

# COMMUNITY RADIO TIMES

## Uniting Strength and Resilience, Uprooting Violence, One story at a time

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The national consultation, held on November 28th and 29th in Suva, coinciding with the 16 Days of Activism, marked the completion of our National Consultations. Over 40 rural women leaders from 14 districts, part of our Rural Women Leaders Community Media Network (RWLCMN), gathered to amplify their voices. With special guests like Shamima Ali - Coordinator FWCC, Jokapeci Cati - Programs Manager, People Living and Affected by HIV, Sabina Moce - from the Fiji Disabled People's Federation, Vani Catanasiga - Executive Director, Fiji Council of Social Services and Delphine Serumaga - UN Women's New Representative for Fiji Multi-Country Office, the discussions focused on empowering women, linking the challenges they face in disasters to the urgent need to eliminate violence against them.

The women echoed a loud and clear demand: invest in women-led initiatives. It's not just about financial support; it's a commitment to community strength and resilience. As we celebrated wins and shared success stories during the National Consultation, we committed to amplify the voices of women facing unique challenges during the 16 Days of Activism. This was not a plea BUT a call for action.

Governments, NGOs, and stakeholders, the time has come to turn promises into reality. The needs of diverse rural women leaders must take center stage in policies and programs. Join femLINKpacific in this call for change. Let's create a future where every woman's voice is not just acknowledged but respected and acted upon.

In the spirit of the 16 Days of Activism, let's stand together, amplify women's voices, and work towards a world where violence against women and girls is eradicated. femLINKpacific remains steadfast in our commitment to positive change, inviting everyone to join us in demanding empowerment and equality. Together, we can make a lasting impact.



## Editor's Note

Fay Volatabu  
Executive Director



The Community Radio Times (CRT) is an integral part of femLINKpacific media. Our work is captured in various forms of media and the pages of the CRT is another form of media that helps you to journey with us into the various spaces that we have gone to, meet the amazing women that we have collaborated with and appreciate the funders who have supported us in the moving work that we do.

We held district convenings in various communities, divisional convenings in the four divisions, as well as a national convening in Suva, where we brought together leaders of various rural and marginalised communities. We also share stories that were shared to us during these convenings, as well as made reflections on things that we observed and heard from the women in this issue.

This issue also records some of the activities done through the support of our collaborations with other organizations. and we even have in this issue, creative writing by two of our interns from Think Pacific, who were attached to our media team during this period.

We record also the various work that is made possible through various collaborative support by donors. We share a bit about our women's weather watch, which is an integral part of the Community Disaster Resilience Work we are engaged in, as well as other external engagements that we are involved in as a result of the support we receive from various donors. Through donor funds we not only implement activities but we are also able to employ staff and in this issue we welcome new members to the femLINKpacific team, but unfortunately, just as we welcomed new members we also farewelled a senior member of the team during this period.

The CRT also highlights the work we do on other media platforms to highlight activities and international dates, and this issue highlights one of the crucial dates on our work calendar, the 16 Days of Activism. Various team members reflect on this in their writing which then reveals that the CRT is a collaborative production, by various team members. This is the joy of a collaborative feminist media organization, in that we are ALL part of the femLINKpacific story telling.

We hope then that as you read this July-December issue of the Community Radio Times, that you will journey with us and get to appreciate the rural women of Fiji who do so much to impact change in our communities. Our role is simply to tell you their story and hopefully give you an insight into the moving work that femLINKpacific implements in the various rural communities, with the guidance and support of these rural women leaders, and the work we do throughout the country and in the region due to the support of our donors and partners.

We invite you to journey with us through the pages of this issue to celebrate as well as reflect on the amazing work done in the months of July to December.

## Here Are The Women

### World Human Rights Day - Julekha Mustafa



December 10 is International Human Rights Day. This day celebrates the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights by the United Nations in 1948. The document established a standard of fundamental values and rights for every person, which is still valid today. The document later led to treaties surrounding women's rights, covering topics such as protecting women from violence, promoting the human rights of all women and ensuring women's economic, legal, social and political empowerment. International Human Rights Day coincides with the global 16 Days of Activism campaign Against Gender-based Violence.

One of the most important components of femLINKpacific's work is the rural women's district, divisional and national consultations. These gatherings provide a forum for rural women leaders to come together and share ideas, issues and solutions to inform our organisation's strategic plan. These consultations cover a wide range of topics under the seven pillars of human security; political, economic, environmental, health, food, community and personal security. Underpinning these pillars is the concept of human rights.

Julekha Mustapha has been involved with femLINKpacific since 2006 and has become well versed in some of the most prevalent human rights issues faced by women in rural communities. She has been Fiji Muslim Women's League Vice-President and now sits on the District Advisory Council of a rural village on the outskirts of Nadi. She was also responsible for bringing femLINKpacific to Nadi. "femLINK are the ones who empowered me to become part of the District Advisory Council," Mustapha said.

Being a part of a grassroots committee has enabled Mustapha to consult the women in her community about issues they are facing such as health issues, education, environment, personal issues and economic security. She reports that most of the women raise environmental issues, especially during flooding season. Recognising the relevance and importance of environmental issues within her community, Mustapha completed training in disaster management to better support women during natural disasters.

