



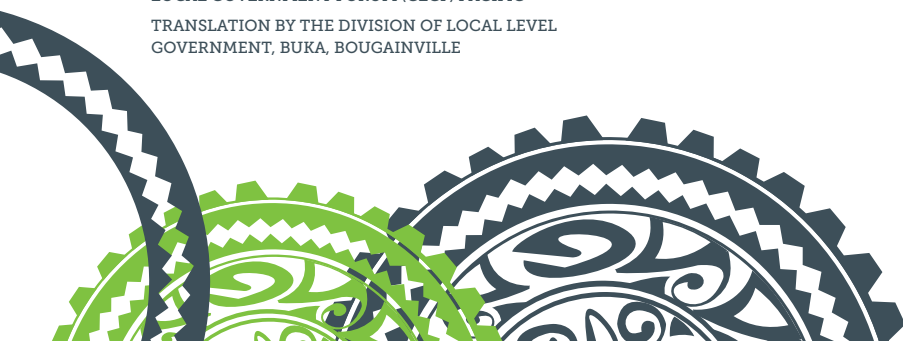
Women's Leadership Stories – Bougainville

Stories of inspiration from
women in local government

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*INDICATES MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL OF ELDERS
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LOCAL GOVERNMENT FORUM (CLGF) PACIFIC
TRANSLATION BY THE DIVISION OF LOCAL LEVEL
GOVERNMENT, BUKA, BOUGAINVILLE



Introduction

Equality in local government makes good sense. Local governments whose composition reflects the diversity of the community have an enhanced understanding of the different needs, access to a wider range of knowledge and skills, and encourages creativity which in turn leads to better service delivery and prosperity for the whole community. That is why out of a wide range of words identified during women in local government networking events across the Pacific region the words 'Diversity, Creativity, Prosperity' have stood out as the most fitting to describe the work and goals of women in local government now and in the coming years.

Despite the existence of affirmative action measures at the sub-national level in almost all Pacific island countries (a little known fact), women's political representation at this level continues to remain significantly low. Nevertheless, regional trends indicate that women's political representation at the sub-national level is gradually increasing and in most cases is higher than at the national level. Across the local government workforce, women's representation in senior management positions is also low, with a few exceptions such as the Buka Urban Council in Bougainville with a management staff of over 90% women. Although these women have contributed an enormous amount to the growth of the sector and their communities, anecdotal evidence suggests there are still significant social, economic and cultural barriers at all levels in the sector that will be difficult to overcome alone.

In response, the Commonwealth Local Government Forum (CLGF) Pacific and International Women's Development Agency (IWDA) have been working together since 2008 to integrate gender equality commitments into local government and enhance the visibility, value and level of support for women employed, elected and involved in local government and help add to their numbers. This work aims to:

- encourage the participation of women in leadership roles in local government
- encourage councils to engender workplace policies, practices and service delivery
- establish women in local government networks and coalitions with women's civil society organisations

Karibaiti Taoaba

Regional Director, CLGF Pacific



Foreword

Increasing women's inclusion in decision making structures and local government generates new information, ideas and priorities to inform a community or nation's future development.

This booklet takes us on a journey of change and challenge with women who identify as grandmothers, mothers, sisters and daughters. We are struck by the hard work and limited resources that each woman faces. Whether it is organisation building and management, peace dialogues, standing in local elections, investing in business or education – we gain a sense of courage and determination from these women to drive change for themselves and their communities.

I congratulate the team at the Commonwealth Local Government Forum for capturing the breadth and depth of the lives of women in our region. This work makes a valuable contribution to building local democracy and understanding of women's issues by raising women's voices. IWDA joins our friends and neighbours in supporting the rise of women to ensure equal representation at all levels of society.

Joanna Hayter

Chief Executive Officer, International Women's Development Agency



Messages of Solidarity

The participation of women in all forms of decision making particularly at the local, divisional and provincial level, is a pre-requisite for sustainable peace and development. This has been an important focus of femLINKPACIFIC's work to implement UN Security Council resolution 1325 (Women, Peace and Security) in Fiji and with our Pacific partners. This commitment has been enhanced through the opportunity to produce and share the stories of a number of the women featured in this publication through our own community media productions since 2000, and I look forward to a continued collaboration as we collectively demonstrate that the women across the Pacific region have the wisdom and expertise and the right to indeed share in decision making for sustainable peace and development.

Sharon Baghwan Rolls

Executive Director, FemLINKPACIFIC

Participation in local government is an extremely effective way for women to share in decision making processes about critically important community needs such as basic service delivery, community infrastructure, health care facilities, transportation and local economic development. As the level of government closest to the community, local government is also best placed to enable greater interaction with the daily lives of women in the home, in the marketplace, and in community groups. Now is the time for a stronger focus on what women in communities across the Pacific can contribute to the democratic process. I hope that the stories contained in this booklet will provide readers with a new perspective on why women are important for local government as well as inspire other women to pursue their potential and right to be involved in local government.

Megan Praeger

Regional Program Coordinator, CLGF Pacific



About the WiLG Network

Women's networks and coalitions in the Pacific play a very important role in promoting awareness of gender issues and encouraging a sense of support and camaraderie amongst women at all levels. Preliminary research has found that women in local government are often outside the sphere of existing women's networks and have limited access to capacity building and knowledge sharing opportunities. Increasing the levels of exchange and support for women in local government, in particular those seeking leadership positions, to ensure their visibility and credibility, require the cultivation of a dedicated network.

The Pacific WiLG Network is intended to bring together local government employees, councillors and other women and men eager to discuss new ideas across the local government sector. The network is an informal think-tank committed to promoting gender equality, enhancing local governance and empowering communities that have the needs of women, men, girls and boys at heart.

The primary purpose of the network is to:

- Raise awareness of the contributions and achievements of women in local government
- Promote strategies to accelerate the advancement of women in decision-making positions
- Provide professional development opportunities for women in local government at all levels
- Provide networking opportunities nationally, regionally and internationally
- Promote best council practices in engendering workplace policies, practices and service delivery



Women Leaders within the Council of Elders

Mary Ann Tousala
HALIA

Roslyn Gatoma
HAGOGOHE

Bertha Eminoni
TOROKINA DISTRICT

Mary Mamatau
BUIN/KONNOU

Bertha Sali
TSITALATO

Agnes Nara
BANA DISTRICT

Julie Tulasor
ARAWA



Mary Ann Tousala*

WOMEN'S REPRESENTATIVE, COUNCIL OF ELDERS,
HALIA, BUKA DISTRICT



“ One of my greatest achievements in life is that I am a good mother. The other is managing the women’s organization to ensure it works effectively and sustains itself to meet the needs of women. ”

I WILL TELL YOU MY LIFE STORY OF HOW I BECAME A LEADER REPRESENTING WOMEN WITHIN MY HOME COUNCIL OF ELDER, WHICH THE HALIA COUNCIL OF ELDER. I FINISHED FROM PRIMARY SCHOOL AND THEN WENT ON TO COLLEGE.

