



Fiji Women, Peace and Human Security Update 2 / 2012



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Introduction:

FemLINKPACIFIC's monthly policy initiative continues to be one of our platforms to share findings from our rural community media network in Fiji through our network of correspondents, convenors and focal points in Fiji as well as our Generation Next Team of Producers and Broadcasters.

For February, the 3 key Women, Peace and Human Security issues for our centres were: 1) rising price of food

2) school fees

3) access to land

Many women related their inability to grow their own food because they do not have access to their own plot of land – highlighting how economic and political security is inextricably linked.

We anticipate these updates can assist decision makers hear what women are saying is needed to enhance their human security and ensure commitments to ALL women's human rights – social, economic, political are accounted for, in line with commitments made in the UN Beijing Platform for Action (1995), UN Convention for the Elimination of All form of Discrimination against Women (ratified in 1995) as well as UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (Women, Peace and Security, October 2000) and the Millennium Development Goals.

The community radio activities, monthly meetings in our rural centres, regular consultations and the data collection of the Women's Household Income and Expenditure Survey are the spaces we enable women to communicate in their own communities to identify their Peace and Development priorities and also remind us of the inter-connectivity between all human security priorities

Reporting Period

This initiative features information collected in February 2012 through field visits and documentation and a review of monthly reports sent in from our rural network. Information is also drawn from programmes produced for FemLINKPACIFIC's Community Radio Campaign for World Radio Day, and rural consultation conducted in line with the theme for the 2012 UN Commission on Status of Women.

In February 2012 monthly rural consultations Labasa and Nausori highlighted the importance of radio and what women in these areas faced during the flooding in the early part of the month. Members of our Nadi network spent a lot of February focusing on the realities of the floods, while the Ba Seniors Centre activities have only resumed in mid March.

During this period, FemLINKPACIFIC was able to contribute to a series of NGO side events organized for the UN Commission on the Status of Women. The anecdotal evidence presented was based on interviews and consultations with women aged between 20 and 70 years from 34 rural communities in Fiji between November 2011 and January 2012.

Additionally 62 women attended monthly consultations during and 139 radio programmes were produced with women who attending the 16 Days community radio campaign and an additional 30 women contributed to consultations and broadcasts on the 2012 CSW theme. Women have spoken from an individual perspective, from the experiences of their extended families and the local clubs and women's groups they lead or attend. 114 women were respondents in FemLINKPACIFIC's Household Expenditure and Income Survey (HIES) during November 2011 – January 2012 from 4 rural centres and 1 urban centre.

Sources of Information

Our sources of information are women aged between 20 and 70 years from: Waituri, Wainibokasi, Bau, Vuci, Manoca, Verata, Naqai, Vatuwaqa, Toorak, Samabula, Wainibulu, Suva, Narere, Drekeniselala, Suvavou, Namadi and Qauia Villages.

Sixteen women were able to attend monthly consultations during this period and 29 women were respondents in our Women's Household Income Expenditure Survey.

Women speak both from an individual perspective, but also from the experiences of their extended families and the local clubs and women's groups they lead or attend

Women, Peace and Human Security Priorities, What are Women Saying:

Environment Security:

Linked to provision of local government services and infrastructure:

“We had drainage problem, drains were filled up and clogged.”

“I actually had a couple of inches of water inside my compound.”

“The mud was there and we all cleaned up and we had nothing left so we had to sunshine our belongings.”

Linked to disaster risk management:

“Villagers had to dig drains and clean up the village before and during this period and this somehow helped our community to avoid flooding.”

“The village headman got the boys and men to clean the drain so that the system flows.”

“We had to check the river all the time for rising of the water. When water rises the drains fill up.”

Personal Security:

Includes access to services:

One of the women called up the town council to enquire about the evacuation centres in Nausori and was told there was none available at that moment.

“During Cyclone Kina, the water came in so early, we couldn’t move anywhere, my son, my husband and I went on the roof and we spent the night there.”