Using femLINK's Women's Weather Watch program, she also provides crucial updates about severe weather events. In January 2012, while most of Suva's population relied on mainstream media for picture updates of flood-stricken Nadi areas, Mustapha was providing flood photos and updates as things were happening on the ground. She provided updates when flooding had affected homes and farms so women could evacuate to centres instead of staying or coming back to find unliveable circumstances such as no access to clean water. Accurate reporting enables women to remain aware of the situation and remain safe.

Personal security and safety is another issue often raised to Mustapha by women in the community. She says violence against women is a common issue and there is a culture which protects perpetrators as women are afraid to speak out about it.

Mustapha says there are common reasons many women do not speak out about the violence they experience, such as the "children", "stigma" and "burden". She explains that often, the woman doesn't want to leave her spouse, but she desperately wants the violence to stop. It was seeing violence against women which first led Mustapha to resign from the tourism industry and work for NGOs, which could make a difference in women's lives. She began as a project manager for a crisis centre which provided an opportunity for her to learn about the major issues affecting women. "I want women to know their rights. The right to live, the right to freedom of movement, and the right to personal security. I want women to know that they can uphold their responsibilities in their marriage and in their house whilst still knowing and honouring their rights."

The way forward, according to Mustapha, is having more women in committees and spaces where they can raise their experiences. The issues they face cannot properly be understood or addressed without consulting the women who experience them. "Women are the first to enter the home and the last to leave it. They know what's going on, they know things which policymakers don't. I often look around and think why aren't women involved in informing decisions in every area; from environment to social issues to personal issues. More women should be in all of those places."

"Let them speak." Mustapha says femLINK is doing exactly this, by providing a platform for women to raise their issues in a safe space. "Most of our issues aren't heard by the government whereas when we call femLINK and tell them the issues, it is always heard."

"We are also able to make submission and say these are the real issues for women, you should focus on them."

Article written by: Belinda Charman & Saskia Cumming



"To see violence truly eliminated, attitudes of men and women need to change."

-Kelera Lewenilovo (Rural Women Leader - Ba)



# 16 Days of Activism



by Cleo Petra

In the midst of the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence, femLINKpacific stands united with a commitment inspired by the bravery of the Mirabal sisters, who laid down their lives on November 25, 1960, challenging the oppressive regime of Rafael Trujillo in the Dominican Republic. As we navigate the critical period from November 25th to December 10th, their legacy guides our commitment to eliminating violence against women and girls.

Patria, Minerva, and María Teresa Mirabal are more than historical figures; they embody symbols of resilience and bravery. To this day, their sacrifice echoes through history, serving as a reminder of the courage required for a violence-free future—a source of inspiration during the 16 Days of Activism and beyond.

The origins of the 16 Days of Activism traces back to the Women's Global Leadership Institute in 1991 at the Center for Women's Global Leadership at Rutgers University. Among the visionaries shaping this global movement was Fiji's own Shamima Ali, Coordinator of the Fiji Women's Crisis Center (FWCC). Emerging from discussions that ignited activism against gender-based violence, Shamima Ali's dedication has been instrumental in empowering women and advocating for equal rights.

As we reflect on the origins of the 16 Days of Activism, we acknowledge the pivotal role played by Shamima Ali, a front-runner in the fight against violence on both national and international fronts. Her commitment resonates within the very fabric of this movement, reminding us that it is not only a commemoration but a rallying point for collective action.

In our collective journey for a violence-free world, the 16 Days of Activism provides a unique opportunity. More than a commemoration, it is a period for individuals, organizations, and communities to unite. During these days, we reflect on progress, acknowledge challenges, and mobilize for change.

femLINKpacific, in solidarity with individuals and organizations globally, stands at the forefront of this common goal. The sacrifice of the Mirabal sisters underscores the importance of collective action during these 16 days. Our commitment goes beyond acknowledgment; it is a call to transform promises into tangible actions.



Written by: Saskia Cumming & Belinda Charman (Think Pacific Interns)

Femlink Pacific is participating in the global 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-based Violence. For each day of the campaign, we are spotlighting a woman from a diverse background. We want to draw particular attention to women living with disabilities.

Kessy Tamani was previously a coordinator for the Fiji Red Cross in the West where she underwent training to deal with violence against women and children. She describes a “thirst for this kind of community and education” at the time because she knew the scale of the problem. She is a member of Yadua Women's Club and the Sigatoka network of Rural Women Leaders and is a District Advisory councillor in her community.

She also lives with a disability herself and says it was the work of Femlink Pacific which helped her to finally be granted the disability pension through social welfare. “After three years I was still trying and it was pending, pending, pending,” says Tamani.

“In my fourth year, the time I entered Femlink Pacific, I shared my story and they put it into the parliament and my voice was heard instantly. I get the disability allowance now. It is one of the many great things FemLink Pacific is doing, listening to the issues faced by disabled people.”

Tamani says she was able to take what she learnt at Femlink back to her “disabled sisters and brothers in the community” to help them through the process of getting the allowance through social welfare. “I couldn't not share what I knew, when someone was there in need,” she says.

Domestic abuse and underage pregnancies are prevalent issues within the community and ones that Tamani deals with often. “There is a lot of instances of the husband hitting the wife and for girls, around the age of nine to twelve years old, often the uncles, the fathers or the stepfathers are bullies. “That’s where my role comes in, I go to the women and children and say if they need help, or if they need somewhere to sleep, they can come to me.”

