

# Pacific models of male advocacy working to end violence against women

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January 23, 2020

\*This Story of Change was originally published in the [Pacific Women Annual Progress Report 2017–2018](#). All values are consistent with that reporting period.

Project names: Women’s Crisis Centre’s programs to Eliminate Violence against Women in Fiji and the Pacific; From Gender Based Violence to Gender Justice and Healing in Bougainville

Project partners: Fiji Women’s Crisis Centre; International Women’s Development Agency with the Nazareth Centre for Rehabilitation

Total funding: \$6,300,000; \$6,605,100

Funding timeframes: 2014–2020; 2015–2022

Pacific Women supports a range of activities that enable male advocates to be agents of change to end violence against women in communities across Pacific Island countries.

The Male Advocacy Program, developed by the Fiji Women’s Crisis Centre (FWCC) over 15 years ago, includes four stages of training for male advocates, starting with sessions by women’s rights activists and ending with sessions led by a masculinities expert.



From left to right: Shamima Ali (FWCC), Merilyn Tahī (Vanuatu Women's Centre) and Ofa-ki-Levuka Guttenbeil Likiliki (WCCC). Photo Credit: Pacific Women Support Unit.

Coordinator of the FWCC, Shamima Ali, described the male advocacy training as promoting introspection and thinking around women, equality and the human rights of women in every sphere of the man's life including the home, community, traditional setting and workplace.

'For us, it's about the male advocate,' Ms Ali said. 'He is someone who has been trained by Pacific women's groups [and works towards] influencing change in other people and other men.'

FWCC is partnering with the Vanuatu Women's Centre and Women and Children's Crisis Centre (WCCC) in Tonga to roll out this Pacific-led methodology. Three male advocacy trainers are now regularly training men in Pacific Island countries.

Ofa-ki-Levuka Guttenbeil Likiliki, Director of the WCCC, said it is important to harness the power of men in positions of authority to promote gender equality:

'In Tonga, men hold that kind of power within the community and a majority of leaders within the society are men,' she said. 'Using the traditional systems in

Tonga, WCCC believes that they can train these leaders to be advocates on gender equality within the community.'

Merilyn Tahī, Coordinator of the Vanuatu Women's Centre, said a key factor to success is the ongoing support that the women's groups provide to the male advocates after they have completed their training:

'If they have any problems, they can talk to us. Because they will have problems,' she said. 'Suddenly, [they] are changing [their] behaviour, so [they may need] to process that by talking to us. It's something they feel comfortable with talking to us about.'

The Men's Hub, operated by the Nazareth Centre for Rehabilitation in Bougainville in Papua New Guinea, is another model of male advocacy. With Pacific Women support, the Nazareth Centre worked with the International Women's Development Agency to develop a toolkit that equips male advocates and women's human rights defenders to facilitate learning initiatives based on gender equality and human rights at the community level.

At the Nazareth Centre's Male Advocates Forum in December 2017, 111 men shared stories of personal change as they learned about human rights, gender equality and gender-based violence.

'Male advocacy is important because we men are the main contributors to all these types of violence that occur within the community,' said male advocate Dominic Komaru. 'Before we saw these issues of violence as [just] a family matter. After the awareness we've been doing in the community, people understand.'