



HERE ARE THE WOMEN

COMMUNITY RADIO TIMES



Coconut football to Commentator

Femlink Pacific Rural Women and Media congratulates one of our member in our central division networks Adi Arieta Tinai Lewanavanu, 37years old, single and a mother of two. She is one of the oldest women's football striker in Fiji. She has been a blogger and freelancer for three years now. She is also part of the Nasinu District Council of Social Services looking after women and sports an initiative by the ABC International as commentator three years ago.

Adi Lewanavanua has been selected to attend the FIFA Women's World Cup Commentary training being held in Australia this month. Adi entered a competition where she wrote an essay called Coconut football, she was selected from the 500 entrants as one of the 17 participants and the only representative from the Pacific. She will be training in sports commentating in Brisbane as part of the

women in news and sports initiative with ABC International, she will also be mentored by none other than Australia's famous commentator Peter Longman.

An advise from Adi Lewanavanua,.

"Girls do not give up on your dreams. Stop building your future around others. You are unique in your own way out is looking into that mirror to find the real person you're looking for, is who you see"

This is a huge achievement and we are proud of you Adi Arieta Tinai Lewanavanua. Congratulations.



What's inside?

- Launching of our Levuka District
 - 3rd Pacific Feminist Forum
 - Parametric Insurance for our women
 - Women's Weather Watch
 - Rainbow Connections
- & more ...



EDITOR'S NOTE by Maria Nailevu, Programmes Manager



One of the most important pieces to femLINKpacific is our RWLCMN. They represent a diverse group of women from all over the country and play a pivotal part in the content we create by both being the voice and a portion of the audience. Our district, divisional and national consultations are a crucial piece to our strategic plan, where diverse rural women leaders gather to share their ideas, issues, and solutions with each other and the wider audience of Fiji. Post COVID in 2021, we held over 8 district convenings, 3 divisional convenings, 4 regional and 3 national consultations with an emphasis on women in leadership mentorship, feminist media trainings including our own internal organizational capacity building and strengthening.

In January, we farewelled our outgoing Executive Director, Ms Susan Naisara, whom for 4 years have been part of femLINKpacific's herstory. We acknowledge her feminist leadership, vision and her steady guidance to pull us through one of the worst humanitarian crises and global pandemic, COVID-19, that impacted each and everyone of us.

In this first half of the year, some of the breakthrough work we collectively achieved included the introduction of climate finance and parametric insurance awareness that included our feminist media community trip to Vanuatu, establishment of our TFGBV Working Group, Early Flash Flood warning capacity building with Rakiraki communities and diverse stakeholders, our National Convenings centred on social and economic empowerment with our space opening up to cooperative business models, financial literacy, savings and budgeting and a few succesful diverse rural women leaders sharing their own success stories and inspiring messages.

Our moving feminist media work resulted in the establishment of two more new diverse rural women networks launched in Saqani in February and Levuka in June to bring us to 15 networks.

We acknowledge some of our key feminist media positions being filled up- Programme Associates (Media & Broadcast), Central and West Conveners, Suva Broadcasters, Finance while we welcome our new Executive Director, Ms Fay Volatabu. We now have 17 staffs. We have a young driven diverse team who wears multiple hats of advocacy and that gives the team an added advantage towards our collective mentorship, accompaniment and overall feminist. media delivery.

As planned, in the next 6months, apart from Convenings, we will be prioritising feminist media community documentation to highlight the diverse contexts and lived experiences of the diverse rural women leader's network. Additionally, we aim to amplify their resilience within multiple facets of disasters, humanitarian crises and failing systems and structures with their continued efforts to move advocacy and influencing work despite the reality of lack of resources and support.

Farewell, Susan Naisara!



Susan Naisara joined as Executive Director for femLINKpacific in February, 2019 and departed on January, 2023. We acknowledge Susan's feminist and strategic leadership especially during the two years of the COVID-19 pandemic when Fiji and the world was on a stand-still and with many diverse and grassroots communities being the frontlines and facing it's multiple socio-economic impacts. Susan's strategic programming in resourcing and risk management, leading our navigation through the pandemic, enabled our feminist media team to quickly reprogram our way-of-working through convening hybrid grassroots diverse women virtual convenings, and ensuring that our team adapted to safely work-from-home, while at times distributing urgent pandemic assistance covering economic, food and health security measures . These included farming tools, seedlings, PPE equipment, food and school stationary vouchers.

She led the movement building of femLINK's substantial influencing work as a regional feminist media organisation and policy network and implementation of activities covering rural women movement building of Women's Weather Watch (WWW) and the

Rural Women Leaders Community Media Network (RWLCN), that has now expanded to 15 districts in Fiji. This also included the expansion of the Women's Human Security First (WHSF) feminist media and community documentation.