She describes one situation of a 16-year-old girl who had never spoken out about experiencing sexual violence until she fell pregnant to her step-father. In cases like these, Tamani works closely with the police and Ministry for Youth Support to report and protect women and children against violence.

However, violence against women is an even bigger problem amongst the disabled community as it disproportionately affects those with disabilities. Women with disability are twice as likely as women without, to experience sexual violence in their lifetime.

“Some women and children already find it so hard to speak out. How can people living with certain disabilities speak out about what is happening to them if they have no way of communicating?”

Somebodies problem is everyone’s business. People with disabilities are no exception.”



For this reason, Tamani has recently been taking sign language classes and will graduate from the course this year. She was inspired by people she had met in communities who face hearing or speech difficulties and disabilities. “As a disabled person, I know what it's like to find it harder to be heard so I want to be able to be there for them so I let their voice be heard even if they can't communicate it in the same way.”

In order to better support people living with disability, Tamani says more awareness surrounding a variety of different disabilities is needed, especially in rural and isolated communities. She hopes more awareness will lead to better solutions for issues faced by people with disabilities.

An example of this is lack of accessible transport in many of the rural communities where there are no buses and the only transport option is trucks. When it is bad weather people with certain disabilities can't come into town because of the road conditions. If they are facing violence, it makes it difficult to ever get a break or experience respite.

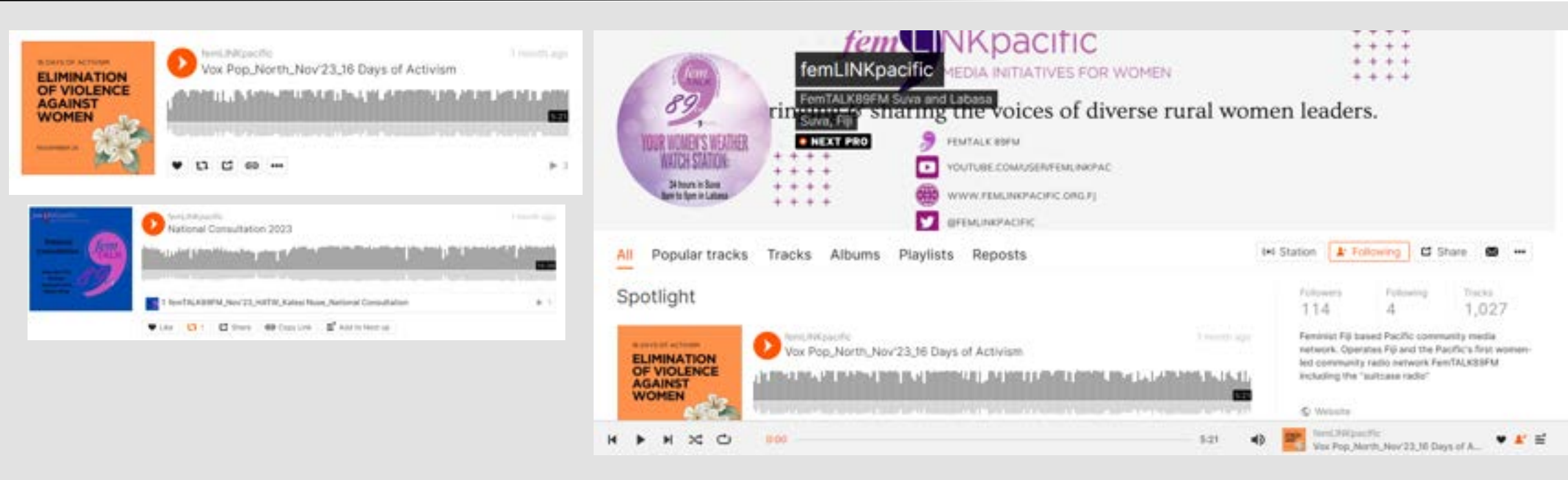
Tamani says it was Femlink Pacific which empowered her to advocate for her communities, for women and for people living with disabilities.

“Whatever I learnt here through this platform I can go and share it with the community and in turn, empower them.”

Article written by:  
Saskia Cumming & Belinda Charman

Scan here to listen to the voices of our rural women leaders community media network

SCAN ME





## International Day Against GBV



by Cleo Petra

25th of November marks the start of the 16 days of Activism against gender based violence. It unfolds a pivotal period from the 25th to December 10th and it is centered around the UN Women theme “UNITE, Activism to end Violence Against Women and Girls.” During this time, individuals and organizations collaboratively advocate for the eradication of violence against women, shining a spotlight on issues such as domestic violence and discrimination. The campaign emphasizes the importance of community advocacy, empowering individuals to speak out against gender-based violence, and holding both individuals and governments accountable. Its focus extends to urging the government to strengthen, enforce and implement laws protecting against various forms of violence, fostering collective efforts to create communities of care, free from injustices. Notably, the theme underscores the significance of investing in women-led and feminist initiatives. Investing in these initiatives is crucial as it acknowledges the pivotal role women play in driving social change. By supporting women-led and feminist initiatives, we contribute to empowering women economically, socially, and politically, creating a ripple effect that aids in the prevention of violence against women and girls.