I attended the Arawa School of Nursing to become a nurse; however I was expelled as I assaulted a sick man after he swore at me. I came home and got married. I was not happy with the arrangement as I did not get married to the man I was courting. I did not want to just get married and waste the education I had so I was sent to a Bible College in the Eastern Highlands of PNG. I came home and was dedicated in 1990 as the first female Pastor of the East Buka Circuit of the United Church. I worked for a time as Pastor and due to my leadership quality I was nominated by the church to represent women at Buka District Women’s Council. I was later removed from being a Pastor as the Church thought I was involving in too much politics involving women’s issues at the government level.

I was not happy with the decision of the church as I thought they did not have respect for me. But anyway, I started to involve in partying and dancing, maybe I wanted to get back at the church for what they did to me. I know it was wrong to do that. But there were better things for me as I was later elected by the women as the Vice President of the Bougainville Women’s Council. I was thrilled with the appointment as I knew that I had leadership qualities. You cannot experience better things in life as I later found out. My brother and his son passed away in a month which was devastating for me and my family. However I managed to overcome the grief, as I looked back at how I continue to achieve many things as a leader for women. I attended a lot of workshops and

forums organized by the NGOs for women and learnt a lot of new things to build my capacity as a leader. In 2003, I contested the election for the North Bougainville seat for Women representing women of North Bougainville in the Autonomous Bougainville Government. I lost but came 3rd. It was a good feeling that I can still achieve much. I was elected the President of the Halia Women’s Council and automatically became a representative for women to the Halia Council of Elder.

One of my greatest achievements in life is that I still am a good mother. I have all my children attending schools and colleges. The other is managing the women’s organization to ensure it works effectively and sustains itself to meet the needs of women. I have tried to sustain the needs of my children by selling market produce. It has helped me meet my children’s needs and help me meet travel expenses like attending ,meetings and workshops for programs targeting women. One of my visions is to help sustain the work of the women’s organization in Halia. The women must raise funds to sustain our operations. One initiative I have undertaken in the last 3 months is to produce potatoes and market them to public servants in Buka and also to any interested groups and individuals.

The Women’s group have drawn up a schedule where we produce and market the potatoes. The money that we raise will help meet the needs of the women. I have brought 10 baskets on my way to this interview program which I have already sold to the public servants in Buka. By doing this, we are in one way reducing poverty and giving women an opportunity to realize their full potential to make our home a better place. This is the life time story of me. Thank you

*RECORDED IN ‘TOK PISIN’ TRANSLATED BY THE DIVISION FOR LOCAL LEVEL GOVERNMENT, BUKA

Roslyn Gatoma*

WOMEN'S REPRESENTATIVE, COUNCIL OF ELDERS,
HAGOGOHE, BUKA DISTRICT



“ Today I am so happy because I have achieved a lot of leadership roles and learnt a lot of things in the church, family and amongst my interactions with the community. ”

MY NAME IS ROSELYN GATANA. I AM A WOMEN'S LEADER REPRESENTING THE WOMEN OF HAGOGOHE IN THE HAGOGOHE COUNCIL OF ELDER WHICH IS IN THE HAGOGOHE CONSTITUENCY OF BUKA DISTRICT, BOUGAINVILLE. I AM MARRIED WITH 4 CHILDREN AND HAVE 3 GRANDCHILDREN. I WILL TELL YOU A STORY OF MY LIFE. THERE ARE 10 OF US IN THE FAMILY. MY PARENTS CARED FOR US TOGETHER WITH MY RELATIVES.

In 1977, my father died and that year I could not continue after Grade 6 so I went to a Vocational School at Kihili, a United Church run agency school in Buin, South Bougainville. I stayed 1 year at the Vocational School and learnt a lot of things like, cooking, management and skills that was necessary for women. After I finished, I stayed at a United Church run Bible School and studied for 1 and half years. I came home when I finished and got married to my husband, whom I never courted. The marriage was arranged by both our families. I had little education, which is as far as Grade 6, while my husband was a University graduate. But he was a good man and he supported and mentored me to become a women's leader. In 1989, an Association for Women of the Bougainville Copper Mine was formed and I was elected as the President until the Bougainville Crises started. I came home and stayed with my husband and 3 children. In 1990, I had my 4th child. The child was delivered at the time when there were no government services available such as health centres, hospitals and schools. The PNG Government imposed a total blockade where all services were cut off from reaching Bougainville.

During that period I became heavily involved in the work of the Church – I became involved with the Sunday School Ministry and the Women's Ministry. Due to my hard work, the Church ordained me as a Pastor to work with the Women and Children's Ministry in the Church. Of course there were a lot of problems and challenges; however my husband continued to inspire me to work hard. Today I am so happy because I have achieved a lot of leadership roles and learnt a lot of things in the church, family and amongst my interactions with the community. People have become confident of me been a leader and they have appointed me to represent the women from the Village Assembly into the Hagogohe Council of Elder.

Recently I was also appointed as the Vice Secretary of the Buka Women's Federation. The greater challenge for me now is get the women organized at the Village Assembly, to the Council of Elder level, to the District, to the Autonomous Bougainville Government level and up to the National Government level. This is what the women want. They want bottom-up planning to empower women to become leaders.

This is what I want to do and this ends the story of my life as a women's leader.

*RECORDED IN 'TOK PISIN' TRANSLATED BY THE DIVISION FOR LOCAL LEVEL GOVERNMENT, BUKA



Bertha Eminoni*

WOMEN'S REPRESENTATIVE, COUNCIL OF ELDERS,
TOROKINA DISTRICT



“ The responsibility as President of the District Women's Federation has given me hope to overcome my shortfalls and to mobilize the women. ”

MY NAME IS BERTHA EMINONI. I HAVE 5 CHILDREN AND AM JUST AN ORDINARY HOUSEWIFE FROM THE VILLAGE. I COMPLETED GRADE 6 AT A PRIMARY SCHOOL AND COULD NOT GO FURTHER AND SO I ENROLLED AT THE COLLEGE OF DISTANCE EDUCATION (CODE) AT BUKA AND DID GRADES 7, 8 AND 9.

I did not do Grade 10 as I could not cope with family and study at the same time. I enrolled at a Secretarial School and got Certificate in Typing. I also did the course in Diploma in Public Administration after working with the Bougainville Administration 2001 to 2006.