Some of her breakthrough work included her feminist coalition work on women in politics and women in leadership leading to last years Fiji General Election through the Fiji Women's Forum, the build-up to the Pacific Feminist Forum through the Fiji Feminist Forum and the strengthening of femLINKs DRR and gender justice and climate justice through the Pacific Resilience Partnership, Pacific Community, United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF), and recently the awarding of the Fiji Women's Resilience to Disasters (WRD), grant and earlier, the sustainability support from the Women's Fund of Fiji. Her leadership led to the implementation of regional, national, divisional and district diverse rural women convenings, and the supportive feminist media documentation. Some of her outstanding achievements, included the operationalising of the five hybrid intergenerational dialogues covering young women's access to education in Vanua Levu, during a multiple crisis. She has also led the convening expansion and helped secure resourcing into three (3) new rural women networks of Lami, Nadroga/Navosa and Levuka and took the feminist media platform into a new podcast series, supporting femTALK89fm.

We farewelled Susan in Jan, after almost four years with femLINKpacific, and thank her for her continued support and wish her all the best in her journey.

LAUNCHING OF LEVUKA NETWORK



A historical and special moment for femLINKpacific and the wider diverse rural women leaders network as we launch our 14th district which is Levuka on the 16th of May this year.

With more than 30 diverse rural women participants, we shared the femlink #herstory, our moving work in the area of Women, Peace and Security and the importance of feminist media in linking diverse women's voices into public and policy spaces.

Our mission is to be a strong and effective feminist media platform for the community, and being able to launch in Ovalau will give us the opportunity to amplify the diverse rural women's voices in and around the communities of the old capital who have been historically excluded.

Some of the issues that the women highlighted in the convening was the lack of medical equipments in Levuka hospital where women with their first and last born and other high-risk cases have to travel to Suva hospital which often places higher financial burden on women and families. Rape and violence cases still being addressed through the traditional "veisorosoi" process which involves perpetrators asking rape and victims for forgiveness and the lack of awareness that comes to the grassroots communities including women's health informations. A powerful and inspiring start for Levuka.

From this district level of discussion, the Levuka rural women will be exposed to more platforms where they will be able to represent their communities, especially in our national and our regional convening.

Our feminist media team was present to document the voices of the rural diverse women and the issues they face so that it be amplified on our social media and on our femTALK89FM. With all the discussions captured, it helps feed into the work that femLINK does in the area of public policy like budget submissions, Thursdays in black campaigns on Eliminating violence against women and empowers women to be leaders in their different communities.

We look forward to more future dialogue with diverse women moving many breakthrough work in Levuka, Ovalau. We acknowledge the Women's Fund Fiji for making all these feminist media expansion into Levuka possible.

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY



femTALK89fm, a feminist community radio station was one of the major initiatives by femLINKpacific in 2004. It started its journey in a suitcase. It is about women, for women, and is run by women in the communities with the purpose of addressing many gender inequalities that exist in communities.

The organization and the work femLINK has done has developed since its humble beginning. It has also expanded to include a radio station in Labasa, with women convenors and correspondents based in each division playing an important role in ensuring the lived realities of women are visible.

by Alumita Davuilevu

International Women's Day, on the 8th of March, is one of the events that is yearly marked too in the organisation. It is about celebrating women's success and addressing the challenges faced by women all around the world. The theme this year is DIGI ALL: INNOVATION AND TECHNOLOGY FOR GENDER EQUALITY. Its vision still rings true to this very day by the way the organisation provides the enabling space for women leaders to address their issues.

I started my journey too with femTALK89fm with the suitcase radio in 2019. Back then it was only a few hours of broadcast which is now extended to weekdays. I witnessed the influence of radio as an important tool for women in our communities. It has enabled them to access information that highlights development.

Women's Weather Watch is another platform to address many issues related to climate change and issues related to changes in weather pattern patterns. Provided the space to exchange ideas on preparedness. The community radio station has grown from just one suitcase to two permanent console panels in Suva and Labasa. We have also ventured into increasing our visibility online to cater to the challenges in our transmission.

I wish to also reflect on the theme for young women in my experience as a University Student when we talk about innovation. Courses available online, it has enabled someone like me in rural communities to have access to learning. Innovation and technology should be unbiased when it comes to gender. Anyone can use it.

It is an important tool for information and communication. It is important to utilize it for the common good of our society. Include women in the designing of the technology and innovation programs to properly address women's issues and consider the best solution for women.



by Tarusila Raniu

With femTALK89FM it has emerged as powerful tools in the fight for gender equality by amplifying women's voices that have been historically marginalised, provides a platform for their narratives to be heard thus promoting feminist values and building communities. These stations are at the forefront of social change through their inclusive and empowering content that continue to challenge societal norms and create a more equitable and just world for women.