“During Cyclone Eric, our house top was blown off and it was all of a sudden that I wasn’t prepared for. I got assisted by my neighbours for two days of shelter.”

Includes privacy, safety and security:

For those who had to move to evacuation centres during the last hurricane did not get privacy to change properly with no clean toilets available:

“I think it’s not safe for us because the village community hall is open. We all did our cooking and everything there. The problem I faced that night was the toilet.”

Health Security:

Women said that water running in the taps and rivers were very dirty for days after the floods receded:

“With that same muddy water we clean the house, because later when the water is cleaned out the mud will be there, inside stuck, so it’s very hard to clean.”

Women's Household Income and Expenditure Survey

This research methodology enables us to continue to understand the local trends and realities affecting women in the rural centres we work in. Women talked about their source of income and their spending as well as how they access media technology.

- The average age of the women interviewed was 34..
- 62% were married.
- 28% of the women were single, unemployed and under the age of 21. These young women depended on their parents for providing the basic necessities in the household.
- 79% of the interviewees had five or more members in the household that consisted of either an extended family or a nuclear family.
- The majority of those interviewed have a weekly income of less than \$300 FJD. The average weekly salary overall is \$207 FJD.
- The majority of women interviewed identified their husbands as the main income earner. 38% were the main earner in their household .
- In a female-headed household the average salary earned is \$141 FJD, in contrast to the male-headed household average salary of \$247 FJD.
- The majority of those interviewed (54%) bought their fruit and vegetables from the market due to the lack of land space available to them.
- 93% of interviewees, majority of who lived in the greater Suva area, had access to a medical centre in their area to cater emergency, illness and pregnancy.
- Radio is the key source of information for 86% of women interviewed
- 3% that stated that newspapers were their main source of news with the Fiji Times as their preferred choice
- 62% of interviewees had access to the internet, but access is mainly for email and online communication with their family and friends rather than as a news source or for entertainment.
- 79% of interviewees owned a mobile phone with the majority spending less than 5 dollars a week on mobile phone services. This particular technology was mainly used for contacting family and friends and during emergency like natural disasters.

Connecting to the Inaugural World Radio Day, February 13 2012

FemLINKPACIFIC's community media network commemorated the first World Radio Day, and in Labasa, where our network also hosts their own community radio station, the monthly "1325" network meeting focused on the importance of community radio:

Many women highlighted how when the "suitcase radio" has travelled to Labasa, they have been able to both see and hear a radio station:

"The first time to see and hear radio at home when we grew up."
"It has always been around with our parents."

For many of the women coming from rural centres, often more than 10 kilometres beyond the Labasa town boundary, daily radio broadcasts connect them to the rest of the country and the rest of the world: "We like listening to new and what is happening to the nation, locally and abroad."

"It is important to know what is happening around the world."

Women tune in the news also in anticipation of policy decisions which respond to their peace and human security priorities, as they understand how their radio programmes are transformed into policy advocacy statements and submitted to the government network:

"We want to hear their responses to what they shared in their first radio interview."

And they also call for more women to join them in public advocacy initiatives such as with the community radio network in Fiji: "More women's voices need to be raised, women's rights to rural areas so that women can know their rights."

And finally, they would also like more people to share the community radio platform with them: "We want more people to come and see and hear about the community radio and its awareness."

Media Monitoring

Using the guidelines of the Global Media Monitoring Project, FemLINKPACIFIC monitors daily newspapers in order to provide a quantitative and qualitative gender analysis of news media content.

- ☒ 20% of newspaper content reviewed included women in stories relating to Social and Legal as well as Crime and Violence.
- ☒ Only 2% of content reviewed featured issues relating to the Girl Child.
- ☒ 68% of the content featuring women were in Celebrity, Arts, Media and Sports pages compared to 10% in Politics and Government; Economy; Science and Health.

