



# Fiji Women, Peace and Human Security Update 1 / 2012



For more information please  
contact:

Sharon Bhagwan Rolls  
Executive Director

E:

[Sharon@femlinkpacific.org.fj](mailto:Sharon@femlinkpacific.org.fj)

M:+6799244871

D/L +6793310303

[www.femlinkpacific.org.fj](http://www.femlinkpacific.org.fj)

Page 2	<i>Introduction</i>
Page 3	<i>Women's Household Income and Expenditure Survey</i>
Page 4	<i>Women, Peace and Human Security Priorities, What are Women Saying</i>
Page 6	<i>Connecting to the UN Commission on the Status of Women: "The empowerment of rural women and their role in poverty and hunger eradication, development and current challenges"</i>
Page 8	<i>Media Monitoring</i>

## **Introduction:**

FemLINKPACIFIC's monthly policy initiative continue 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 Ba, Nadi, Nausori, Labasa as well as our Generation Next Team of Producers and Broadcasters.

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 November 2011 to January 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 the 16 days of Activism to End Violence against Women as well as rural consultations in January 2012 addressing the theme of the upcoming UN Commission on the Status of Women

### **Sources of Information**

Women aged between 20 and 70 years from the following communities have related their peace and human security priorities to us from: Vunimono, Naleba, Dilkusha, Udu Point, Bua, Waituri, Bulileka, Nausori Village, Wainibokasi, Vunicuicui, Malake, Mataniwai, Sawani, Nakaikogo, Waila, Davuilevu, Vatulutu, Nakelo, Bau, Vuci, Manoca, Koronivia, Kasavu, Verata, Naqai, Vunimoli, Korou, Navakau, Votualevu, Namaka, Koruto, Malamala, Namotomoto and Nakavu Villages.

62 women were able to attend monthly consultations during this period, 139 new 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 speak both from an individual perspective, but from the experiences of their extended families and the local clubs and women's groups they lead or attend.

## Women's Household Income and Expenditure Survey

Data for FemLINKPACIFIC's Household Expenditure and Income Survey (HIES) in the last quarter of the year 2011 was sourced from 114 women in Nadi, Nausori, Labasa, Ba and Suva. This research methodology enables us to continue to understand local trends and realities affecting women in the rural centres we work in.

61% of the women interviewed were Fijians of Indian origin while 37% were iTaukei and the majority of the respondents were married with children.

Most of the women identify their husbands or fathers as the main income providers of the family, but many of the women are working in the informal sector to supplement their family income.

Individual household earnings varied from as low as \$10 a week to a maximum of \$500 a week with an average count of \$170 a week.

While some families are able to access the state sponsored bus-fare programme, others budget \$0.70 to \$10 a day for transport, while many commute by sharing a ride in a private vehicle. Many women noted personal security as a concern for those who have to walk.

60% interviewed stated that they did not have access to a medical centre within their area of residence and had to travel far to other centres/hospitals to access medical facilities during illness, pregnancy and emergency.

94% identified radio as their key source of news and information with listening patterns during the early hours of the morning or in the afternoon.

Less than 25% have access to the daily newspapers and those who do prefer the local news.

74% have access to the internet and those who do use it to access general information, for study or to contact family and friends.

83% own a pre pay mobile phone with an average of less than \$20 allocated for recharge.

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

### **Economic Security:**

#### *Linked to lack of employment opportunities*

“Our issue is most of the things we face at home is about money, the source of money is not good even though we are working but it’s not at the rate that we need as life at this time is hard.”

“We do not have the licence but we are selling the eggs in the community but there is no electricity or water supply for the farm.”

“If there is no money or stable source of income then the family falls apart and then the nations suffer”

“The cost of living is so high; it cannot meet the earner at the grass root level”

“Salary does not compensate for the cost of living and there are limited job opportunities”

“People are jobless or under-payd. People work short hours, that is the minimum source of income, many have lost their jobs, and many work menial jobs”

#### *Linked to infrastructure and transport*

“If I miss the six o clock bus, I will miss the wholesalers and we will have no products to sell.”

“The bus comes every one hour, so if you miss one bus you have to wait for one hour to get another bus.”

“Bad road conditions like pot holes and its miserable when it’s raining and the road is always flooded and the bus or taxi does do not want to take the trip inside.”