I resigned and stayed home doing household work until the Bougainville Women's Federation was established and I was elected as the President of the of the Torokina District Women's Federation. I had marriage problem prior to my election. The problem was a blessing in disguise as it taught me to be strong and independent. I also learnt to be mature and look at issues as challenges in life. I am still the President of the Torokina District Women's Federation for the last 4 years. I am grateful for the skills and knowledge I have gained during my school which has helped me to deal with issues as a President of a women's organization. There are many challenges and problems of trying to effective run the organization. They concern lack of good communication and transport infrastructure in Torokina District. It's very difficult to have access to information from other women's organization in Bougainville. There is no access to information which can increase knowledge and empower women on development issues.

One of my achievements is that I have now organized the women to build a guesthouse in Torokina. We hope to have it completed in 2013 if the land issue is settled with the landowners. The Banoni Boboi Council of Elder in Torokina is discussing the issue of land acquisition with the landowners to have the project started.

One major difficulty for the women is the lack of resources such as office stationeries, computers and other materials to help set up an office in the District.

I also have to overcome bad personal habits as I get angry and lose my temper. I also have a bad drinking habit which I am trying to overcome. The responsibility as President of the District Women's Federation has given me hope to overcome these shortfalls and mobilize the women. Though I drink alcohol, it does affect my family. I have grown up children attending high schools and colleges. My eldest son is enrolled at the Institute of Business Studies in Port Moresby and the other is at the Lae Polytech Institute. My 3rd child is at grade 10, the 4th is in grade 8 and the last is at the elementary school.

I am thinking of resigning this year from the position of President for the District Women's Federation and involve in the Oil Palm project in Torokina. Thank you.

*RECORDED IN 'TOK PISIN' TRANSLATED BY THE DIVISION FOR LOCAL LEVEL GOVERNMENT, BUKA

Mary Mamatau

WOMEN'S REPRESENTATIVE, COUNCIL OF ELDERS, BUIN/KONNOU
WOMEN'S FEDERATION PRESIDENT



“ I was chosen to attend an inter-church forum in Arawa. That was the first time I was seen as a leader. That trip, made me a confident woman, telling me that I can take the lead. ”

MY NAME IS MARY MAMATAU, I WAS BORN IN 1963. FROM 1971 TO 1975 I WAS IN PRIMARY SCHOOL. FROM 1975 TO 1979 WERE MY HIGH SCHOOL YEARS. IN 1980 I ATTENDED ARAWA TECHNICAL COLLEGE WHICH WAS ONE OF MY HIGH POINTS. IN 1981, I WAS FORCED INTO A CUSTOMARY ARRANGED MARRIAGE TO A MAN FROM MY VILLAGE.

It was not of my wish but that of my parents. But life goes on and I had my first child in 1981. I continued to have the rest of my children and cared for them which was quite hard while my husband was working at the time. By 1989 I had had six children. This was also the time that the crisis began in Bougainville.


In 1992, we went to a Care Centre and life there was very difficult for mothers especially for women like us who had many children and not enough money to feed them. It continued on to 1994, there were so many killing occurring at the Care Centre and we couldn't stay there so we had to move. So my people wanted to go back to their own area and build a care centre there, however the same treatment continued on.

So it was 1996 when the army decided to move us to another location altogether, not in our area because they wanted to take all the people to one location. So we were moved to Konnou for not even one year before our boys and the Bougainville Revolutionary Army (BRA) came up with the idea of killing the army.

At the same time I was chosen to attend an inter-church forum in Arawa. That was the first time I was seen as a leader. I never thought I would be chosen by the women or by the people to be one of the leaders. This trip made me a confident woman, telling me that I can take the lead. Since then I have taken a leadership role among the women.

When I came back from Arawa, killings were still continuing, so we had to relocate to the bush, that's a long story but we went and stayed in the bush. In 1997, one of my children died, but that didn't stop me from continuing my work with the women. Even though we were living in the bush, it did not stop me from mobilising the women in spiritual groups and programmes, we found ways to help ourselves and each other in how we could meet our needs. Sometime we would help to go and sell produce we would grow in our gardens like 'kumu' (sweet potatoe). We have to walk a long way to a district, local town in Buin. So there were many ups and downs, but the women did not give up. We continued to pray for peace, we continued to talk to our children who were still into the guns.

In 1998, the Bougainville Pan Meeting which was conducted in Buin district, which is where the negotiations and signing of peace agreements took place. I was chosen to represent my COE once again. So those experiences helped me raise my morale and leadership role.



During that period I was also representing women on the BRA side and the meetings on the BRA Government side. A helicopter used to come and get me from my own location and bring me up to Kieta that's where we used to conduct women's meetings for peace and freedom. So that continued on, but I still played the role of the woman's leader at the district level too.

My COE area was one of the fighting zones. In 2000, another shoot out happened between the factions, so the women had to work even harder for peace. We had to talk, we had to go from place to place to talk to the factions.

By 2002, the PNG Census was conducted and I was selected by the district to assist with the census in my COE. So because of the conflict and fear, only a few people to conduct the census and I was one of them brave enough to go to the no-go-zones. I have to get women and make a network of women in order to enter the no-go zones.

In 2005, I contested in the elections at a sub-regional level, but unfortunately I did not succeed. I did not give up and continued to work with the women in various programmes. I continued to attend trainings and workshops building this capacity for myself. Maybe this is just my point of view, but having this capacity helped me work with the women and to continue with the peace process – talking to our children, reconciliation talks.

In 2008 to around 2011, there were still some disagreements and it stopped a lot of our women's programmes. The factions were fighting each other: the BRA, the women and so on. Maybe they had issues and I don't know all the details, but this problem stopped a lot of our women and COE programmes and whatever that was helping us.

In 2011, we decided to talk with our Chiefs. I can say it was just a miracle that the reconciliation happened on the 29th of November. All the factions came together and negotiated to come up with a process to continue. All the ABG members came and witnessed. From that time the women continued to maintain the peace and that this peace in our area won't go backwards.

In 2012, I attended a Honiara Peace Dialogue Workshop. I learnt more about how to go about dialogues and reconciliations. After coming back from Honiara we had the Women's Federation launching. Now, just a few weeks ago we had training that could help us come up with strategies beneficial for our own areas.

Bertha Sali*

WOMEN'S REPRESENTATIVE, COUNCIL OF ELDERS,
TSITALATO, BUKA DISTRICT



“ There are lots of challenges, however, we are working hard to raise awareness. ”

I REPRESENT THE WOMEN OF TSITALATO IN THE TSITALATO COUNCIL OF ELDERS AS PRESIDENT OF THE TSITALATO WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION. I HAVE 4 CHILDREN AND I WAS VOTED IN BY THE WOMEN AS PRESIDENT OF THE WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION.

I am very happy to hold this position and my husband fully supports me and assists me in areas where I need have problem in managing the organization for the women. I do not have much skills and knowledge and depend on my husband to help me. I completed Grade 6 and went on to a Vocational School. With the little knowledge I gained, I am able to look after the office of the women, of course with the help of my husband.