femLINKpacific engages in uniting communities and stakeholders to collectively address and eliminate gender-based violence. Our commitment extends to advocating for the allocation of resources, both financial and non-financial, to support initiatives that empower women and girls while fostering communities where women thrive without persecution. During this 16 days, we issue a call to action to eliminate violence against women and girls in Fiji, the Pacific, and worldwide. Aligned with the theme of the “16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence,” the call echoes the urgency to “UNITE! Invest to prevent violence against women and girls.” We implore communities, leaders, and individuals to unite against the pervasive issue of gender-based violence, emphasizing the collective responsibility to invest resources, efforts, and commitment in preventative measures. By answering this call, we contribute to a shared vision — one where women and girls in Fiji, the Pacific, and beyond can live free from the scourge of violence, fostering a safer and more equitable future for all. It is a call not just for awareness but for concrete actions that challenge norms and create lasting change.

## World AIDS Day



by Cleo Petra

As we commemorate World AIDS Day on the 1st of December, the powerful words of Jokapeci Cati during the 2023 femLINKpacific National Consultation resonates: “As women, we are game changers. We need to address the issues of attitudes towards people’s perspective on HIV/AIDS.” This sentiment encapsulates the spirit of our collective fight against HIV/AIDS, recognizing that it affects everyone and does not discriminate.

Jokapeci Cati’s call to action rings loud and clear: Encourage actions that prevent the spread of HIV, make it easier for people to get tested for HIV, provide ongoing assistance to individuals living with HIV to ensure they continue their treatment, offer support for pregnant women living with HIV to have babies free from the virus, bring HIV treatment directly to people’s homes, and keep a close watch on the availability and quality of services to avoid shortages.

In promoting HIV prevention, we collectively engage in community education, fostering awareness to curb the spread of the virus. By facilitating HIV testing, we make it accessible for everyone to know their status, breaking down barriers to knowledge and care. Supporting those living with HIV to stay on treatment is an expression of our shared commitment to ongoing care. Our advocacy for pregnant individuals with HIV echoes our dedication to breaking the cycle of transmission, ensuring babies are born HIV-free. Delivering HIV treatment directly to doorsteps ensures that no one is left behind in accessing vital care. Simultaneously, our vigilance in monitoring stock-outs and service quality reflects our dedication to maintaining the consistency and effectiveness of healthcare services.

The theme for this year’s World AIDS Day, “Let communities lead,” emphasizes the collective strength of communities in HIV prevention. Together, we bring unique perspectives that shape and drive strategies for awareness and care.

This World AIDS Day serves as a reminder of the importance of knowing our status. HIV/AIDS affects us all, and getting tested is a crucial step in our collective effort to end the epidemic. By knowing our status, we empower ourselves and others to take charge of our health.

Let us unite, recognizing that HIV/AIDS doesn’t discriminate, and we all play a vital role in the global effort to end it. As we heed Jokapeci Cati’s call, let’s encourage one another to get tested, know our status, and stand together in solidarity. Together, we can create a world where understanding, compassion, and resilience prevail over HIV/AIDS.



“As women, we are game changers. We as women need to address the issues of attitudes towards people’s perspective on HIV/AIDS.”

–Jokapeci Cati  
Program Manger  
People Living with and affected by HIV & AIDS

## United in action to rescue and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for, with and by persons with disabilities



by Leila Gonewai

The goal of femLINKpacific is to overcome the disparities perpetuated by conventional gender roles in decision-making institutions which prevent women and girls from effectively participating in public discourse on issues of common concern, particularly when they come from underprivileged and rural areas. We work to guarantee that women, girls, and underrepresented groups consistently have access to essential information and communication platforms. We have a mission to raise awareness about problems facing our society by serving as a powerful and effective feminist media platform that acknowledges and upholds the multi-ethnic and multi-faith foundational values of our organization which promote discussion and solutions, increase awareness of women’s leadership, and spur changes in public and political opinion,

The third of December is always the International Day of Persons with Disability. One of femLINKpacific’s many initiatives is to include people with disabilities in spaces where their voices are heard and issues reach those in power, with this year’s theme being United in Action to rescue and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for, with and by persons with disabilities. This pertains to the wellbeing and special needs of every person living with a disability in Fiji.

Because of their disability and gender identity, people with disabilities experience a variety of overlapping and compounding kinds of discrimination in both urban and rural areas throughout the Pacific region. Although these efforts appear to be minor, the majority of Pacific Island countries have signed one or two pertinent agreements that highlight the need for women and girls with disabilities to be integrated and included in all facets of society.

There is still work to be done in order to properly integrate into civilizations. Individuals with disabilities frequently lack access to social protection services, work opportunities, state support programs, and education, which lowers their socioeconomic level and limits their human rights. They have a very high chance of experiencing injustice and violence as a result. Consequently especially in rural regions, the requirements of the community’s people with various abilities are sometimes overlooked in the planning and relief efforts after natural disasters.

Working toward the creation of an inclusive society is made possible by incorporating campaigning for the changing of attitudes and behavior’s toward people with disabilities. Most vital, though, is allowing accessibility and equal opportunity to all who have impairments, perceived or not.

The United Nations approved the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), sometimes referred to as the Global Goals, in 2015 as a global call to action to eradicate poverty, safeguard the environment, and guarantee that by 2030 all people live in peace and prosperity. The 17 SDGs are interconnected; they acknowledge that decisions made in one area will have an impact on other areas and that development must strike a balance between environmental, social, and economic sustainability.