Our station ensures rural women's voices are heard as well as those women living within the urban settings with the aim to correct the imbalance of women in media. With femTALK 89FM coverage run by femLINKPacific, it has reached a much broader audience, helping to balance the representation of women and young women in decision making, politics, and leadership at local and national levels.

The Suva station runs 24 hours a day, with hosted shows scheduled between 7am and 4pm every day. Shows are produced and hosted by young women representing a diversity of backgrounds, interests and communities.

During the week a listener can tune-in to hear the live program Morning Waves News collated by broadcasters from our local mainstream media, RNZ News and UN News based on our seven pillars with another follow up update in the afternoon along with Womens Weather Watch News from Fiji Meteorological Service and tide forecast.com.

We also have pre-recorded programs such as "Here Are the Women" interview audios from Women In Business, Women In Agriculture to name a few, together with Rainbow Connections Show open to and hosted by members of the LGBTIQ community as well as Look At My Abilities a program for, by, and about women with disabilities, even Day In A Life which depict a typical day experienced by a woman, plus Market Report this program reflects the market condition in terms of product or service offered by a woman market vendor and finally Production from Conveners from the District Convening done on a monthly basis, Divisional and also National Convening.

With many more from Events Coverage to International and International dates which has helped to bridge inter-generational gaps with young women learning new broadcast and recording technology and older women finding their voice, often after years of being told to be silent. Through the work and dedication of young women producer/broadcasters Fijian women's voices are heard loud and clear.

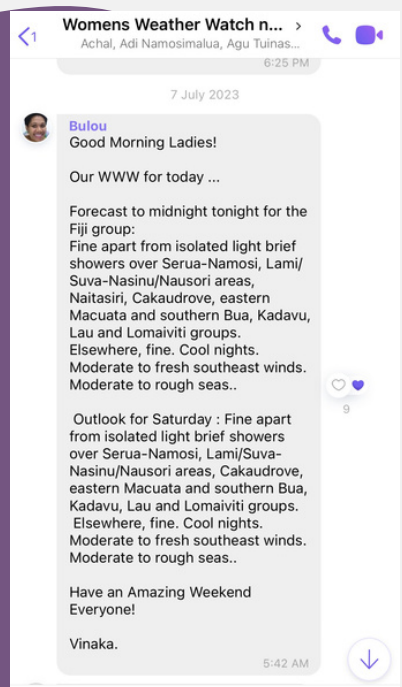


by Bulou Verebunuya

It is a women-led communications platform that provides early disaster warning, health and violence prevention messages, and other practical information through SMS. Information-communication strategy continues to provide a gender equality and women's human rights lens on the disaster management (preparedness, response and recovery) enabling women leaders from our network to enhance their engagement and influence in national disaster management processes is an important example to demonstrate the potential to collaborate, with the Fiji Meteorological Service has been able to ensure that weather information - from the early warning stage is made accessible to women in our network via the inter-operable system - from community radio to SMS, our WWW Viber updates weather updates on femLINKpacific's facebook page, as well as through our media initiatives such as the HEROWINS comic book series as well as the Community Radio Times.

Women's Weather Watch network has been a safe space for diverse women to share and communicate their development issues and at the same time making recommendations. It gives women leaders the power and confidence to talk with the Turaga-ni-Koro and heads of the family in their communities about the weather and to be prepared. It was also the constantly shining light on the continually overlooked area of the involvement and consultation of women before, during and after natural disasters despite being first responders in their communities - as they are often the last to leave the home following everyone else after they have prepared the house and taken what they may need or what they have on the way to evacuation centres. It continues to campaign for the inclusion of women in all aspects of disaster preparation, management and rehabilitation which requires equal participation of women.

From the past 6 months, diverse women leaders in our rural community media network in Fiji from coastal communities, river deltas and the agricultural sector continue to draw attention to the devastating impact of intensifying natural disasters and climate change on their economic situations and access to food and water. Women's Weather Watch also demonstrates the vital role that community media, in particular community radio plays to ensure information on weather patterns and forecasts are reaching communities away from main centres and because the women are often responsible for the management of their families, evacuation strategies must be gender inclusive, particularly to ensure the safety and protection of women, children, persons with disabilities, LGBTQ and the elderly.



Rakiraki Catchment Project with SPC & Fiji Met



by Maria Nailevu



We held our "Rakiraki Stakeholder Workshop- on Flood Early Warning" in Vatukaceveva village which hosts the Rakiraki catchment and in Rakiraki town for our near by town area stakeholders. The event was an outcome of the moving work of femLINK, Fiji Meteorological Service and now with Pacific Community, SPC, Suva in the area of disaster preparedness, DRR and climate change. There was a specific focus on diverse participants and stakeholders from Rakiraki community including the Provincial Office, education sector, advisory councillors, government agencies, traditional leaders and diverse rural women leaders.