I have an Executive Body made up of myself, the Vice President, the Secretary and the Treasurer. We have done a lot of fundraising activities and have assisted a lot of women access funds to carry out little projects to benefit the women. There have been some problems and challenges, but we have overcome. Sometimes there is no consultation amongst the Executive Body on the expenditure of the funds. We continue to deal with this issue on the spot. This is to ensure the women have confidence in our leadership. So far we have worked well and there is no problem.

One of the major challenges is that most women lack skills in how to organize themselves. There is no training for the women. We have no idea which organization deal with capacity building although there are many women's organization in Bougainville. We lack resources such as office space, stationeries and supplies, computers. We meet under the trees. Nobody is there to help us.

There are lots of challenges, however we are working hard to raise awareness and hopefully we will receive support from the government and the NGOs this year. Thank you.

*RECORDED IN 'TOK PISIN' TRANSLATED BY THE DIVISION FOR LOCAL LEVEL GOVERNMENT, BUKA



Julie Tulasor

COUNCIL OF ELDERS AND PRESIDENT OF KIETA DISTRICT WOMEN'S FEDERATION, ARAWA



“ There are so many challenges that come with being a member of a COE. It's so hard when the people do not listen to you. Sometimes you don't feel like working and want to give up, but to be a leader you have to lead on and face the problems. ”

MY NAME IS JULIE AND I WAS BORN ON CHRISTMAS DAY 1959. MY SMALL VILLAGE IS POSENAME IN THE KOKODA COE, KIETA DISTRICT.

I attended Koromira Primary School from 1969 to 1974 and then I was chosen to go to St.Mary's High School in Asitavi. My parents and my relatives tried to stop me from going to school and instead wanted me to get married, but I refused. So from 1975 to 1976 I was attending High School in Asetavi. I went as far as Grade 8, I was accepted into Grade 9 but by then my parents had stopped me from going to school to get married. But I didn't listen to anybody and instead ran away with a different man. We had seven children together.

During the crisis, there were no services in the urban areas and we left our villages and relocated to the bush to go into hiding. We stayed there for almost five years. In 1994 I was trained as a teacher and I taught children in the bush. When we stayed in the bush, it was a very enjoyable time despite the conflict around us.

In 1995, my husband went to Honiara, the following year we went and stayed with him. I was also sent to train as a literacy teacher. I used to teach the Bougainville refugees in Honiara. In 1999, my children and I returned to Bougainville. I wanted to return to my homeland because I really love Bougainville. My husband didn't want us to return but I went anyway. From 2000–2006, I worked as a literacy trainer in Bougainville and all that time I was struggling to secure peace and to make ends meet for my children because by that time my husband had left us and he had married another woman. I was very upset and I went twice to Honiara to talk to him but he didn't listen and so I came back.

In 2012, I became a village chief; I was chosen to be an executive member of the COE. From there I was elected to be Kieta District Women's Federation President.

There are so many challenges that come with being a member a COE. It's so hard when the people do not listen to you. Sometimes you don't feel like working and want to give up but to be a leader you have to lead on and face the problems. And sometimes, some of them will accuse you of not working properly and all sorts of things like you are not leading the people properly and most times they are jealous and come up with all kinds of things and criticism. I just put my head down and continue to walk strong.



Agnes Nara

WOMEN'S FEDERATION PRESIDENT, BANA DISTRICT



“ We have identified the capacity building of the present leaders and the younger women. We have observed that there is a very large gap between the two and that there are not too many young girls at the back of us to take over when we are gone. ”

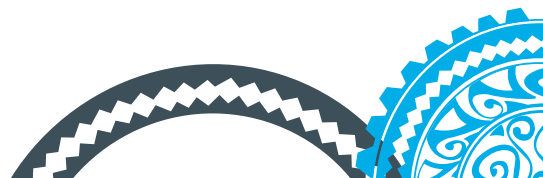
MY NAME IS AGNES NARA. I HAVE A STORY TO TELL ABOUT MY LEADERSHIP. I WAS ELECTED THE PRESIDENT FOR BANA DISTRICT WOMEN'S COUNCIL IN SOUTH BOUGAINVILLE BACK IN 1995. THIS COUNCIL ALSO CAME UNDER THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF WOMEN. I WAS ELECTED AS A PRESIDENT TO MOBILISE WOMEN IN PEACE BUILDING. DURING THE CRISIS, THE WOMEN OF BOUGAINVILLE WERE INVOLVED IN THE PEACE BUILDING PROCESS. IT WAS A TIME OF RESTORATION TOO AND I ALSO BECAME PRESIDENT SO I COULD MOBILISE WOMEN TO TALK TO OUR SONS.

With my leadership, peace was brought back to Bana District. In 1997, I became a member in the Council of Elders (COE) under the provisions of the Bolave Constitution which states that a woman leader who is elected becomes automatically the woman's representative in the COE. This lasted till 2001, where during the peace process there was a need for a government to be established. I was again nominated to be a member representing women of South Bougainville in the interim Bougainville Provincial Government. I stayed as a member up until 2005 when the first ABG elections were held. It was then at that time in the interim Bougainville Provincial Government where we had to prepare ourselves and the government for a new Bougainville.

In June 2005, before the elections, I was nominated to contest in one of the three reserved seats for women. I campaigned for these elections and there were many challenges. People here, especially women think that when we are in the government, we or I have money or that the government gave me grants for women's development. But at that time this was not the case, because Bougainville did not have any forms of grant allocated to the members of the interim provincial government. That was the cause of my loss in the 2005 election. I also realised that campaigning cost a lot of money. I did not have enough money to reach out to all parts of South Bougainville, which is largely scattered all over the place from the coastal areas to the mountains.

After I lost in 2005 in the ABG elections, I did not give up working with the women. In 2009, I was elected President for the Bougainville Women's federation for South Bougainville. After the formation of the ABG we were required to form an umbrella organisation for women in Bougainville because we were autonomous and we were no longer under the national council of women. In the ABG constitution it states that there will have to be a women's organisation for women of Bougainville.

In 2012, after establishing and completing the structure of the BWF which goes right down to the district, COEs and Village Assemblies, the umbrella body was then elected and launched. We started establishing the network from a sub-regional level, which is where I was elected as President. I was also elected vice President of the BWF.





There were also many challenges. In 2010, the women's federation was given a grant of K150,000 to be allocated amongst the three regions- North, Central and South Bougainville. The grant was meant for the establishment of the BWF network and its structure from the sub-region right down to the village advisors. The challenge came because the women thought this was their money.

Women now understand from a recent workshop we had that the money was not theirs. The money was for the BWF establishment. It was held at a regional level though some money was given to four districts in south Bougainville- Buin, Siwai, Bana and Torokina. This misunderstanding was on the funding.

I think that the workshop made the women realise that we have to be self-reliant to find money for different levels e.g. at COE, VA and district level federations.