“When we do our shopping, we have to carry it in our hands and walk for about 10km. Our children find it difficult to cross the road because of the pot holes, they have to take off their shoes and then walk to the main road.”

“Before taxi fare was \$2.50 from town to my house, now its \$3.80 and its very high, now instead of taking a taxi home, we sometimes have to walk home to save that much money.”

“Before the taxi fare was \$3.00, but now its \$4.20 and its very hard for us.”

“We cannot afford to pay for taxi fare so we have to go by bus and when the road is not good, the bus cannot come up.”

### **Environment Security:**

#### *Linked to provision of local government services and infrastructure:*

“Problem we are facing is the condition of the market as most of our products are always damaged by the sun and the rain. We need a good market and the town council are picking the money every day but we are still facing the difficulties with our market products.”

#### *Linked to disaster risk management:*

“There was a landslide that damage about two-three houses, my house was split in

two pieces and that time I was really frightened.”

“Flooding season is coming, I am worried that we in Nadi area might have another flood”

“As soon as it rains, at least for a night, the roads get flooded and it’s so hard even for the car to pass on or even to walk through.”

“People throw rubbish everywhere especially plastics that cause the drainage problem, so when the drains get blocked in the town area the water rises and it’s hard to move during the flood.”

“When we have heavy rain, it’s all flooded”

“People coming for picnics dump their rubbish anyhow on the beach”

“Sometimes they don’t collect the rubbish in our area, we have to put it in our backyard”

### **Personal Security:**

“We go with our children to the library and internet shops for their safety and this is costly.”

“Drugs and alcohol abuse have led to a couple of criminal activities such as stealing and also rape.”

“We have to go for a walk for exercise and it’s not even safe to walk in the evenings or early in the morning because there are no street lights.”

“We need fencing of the farm so we know we are safe.”

### **Community Security:**

*Includes access to services:*

“We face water problem. We are hoping to receive some water tanks so we do not have to walk long way to get water daily”

“We need a shelter for collecting eggs and electricity during the dark hours. We also need a water tank so we do not have to walk far to get water.”

“We face water problem. We are hoping to receive a new water tank so we do not have to walk long way to get water daily”

*Includes security of land:*

“Land has expired so most of the communities just live within their block, they don’t have any source of money.”

### **Food Security:**

“Now days, people don’t go to the market, so they have to plant vegetables at home.”

“We need to encourage people to plant their own food and vegetables so there is no need to go to the market.”

“Food in the supermarket is sometimes not of good quality but cheap so people with low wages tend to buy them.”

“Food prices are too high that we cannot buy good quality foods to support families.”

“Expiry dates are near and consumers rush in to buy in large amounts as they get cheaper.”

### **Health Security:**

“The availability of medicines in hospitals is just panadol and ibuprofen. Other medications are referred to the pharmacies which are very expensive.”

## **Connecting to the UN Commission on the Status of Women: *"The empowerment of rural women and their role in poverty and hunger eradication, development and current challenges"***

The Commission on the status of women (referred to as "CSW" or "the commission") is a functional commission of the United Nations Economic and Social Council. It is the principal global policy-making body dedicated exclusively to gender equality and advancement of women. Every year, representatives of the member states gather at United Nations Headquarters in New York to evaluate progress on gender equality, identify challenges, set global standards and formulate concrete policies to promote gender equality and women's empowerment worldwide.

In the lead up to attending the 2012 CSW, FemLINKPACIFIC met with the community leaders in 3 of our rural centres to understand what the global theme meant to them.

The following are "snapshots" of what we heard:

84% of women consulted linked notions of Empowerment to participation in decision making for their communities. This meant not only being invited to attend meetings but being supported to speak with confidence and to inform decision making which would integrate women's perspectives into decisions made.

In the centres we visited, the representation of women in local advisory and village councils remained less than 30%. In fact in Nausori, there is only one woman in a council of 14 members! In Nadi, one woman highlighted, she was not even aware who her district advisory council representative was!

Empowerment also meant having the confidence to be a leader within their own clubs and groups but being equipped with leadership tools that enables them to transform women's human rights commitments into local and divisional decision making processes. Several women also referred to empowerment as being a process throughout a woman's cycle of life, commencing with their status as daughter to having equal access to quality education and employment, as well as enjoying quality services as a senior.