The aim of the engagement is to;

- identify how communities are responding to flood warnings
- increase the of capacity of communities to respond to flooding through increased knowledge
- foster a shared understanding of different stakeholders requirements of flood early warning and ensuring that GEDSI is mainstream throughout the engagement process.

Additionally, the organising team experienced first hand the challenges some of the rural Rakiraki communities encounter when there is flooding and transportation challenge when community bridges and roads are affected rising water level.

Acknowledging all the organising partners including Australian Water Partnership, Rakiraki Convener, Fane Lomani for all the community coordination and mobilising and to all the diverse stakeholder that were part of the mapping and strategic discussions.

UNCDF Parametric Insurance initiative for rural women



by Alanieta Atama



The first merge convening for the West this year brought in diverse rural women from Lautoka, Nadi and Nadroga/Navosa, as we expanded our convening agenda to parametric insurance, a partnership recently forged with the UN Capital Development Fund (UNCDF).

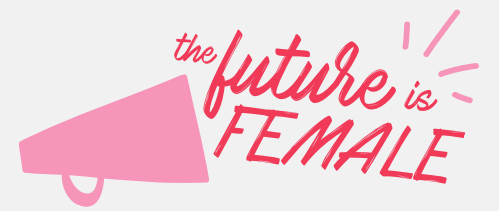
femLINKpacific sees the opportunity to engage in this climate finance work to compliment our moving work in disaster preparedness and community resilience. The information session was to educate the diverse rural women on the linkage between increasing climate impacts and how parametric insurance can be a form of financial protection to help secure them financially and assist in their recovery within disasters.

The Parametric insurance info sessions were being convened as well in Suva, Labasa, and the last location was in Port Vila, Vanuatu. We were supported with resources from Fiji Care & Van Care on insurance information they offer to collectively ensure that low income earners and grassroots communities are able to equally access climate and natural disaster funds.



We thank VanCare Insurance Limited for their attendance and useful information session to support climate finance access to our rural communities in Vanuatu and acknowledging UN Capital Development Fund for this collaboration work with femLINKpacific and seeing the value and significance of diverse rural women in accessing climate insurance and helping build stronger community resilience in the face of climate crises. Lastly a big Vinaka Vakalevu u to Vanuatu Young Women for Change and Ms Anne Pakoa for all her amazing support and mobilising on the ground.

HERE ARE THE WOMEN



by Esita Talei



In a candid conversation with femTALK89fm, two resilient women farmers from the Naleba Multiracial Women's Group, Dimakita Lena and Harash Wati, shed light on the pressing challenges they face due to climate change and the urgent need for support to sustain their livelihoods.

Naleba is located about 20 to 25 kilometers away from Labasa Town, Naleba is a community of cane farmers who were the backbone of their families for generations who, because of the change in weather pattern, have resorted to subsistence farming for their own consumption and livelihoods. Despite their unwavering determination, these women farmers are now grappling with the impacts of climate change and natural disasters that threaten their way of life.

Adi Makitalena, a member of the Naleba Multiracial Women's Group, revealed that she faced a significant challenge in 2021 when her husband passed away. In the aftermath, she had to shoulder the responsibility of transferring the lease and paying legal fees, amounting to nearly one thousand dollars. Additionally, unpredictable weather patterns, such as untimely heavy rains during the harvest season, have disrupted their farming practices.

Flooding has washed away essential manures, leading to decreased crop yields and impacting their daily sustenance. Harash Wati, another farmer, echoed similar sentiments, emphasizing that hurricane seasons often bring devastating floods that damage their cane farms and decrease crop tonnage. These challenges have made it increasingly difficult for them to maintain stable incomes and secure a consistent food supply for their families.

The adverse impacts of climate change have hit the women farmers of Naleba hard. Dimakita Lena explained that the changing weather patterns have resulted in decreased tonnage due to washed-out manure, directly affecting their income and the availability of food for their families. In response to these challenges, the women have taken matters into their own hands, organizing group trips to the sea to collect food, showcasing their resilience and resourcefulness.

Dimakita Lena elaborated on how the climate shift has affected the quality and variety of crops grown in the community. With fewer vegetables and crops thriving, the reliance on sea-based resources and cane harvesting for sustenance has increased. She also highlighted the issue of poor drainage systems causing waterlogging, which devastates their crops and negatively impacts overall agricultural output.

In the face of such challenges, the women farmers of Naleba are proactively adopting mitigating measures. They have changed their farming practices. They have now changed the season of their planting to adapt.

They have now proposed planting more resilient crops like pineapple and rice, better suited to cope with the changing weather patterns. Harash Wati emphasizes the importance of planting on higher ground to ensure some income even during challenging seasons.