When women and girls take part in decision making the decisions are sometimes more workable and girls in my opinion- I became a level through capacity building, it was on the job training through leadership I can honestly say. Women know how to manage their homes so they are good decision makers.

The plan for us now for leaders who have been around for a long time and the plan for the BWF, we have identified the needs to strengthen the running of the organisation. We have identified that there should be capacity building as I said earlier.

In 2012 we identified areas where we thought needed strengthening and the smooth running of the organisation. We have identified the capacity building of the present leaders and the younger women. We have observed that there is a very large gap between the two and there are not too many young girls at the back of us to take over when we are gone. So the next step will be to build capacity of the young women to take over the leadership when we finish. We have plans now in the first quarter of 2013 to train women at the district level and then us at the BWF and then the next step is to build the capacity of the young women.

The future looks good and we are hoping that we will achieve our goals. Our vision and mission of the BWF and of the BWF Constitution is to empower and promote the women of Bougainville.



Buka District

Helen Aron
BUKA

Fredalyne Sharloveii
BUKA URBAN COUNCIL

Shirley Namhito
BUKA URBAN COUNCIL

De'ourdes Semoso
BUKA URBAN COUNCIL

Rachel Minsipi
BUKA

Joyce Karevu
BUKA

Brenda Tohiana
BUKA URBAN COUNCIL



Helen Aron

WOMEN'S REPRESENTATIVE, BUKA URBAN COUNCIL



“I have seen that Buka Urban Council is much different from the perception I had before, and it is so much more.”

MY NAME IS HELEN ARON, I AM THE WOMEN'S REPRESENTATIVE AT THE BUKA URBAN COUNCIL.

I was born in 1968. In 1975 I attended primary school and finished in 1980. In 1981, I started at an all-girls high school and enjoyed myself very much with a great influence from expatriate teachers who taught me how to speak English. I have very good memories from that time.

From 1981 to 1984, I went up to Grade 10 and completed my high school. In 1985, I attended Arawa Technical College for a one year course.

The following year, 1986, was a bad year as I did not want to find a job, so I spent one year socialising, playing sports and dancing, thinking this was life. In 1987, I realised that I had to go forth and make use of my training so I went to Madang, Papua New Guinea. I stayed there and found a job from 1987 to 1997. Within that 10 year period, I got married (1990) to a man from New Ireland who I am still married to. I also had my first child, a daughter, in 1992. This was my first experience with motherhood and family life and we lived a very happy life in Madang.

In 1997, I left work due to my husband who wanted to go back to New Ireland. So the whole family moved over and stayed until 2006.

Whilst still in Madang, my husband and I would take part in church services and programs. That's when I came to realise that there was a new thing coming in front of me and it was time to receive Jesus into my life as my Saviour so I changed my entire attitude from my young life. This experience got me involved in the Women's Fellowship and processes such as being the Secretary, Chairlady as well as being a teacher in the Sunday school during my stay in New Ireland for six years. I have been serving in the missions and church programs ever since.

I decided that I needed to take my children back with me to Buka, Bougainville as it was easier for me to look after them there and their schooling without having to walk long distances as was the case in New Ireland. My husband didn't really like the idea, but I said I have to go for good reasons because of my children's education and health.

From 2007-2012, I was unemployed but did manage to save and also continue with my church activities. The women's group selected me to represent them on the Buka Urban Council and I took up the position in 2012.

I have seen that Buka Urban Council is much different from the perception I had before, and it is so much more.

Fredalyne Sharloveii

OFFICE ASSISTANT, BUKA URBAN COUNCIL



MY NAME IS FREDALYNE SHARLOVEII, I WAS BORN IN 1977. WHEN I WAS ABOUT 1 YEAR 8 MONTHS OLD MY FAMILY BROKE UP AND I WAS ADOPTED BY SOMEONE ELSE. IN 1984 I STARTED SCHOOL IN PORT MORESBY WHERE I WAS BROUGHT UP. I RETURNED TO BOUGAINVILLE SHORTLY BEFORE THE CRISIS OCCURRED AND STAYED WITH MY BIOLOGICAL PARENTS.

I went to high school and was in Grade 9 when the Crisis occurred; as a result I stopped school and stayed home. I joined a couple of youth, women's and church groups. Services began to return and I asked my father if I could return to school. He said that I could not saying 'You are a lady and you cannot go!' This was due to the fact it was very dangerous for women during the crisis. So I continued to stay home. But from joining the different youth and women's groups, I was very interested in their work which is why I wanted to finish my education. While working in the church group I attended several trainings and courses conducted by the priesthood and sisters. That was in the 1990s.

In 2002, I got employed by my own brother when he was a station manager in Talia. I started by helping him out with the station until he died. Shortly afterwards, I met a man and had a baby girl with him. Two years later the relationship ended when he left me for another woman, leaving me to care for our daughter on my own. But this didn't let me down as I had been through hardships before.

In 2009, I worked as a volunteer for PNG Red Cross Society Bougainville Branch. I then worked with the Buka Youths and was a Youth representative to the Buka Urban Council. Whilst working with them I was the Program Coordinator.

In 2012, Buka Urban Council employed as an Office Assistant as well as Bank Messenger where I remain today.





Shirley Namhito

ACCOUNTS CLERK, BUKA URBAN COUNCIL



MY NAME IS SHIRLEY NAMHITO. I GREW UP AND WENT TO SCHOOL IN BUKA. WHEN THE CRISIS OCCURRED WE RETURNED TO THE VILLAGE. WE LOST FAMILY, FRIENDS AND PROPERTY. SCHOOLS WERE CLOSED AND WE STAYED HOME HELPING MY MOTHER. IT WASN'T SAFE AS YOUNG MEN WOULD COME AROUND AT NIGHT WITH GUNS.

When services resumed, my mother and I flew out of the province and I went back to school in my mother's village in the Papua New Guinea highlands. My father was unemployed and he later joined us. I completed my education there and so did my sister.

After the crisis, we returned to Bougainville where I was employed at Hotjena Secondary. My father attempted to run a small business but unfortunately passed away.

My family continued to live in Buka where I eventually found a job with the Buka Urban Council. I'm got married and had a child. Unfortunately my husband left me, but I continue to work with the council and raise my child on my own.



De'ourdes Semoso

DEPUTY TOWN MANAGER-OPERATIONS, BUKA URBAN COUNCIL



“ Working with the Buka Urban Council is a challenge especially when you are a woman. I can still remember when I was first employed as the Health Inspector; men were a bit reluctant to listen to the recommendations or what is expected of them to so. ”

MY NAME IS DE'LOURDES SEMOSO, I'M CURRENTLY THE DEPUTY MANAGER OF OPERATIONS FOR THE BUKA URBAN COUNCIL. I WAS BORN IN 1971 AND DID MY PRIMARY SCHOOLING AT MALASA FROM 1978 TO 1983. I WAS SELECTED TO ATTEND HIGH SCHOOL AT THE ALL-GIRLS SCHOOL IS ASITAVI.

