

HEROWINS

PROTECTION & *Human Security*



ISSUE

3

THE HERO'WINS ARE BACK! AFTER THE CATEGORY 5 CYCLONE, THEY BEGAN REACHING OUT TO AFFECTED COMMUNITIES



BRINGING MOBILITY EQUIPMENT, AND MEDICAL SUPPLIES INCLUDING CATHETERS FOR MEN AND WOMEN WITH DISABILITIES WITH THE LOCAL DISABILITY RIGHTS GROUP



WOMEN AND GIRLS ARE RECEIVING DIGNITY PACKS AT THEIR HOMES AND EVACUATION CENTRES



MARKET VENDORS ARE RECEIVING SUPPORT FOR THEIR LIVELIHOODS



AND COMMUNITIES ARE RECEIVING INFORMATION AS THEY NEED IT!



PROTECTION & Human Security



means

Supporting Women as First Responders by ensuring their Safety, Security and Participation

Women's Weather Watch is about bringing greater visibility to women's local experiences and leadership during natural disasters and humanitarian crises situations in Fiji.

There is a need to recognise that men and women experience disasters differently depending on their respective roles in society.

As we have seen again since TC Ula, TC Winston and TC Zena in 2016, women are not just the primary caregivers for their families and the managers of the family home - but are often the first responders!

And so, women are calling for humanitarian programmes to be more than the rebuilding of infrastructure, but also scaling up of women's leadership roles to contributing to the rebuilding of communities, including responding to the trauma faced.

Ultimately, it is about a better human security approach. It is about environment security - whether it is climate change, the impact of development or reducing the risk of disaster, responses and management of situations.

It is also about transforming the structures to make way for women in formal decision making processes at national and local level to safeguard responses and management of programmes are developed to be inclusive of everyone and based on human rights.



What Women Say

After the cyclone, there was lack of food which led to domestic violence and conflicts in homes "Women or the mothers of those (extended) families are the ones who go out looking for food - out in the sea, out in the bush. And ... it takes one day and it's time consuming and when they arrive back to their individual families, it's dark."

PROTECTION

Protection during natural disasters is not just limited to gender-based violence but is also about safety with dignity as well as human and social security, empowerment, self-worth, freedom and autonomy.

Human Security

is

an emerging paradigm for understanding global vulnerabilities whose proponents challenge the traditional notion of national security by arguing that the proper referent for security should be the individual rather than the state. Human security holds that a people-centered view of security is

necessary for national, regional, and global stability. Human security focuses on people, not states; from the point of view of the state. Human security holds that a people-centered view of security is necessary for national, regional, and global stability.

What Women Say



"Feeling safe means peace and stability at home and in the community. Living free from all forms of violence. We have community structures that protect us from being a risk to any harm"

"(We women) are the decision-makers, we are the one[s] who are budgeting the money of the family. We [are] aware about what the children's needs are. The food on the table. We have to provide for the children."



"It's about having decent shelter. Our children are able to access quality education and making up for the lost time since TC Winston. We have alternative livelihoods to recover losses suffered by our farms and gardens"



PROTECTION AND HUMAN SECURITY

In the aftermath of TC Winston, women were first responders, bearing the brunt of responsibility in preparing for the cyclone, searching for safety for themselves and their families, and motivated post-disaster rebuilding. In the midst of all this some had to struggle with dealing with trauma. Persistent violence, injustices and inequalities must be addressed in the initial phase of any response.

Enhancing Women's Participation

is

is vital, as well as recognising their leadership, to inform and influence decisions that affect their lives, through equally participation in local and national governance.

Regular training on gender equality must be compulsory for all local, district and divisional level planning committee members to make certain of accountability to women's human rights conventions.

Community police initiatives to be improved through regular engagement with women's groups and the recruitment of women with expertise and life experience to community policing programmes. Greater support is also need for adolescents and

youth as strategic groups for ending cycles of violence through educational programmes based on gender equality and human rights.

All development planning processes should adhere to gender inclusive indicators based on CEDAW including the National Development Plan and National Budget processes.

There must also be greater inclusion of disability rights activists to ensure their safety and security both during and after humanitarian situations. This would ensure disability friendly transportation systems and evacuation plans including evacuation centres.

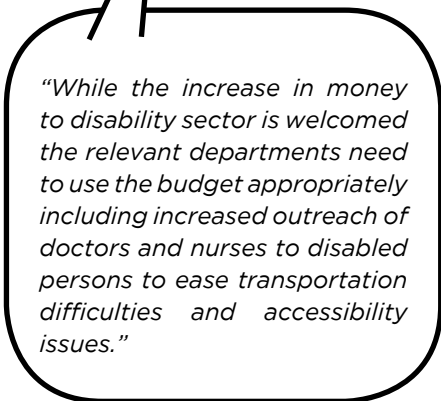
What Women Say



"After TC Winston there was power shut down for about a month in my community. We were out of power and around that time we were not feeling safe at all. It was getting dark around five and half-past five, there was no electricity and we had to be inside the house. That is why working women [coming] back from work were in danger because their lives were not secure."