They have called for support from the government and agricultural institutions. They are seeking subsidies for lease rent, fertilizers, and weedicides to alleviate their financial burdens. Additionally, they urge the Ministry of Agriculture and FSC (Fiji Sugar Corporation) to provide more grants to help clean and prepare their farms, ultimately leading to improved crop yields and enhanced livelihoods.

The women farmers of Naleba are examples of resilience in the face of climate change and natural disasters. As they adapt their farming practices and seek support from the government, it becomes evident that empowering women farmers is essential to ensure food security, sustainable agriculture, and economic growth for their community.

RAINBOW Connections

Amplifying Voices: Climate Crisis and the Impact on LGBTIQ+ Communities



by Cleo Petra

The impacts of the climate crisis on LGBTIQ+ members are multifaceted and exacerbate existing vulnerabilities and inequalities. "The climate crisis affects all of us each and every day". This was the sentiments shared by Mereseini Marama Lomu, a member DIVA for Equality during the Divisional Consultation for the Northern division in Labasa.

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer plus (LGBTIQ+) individuals face heightened risks and challenges, displacement, loss of livelihoods and encounter discrimination and prejudice when seeking shelter or support. Lomu added "For us the LGBT, the climate crisis has only made the matters worse. Because while disasters do not discriminate, relief and recovery practices do". The climate crisis exacerbates the social and economic disparities already experienced within the LGBTIQ+ community underscoring the urgent need for inclusive and intersectional approaches to climate resilience and adaptation. Inclusion not only ensures that the concerns of LGBTIQ+ members are addressed effectively, but it also promotes a more just and equitable response to the climate crisis in Fiji.

Lomu further says "being in the minority group, a female and a youth it is very difficult to access to financial resources and economic opportunities because of the fear of rejection that our voices, our needs and opinions would not be taken seriously.....Being a young LGBTIQ female, our voices are not heard we fear that we might get shut down the minute we open our mouth just because of our gender orientation". To better work with LGBTIQ+ members in the context of the climate crisis and decision-making processes, several recommendations can be implemented. Lomu recommends that "by providing appropriate technology, we can promote more sustainable development, and by reducing poverty, we can help individuals better adapt to the effects of climate change". Highlighting the significance of individual actions in addressing the climate crisis, Mereseini Lomu emphasized the importance of personal efforts such as conserving energy at home and practicing the principles of reduce, reuse, and recycle. She underscored that these actions play a crucial role in tackling the global challenge, emphasizing the role that each person can play in making a positive impact on the environment.



In the face of the climate crisis, inclusive decision-making processes are crucial to ensure that the needs and voices of LGBTIQ+ individuals are recognized and prioritized. Lomu stressed the urgent need for inclusivity, urging that "LGBTIQ+ women can be included in the leadership role in decision making of how to acquire climate justice and sustainable development". Her call for inclusive decision-making processes also means actively engaging and consulting LGBTIQ+ organizations and representatives, seeking their input and involving them in policy discussions and planning processes.

In conclusion, Mereseini Lomu's involvement as a young LGBTIQ woman in the climate movement brings attention to the unique obstacles confronted by marginalized communities. Her advocacy for inclusive decision-making and equal access to resources underscores the way forward towards a more sustainable and equitable future. It is evident that achieving meaningful progress in our global fight against the climate crisis necessitates embracing both unity and diversity. Empowering voices like Mereseini's is essential in driving significant transformations and shaping effective strategies to combat climate change on a global scale.



by Patrina Tawake

3RD PACIFIC FEMINIST FORUM



The third (3rd) Pacific Feminist Forum (PFF) was held at the Pearl Resort Hotel in Pacific Harbor from the 7-10 May. It is one of those times in the Pacific region where diverse women's human rights activists meet to raise issues that they have been working on in their respected communities all of the Pacific region.

With this year's theme, "Embracing the collective power of our movements" it brought together over one hundred (100) participants from across the Oceanic Pacific with the modality of having eleven (11) National Feminist Forum happening in various countries before this regional event. The 3rd Pacific Feminist Forum program emerged from the core issues that was raised in the eleven National Feminist Forum countries which includes, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, West Papua, Tuvalu, New Caledonia, Palau, Vanuatu, Cook Islands, Tonga, Solomon Islands and Fiji.

The three (3) days event had a total of seven (7) plenary sessions apart from the break-out discussions where groups were divided into 3 rooms with the outcome of having five (5) key action points, which is then compiled to the outcome statement that was then finalized on the third day of the event. The plenary topics includes Pacific Feminism and Feminist Leadership – Defining it for ourselves, celebrating the successes and learnings from the National Feminist Forums the challenges that they faced.