When doing my Grade 10 I was the School Student Reps Secretary. These were the happiest times of my high school days. We had Australian and American teachers who were very strict because they were sisters (nuns). Schedules were schedules, study time was study time. From there I continued onto Grade 11 and 12 at Passam National High School in the East Sepik Province, PNG from 1988 to 1989 which was also the start of the Bougainville Crisis. During those two years, people would start harassing us because of our skin colour and the killings that were occurring in Bougainville. Whenever we went to town we would stick in groups.

Two years after that, I attended college in Madang to do my Diploma in Public Health. Before graduating in 1993, I became a mum (too early) and took off three weeks before the final examination. My family didn't know anything. I was able to conceal my pregnancy and get on a flight to Kibe to stay with my sister. I had the baby and remained there for a year.

In 1994, I was lucky to have my father sponsor me back to graduate from college. I later found a job working for Chevron New Guinea an oil project. I was with the community development section and enjoyed my time there. We went on patrols into the villages and bush conducting health education and promotion campaigns and working with the women. We spent most of our time in the field and would return and report to the campsite on the weekends.

I resigned and came home to Bougainville. I remained at home for two years before applying to Buka Urban Council. I was there for a year before resigning again as I needed to get hold of my daughter.

I returned in 2002 to do an assignment with the Council, and I applied for an AusAid scholarship to do a degree in Environmental Health at Curtin University, Perth in Western Australia. I was privileged to have Brenda (Town Manager) endorse my application and was successful in obtaining the scholarship and completed my degree graduating in 2005.

In 2006, I helped my brother in selling cocoa beans. In 2007, I joined the Council as their Senior Health Officer. From there I was promoted to be the Senior Technical Advisor for Health and the highlight of this position was the technical assessment trip to Bali, Indonesia.

In 2012, I was promoted to Deputy Town Manager. It has been a challenge but I'm grateful and believe that I can do it. Another highlight of my work so far was attending the prosecution courses and participating in moot cases in court. These exercises really helped me with my public speaking which I couldn't do before. As an environmental health officer you deal with people on a day to day basis, so it helped me gain confidence. At times I still have butterflies in my stomach, but you get used to it.

Working with the Buka Urban Council is a real challenge especially when you are a woman. I can still remember when I was first employed as the Health Inspector; men were a bit reluctant to listen to the recommendations or what is expected of them to do. But eventually as the years went by, they were able to understand what I was trying to say to them in terms of the legislation and the message I was trying to convey, rather than the fact it was coming from a woman.

Rachel Minsipi

GENERAL HAND, DIVISION OF LOCAL LEVEL GOVERNMENT, BUKA



MY NAME IS RACHEL MINSIPI AND I WAS BORN IN SIWAI. I WENT TO BURAI PRIMARY SCHOOL WHERE I DID GRADES 1-3. I DID GRADES 4 AND 5 AT TONNOU PRIMARY SCHOOL AND GRADE 6 AT A DIFFERENT SCHOOL.

From there I went to high school in Buin where I was for three years. That school was purposely built as a leadership school for Papua New Guineans and Solomon Islanders. When I completed my schooling there, I graduated and I was the Dux. I was offered to go for welfare training but when I went home at Christmas my parents had arranged a marriage for me, so I was not able to get a job. I got married and moved to Rabaul with my husband. There I was working in the community hostel for a year before moving to Kimbe where my husband worked as an electrician. We stayed in Kimbe for 8 years before returning to Bougainville where my husband began work for Bougainville Enterprises where he had his own personal electrical contract.

In 1988, when the Crisis was starting we went back home to Siwai. There was a lot of fighting and bloodshed. In 1993, I came to Buka and have remained ever since. When I arrived in Buka, I reminded myself that I had skills, and I prayed, 'God the skills that you gave me, they are still in my brain, I pray that you will help me get a job somewhere'.

I began work at a guesthouse, and I was the only lady working there. While I was working with them I saw that the work in the guesthouse was too much for one person to do. The owners then offered me a job to work for them instead for about four years.

Later, I made an application for a cleaning service contract. I applied to the LLG for this contract at the Division Office. Instead of giving me a contract they just employed me as their worker, where I am today.



Joyce Karevu

RECORDS CLERK, DIVISION OF LOCAL LEVEL GOVERNMENT, BUKA



MY NAME IS JOYCELYN, I'M FROM NAGOVIS IN THE BANA DISTRICT AND I WORK AS A RECORDS CLERK AT THE DIVISION OF LOCAL LEVEL GOVERNMENT.

I was born on the 20th of April 1985 and am the first born in a family of four siblings – two boys and two girls. However I was brought up in another family, when I was about 8 years old, I was adopted by my aunt (my mother's sister), she was married to a man from Siwai and they had no children.

In 1994, I did elementary and did grade 1 to 8. In 2002, I was selected to attend Bana Provincial High School. I did Grade 11 and 12 at Hotjena High School. Unfortunately I did not receive any offers to attend further tertiary education.

I went to Rabaul and wanted to get a qualification in computer studies. I did a 9 month course there followed by some job experience with the Rabaul Urban Council.

In 2008, I tried to get into teacher's college because my aim was to become a teacher. I applied but was not accepted because my marks were not good enough.

I struggled looking for employment after not being able to get into any of the colleges I had applied for. I eventually found work in one of the Chinese shops in Rabaul.

In 2009 I enrolled in a course for local level government management which lasted six months. I did my practical at the LLG Division in Buka for four months.

In 2011, I got married but we do not have any children yet.



Brenda Tohiana

TOWN MANGERESS, BUKA URBAN COUNCIL



“ As a young girl we took on leadership roles as an all girl’s school. The school was our training field to exercise our leadership skills. ”

MY HAPPIEST TIMES WERE AS A STUDENT AT ASITAVI GIRLS HIGH SCHOOL. EVEN THOUGH LIFE AS A STUDENT WAS TOUGH IN THE REMOTE AREA OF WAKUNAI, GIVEN WE TRAVELLED TO SCHOOL AT THE END OF JANUARY AND RETURNED HOME IN EARLY DECEMBER AT YEAR END, LIFE AT SCHOOL TAUGHT US TO BE RESPONSIBLE FOR OUR OWN NEEDS AND WELFARE.

We took on leadership roles and as an all girl’s school, the school was our training field to exercise our leadership skills.

Yes, I was a star student who excelled in school and I took out the Dux Prize of my grade 10 class at the end of the school year. I chose to go to PNG University of Technology in Lae even though I also had an offer from the University Of Papua New Guinea (UPNG). I qualified in Business Studies majoring in Accounting. I took up employment in Port Moresby with the PNG Investment Corporation. I worked for one and a half years, trained and mentored by the Financial Controller who was a retired lecturer from Perth, Australia.

