

Ensuring that Survivors' Stories are Documented Sensitive

Regional Solomon Islands Ending Violence Against Women

November 25, 2016

Project name: Pacific Regional Ending Violence Against Women Facility Fund (Pacific Fund)

Outcome area: Ending violence against women

Project partners: UN Women and Vois Blong Mere Solomon (VBMS)

Total funding: \$1,500,000*

Funding timeframe: 2014–2015

Vois Blong Mere Solomon (VBMS), meaning Voice of Women, is a non-government organisation in Solomon Islands that engages with the media to improve gender-sensitive reporting. VBMS staff and volunteers underwent a specially designed training to prepare them for documenting the stories of survivors of violence.



Participants with Ms Joel Supple, a volunteer with the Australian Volunteers International, during a demonstration of the digital story recording process.

Photo: VBMS.

VBMS plays a unique role as an influencer in Solomon Islands broadcasting. Since 2002 it has worked to promote gender sensitive media and to increase the exposure of women's voices.

Through the Pacific Fund, Pacific Women supported VBMS' Digital Story Documentation project during 2015–2016. This project builds a resource and digital reference collection of stories about ending violence against women. To prepare the staff and volunteer interviewers at VBMS for collecting these stories, VBMS organised a one week workshop on digital story documentation on survivors of violence.

The training was provided to three VBMS staff, 12 volunteers and two media personnel. It focused on how to conduct sensitive interviewing and how to respond if the interviewing affected survivors of violence. Ms Joel Supple, a volunteer with Australian Volunteers International, also assisted with technical training on video recording and production techniques.

'One of the challenges was the heightened emotions when dealing with difficult topics,' explained the VBMS team. 'In response to this, one of our partner's [under the Pacific Fund], the Family Support Centre, provide[d] a counsellor who [would] accompany us during [the] digital documenting [of] survivors of domestic violence stories in provinces, to provide stress management and trauma counselling for those who need[ed] it.'

The counsellor was available to answer questions and share experiences about working with survivors of violence. The participants noted the importance of this additional resource as they realised that they 'needed to be at peace within themselves' before they would be able to engage fully in the project activity.

Following the workshop, the interviewers are now prepared to roll out the story gathering project in Western, Guadalcanal and Malaita provinces.



Workshop participants of VBMS' Digital Story Documentation project, held in the Guadalcanal Province. Photo: VBMS.

This Story of Change was originally published in the [Pacific Women Annual Progress Report 2015-2016](#). All values are consisted with that reporting period. For the most up-to-date value of activities, visit our [interactive map](#).

*This activity is part of a larger program.