Other topics included bodies and our sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), The silent pandemic – gender based violence, Our Pacific Home and Identities – the struggles for decolonization and independence, Pacific Feminist Demands for Climate Justice and Spaces for Our Voice and Representation – Forthcoming regional and international opportunities including Women Deliver.

femLINKpacific was part of the 3rd PFF Working Group with its media team tasked to coordinate with other communications team in documenting diverse women's voices. Pacific Feminists recognized the need for the PFF to be a safe space in which diverse women can speak on urgent issues that they are facing in their home countries. "The Pacific Feminist Forum is very important as I get to hear my voice in the platform of women, not only just women but all diversity of women and you are not only talking about your own country but the whole of the rainbow family throughout the Pacific" said Joey Joleen Mataele, Tonga. Similar sentiments were shared by Ann Pakoa of Vanuatu on why the PFF is important to her. "The Pacific Feminist Forum is important because it's a space where women come together to raise issues as well as sharing stories of success and challenges from across the region", said Ann Pakoa.

For Angeline Chand of Pacific Disability Forum based in Suva, Fiji, thanked the organizers for inviting two women with disability to the 3rd PFF – Villany Remengesau and herself. "As woman with disability ensuring dis ability inclusion and with the three days event, issues on persons with disability have been highlighted by speakers and particularly on the outcome statement where specific recommendations on women and girls with disability are specified on the and how they can incorporate person with disability in the program back in their different country", said Ms. Chand.

The forum achieved a solid Outcome Statement which can be obtained from the Pacific Feminist Forum Website and was taken into the #WomenDeliver Conference in Melbourne, Australia and Kigali, Rwanda, Africa which we were represented by our Programmes Manager, Maria Nailevu.

NATIONAL CONVENING 2023



by Leila Gonewai

Since joining FemLINKPacific in April 2023 as a Suva Broadcaster, I was given the opportunity to attend the National Consultation in June that was at the Tanoa International Hotel in Nadi. With the gathering of 60 diverse women from the 14 Districts in Fiji, with the theme "Women Humanitarian Social and Economic Empowerment", the 2023 Rural Women's Leaders National Consultation took this opportunity to create a space for discussion, exchange of ideas, identify ways to empower women in their community and address issues, unique challenges and vulnerabilities that and so on. We had a diverse representation of individuals from Community Health Workers, Young Women, Advisory Councilors, Naitasiri Women in Dairy, Women in Disability, Soqosoqo Vakamarama, Sex Workers, LGBTQI activists, DCOSS, Market Vendors, Retired Civil Servants etc etc.

With a team of 11 of our staff from FemLINKPacific, who worked together to facilitate the National Consultation. This featured Ms. Fay Volatabu, the newly appointed Executive Director of FemLINKPacific, who gave an inspiring address to kick off the National Consultation. Maria Nailevu, the Programme Manager, provided an educational presentation on recognizing the connection between social and economic empowerment within our humanitarian work and tying the existing framework. We opened our space to SEEP, the Social Economic Empowerment Program (SEEP) who spoke to the success of Cooperative model of business which was launched during COVID at informal settlements in Suva. We also invited 2 key financial institutions -Westpac and SOLE FINTECH to share informations on financial literacy, budgettings and the importance of savings

A unique wave of information and recommendations flowed into the atmosphere, with ladies from all 14 districts sharing the challenges they faced on the ground, together with recommendations on how to deal with those challenges. The participants also had recommendations for the Budget Announcement, which was compiled together into a word document and submitted to the Fiji Government. This was then followed by three panel discussions, which was streamed live on FemLINKPacific's Facebook page. There was an integration of 3 Diverse Rural Women Leaders panel talanoa session had aging rural women leaders, young diverse women and marginalised communities which included diability and LGBTQI and Mental Health activists with a focus on Budget Announcement. and what are the priorities of the rural women leaders. The panels were all moderated by Cleo, FemLINKPacific's Northern Division Broadcaster, Patrina Tawake, Programme Associate Broadcast and Maria Nailevu, Programme Manager.



They discussed the challenges they face in their work and focused particularly on the budget announcement while making recommendations to the government of Fiji. The government should give top priority to certain areas in the 2023 Budget Announcement that will directly benefit and improve the standard of living for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged communities.

The recommendations made during all of the conversations were collated when the Day came to a close and a proposal was delivered to the Fijian government. We witnessed an enormous outpouring of emotion as leaders representing their groups from the 14 Fijian Districts spoke about the difficulties these women faced on the ground and their inspiring words of optimism for the future. With that stated, the National Consultation concluded with a roaring call for Fiji's women's rights. We wish our participants the best of luck as they work tirelessly to spread the word, maintain their commitment, and never give up hope.

FUN FACT! Women are more stronger & resilient and are scoring higher than men on leadership skills.