Nations have pledged to give the least developed nation’s development the highest priority. The SDGs must be accomplished in every setting with the help of all societal members inventiveness, expertise, technology, and financial resources. Member states decided to begin the process of creating a new set of sustainable development goals (SDGs) to replace the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), as its implementation term ends in 2015. This was decided upon during the 2012 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20). Beyond 2015, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) must be consistent with and incorporated into the United Nations Global Development Agenda, addressing the environmental, economic, and social components of sustainable development. The anticipated SDGs span the years 2015 to 2030. The SDGs mentions disability in a number of places, particularly in areas that deal with inequality, growth and employment, education, human settlement accessibility, and data collecting and monitoring. A few examples of these areas include:

- Goal 4 on inclusive and equitable quality education and promotion of life-long learning opportunities for all focuses on eliminating gender disparities in education and ensuring equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities. In addition, the proposal calls for building and upgrading education facilities that are child, disability and gender sensitive and also provide safe, non-violent, inclusive and effective learning environments for all.
- Goal 8: to promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all, the international community aims to achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value.
- Goal 10, which strives to reduce inequality within and among countries by empowering and promoting the social, economic and political inclusion of all, including persons with disabilities.
- Goal 11 would work to make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe and sustainable. To realize this goal, Member States are called upon to provide access to safe, affordable, accessible and sustainable transport systems for all, improving road safety, notably by expanding public transport, with special attention to the needs of those in vulnerable situations, such as persons with disabilities. In addition, the proposal calls for providing universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces, particularly for persons with disabilities.
- Goal 17 stresses that in order to strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development, the collection of data and monitoring and accountability of the SDGs are crucial. Member States are called upon to enhance capacity-building support to developing countries, including least developed countries (LDCs) and small island developing states (SIDS), which would significantly increase the availability of high-quality, timely and reliable data that is also disaggregated by disability.

FemLINK has participated in several feminist initiatives and the worldwide civil society that support the inclusion of gender equality and climate change in Sustainable Development Goal 16, which aims to “Promote Just, Peaceful and Inclusive Societies, Achieve Gender Equality and Empower All Women and Girls”; is another goal of SDG 5. We think that in order to make real progress toward the safety and empowerment of excluded groups, an integrated strategy incorporating both objectives is essential. Since different groups are never affected in the same ways, truly equitable peacemaking may be achieved by making sure that people of all diversity play a major part in raising issues, preventing, and reducing all types of violence.



## Monitoring & Evaluation



by Tarusila Raniu



## Community Radio Training

We build the bridge as we collectively walk towards moving our feminist media work forward. We recognize the critical role of feminist media in documenting and amplifying diverse rural women leaders voices however we equally see the importance of developing our feminist media teams internal capacity to ensure that we are able to leverage the women's voices on our multiple feminist media platforms for impactful influencing. We completed our Community Radio Times in-house training which apart from internal reflections we opened our space to two mainstream media personalities to help shape our feminist media work better.

Within our evolving digital era and fast advancing social media platforms, we recognise the need to equally leverage our feminist media delivery to increase our visibility, reach and online engagement.

As a community and a feminist media and radio station, our objectives of the training were to:

- increase team's media skills
- understand the link between documenting and feminist media visibility
- understanding available online platforms and applications that will help enhance the quality of our feminist media delivery.

We recognise that our feminist media is different from mainstream media, and the differences make us unique.

Acknowledging Lice Movono and Taitusi John for accepting our invitation to come into our space and share their media and journalism experiences and expertise which the feminist media team found useful and relevant.



## Community Feedback



At our October Divisional Convening in Labasa, Vanua Levu, we were pleasantly surprised by a presentation shared by one of our rural women leader in Vanua Levu, Meresiana Dimaiqalau on some inspiring community projects they are doing on Fiber Glass Canoe building.

The participants were all women and she was proud to share the many benefits of these fiber glass canoes which were fast to make and helps facilitate collective life-skills training and finished boats that are a necessity within rural, maritime and remote areas for transportation and fishing for food and income generation.

"if you educate a man, you educate an individual, you educate a woman, you educate a nation" African proverb

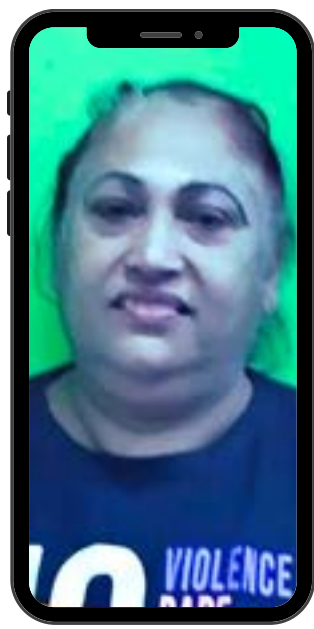
The rural women leaders of Naivikinikini, Lami shared through their women's group seaweed soaps making. These women attended our merged Nadroga/Navosa and Lami WWW Convening early this month and were part of the seaweed soap making shared by [Rotary Pacific Water for Life Foundation](#).

We acknowledge the women's group sharing their knowledge to our broader WWW viber group on simple steps women can make soap at home which can be for household use and also to earn income for their families.

