

Mere Moto, Community Media Officer – Features



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“Programs on community radio are very different compared to mainstream. On mainstream we know more about Kim Kardashian than Kini from down the road.”

~ Mere Moto

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Mere Moto is one of FemLINKPACIFIC’s newest staff members. She joins the team as a Community Media Officer (CMO), focusing on the organisations’ print advocacy. One of the most interesting things about Mere, is that aside from her enthusiasm about working at FemLINKPACIFIC, she used to be part of Fiji’s mainstream broadcast industry for seven years.

Tell us a little bit about yourself...

I’m from Tailevu but Toorak has been home all my life. I spent some time studying at the University of the South Pacific and before joining FemLINKPACIFIC last year, I worked at the Communications Fiji Limited’s radio station FM96. I also play rugby and am part of a team called Striders.

On joining FemLINKPACIFIC...

I had been thinking of doing something different for some time but kept procrastinating. It was when I saw FemLINKPACIFIC was looking for a community media officer, I decided to give it a go. As one of the CMO’s, I do the feature writing, compilation of publications, drafting press releases, liaising with the media and so on.

Before joining FemLINKPACIFIC I was aware of human rights violations and discrimination and would do my venting on Facebook, but after joining a feminist organisation I see things differently. I see it now with a gender lens.

In terms of changing jobs at a professional level, it has been very challenging. Having worked in mainstream radio for seven years, I have had to unlearn certain skills and some of them are taking longer because they have become habits. But I have also had to learn some new skills. Learning how to engage with other CSOs when it comes to programmes and thinking of better ways of collaborating especially on the radio. It involves a lot of thinking outside the box. It's been a huge learning curve for me.

On a personal level, it's been different. I write for my rugby club so I thought I was great at writing. That's until I came here, to a feminist media organisation and learnt different ways of writing and unpacking issues. That's something that I have picked up and I have liked learning that.

On the difference between mainstream and community radio...

Programs on community radio are very different compared to mainstream. On mainstream we know more about Kim Kardashian than Kini from down the road. The programmes are definitely one of the biggest differences.

One of my first assignments was to go to Tavua with Frances [Tawake, FemLINKPACIFIC's Network Coordinator]. After talking to a lady who hadn't had tapped water in 20 years, I had to reflect and ask myself – who am I to complain about having no water for a few hours because of a burst pipe or having a cold shower? It gives you a reality check on life and it has been a real eye-opener for me.

In Alisia's [Alisia Evan's is one of femLINKPACIFIC's young women broadcasters and producers) radio program, Morning Waves, we do something called Who Makes the News where we go through the national newspaper and do gendered analysis. You'd be lucky if you get a gender balanced article. Many of these articles are written by women journalists but that does not mean they are gender sensitized. I think journalists do need to be gender sensitized for it to make an impact on their work.

On celebrating World Radio Day...

I was really excited for the girls for the World Radio Day marathon! It was nice to see them realizing that this was the first time they were going to be on air for 24-hours and knowing that there may be someone listening to them in Nausori and Navua. Everybody helped to ensure that it went well. Even listening to their reflections the week after was amazing. A lot of people found out for the first time how hard it is to stay up and run a radio show at night and also discover the dynamics of co-hosting.

Then there was those, including me, who learnt more about the Beijing Platform for Action and realized that it's not just one area [such as education or reproductive health issues for women] that's critical, but that they are all linked.

On interacting with other women and being part of the movement...

Being here for the last eight months as part of a team of young women has been wonderful. It has made it easier to transition. We have people like Francis, Sulu and Emeli who have been doing the work for a long time and have helped me transition. Sharon [Bhagwan Rolls, FemLINKPACIFIC's Executive Director] is a great mentor. I feel supported in my work space and being a relatively smaller organisation in terms of numbers [compared to previous workspace] it's easier to reach out to people.

I also produce and host the CSO Hour which airs on Friday's from 11am to 3pm. During this time we try and profile different Civil Society Organisation's in Fiji. Sometimes we profile the organisation as a whole and sometimes we highlight the different programs and projects they have. With getting to know the different CSOs and their program, you get a better understanding of what everyone is doing, draw linkages and how you can work with them.

About FemLINKPACIFIC

FemLINKPACIFIC: Media Initiatives for Women is a Fiji-based feminist community media organisation. It was founded in 2000 by a group of women and men who came together through the Blue Ribbon Peace Vigil. The organisation emerged in the aftermath of the 2000 political crisis in Fiji, as a peaceful way of speaking out against what was happening in Fiji.

On 5 May 2004 it launched Fiji and the Pacific's first women led community radio station – now known as FemTALK 89FM.

In February 2015, the organisation added another milestone to its growing list when it celebrated the technical expansion of FemTALK 89FM Suva to cover the Navua to Nausori corridor of Viti Levu by boosting the transmission power to 300 watt (it used to be 100). This enables FemTALK 89FM Suva to reach communities in some of the most densely populated areas between Navua and Nausori.

Pacific Women is a strong supporter of the critical work FemLINKPACIFIC engages in to ensure the women of Fiji, especially rural women, have a voice in national decision-making. As part of its long-term support to increase gender equality in the Pacific, Pacific Women was pleased to invest a grant of AUD 186,000 to FemLINKPACIFIC, which contributed towards this technical expansion.

Following this year's weekend marathon broadcast held to mark World Radio Day (themed 'Youth and Radio'), the organisation's young women staff and volunteers reflected on their journey so far.