**Recommendations:**

“Freedom from want and freedom from fear” is central to women’s peace and human security agenda and integral to ensuring holistic responses to the CSW theme.

In addition the multiple realities of rural women in Fiji are addressed within a framework of current political contexts.

Additionally human rights are central to human security as well as state security.

*Recommendation: Rural women must be substantively involved in shaping policies, implementing and monitoring poverty eradication and food security programmes to ensure these are responsive to women’s local realities (because):*

“We should start small business” such as planting or baking or cooking or sewing and selling”

“The price of food is going up, and also the school fees, there is no sufficient water in the community so there is a lot of sickness affecting the community.”

“I have five children attending school this year. It is very hard for me to pay, the food has increased and the book fees is also increased, that means there will be no food on the table. It is better for me not to send my children to school.”

“There is an expiry of the land lease and the community do not have any place to plant vegetables and the root crops.”

“Some people are not living in their piece of land, they are living in other people’s land.’

*Recommendation: Rural women’s networks must be supported to enhance their contribution in national budget and development planning processes (because):*

“There is a lack of wisdom on budgeting.”

“People can’t send their children to school.”

“There is poverty and hunger due to the laziness of the people in the communities, especially the men.”

“There is a lack of skills and education.”

*Recommendations: Rural women and young women must be supported to claim their leadership potential (because):*

“Show the people in the community to educate women more.”

“Raise the voices of the women in the community.”

“I would like to act as a counsellor in my area to advice women on budgeting.”

## Media Monitoring

According to state-sourced information, females make up 49% of the total population of Fiji however women remain under-represented in news-media content.

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.

In the period November 2011 to January 2012, 15% of newspaper content reviewed included women in stories relating to Social and Legal as well as Crime and Violence.

Only 5% of content reviewed featured issues relating to the Girl Child.

70% of the content featuring women were in Celebrity, Arts, Media and Sports pages compared to 10% in Politics and Government; Economy; Science and Health.

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

Fiji TV 08 November <http://www.facebook.com/video/video.php?v=2432567325898>

[http://www.fjijisun.com.fj/main\\_page/view.asp?id=64343](http://www.fjijisun.com.fj/main_page/view.asp?id=64343): North Women Welcome Community Radio

<http://www.fjitime.com/story.aspx?id=186199> Include Women in Disaster Management Plans: FemLINKPACIFIC

<http://www.thejetnewspaper.com/?p=14409>: Vanua Levu's First Community Radio Station Inaugurated

<http://www.scoop.co.nz/stories/WO1110/S00309/femlinkpacific-statement-for-rural-womens-day-2011.htm>

<http://spasifikmag.com/fortheladies/medianradio/>

[http://www.whomakesthenews.org/component/option,com\\_lyftenbloggie/Itemid,288/id,48/view,entry/](http://www.whomakesthenews.org/component/option,com_lyftenbloggie/Itemid,288/id,48/view,entry/)

<http://facetotheworldglobalpolitics.blogspot.com/2011/10/we-femlinkpacific-statement-for-rural.html>

### **Coverage of FemLINKPACIFIC's 16days of community campaign includes:**

[facebook.com/notes/femlinkpacific/diary-of-a-community-radio-campaign-1/10150417043279295](https://www.facebook.com/notes/femlinkpacific/diary-of-a-community-radio-campaign-1/10150417043279295)

<http://www.iwda.org.au/2011/11/26/16-days-of-community-radio/>

<http://www.scoop.co.nz/stories/WO1111/S00874/community-radio-campaign-rural-women-have-their-say.htm>



2012 Newspaper coverage:

***January 19, 2012, Fiji Sun: "North women going on air"***

<http://www.fijisun.com.fj/?p=90841>

***Friday, January 20, 2012, Fiji Times: "Radio program to benefit women"***

<http://www.fijitimes.com/story.aspx?id=191223>

***Monday, February 06, 2012, Fiji Times "Protecting children in emergencies"***

<http://www.fijitimes.com/story.aspx?id=192713>

***Wednesday, February 08, 2012, Fiji Times "Relief care pack for women"***

<http://www.fijitimes.com/story.aspx?id=192856>