These were part of our collective efforts towards building community resilience to Climate change through Civil Society Action project supported through the [European Union in the Pacific](#)







Yasmin Khan

"It's (violence) not a good thing. We need to be protected under the "law and in communities. We do not need to be violated. We are the first responders. My message is to stop violence against women and girls. WE ARE THE BACKBONE OF SOCIETIES. "

....first one is domestic violence which is very common. Myself, a community worker. I work closely with women in the community and to be honest most of the domestic violence are not reported because of the traditional norms in the community which is to do one sevusevu, present yaqona just to reconcile. That's it. But the victim is there in the community.." This was highlighted by Luisa Lasaga, a member of our rural women's leaders community media network (RWLCMN) in Labasa. Another, a member of the Macuata District Council of Social Services, stated "I urge you, if you are listening to this, please stop the violence on women in the community because they are special. Women and young girls are special in the community

Luisa Lasaga



## Power of Community Radio



by Sulueti Waqa

In 2007, my journey with femTALK 89fm began unexpectedly during a visit to the Ba Senior Citizen Centre for the District Consultation with my mother. As a first-year university student studying Bachelor of Science, the prospect of joining a community radio station seemed distant. However, life took an unexpected turn when the Founding Executive Director suggested I become a member of Generation Next, the Young Women Project consisting of 10 core broadcast volunteers within femLINKpacific.

Raised by a single mother who supported me with \$30 a month for travel expenses, the offer to join femTALK 89fm was both a challenge and a lifeline. Little did I know that this opportunity would mark the beginning of a transformative journey. Navigating the unfamiliar realms of media and radio, I quickly grasped the significance of my role. Beyond the personal gains, I realized that community radio is a powerful opportunity for addressing broader issues. The experience extended beyond my immediate concerns and became a peaceful approach to tackling problems that others often struggle to overcome.

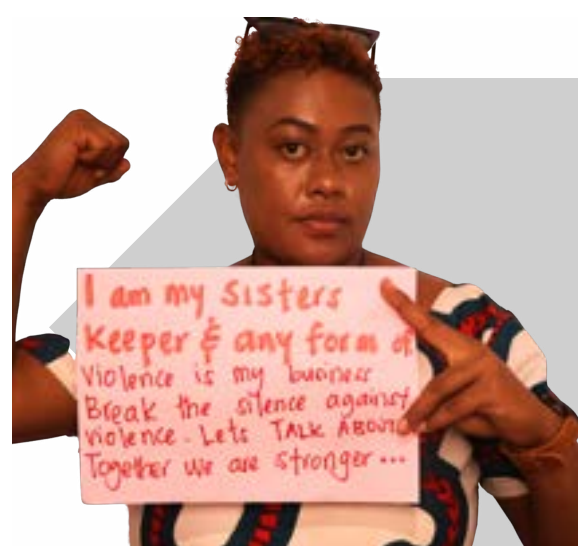
Community radio, since its inception in 2004 with Lady Veronica(a Suitcase Radio), has played a pivotal role in collecting and broadcasting stories from remote rural areas of Fiji. These stories, often highlighting the challenges faced by rural women leaders, contribute to decision-making processes in the capital, influencing the development landscape. One of the overlooked but critical aspects of community radio is its role in disseminating essential information. Whether it's obtaining a birth certificate, accessing healthcare, or understanding government services and grants, community radio bridges the information gap. It empowers individuals by providing them with the knowledge needed to improve their lives.

Moreover, community radio serves as a catalyst for peaceful resolutions in addressing conflicts and violence within communities. By creating a space for meaningful dialogue and engaging conversations, it helps address the root causes of conflicts, fostering a harmonious environment in homes and communities.

Recognizing media as a powerful tool, community radio channels the energy and influence it possesses to bring about positive change. While progress may seem slow, the impact is undeniable. Over the course of more than ten years in this space, I have witnessed the transformative power of community radio.

Women's lives have changed, and they have emerged as leaders driving development in their communities. From rural leaders becoming politicians to tangible development initiatives taking root, the influence of community radio is profound. It's a reminder that change is possible, even in seemingly small and remote corners of the world.

In conclusion, my journey with FemTALK 89fm has not only been a personal journey but also a testament to the immense impact community radio can have on individuals and communities. It reinforces the belief that through collective efforts and the power of media, positive change is not just a possibility but an achievable reality.



"I am my sister's keeper and any form of violence is my business. Break the silence against violence. Let's talk about it. Together we are stronger."

-Sepeci Vereivalu

## Pacific Resilience Meeting 2023



femLINKpacific was part of the Pacific Resilient Meeting Panel on Thursday 5th October, 2023. Frances Qounadovu, our central convener was on a panel and discussed femLINK's work around the theme: "Inform: Building Resilient Water Systems at the community level."

Some of the highlight of the discussions were:

- With the climate crisis arising there is an urgency to accelerate access to sustainable, safe and reliable water systems.
- Equitable Shift- from empowering Pacific women to recognition, inclusion and investment in women led Resilience strategies.
- Building Resilient water systems at community level.
- Encouraging traditional ways of preserving food and water.
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The day ended with a learning lab on measuring water security for Pacific Resilience.