My disability won't stop me from serving and helping my community



by Timaima Ralolokula

"I know that I have done a lot for my community and also empowering my other members of disabilities that we can also become the voice of our community even though we are not SEEN. I used to empower and challenge them that we all have a talent that God gave us and we should make good use of it, let no one look down on you. Believe in yourself and be the agent of the change in our disability community"

Amelia is one of our outstanding Diverse Rural Woman leaders. She is not only the secretary for the Fiji Disability People's Forum, but she is also the Vice president of Nadroga DCOSS, the President of Vunatovau Soqosoqo Vakamarama, the President of Cuvu Methodist Womens Group and she is also a Preacher in her local church.

As a woman leader, she always takes time to visit the members of the communities and organisations she is affiliated with and makes sure to know each of them very well. With the limited financial resources she has, she does her community visits and assists women with her social welfare allowance that she receives every month. Amelia looks after the people who are living with disabilities and she urges the government to prioritise and give more assistance to them.

AMELIA KIDI - SECRETARY (FDPF SIGATOKA)



by Frances Qounadovu
Women in Leadership

The role of a female leader in today's society is more important than ever. With strides being made in gender equality, it is evident that the future of our society rests upon the shoulders of women. Female leaders are essential for creating and implementing change, and their unique perspective can help to improve the quality of life for everyone.

One of the most important pieces to Femlink Pacific is our Rural Women Leaders Community Media Network. They represent a diverse group of women from all over the country and play an important part in the contents we create by both being the voice and a portion of the audience.

Our district, divisional and national consultations this first half of the year (2023) plays a crucial role to our strategic plan, where rural women leaders gather to share ideas, issues, and solutions with each other.

These consultations covered a wide range of topics under the 7 pillars of human security (Political, Economic, Environment, Health, Food, Community and Personal Security)

In these consultations we are able to assist, empower and amplify women leader's voices and issues in our platforms provided. As I quote Maya Angeleou, "Each time a woman stands up for herself, she stands up for all Women." We have met a lot of rural women leaders in our network and we are privileged to have worked and partnered with them in amplifying and addressing their issues and voices in the district level way up to the national level and also influencing policy makers.

Introducing one of our central rural women leader Nisha Rafiq, who is 49 years old, a wife and mother of four. Nisha, is the leader of the Wainigasau Women's Club in the outskirts of Lami. She is also a board member of the Fiji Council of social services. She, has travelled a long way in striving to become what she is today. She shared that it's not easy leading her women's group when you're the only Indo-Fijian lady and also when living in a community setting where men are the leaders. Being involved and engaged in our monthly meetings and networking has somehow empowered her and motivated her in the work that she does. The Wainigasau women's group often do visitations to the elderly and people living with disabilities within their community, they organise activities such as cleaning up campaigns along the princess highway since most passer-by's just throw their rubbish and it has an impact on their settlement which is along the Princess Road highway in the outskirts of Lami. The group meets weekly and also does handicrafts and their fundraising to help support their goals as a group. Nisha, stated in one of our district convening's that as a rural women leader whatever challenges we are facing we can face it if we believe in ourselves, we associate ourselves with the right people, right attitude and right mindset, equip ourselves with knowledge and resources we are able to keep on taking that step forward.

We thank Nisha Rafiq for the passion and commitment in the work that she does in her community and the Wainigasau women's group. Women are the backbone of families and communities. They provide care, support, nurturing to their families and are the essential to the development of children. Women also play a significant role in community building and peace building in a community. Leadership is about making others better as a result of your presence and making sure that impact lasts in your absence.



FEMINIST MEDIA TEAM

femLINK WELCOMES NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



femLINKpacific (femLINK) is pleased to announce its new Executive Director, Ms Fay Volatabu who took office as of Monday June 19, 2023.

Ms Volatabu has a Post Graduate Diploma in Education, and Bachelor of Arts from the University of the South Pacific and the University of Adelaide. She has more than 10 years of experience in the Social Sector in Fiji.

Fay's work in the social sector include governance, civil society, stakeholder engagement and communications. She has over 5 years' experience in media as Chief Editor of the I AM WOMAN and IAM TEEN magazines and as a women's collaborative and leader as General Secretary of the National Council of Women Fiji. Fay has extensive experience in project management, policy and strategy development, grants management, monitoring and evaluation, diplomacy, communications, media, PR and research.

FEMINIST CO-LEADERSHIP

In the 23 herstory of femLINKpacific, for the first time, there was a trial of Co-Lead modality that stepped into leadership from January to June, 2023 while recruitment of ED was in progress. We acknowledge the feminist analysis and vision of our departing Executive Director, Ms Susan Naisara and Board of Trustees for trusting and allowing Co-Lead to step in and take femLINK forward in the absence of the Executive Director position. The feminist leadership was co-shared between the Programmes Manager, Maria Nailevu and Finance Manager, Achal Kumari. This was a strategic leadership modality that utilised and harnessed their collective and diverse strengths and that encouraged collective decision making, power sharing and negotiations.