"We have a school nearby where children go for evening classes and mums always accompany the girls and it's not safe to come back home because there [are] no streetlights. We need streetlights."



"While the increase in money to disability sector is welcomed the relevant departments need to use the budget appropriately including increased outreach of doctors and nurses to disabled persons to ease transportation difficulties and accessibility issues."



Food Security

During TC Winston, women actively mobilised within their existing local networks to share information and address human security issues including lack of clothing, food and water in communities. However, women are still facing challenges in the food security space which can lead to instances of conflict at the local level.

What Women Say



"There is the increase in [cost of] basic food items. It has increased and people are trying to rebuild their homes and [are having] replanting issues. So they're wasting a lot, using a lot of money. So in this case with the increase of the food prices they're facing more issues and the women particularly in this case are finding ways to provide food for their families."



"After Winston there was another drought so we hardly have any vegetables. Women [used to] wake up at 5am and [would] sleep at 9 or 10. After Winston they wake up at 3am and [continue] until 10pm or 11pm. [Even then] their duties on food security are not met."



"Before, a lot of women, do planting like bele or baigani. Now, due to climate change, we can not do this anymore. We can do but it takes a lot of time in coming up. We have to wait a long [time], more months for these things to come up. Getting good food on the table. And this is the thing that takes their minds all the time. And due to climate change, planting bele and baigani, before, yes, we have a lot. But now, due to flooding, it takes a lot of time in coming up."

FOOD SECURITY

According to the Global Study on UNSCR 1325, gender norms and gender inequality render women and girls particularly vulnerable to food insecurity. Not only are women and girls made primarily responsible for feeding their families in a context of food security but also are often impeded from earning an income outside the house leaving them more dependent on food assistance.

Protection strategies must therefore consider issues of food security in terms of the immediate provision and distribution of food relief as because of the limited supplies there is the potential for conflict including the challenge of sourcing an alternative incomes and child labour.

Economic Security

This requires an assured basic income for individuals, usually from productive and remunerative work. However, there is a need to recognise the additional unremunerated workload for women as they try to rebuild and get their lives in order. Within families, growing the economic stress also has a close correlation with spikes in violence against women. Since TC Winston, women have highlighted that the

high cost of running a farm has left them with very little to support their families as well other forms of income generation.

The increase in women's unpaid care work, as a direct result of TC Winston, often means their ability to actively participate in the humanitarian response is further reduced.

What Women Say



"I need, as a farmer, the price of the cane production [to] go from \$60 to \$100 per tonne so the farmers can meet their needs their wants they can assist the labourers in their farms. If the farmers don't have enough they cannot support their labourers".



"(We can start) by reviewing the employment regulations to ensure women have more employment opportunities and quality working conditions."

"For my community one thing I've noticed is most of the members are involved in very low income earning employment such as [at the] garment factory, sex work, [as] market vendors, so economically they're not secured or protected to be empowered to sustain themselves in the future."



Women's Engagement

with the National Humanitarian Mechanism on Integrating Protection- "from the ground up"

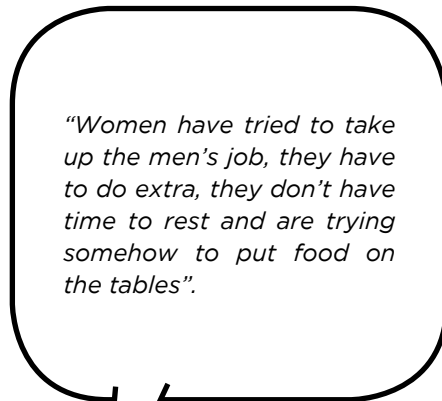
As women are the first responders in communities in humanitarian situations, there is a clear need for the humanitarian machinery to be gender responsive. However, women leaders from our femLINKpacific network have identified an existing disengagement with the national humanitarian system.

Most women in both rural and urban communities are not aware of the functions of the NDMO mechanism and there is a need for the NDMO to work better to support women's engagement and participation in preparedness and response.

What Women Say



"Women don't have time to rest. Before Winston [they] ha[d] time to rest but now women's time is affected because of the heavy burdens they have in their houses"



"Women have tried to take up the men's job, they have to do extra, they don't have time to rest and are trying somehow to put food on the tables".



"It's simple. Set up a bank account where women are able to control, sign off and decide where the funds can go. Also, support women's income generation project[s]."



WOMEN'S ENGAGEMENT

There is need to build women's capacity and to create spaces for dialogue and collaborative efforts to bridge this gap.

