

Stories of rural women's resilience after Tropical Cyclone Gita

Tonga [Ending Violence Against Women](#)

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Project name: Raising Rural Women's Voices in Tonga Post Cyclone Gita multimedia campaign

Project partner: Women and Children Crisis Centre (UN Women Support)

Total funding: \$35,200

Funding timeframe: March–May 2018

When Tropical Cyclone Gita hit Tonga in February 2018, the Women and Children Crisis Centre (WCCC) harnessed the power of the media to share stories of rural Tongan women's resilience with a global audience.

In the wake of Tropical Cyclone Gita, the most severe cyclone to hit Tonga in more than 60 years, Pacific Women supported the WCCC to provide psychosocial support services in affected areas. The staff of the WCCC also focused on sharing stories of women's resilience through its Raising Rural Women's Voices in Tonga Post Cyclone Gita multimedia campaign.



Lolohea Tafisi was featured in one of the 19 multimedia stories produced by WCCC. Photo credit: WCCC.

The campaign ran from 19 March, aligning with the themes for the 62nd session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women which was taking place in New York. The priority theme of the meeting was ‘Challenge and opportunities in achieving gender equality and the empowerment of rural women and girls.’

‘We thought the theme of this year’s Commission on the Status of Women made it the perfect opportunity to highlight the experiences of women and girls across rural areas of Tongatapu, including ‘Eua,’ said Ofa Guttenbeil-Likiliki, Director of the WCCC. ‘Most often, stories of women and girls living in rural areas are never told, and we want to change this and give them various media platforms to raise their voices.’

The stories illustrated Pacific women’s resilience and were released on the WCCC’s Facebook page, Twitter account and website.

The campaign received praise both within Tonga and abroad. As a result, some viewers of the stories provided financial assistance, through WCCC, to women featured in the project.

The month-long activity was part of the wider ‘This is My Story of Resilience: Women of Tonga’ multimedia campaign organised by the WCCC.

Ms Guttenbeil-Likiliki described the rationale behind using this participatory media model to profile rural women’s resilience: ‘It is a way of connecting the

dots between high-level discussions of women's lives with the reality on the ground, especially in grassroots communities.'

She hopes the activity will empower and motivate other women encountering similar issues and challenges.