

Locally driven change from Marshallese women

Republic Of The Marshall Islands [Enhancing Agency](#)

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Project name: Iden Mwekun Program

Project partner: Women United Together Marshall Islands

Total funding: \$515,000

Funding timeframe: 2015–2018

Pacific Women partners with WUTMI to support and strengthen Marshallese women and families. WUTMI is an established women's non-government organisation that works across domestic violence, legislative change, women's economic empowerment and women's leadership.

The 2018 review of the RMI Country Plan found that the program's support to WUTMI had helped to fill a gap in services to women and girls in RMI. This included support to establish Weto in Mour (meaning 'a place for life') in 2016, the county's first centre to support women and children survivors of violence. Weto in Mour provides psychosocial support for survivors of violence and works to improve referral systems between service providers.



Kathryn Relang, former Executive Director of WUTMI, in front of a 'gender equality timeline' mapped out participants of the country reflection workshop in RMI. Photo credit: Pacific Women Support Unit.

Throughout 2017, 31 women used Weto in Mour's services. While this number is not high given the incidence of domestic violence in the country, the 2014 RMI Family Health and Safety Survey found that more than 90 per cent of women affected by violence do not report their experiences to anyone. It is envisaged that the centre will see more women accessing its services.

As well as supporting women in the capital Majuro, WUTMI staff delivered 22 community education workshops for 550 people in the atolls of Arno, Ebeye and Jaluit. They also facilitated a session on the impact of violence against women for 15 community judges. WUTMI hosted two events during the 16 Days of Activism in 2017, including an opening ceremony on International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women and Girls and a candle-lit vigil on International Women Human Rights Defenders Day.

Pacific Women has also invested in organisational strengthening for WUTMI. This included assisting WUTMI staff to review and assess their strategic plan in September 2017 and financial training for the Finance Officer and the Weto in Mour Coordinator. This training helped the staff to draft WUTMI's finance manual now endorsed by WUTMI's Executive Committee.

RMI's Minister of Culture and Internal Affairs, the Honourable Amenta Matthew, said WUTMI is making a large contribution to the development of information on the prevalence of domestic violence, creating community awareness about domestic violence and providing support to women affected by violence.