Communicating Women's Leadership

Women are also often portrayed as victims of natural disasters and climate change rather than as equal partners in designing strategies and agreements on how to tackle associated issues.

Radio, especially community radio, has proven to be an effective tool for disaster management because of the ability to communicate information suited to the needs of the community, packaged in local language. femLINKpacific's community media

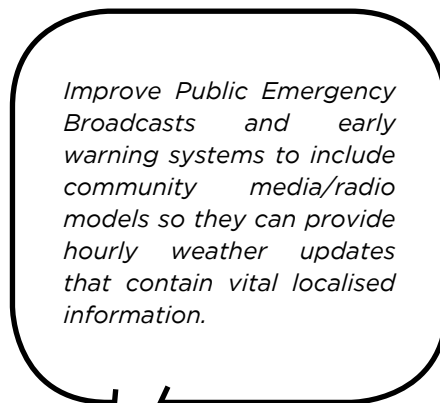
model including its station, FemTALK89FM, has been used to disseminate information and early warning messages to local communities.

There is a lack of accessible and appropriate information and communication channels in existing institutions for women leaders to use. Traditional barriers also fail to allow or help these women leaders to readily inform their communities of practical actions in times of crisis.

What Women Say



Ensure the inclusion of community radio broadcasting as a part of information communication infrastructure to guarantee that early warning and preparedness information is made available to women including via community media systems



Improve Public Emergency Broadcasts and early warning systems to include community media/radio models so they can provide hourly weather updates that contain vital localised information.



Support capacity building programmes of disaster committees at community and village, district and Tikina as well as provincial level to support strengthening of women's leadership and participation in assessments and distribution planning and management monitoring as well as protection.

About Women's Weather Watch

femLINKpacific's Women's Weather Watch model commenced in 2004 when we began to link United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325, and our own work on the ground on Women Peace and Security, to women's local experiences of natural disasters and humanitarian crises situations in Fiji. The gendered roles of men and women in communities and the associated responsibilities sees women as the primary care giver for their families as well as the managers of the family home. Men and women will, therefore, experience disasters differently depending on their respective roles in society.

Peacebuilding practice can enhance existing humanitarian programmes to be more than the rebuilding of infrastructure, but about the actual rebuilding of communities, responding to the trauma faced by women who are dealing with many complex daily challenges. For this reason, information-communication systems associated

with responses must also take a community based approach.

Ultimately, it is about a better human security approach. It is about environment security - whether it is climate change, the impact of development or reducing the risk of disaster, responses and management of situations.

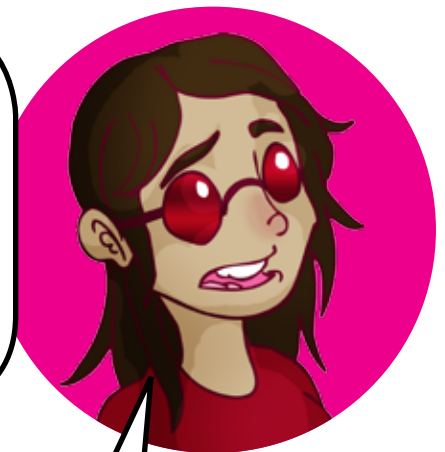
It is also about transforming the structures to make ways of bringing women into the formal decision making processes at national and local level to safeguard responses and management of programmes are developed to be inclusive of everyone and based on human rights.

Women leaders in femLINKpacific's 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 situation and access to food and water.