From the 68%, women featured as celebrities compared to men 45% in sports and 40% in politics and economy

As a feminist media organisation, FemLINKPACIFIC continues to generate media content to address the imbalances in the mainstream media content:

Floods:

February 6, 2012, Fiji Times: "Protecting children in emergencies"
<http://www.fjitime.com/story.aspx?id=192713>

February 8, 2012, Fiji Times: "Relief care pack for women"
<http://www.fjitime.com/story.aspx?id=192856>

International Women's Day:

February 14, 2012, Fiji Times: "Broadcast to empower rural women"
<http://www.fjitime.com/story.aspx?id=193306>

World Radio Day:

February 15, 2012, Fiji Times: "Radio a safe place to empower women"
<http://www.fjitime.com/story.aspx?id=193397>

February 15, 2012, Fiji Times: "Involve more rural women: IWDA"
<http://www.fjitime.com/story.aspx?id=193418>

Generation Next Training and Consultation:

February 21, 2012, Fiji Times: "Media training for young women producers"
<http://www.fijitimes.com/story.aspx?id=193885>

Coverage on television media includes:

Fiji TV 13 February <http://www.facebook.com/video/video.php?v=3093591738420>

Fiji TV 20 February <http://www.facebook.com/video/video.php?v=3380491190727>

Coverage on our facebook page includes:

http://www.facebook.com/note.php?note_id=10150614266974295

http://www.facebook.com/note.php?note_id=10150641911704295

http://www.facebook.com/note.php?note_id=10150637807904295

http://www.facebook.com/note.php?note_id=10150637372214295

http://www.facebook.com/note.php?note_id=10150594595229295

Protecting children in emergencies

By TEVITA TUIWAVU

THE Ministry of Social Welfare's Child Welfare Unit is working with the National Disaster Management Office to train welfare officers in the Northern and Western divisions on child protection during emergencies.

The program is formed to strengthen the roles of welfare officers and parents in a bid to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children.

The training will focus on the coping mechanisms of children during disasters, preparation of food using polluted water, lack of shelter, loss of parents, violence and abuse during and after emergencies.

"Children face the world with innocence and it is our responsibility as adults to provide them with a safe environment, care and protection," said the Social Welfare Minister, Dr Jiko Luveni.

"The Child Welfare Unit together with NDMO is working on a training program that has child protection during emergencies as its ultimate objective.

"After the recent flooding experienced in the north and west, parents and families members need to be aware of the safety of children."

"The child-centred disaster risk reduction program will not only focus on children but also the needs of women and disabled people," said Dr Luveni.

femLINK Pacific executive director Sharon Bhagwan-Rolls said it was important that people in evacuation centres look into the welfare of women, children and disabled people.

"We have conducted a Weather Watch campaign and I would like to stress out that evacuation needs to be organised in such a way that ensures safety for women and children," she said.

"People need to take into account the welfare of women and girls to see that the rooms allocated for them are spacious and well lit and they don't have to go far to access the lavatory," said Ms Bhagwan-Rolls.

NEWS

Relief care pack for women

By TEVITA TUIWAVU

THE National Disaster Management Office (NDMO) has prepared a relief care pack for women and children in emergencies.

The pack contains information on how to set up a relief care pack for women and children in emergencies.

"Most of the women in evacuation centres are uneducated and do not know how to set up a relief care pack for women and children in emergencies," said the NDMO director.

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Broadcast to empower rural women

By TEVITA TUIWAVU

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Media training for young women producers

By TEVITA TUIWAVU

THE Annual Young Women's Media and Advocacy Skills Consultation and Training has provided an opportunity for young female producers to share their experience, knowledge and strategic development and delivery of community media content.

The training, which was hosted by FemLINK Pacific, focused on media monitoring, basics of community radio, writing scripts for radio and recording live.

FemLINK Pacific chief executive Sharon Bhagwan-Rolls said uniting a group of young producers was all part of FemLINK

Pacific's commitment to building a cadre of young women leaders using community media tools including community radio.

