end to your learning on eliminating violence against women. We encourage you to continue to draw on FWCC's expertise in this area and other training and mentoring opportunities available."

He also reminded participants that violence against women is an abuse of fundamental human rights and that there was evidence to suggest that VAW negates every area of development activity which is why FWCC's work in the region is critical to the Australian Government's long-term plan to eliminate violence against women in the Pacific.

"The Australian Government is supporting an ambitious 10-year AU\$320 million program entitled Pacific Women Shaping Development (Pacific Women). This program will improve the political, economic and social opportunities of women in 14 Pacific countries.

"Between 2012 and 2022 Pacific Women will work with Pacific governments, civil society organisations, the private sector and multilateral, regional and United Nations agencies to increase women's representation through leadership at all levels of decision making, expand women's economic

opportunities and reduce violence against women and increase access to support services and to justice for survivors of violence."

The FWCC's training model is recognised regionally and globally as a best-practice example of working to eliminate violence against women.

The Regional Training Program was founded by the FWCC in 1995.

Killing of girl a tragedy, says UN Women

UN Women Pacific has described the alleged killing of a daughter by her father in the Solomon Islands as a “tragic example of violence against women and girls”.

The girl died at Buala Hospital earlier this year from knife wounds to her chest after she was allegedly stabbed by her father following an argument.

UN Women Pacific said the story of the girl’s death suggest she was murdered because she refused a forced marriage.

“Girls who are forced to marry someone who is not of their choosing, and who are married young, has a higher risk of living with domestic violence which can lead to negative health and mental health impacts that can last a lifetime.”

The organisation highlighted that violence against women is a form of discrimination against women and girls.

“At the root of the problem is the belief that women and girls are not fully equal human beings with the same rights as men and boys.

“For many years, violence against women that happened in homes, families and in private was considered a personal or family problem and others looked away.”

UN Women said violence against women keeps half of the population (female population) from contributing fully to the development of their communities and country, and prevents entire countries from growing economically.

Isabel women activists also condemned the killing.

Meanwhile, the father was found dead in what police say was a case of suicide.

His body was found hanging from a tree in the highlands of Isabel.

Source: Solomon Star

Teen girls given away in compensation

Police in the Jiwaka Province of PNG were alerted in January to the giving away of two young girls as part of compensation payments.

And a human rights lawyer has condemned the decision by Menginpol villagers to hand over the girls, aged 13 and 15, to people at neighbouring Kui, as compensation over the death of a teacher.

The two groups live together in the Kol local level government in Jimi district, Jiwaka. Pigs and 9000 kina were paid as part of the same compensation package.

Assistant police commissioner in the highlands region, Teddy Tei, said he had instructed police in Banz, Jiwaka, to investigate the matter.

Mt Hagen-based human rights lawyer Danny Gonol said the two girls’ dignity and rights should have been protected.

He called on Jiwaka police to investigate the matter and arrest those who made the decision to give away the two girls as compensation. “This is like a human trade and this practice must stop now. It’s a new thing in the province and the rest of the highlands region,” he said. He said police must immediately step in and return the two girls to their parents.

Meanwhile, the father of one of the two girls has condemned the act, saying those who made the decision must be punished. Joseph Molmb, the father of the 13-year-old, said his daughter had already spent nine months with the tribe she was given away to.

He said she was deeply traumatised and needed medical treatment when he managed to retrieve her from the tribe last November.

Molmb clarified that the actual compensation payment was done in March last year. He said his daughter and the other girl, aged 15, were given away to the Kui tribe in Kol. Molmb told The National in Mt Hagen he was away in Port Moresby when the decision to give his daughter away was made by the “peace and good order committee” in Meginpol village, Jimi district, Jiwaka.

He has called on Jiwaka police to arrest the members of the committee who made that decision to give away his daughter without his consent. The daughter and the 15-year-old were given away as compensation over the death of a teacher from neighbouring Kol village.

“They just went ahead and gave away the girls against their will,” he said. He said the committee members had spoiled the lives of the two under-age girls. “They went through some painful experiences and it will take some time for the girls to recover,” he said. Molmb said the man who killed the teacher in January last year was from Kol and known to police but no attempts had been made to arrest him.

SOURCE: The National/Port Moresby



Calls for stricter penalties on mothers rejected

Merilyn Tahy of Vanuatu Women’s Centre at a strategic planning meeting with World Vision at the Christian Care Centre in Solomon Islands. She is pictured with Vandhna Narayan, left, Farzana Gulista and Sister Doreen Awaiasi.

The Vanuatu Women’s Centre is demanding authorities and leaders to try and understand why women are killing their new-born babies before imposing harsh penalties.

This is in response to a call from a Tanna chief to up the penalties on women killing their new-borns, saying it is a growing issue that needs to be addressed.

In response, the Vanuatu Women’s Centre Coordinator Merilyn Tahy said the killing of new-born babies isn’t as rife as it is said to be.

“First of all, the way they’re talking about this issue is as if it is happening on a daily or weekly basis. The fact is it is happening but it is not a regular occurrence and I think instead of jumping for stricter penalties, what we need to do is sit down with these mothers and talk with them and find out why they’re doing this. Harsher penalties is not the answer,” said Ms Tahy.

Tahy says such calls by respected leaders in the community amount to nothing less than victim blaming.

“I have spoken to some of these women and for most, they have been abandoned by their partners or they have been impregnated by a close relative and so on so all these issues add up and they reach the stage where they are helpless and for them the only choice they have is to get rid of the baby for fear of retribution,” she adds.

The Vanuatu Council of Women have also rejected the call for stricter penalties on mothers who kill their new born babies. The council’s president, Blandine Boulekone, says women are being unfairly blamed and ostracized by the community.

“They find themselves alone. We don’t have any office to help them, we don’t have anything. Welfare is not very well developed. When you have the full community, and the backing of the people it is okay, they could manage.” Blandine Boulekone says an attitude change is needed in Vanuatu to take the blame off women. - SOURCE: RNZI



Sign language

Posters highlighting the plight of West Papua were displayed on the fence of the Fiji Women's Crisis Centre's headquarters in Suva from 18 June this year to coincide with the arrival of Indonesian President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono in Fiji for the second Pacific Islands Development Forum (PIDF) summit. The Indonesia Embassy is located in Ra Marama House opposite the FWCC. The next day the Fiji Police Force asked if the posters could be removed citing diplomatic relations between Fiji and Indonesia. However, the posters remained up a further five days until they were taken down at the end of the summit.

Beneath Paradise

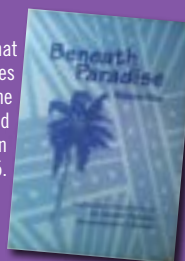
Pacific Women ...
Waves of struggle
Currents of oppression
Winds of change
Horizons of hope
Skies of optimism
Canoes of life
Sands of time

© 1993

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

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.

By TINA TAKASHY



Development justice

*Where wealth, land and power is redistributed more equally,
Where economies focus on local communities and serve the people, not profits.
Where our earth is valued and cared for above individual interests,
where militarisation, violence against women is recognised as major development issues.
Where human rights are our aim and where governments and corporations are accountable to us, the people, and
where the voice of women in my community counts more than a balance sheet.*

► Helen Hakena of Leitana Women's Development Agency, Bougainville, speaking at the 2014 UNESCAP Asia Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development on 19 March.



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FIJI WOMEN'S CRISIS CENTRE

APPLICATION FORM FOR THE REGIONAL TRAINING PROGRAMME

APPLICANT'S NAME:

HOME ADDRESS:

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EMAIL:

SKYPE:

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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