## Feminist Media Team

A number of key recruitments were done early this year with two new Suva broadcasters, Selai and Lavenia, and a new project officer, Doris, overseeing our Women Resilience in Disasters project with UN Women. We also had a few internal changes where Tarusila became our new Monitoring, Evaluation & Research Officer and Cleo taking on the Programmes Associate Media in the North. Joining the team as well is a rural women leader from Ba, Vani, who has taken on the role as the Western convener.



**Tarusila Raniu**  
Monitoring, Evaluation  
& Research Officer.



**Doris Mani**  
Project Officer  
Women Resilience in Disasters



**Petero Cagilaba (Cleo)**  
Programme Associate  
Media (North)



**Lavenia Tamanikaibau**  
Broadcaster  
Suva CMC



**Vani Tuvuki**  
Convener  
Western 2 (Ba/Tavua/Rakiraki)



**Selai Rasiwaqa**  
Broadcaster  
Suva CMC



femLINKpacific is part of the partnership on the project Building Community Resilience to Climate Change through Civil Society Action supported by European Union in the Pacific under the Rotary partnership. The partnership enabled the establishment of the Nadroga/Navosa and Lami Rural Women Leaders Network as part of our strengthening and moving disaster preparedness work that also included their addition into the Women's Weather Watch Viber group. The merge WWW Convening was officially opened by Mr Pedro Velazquez, Team Leader for Gender, Civil Society and Human Rights Sectors at the delegation of the European Union. We acknowledge Rotary Pacific Water, Mr Tomasi Niucavu on their panel presentation on their moving community work and practical demonstration on home-made seaweed soaps that can be used for income-generations, home use and protecting families/communities from water-borne and skin related diseases.



The agenda centered on:

- the role of WWW including identifying how the platform was helping rural women disseminate information on the ground
- practical suggestion on ways we can collectively improve WWW platform network and disaster preparedness work on the ground.

"Never lose hope, we mothers some of us are not well educated, but we still can do better for the future." Joanne Cain, Kids Powerpuff, Lami.

"The Women's Weather Watch has been a fruitful, useful, educational. A very good network, easy to communicate, learning from other islands, villages and communities with different women of different ages and races, I can say more. WWW is active and its working for us and our communities" Amelia Kidi, Fiji Disable people's Federation

"Water is essential, water is life and there will come a time water will be scarce and we will have to search and fight for water" Tomasi Niucavu, Rotary Pacific Water for Life Foundation.

**We also acknowledge the Women's Fund Fiji for supporting our convenings and providing internet data to help our women with the weather updates**

## Building Community Resilience to Climate Change through Civil Society Action (CRCC) Project.



femLINKpacific was invited to the project closure event of the 'Building Community Resilience to Climate Change through Civil Society Action (CRCC) Project.

Our Executive Director, Fay Volatabu, acknowledged the [European Union in the Pacific](#) and [Rotary Pacific Water for Life Foundation](#) on resourcing the establishment of the two new diverse rural women leaders network in Nadroga/Navosa and Lami. This project also encouraged building community resilience for our rural women through our Women's Weather Watch platform.

Frances Qounadovu, our Central convener also shared how much this project has impacted the women of the Lami district to be more resilient in facing issues like water cuts. The funding has also helped resource the women with water bottles and umbrellas for their communities.

Both the femLINKpacific speakers reiterated the importance of engaging diverse rural women's voice within climate conversations.

Acknowledging once again the [European Union in the Pacific](#) and the the secretariat, [Rotary Pacific Water for Life Foundation](#) for funding our climate resilience projects especially during the pandemic.

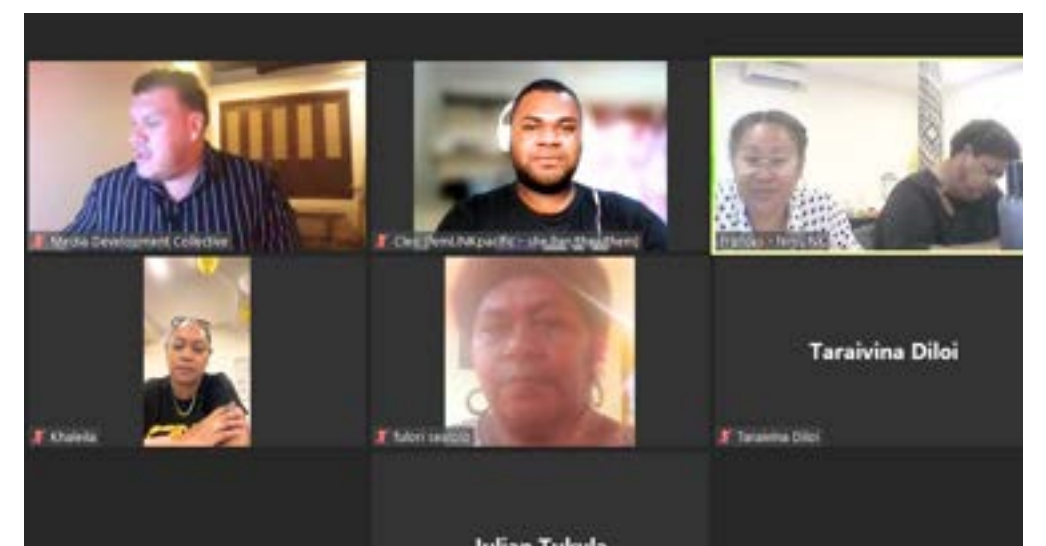
## femLINKpacific in collaboration with Internews -TFGBV (Technology Facilitated Gender Based Violence).

femLINKpacific with the diverse human rights coalitions has a unique role to address TFGBV. In March, we established a TFGBV Working Group that consists of diverse rural women leaders and women and human rights defenders who will be trained on online TFGBV storytelling training and other TFGBV training that are designed to equip and empower the diverse rural women leaders to provide the much needed awareness on TFGBV. We had a 4-days online TFGBV Training with Brandon, of the Media Development Collective and 15 diverse rural women leaders from within our networks joining in both virtually and in-person.