"The media advocacy skills training is an annual program and we're always encouraging the involvement of young women to be part of this training," Ms Bhagwan-Rolls said. "So far the response from the young women from different communities is overwhelming."

"This is the first time we're having Generation Next members from Tonga. This session has provided them with an opportunity to learn more about software radio before they officially launch next month."

Tonga opens first station for women

By TEVITA TUIWAVU

TONGA will open its first community radio station in a bid to highlight issues affecting women.

The radio station 98FM has begun transmitting but will officially open on March 7 in the lead-up to International Women's Day.

Tongan FemLINK Pacific correspondent Bale Huni was among 25 participants who took part in the Annual Young Women's Media and Advocacy Skills Consultation and Training.

She said there was a lot of support from the civil society and NGOs on the launching of 98FM.

"This is the first time I'm attending this training and what I have learnt so far will greatly boost my work back in Tonga," Ms Huni said.

"I've learnt the importance of working with other women and also empowering them and how we work together to build a young women's network."

The radio station broadcasts programs for two hours a day and two days in a week.

"After our official launch next month we're going to broaden our programs because we'll be broadcasting from Monday to Friday," she said.

While there is a lot of responsibility that comes with being a member of Generation Next, Ms Huni said this had become a challenge to her role.

"One of the major responsibilities is to empower other women especially those in rural areas and to give them the courage to come out and share their experiences. We're just building up and we're going out to communities to ask women to tune into our radio station because we're broadcasting programs that empower them," she said.

FemLINK backs World Radio Day

By TEVITA TUIWAVU

THE World Radio Day will be an opportunity for FemLINK Pacific to highlight the importance of public broadcast at community level.

The association will use its radio station FemTALK 88.5FM to reach out to women and girls in different communities.

FemLINK executive officer Sharon Bhagwan-Rolls said that their ultimate objective was to raise awareness about the importance of radio, facilitate access to information through radio and to enhance networking among broadcasters.

"The World Radio Day opens up a lot of opportunities not only to highlight the importance of public broadcast at community level but also to look at the creativity of young women

in Fiji," Ms Bhagwan-Rolls said. "We'll be broadcasting programs that focus on the initiative of women, in-depth series, promote women and we'll also have a radio drama series," she said.

Ms Bhagwan-Rolls said that it was important to raise the understanding among the public and the media on the value of radio and the content of new media, and the value of actively supporting radio.

"It will be an interactive day where people will be part of a radio program in a round table discussion, we encourage decision makers to support, establish and contribute to exchanging ideas, experiences and resources," she said.

The 2012 World Radio Day will be celebrated today - the program begins at 8am at the Community Media Centre in Suva.

Involve more rural women: IWDA



Generation Next organisation rep Letitia Nalagawa making her submission on the topic of challenges facing young women today.

Picture: JON LINDSAY

By TEVITA TUIWAVU

THE Australia-based International Women's Development Agency believes there should be more involvement of rural women in the development process.

IWDA executive director manager Nancy Miller said the association had been supporting Generation Next's projects since 2005 and the partnership formed with FemLINK Pacific had really grown.

"The contribution of rural women to different programs is important because they comprise the majority of the population in rural areas," Ms Miller said at the launch of World Radio Day earlier this week.

"All over the world rural women continue to remain obscure and invisible in the process of economic development. The grassroots there are certainly programs that allow rural women to have a voice

and also feel critical and to be part of the development in their communities."

Generation Next member Mani Rala said she was inspired by her mother to be part of associations.

"My mother and grandmother inspired me to be a strong believer in justice and to have a voice," Ms Rala said.

"I went to a high school which was socioeconomically affected, so I never got a chance to do community work or anything creative."

"When I came to Generation Next I was able to make programs and learn about what it means and to have a voice that supports someone else to tell their story."

The group has dedicated the week-long World Radio Day to the empowerment of rural women.