We acknowledge the 2 Co-Leads for holding our feminist media work, the diverse rural women's network together and sustaining the trust of our funders and feminist coalitions during the 6months of leadership.



PROGRAMMES/MEDIA

PROGRAMMES ASSOCIATE- BROADCAST



Patrina Tawake is a current young woman femTALK 89FM Suva Broadcaster who have stepped up to the role and displayed exceptional broadcast and feminist leadership skills.

In her school days, Patrina got introduced to femLINK's District and National Convening spaces and that's when she started enjoying the experience especially hearing diverse women

Programmes Coordinator



Sulueti Waqa joined femLINK in 2008 as Generation Next team member to Team Leader, Technical Producer, Programme Associate Multi-Media to Programme Officer.

She is now appointed as Programme Coordinator.

Programme Associate- Media



Alanieta Atama is a young rural feminist and climate change activist who is passionate about grassroots level work and empowering diverse women, youths and girls.

She is no stranger to documenting and amplifying diverse voices and she comes with experience in regional and international feminist organisations.

SHE CAN HANDLE IT



FINANCE/ ADMINISTRATION

Finance & Human Resource Officer, Shafreena Nisha

Shafreena joined femLINK in 2018 as Finance and Administration Support to Finance and Administration Assistant. She is now taking on the role of Finance and Human Resource Officer.

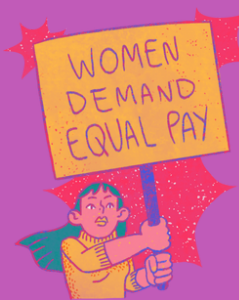
We acknowledge your hard work, dedication and commitment to our feminist media work.



Finance & Administration Assistant, Manisha Ram

Manisha joined femLINK on internship on March, 2022. She is now appointed as Finance and Admin Assistant.

We acknowledge your hard work, dedication and commitment to our feminist media work



Feminist media team recruitment from our diverse rural women leaders network

A number of key recruitments were done early this year with two Community Conveners and two diverse young women Suva Broadcasters. Tima Ralolokula as Western Convener and Frances Qounadovu as Central Convener. The two new Suva Broadcasters were Tarusila Raniu and Alisi Baleiniusiladi who both came from our Nausori rural women's network. This is a reflection of our growing movement building work and the continuous women in leadership empowerment initiatives that femLINK have been investing in pre and post-covid.

Additionally, we recruited a young diverse woman- Leila Gonewai as our third Suva Broadcasters, whom apart from some existing Broadcast media background, she comes with passion and personal interest to venture into feminist media work and get connected to all our moving gender and human rights work within our 14 districts in Fiji.

We recognise the need to strategically vision sustainable women in leadership by tapping into the rural women's network and the need for proactive planning towards succession leadership pathway which is often a gap.

We will continue to support peer-to-peer mentorship and accompaniment both within the organisation and within the wider rural women leaders network where feminist practices of shared power, collective decision making, collective negotiations and embracing of diversities remain at the heart of all our moving work.

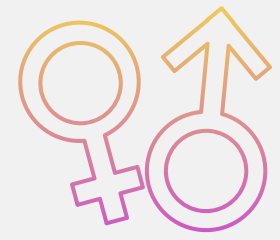
COMMUNITY CONVENERS



SUVA BROADCASTERS



Technology-Facilitated Gender Based Violence and Threats to Civic Life (Working group)

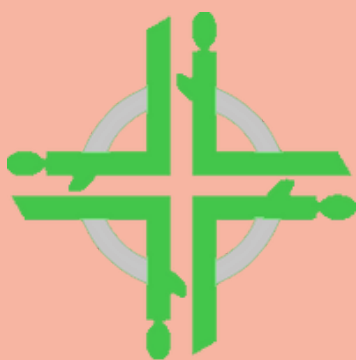


femLINKpacific in our moving work on Women, Peace and Security especially in the area of SGBV, we see the critical role of diverse rural women leaders and stakeholders to have a collective role in addressing increasing socio-economic issues.

We acknowledge the moving work of diverse rural women and allies in collaboration with Internews to allow us to move into technology facilitated gender based violence which is critical given the increase in cyber bullying and online violence and targets on diverse women and girls.

Vinaka Ranadi Kei Viti and Ms Salaseini Vakaturagani, Community Policing, Nausori for sharing your personal stories, work and messages to help inspire and set the practical pathway in addressing online harassment and violence which is often a big challenge in Fiji and the Pacific region.

Today is the initial process of bringing together diverse women Coalition to dialogue and form a Working Group. The working group is made up of the diverse women from Strumphet Alliance Network- Fiji, Tebara Pride Hub, Mama Ashy Project, Rainbow Pride Foundation 4 LGBTQ Rights and Equality in Fiji, FIJIAN FOR CHANGE INITIATIVE and Evertonsisters Football Club.



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