

# Strengthening Partnerships in RMI

Republic Of The Marshall Islands

SHARE

October 14, 2015

As part of its commitment to the Republic of Marshall Islands (RMI), Pacific Women has been working closely with Women United Together Marshall Islands (WUTMI) – the leading voice against violence against women and girls.

The Pacific Women Support Unit's Senior Programs Manager, Emily Miller, was recently in RMI to undertake an organisational review with WUTMI, to document the current state of organisational processes and to establish a baseline from which WUTMI, with support and guidance from Pacific Women, can make and measure organisational improvements over the next three years.

The review reaffirmed the importance of supporting local women's organisations, such as WUTMI, who have proven the essential role they play in the political, economic and social advancement of women in their countries.

It was evident from the review that WUTMI has earned the respect of a number of organisations, including government and local nongovernmental organisations (NGOs) and has proven its effectiveness, most recently as a critical player in the passing of the RMI's Domestic Violence Prevention and Protection Act in 2011.

Those interviewed as part of the review process acknowledged WUTMI as an important implementing partner with the ability to "get things done" and tackle the "big issues" in the RMI. The organisation's structure, with membership from 22 of the 24 outer islands in the RMI, gives WUTMI an unrivaled ability to reach remote and vulnerable communities. One stakeholder shared: "They [WUTMI] have the right network. The Executive Committee has a lot of very powerful women. Women with immense influence and knowledge." Another said that before WUTMI's establishment in 1987, gender inequality was never discussed: "WUTMI has exposed the stigma

around domestic violence. Now, more young women are comfortable voicing their concerns”.

Despite this, WUTMI does not escape the common issue of insecure funding for women’s organisations in the Pacific, with their funding to date being project to project based. This challenge has prevented WUTMI from championing important and often time critical issues.

WUTMI and Pacific Women will finalise the details of their new partnership when the review is finalised towards the end of October.