I relocated to Bougainville one and a half years later after getting married. After five months I secured work with Private Enterprise, a company linked to the Port Moresby based firm I had worked with. I was given responsibilities over the management and administration of the office including the accounting functions of Angeo Pty Ltd in Kieta, Bougainville. These responsibilities sharpened my management skills. Two years later I started a family but still worked.

In 1987, I was invited to apply for the position of Chief Accountant for the North Solomons Capital Authority (NOSCA/Arawa Town Council). This is where my management skills started in the civil service with support from male colleagues when the Bougainville Conflict enveloped Bougainville in 1990. I was one of the last officers to close the office and relocate to Buka.

Life in the village was tough- no government service available due to the embargo by the PNG Government. In 1992, the Bougainville administration was re-established in Buka and as former staff of NOSCA we were requested to establish the Buka Town Management Committee. The former Town Manager, J. Longa accepted and requested me to come on as Chief Accounting Officer. In 1998, I was promoted to Deputy Town Manager. The Town Manager mentored me in preparation to take on his position. In April 1999, I assumed the position when asked by Council. I have been there ever since.



Arawa District

Lucy Travertz
KIETA DISTRICT



Lucy Travertz

EXECUTIVE MANAGER, KIETA DISTRICT, ARAWA



“ I encourage female team leaders in the different sectors under my administration. Maybe because we are conditioned by our culture to hold back. And it will take a lot of time for women to come out of that. ”

MY NAME IS LUCY TANU TRAVERTZ. TANU IS MY VILLAGE NAME WHICH IS VERY IMPORTANT TO ME AND TRAVERTZ IS MY HUSBAND'S NAME. I'M STILL KEEPING IT BECAUSE WE WERE MARRIED IN THE CHURCH AND ALL MY SCHOOL AND UNIVERSITY CERTIFICATES ARE UNDER THIS NAME. SO FOR ADMINISTRATIVE PURPOSES I STILL RETAIN THE NAME EVEN THOUGH THE MAN IS NOT WITH ME. BUT WE REMAIN GOOD FRIENDS. HE LIVES IN PORT MORESBY WHILE I AM HERE IN ARAWA.

I was born on the 28th of January 1953; I attended a village school in my own village at a very early age when I wasn't even fit to go to school. I used to admire the other children going to school and wanted to join them. My brother was a teacher so he put me in.

I mostly received a Catholic Mission education. In village school and mission school we were forbidden to talk in 'tok plas' (native languages) and we were encouraged to speak either pidgin or English, but mainly English by the nuns.

In Grade 6, I was taught by an Australian lay missionary. From there I went to St. Mary's Catholic High School in Wakunai District which is a girl's high school. I did Grade 7 to Grade 10 there. I left for Port Moresby in 1972 to begin preliminary studies at the University Of PNG (UPNG). I wasn't selected to go to National High School, which sort of discouraged me and I didn't have confidence in myself so I thought maybe I'll go to the next closest level to UPNG which is the Admin College, now known as the Institute of Public Administration. But at the same time I applied to work with Radio Bougainville and I was accepted in the job with the intention to become a radio announcer one day.

However, my name was also referred by the Admin College to the Australian Defence Administration. In 1972, I went to Port Moresby to join the Defence Administration at the cash office. I was more attracted to joining this job than the Radio Bougainville position. When I received my first pay, it really discouraged me, it was just \$28.

I was always looking out for opportunities for further studies. So when the Public Service advertised scholarships for students for higher certificates, I applied straight away. I was successful and was selected to go down and attend the International Training Institute in Sydney, Australia for one year. The Public High Service Certificate I received is equivalent to matriculation (school leaving certificate). I graduated with high academic results and was in the top five students.

On return from Sydney, I wasn't really keen to stay in the cash office because of the pressure that we went through and especially with the military personnel who were often very raw and unruly. They would not care how they spoke, or the language they used which was hurtful. They would swear without thinking, and coming from a strong Catholic home where I was brought up and being taught by nuns, that didn't go well with me. I was very good at writing and English and because of that I decided to transfer to a section where I can use these skills. I applied to the Defence Head to transfer to Policy. I was accepted and in 1975 was transferred Defence Policy and Planning. I was the first woman and first local among the expatriates to work in that division.

I also got married in June 1975. I was about 20 years old at the time and we went to live with my husband's parents. It was a big church wedding because my husband was the eldest.

The first two years of marriage were good but after that, things went downhill. However, these problems didn't affect my job. When I was experiencing these personal problems, I went to the Priests and the Nuns for help, I felt closer to them. Those were the only people that I could talk to, and I got a lot of encouragement from the Parish Priests. So those were my consolations from the religious people. I tried my very, very best to contain this marriage as I didn't believe in marriage breakup as it had been a church marriage and I wanted to bring my children into this world in the right way. I didn't have any children at the time. But towards the end of the year I lost my first child, who was a stillborn. That was a disappointment for me. I was expected to die, but maybe the good Lord had plans for me and only the baby died.

In 1977, I got promoted to Clerk Class 7 to look after the Australian-PNG Corporation desk in the Policy division.

From 1979–1980, I was seconded to go and work with the Bougainville Provincial Government for two years. So the job that I held here was Provincial Administrative Officer. I was responsible for all the staff, vehicles and logistic support in the provinces. I also used to work very closely with the community governments then. Holding that job, the incumbent is also a member of the policy secretariat, and that policy secretariat in any provincial government is a decision making body. So I was the first female to be in the policy secretariat in any provincial government. So that was for two years before returning to Port Moresby.

I returned to Defence and was later promoted to take up the office in Policy and Legislation department which was a Clerk Class 8.

In 1981, I applied for part-time studies at the University Of Papua New Guinea (UPNG). So I was taking two units each semester and at that time my husband was very supportive so I had to take up part-time employment at the horse race betting, trying to make ends meet. I had children at the time and my husband had resigned from his job without telling me to study full-time at UPNG.

In 1982, I overloaded my studies at UPNG plus part-time employment. My conscience was not right feeling that there were people out there without employment while I had two jobs and studying. So I decided to forgo the part-time employment I had with the horse racing.

While doing part-time studies, the Department of Personal Administration selected me for a three month program in Sydney. I tried to convince them that I was taking part-time studies and would be unable to go, but I still had to go to Sydney. Thankfully I was able to submit a major assignment from Sydney and thank God my results were still good. Whilst down in Sydney I had to select an organisation similar to the one I worked at in PNG. Luckily the Defence department is also in Australia, so I attached myself at the office in Canberra there for two weeks for on the job training.