What Women Say



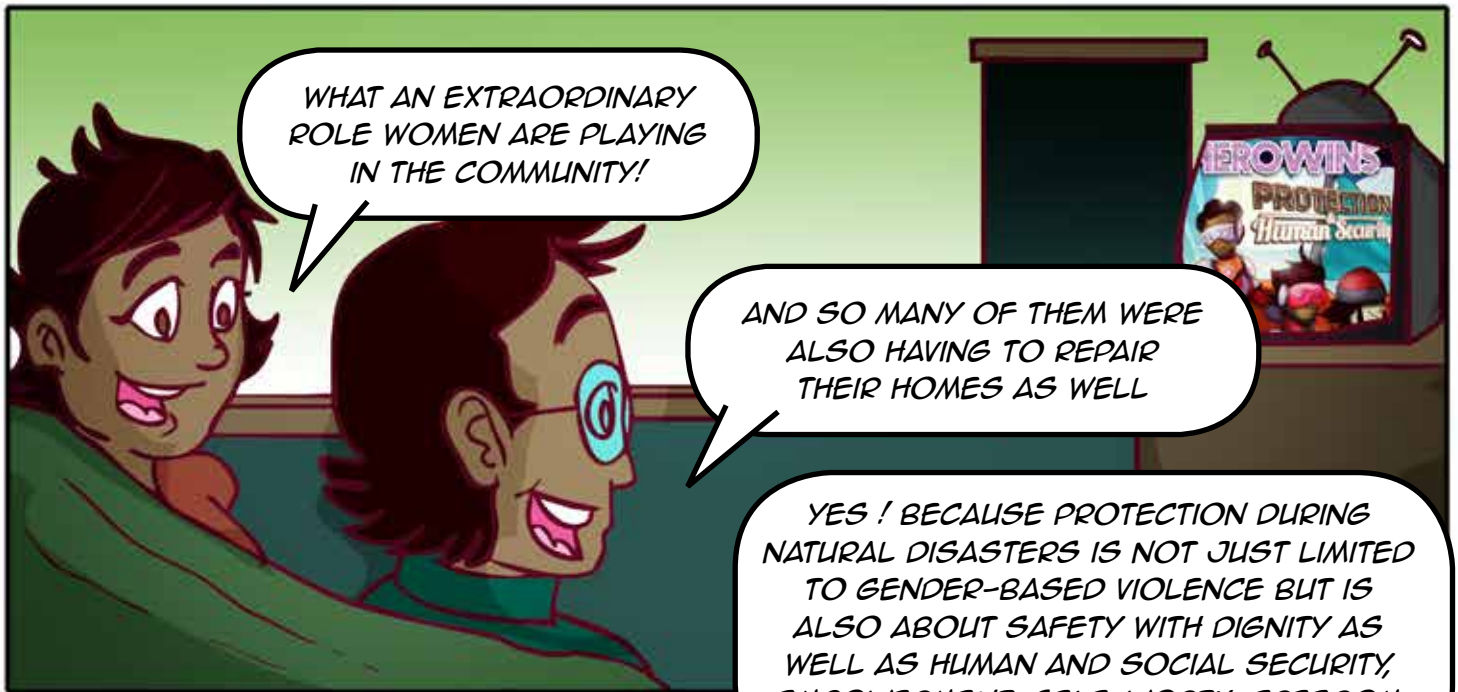
"I boiled two pots of breadfruit which I think will cater us for the rest of the cyclone. I got some water ready in the buckets and I pack our things and put them in a safe place, so I put them in up high. And at about midnight, I woke my son, because [it's] only me, my son and my grandson, in the house. I woke him up to go and cut the the cassava stem, so the roots wouldn't be uprooted."



"It was a very traumatic experience for me actually. Facing a cyclone of that intensity and magnitude. It was really a very traumatic experience for me. My house was damaged and my car was damaged...After organising things at home, I went out into my community. I went out into the community to see the damage. I was the first one to respond and then most of the houses had their roofs blown away."



"On Rabi, it's isolated from the main islands. And most of the time we don't receive any message[s] because we don't have TV or [a] only few [people have] radios. And lucky I got news from the family here in Suva that there was cyclone coming, it will be strong, it will hit Rabi, so I had to prepare. So I send a message to the nearby neighbors telling them that they should be alert - there is a cyclone coming."



WHAT AN EXTRAORDINARY ROLE WOMEN ARE PLAYING IN THE COMMUNITY!

AND SO MANY OF THEM WERE ALSO HAVING TO REPAIR THEIR HOMES AS WELL

YES ! BECAUSE PROTECTION DURING NATURAL DISASTERS IS NOT JUST LIMITED TO GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE BUT IS ALSO ABOUT SAFETY WITH DIGNITY AS WELL AS HUMAN AND SOCIAL SECURITY, EMPOWERMENT, SELF-WORTH, FREEDOM AND AUTONOMY



BUT IT SEEMS THERE'S STILL A LOT THAT NEEDS TO BE DONE TO SUPPORT WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP EVERY DAY ...INCLUDING PREVENTING THE ROOT CAUSES OF VIOLENCE



INDEED, BECAUSE ACROSS THE COUNTRY WE HAVE HEROWINS MAKING A DIFFERENCE EVERYDAY!



WELL THAT'S EXACTLY WHAT OUR EVERYDAY HEROWINS LIKE AUNTY VASU, NIRU AND JULI ARE SAYING AND DOING...



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About femLINKpacific


femLINKpacific is a regional feminist community media network working so that women in all her diversities can claim their communication rights to define their peace, human security and development priorities. We are the regional secretariat of the Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict (GPPAC) and members of the World Association of Christian Communications (WACC) and the World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters (AMARC). We believe Peace, Human Security and Sustainable Development is possible when women in all our diversities are equal partners within civil society, and with governments and international organisations. Women's participation is key from the local to the national level and must be supported with an inclusive and creative information and communication system by amplifying women's knowledge and voices a shift from reaction to prevention is possible. In Fiji our women-led community radio network "FemTALK 89FM" enables the production of a range of innovative media and communication initiatives to inform media and policy action.

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