

Palauan Men Rethink Feminism

Palau [Ending Violence Against Women](#) [Enhancing Agency](#)

November 25, 2016

Project name: Regional support for male advocacy

Outcome areas: Ending violence against women, enhancing agency

Project partner: Fiji Women's Crisis Centre (FWCC) and Government of Palau

Total funding: \$17,998*

Funding timeframe: 2016

In June 2016, Pacific Women supported two participants from Palau to attend the month long Regional Training Programme run by FWCC. After attending the training, the two counsellors have found they approach their work with a different perspective.

The Regional Training Programme is considered by international donors and agencies to be a best practice model of training in the area of gender awareness and eliminating violence against women.

Mr Wilson Subris is a Spiritual Health Coordinator with the Ministry of Health and Mr Vierra Toribiong works for the Ministry of Community and Cultural Affairs and has travelled to Palau's 16 states to deliver awareness training about the Family Protection Act.

Both men found the training 'an eye opener'. Although they both deal closely with the issue of violence against women as part of their work, Mr Subris explained that the training helped them understand the issues in a new light and approach their work with new insight: 'This training is unique. The unique thing that I learned here is the link between gender inequality, violence against women, and society's attitudes around it. The impact of that on me has been huge. I was challenged to just look at where I am, where I was and provide a bigger picture, a more accepting picture. I am very excited and I want to be part of the group of people making the change.'

The course allowed both men to examine the daily inequalities experienced by women and the systems that reinforce this. 'It's about control,' explained Mr Subris. 'Men usually like to control what women do and expect women to comply with what they want. It's common both among younger and older men.'

Course topics in the Regional Training Programme include gender and violence against women; religious and cultural justifications for violence against women; counsellor training; and international human rights law and national laws in the Pacific relating to violence against women.

The course gives participants the opportunity to better understand the concepts of gender and feminism. Mr Toribiong confided that before the course he had not understood the difference between ‘feminism’ and ‘femininity’.

‘I had a different vision of what the word meant. And then I sat there and got educated by Ms Ali [the Coordinator of FWCC] and realised that I am a feminist!’



L-R: Palauan advocates Mr Wilson Subris and Mr Vierra Toribiong spent the month of June in Suva this year, attending the Fiji Women’s Crisis Centre’s Regional Training Programme. Photo: Shazia Usman/ Pacific Women Support Unit.

** 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](#).*