From 1983–1985, I continued my work with the Policy and Legislation department. Then I applied for the Free Play Scholarship which is usually awarded to Senior Public Servants to go on full time study at any university. So I was accepted and in 1985 I went on full time study at University. I completed my studies in 1987 and graduated with a Bachelor of Arts majoring in Psychology in 1988 and was also six months pregnant at the time with my youngest child.

For me my problems with my marriage I saw as stepping stones, it made me a very strong willed person and I don't see those as stumbling blocks.

With my new degree, the Secretary for Defence thought I would be better off in a management position. So I was placed down in the management section and was the Assistant Secretary Management for three years from 1988 to 1990. Whilst there I applied for a post-graduate management studies and in 1991 was accepted at the University of Central Queensland in North Rockhampton. When I returned to work, the Secretary had changed and I was called back to Policy and legislation which was disappointing as I had enjoyed working in the management section.

I began looking for ways to get out of Defence, so started looking at other avenues for employment. In 1993, I found a job with Telikom and by 1996 had been promoted (worked my way up) to manager of the occupational safety and welfare position.



From 1999 to 2003 I was awarded a contract for an Executive Manager of Human Resources position with Telikom. In 2003, there was a reorganization of Telikom and I went back to my old position of Manager of Occupational Safety and Welfare.

I applied for the position of Executive Manager for Kieta District. But my real interest was for the position for Chief Executive Officer for Human Resources because of my background and previous experience but somebody else won the position. When he completed his 3 year contract and left, I was asked to go and take his place but I refused.

I refused because my view from the outset I was that I was fully qualified and despite being a member of the PNG Human Resource Institute where I had been Vice President and also the same for the PNG Occupational Health Safety Association together with good references they had still disregarded my initial application as CEO. Even now they still ask me to go back, but I refused.

In those two professional organizations I had always been the only female member. It was an extra-curricular activity that helped me professionally.

I attended a Women's Executive Meeting in Sydney up in the Blue Mountains. When I came back I initiated a women's networking in Telikom. My core business there was to help women progress up to the decision making area. I also organised workplace based training for the women as well. But it was very difficult, maybe if I had more time I could supervise them but what I see is that even when you encourage women, they still hold back. They need to have a bit of their own stamina, will power and ambition in order to get to where they want to go. I've tried to encourage women during my time in the Defence Force and while working at Telikom. I continue to encourage female team leaders in the different sectors in my current administration.

Maybe because we are conditioned by our culture to hold back. And it will take a lot of time for women to come out of that. In Bougainville, I think we were coming out of that and this Crisis started. So now we've gone 20 years back and it will take time. But now more and more young women are going to school, but that group of people that have missed out, all we can assist them with would be life-skills type of training maybe because most of them are now married. I always say it's a time bomb we are sitting on, and we must really do something.

My achievements in Telikom include my wellness and safety programs. I would coordinate helicopter and aviation safety programs as well. Where I didn't have the resources I would tap into international resources and professionals outside like Australia. I would also travel right around PNG conducting all these programs for workers. I also worked with the churches especially the Catholic Church on family life programs. If we saw that a lot of our Telikom employees were sick or having respiratory problems, we would organise consultations with outside professionals.

I also organised training with St. John's Ambulance in Australia for basic training in first aid. Whilst doing that it has helped me to learn, and I would go to my programs to Telikom employees in all the provinces. I think I was the most well travelled person in Telikom. I've learnt so much.

When I returned to Arawa, even though I'm from here I'd been away for 33 years, I noticed that the people were totally different. The Crisis had changed them. When I was in Port Moresby I thought that I would come back to Arawa and make a change so rapidly and this is the type of mentality that Bougainvilleans in Port Moresby have, and I was so wrong because there are so many impediments here now.

In 2008, I totally refused to entertain crisis related claims from well before my time and I had to sit them down and say the ABG does not have the money to pay for such amounts being claimed. The ABG is still a baby; we still rely on PNG for much of our money, money which should be used to help the ABG grow, and not on these crisis claims.



I've faced a lot of challenges upon my return to Bougainville. My brother and my family came down and told me to pack up and go back to Port Moresby. I was actually in Buka petitioning with the Police Commissioner not to withdraw the police from Arawa, when my office was vandalised. My brother told me to pack up and go, and I refused. The challenge made me stronger to stay back.

The house that I stayed in was claimed by the Catholic women but a helicopter company that used to be based in Arawa used to own the house and had left everything to the Arawa District Administration. However I was asked to pay for the house by the so called Catholic women and ended up paying K14,000.

Last year an ex-combatant accused me of hiding someone's ballot paper during the 2012 PNG National Elections. I was a returning officer for Central. I was also involved in the 2009 Presidential By-Election, 2010 ABG Elections. The claim made against me was ridiculous as counting of votes is so open. So one of that person's supporters came and vandalised my house. At that point my family and Chiefs nearly staged a war which would have disturbed everything and ruined the whole peace process. But because it was prayfully addressed it did not get to that level however, today the person who accused me has never reconciled. It was at that time that I wanted to give up and go back to Port Moresby.

For my safety, my family then put me under house arrest and my nephews who were ex-combatants slept around the house. My Chiefs were also sleeping in the house. I was under house arrest for two months; they didn't want me to go back to work. That's when I wanted to resign and return to Port Moresby. Then many people started talking to me and I thought about my Kieta District office relocation and its officers. I went to Human Resources to resign but I was given another three year contract which I signed. I have been encouraged to stay back and establish the Kieta District relocation, the office has been built and this year we will complete two staff houses too. We should make the move by April or May. My goal is to establish the structure of the administration as well as outsourcing technical expertise to help establish other plans that I have already

developed into phases like a clinic, police post, community hall, international school and public servants sports facility. I have already approached a technical person who is going to set everything out in my plans properly.

My core business is to strengthen and enhance capacity and I have many plans for Kieta District. Most are to do with infrastructure and one of these plans is also to make sure the feeder roads reach right up into the mountains for the rural and remote village communities.

As for my married life, I have been separated from my husband now for 24 years, not legally. But my children have a good relationship with both of us. I believe in my children and I think when you focus on your children you will be in the right frame of mind too. My children, even in school many people, the teachers always say 'Lucy your children are not like kids brought up in a home with one parent, they are well behaved', but I think it depends how that one parent has given his or her time. I don't say it is a broken home, the family is still together, just one man decided to leave, otherwise the rest of the family is together and it is not broken. Its how that one parent has looked after and nurtured those kids. I'm also very specific with not letting my relatives look after my children too. Whenever I had problems, my parents would want to come and look after the children but I wouldn't let them. I would solve mine and my children's problems together. It makes you closer to your children too and your children become very responsive and determined and loving as well. So I sometimes share the way I brought up my children with my friends. Otherwise my husband and I are good friends, when in Port Moresby I visit his parents and maintain a good relationship. We talk more freely now than we did when we were together.



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women's development
agency inc.