"The past 3 days have been packed with intensive and interactive learning. I have learnt and am continuously educating myself via feedback from Brandon and group discussions on important elements of effective campaigning/advocacy regarding TFGBV." Frances Qounadovu, Central Convener.

"The past 4 days of intense media training on TFGBV have been educational with lifelong skills on effective campaigning through advocacy and storytelling. These skills include the identifying of target audiences, digital/traditional channels to convey key messages etc and the importance of clear messaging and calls for action. This training has also built my capacity to better analyze or measure the level of engagement of my audience through the usage of online monitoring tools" Khaleila Vakatalai.

We acknowledge the diverse rural women participants for giving their time and effort to be part of this empowering training. All in our collective efforts of improving the diverse community responses to technical and sexual and gender based violence



## Advancing Women, Peace, and Security: Building Inclusive Resilience in the Pacific.

femLINKpacific was invited into the ongoing consultation on Advancing Women, Peace, and Security: Building Inclusive Resilience in the Pacific. The objective of the workshop is to explore the nexus of gender, climate, and food security through a Pacific lense.

The hybrid event-online and in-person in Suva, Fiji- seek to build bridges between communities of practice implementing policies of inclusivity, disaster Resilience, and sustainability. The Women of Color Advancing Peace, Security and Conflict engaged femmLINK's feminist media podcast to document a few regional key voices inputting on the connection between climate change, food security and our state of security and stability in the Pacific.

The event was attended by the Executive Director Ms Fay Volatabu and Programmes Manager Maria Nailevu. The dialogue was organized by U.S. Indo-Pacific Command and Women of Color Advancing Peace and Security





Women Deliver Conference- Kygali, Rwanda.



femLINKpacific was part of the Pacific delegation attending the Women Deliver Conference that was convened in Kygali, Rwanda in Africa. July 18th was the official opening and cultural exhibition. Women Deliver is the first biggest global Conference hosted in the African continent that convened more than 6000 plus participants on gender equality. Attendees included government delegates, NGO's and CSO's, LGBTQI and youth advocates, women and human rights defenders and international funders. President Paul Kagame of the Republic of Rwanda opened the Conference and reiterated Rwandas continuing commitment towards gender equality and ensuring that more women are engaged in leadership at all levels.

Rwanda is one of the top 10 countries in world ranking that are fast moving towards attaining gender equality. The idea of fairness that dominates this country arose after the genocide against Tutsi that occurred in 1994.

We had a good representation from the civil societies and feminist organisation's in the Pacific who were all part of the Women Deliver preparations in Melbourne in June. femLINK's engagement at the Women Deliver Conference is the culmination of our moving movement building work and collaborations from the diverse rural womens communities to the Pacific Feminist Forum - PFF and now to the global level.

We acknowledge the We Rise Coalition partners that were mobilizing, engaging and networking collectively in the 5 days course of the Conference. . We Rise partners is a regional collective Coalition of femLINKpacific, Sista , Brown Girl Woke , International Women's Development Agency - IWDA , Fiji Women's Rights Movement and The Voice Of Change,Western Highlands Province-PNG. Programmes Manager, Maria Nailevu attended the Conference

We Rise Coalition Partners Strategy meeting

The week long We Rise Coalition Partners Strategy meeting allowed reflections and real courageous conversations that is needed to recognize challenges, successes and affirmations to all our moving work. We recognize our different contexts and the much needed intergenerational learning and peer mentoring to keep us all aligned to our vision as a fierce and disruptive regional feminist collective.



We send each other off with love, care and confidence as we head towards the We Rise 4 journey. May all our feminist and activism work continue to be fueled by the diverse voices and constituencies that we represent.




Farewell Maria!

At the end of November, we farewellled our Programme Manager, Maria Nailevu. Maria joined in 2021 and departed at the end of 2023.

We acknowledge the work that Maria has contributed to the network and for her feminist leadership during her co-leadership. Maria played important roles during the absence of the Executive Director. She was the project lead for the We Rise Coalition projects and Rotary. She helped in finalizing new fundings for our Women Resilience in Disasters project as well as the Women's Fund Fiji funding that we were fortunate to secure early this year. Maria also helped finalize funding for the Internews technology Based Gender Based Violence Project currently ongoing.

We farewellled Maria in November after almost 2 and a half years with femLINKpacific and we wish her all the best in her journey. Vinaka Maria!



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Editor: Fay Volatabu

Contributors: Sulueti Waqa, Leila Gonewai, Maria Nailevu, Tarusila Raniu, Belinda Charman, Saskia Cumming.

Publications and Editorial team: Fay Volatabu, Alanieta Atama, Petero Cagilaba (Cleo)

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