

The Role of Pacific Women in Peacebuilding and the Implications for Programming: Experiences and Case Studies from CPAD (Draft 3)

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The roles that Pacific women play in peacebuilding were explored based on case studies emerging from UNDP's CPAD project and the experiences of members in the CPAD community to identify how programming may be better designed to ensure that women's roles can be strengthened and peacebuilding initiatives improved in general. Key themes of Pacific women's work for peace that emerged included reaching across conflict lines, advocacy for cessation of violence, promotion of dialogue, and appealing to political and military figures on traditional, religious and moral grounds. It was found that Pacific women often utilise their roles as mothers, while older women also draw upon the traditional authority bestowed to community elders to achieve their aims. The study also established that women do participate in high level decision making to a degree but usually through influencing men and that their peace work is largely undervalued. Most importantly it was observed that the peacebuilding work undertaken by women was essential to building the necessary foundation upon which formal peace settlements and reconciliation could begin and later take root in conflicted societies. These findings suggest that women's involvement in peacebuilding needs to be further supported through capacity building, financial aid and in-kind assistance. The paper acknowledges the important role of men in peacebuilding and that the positive role that influential male champions and young men who are supportive of women's involvement in peacebuilding needs to be expanded to achieve better peacebuilding outcomes for all. Moreover, increasing the awareness of regional and global declarations, plans and conventions that region's leaders have signed on to and that support women in peacebuilding and using them as advocacy tools is recommended. Spaces for women to participate in high level decision making processes should also be opened up and women empowered in those spaces while being sensitive and responsive to possible backlashes from men. International and national funding partner organizations also need to look beyond just NGOs, and explore how to support traditional mechanisms and faith based organizations through which women can also effectively work for peace. Lastly, organisations must actively aim to improve gender equality in all peacebuilding programmes and ensure gender analysis is included in broader conflict analysis when designing, monitoring and evaluating peacebuilding projects.¹

¹ The author would like to thank Janet Murdock for her guidance on this paper and the interviewees: Mary Kini, Alisi Taumoepeau, Sister Lorraine Garasu, Mary Gele, Sharon Baghwan Rolls, James Laki, and Koila Olsson. Also Hona Holan and Marilyn Havini for their correspondence. Further interviews and correspondence will be done in preparation of future drafts of this paper.

1 INTRODUCTION

Because women and children are the main victims of conflict and men cause the problems, the women really want to stand up to stop the violence. It becomes a motivation for them.

Mary Kini, Human Rights Defender, Kundiawa Human Rights Advocates²

1.1 CPAD

The Strengthening Capacities for Peace and Development (CPAD) project is a regional initiative of the UNDP Pacific Centre designed to build a community of peace practitioners, strengthen the regional and national peace and security architecture, and support peacebuilding interventions. Since 2008 in Tonga, Fiji, Solomon Islands, and Papua New Guinea (in both Bougainville and the Highlands) CPAD has provided opportunities for governments and civil society organizations (CSOs) in the Pacific to work together on peace and development. Key activities of CPAD include:

- Regional and national workshops for governments and civil society leaders to foster constructive engagement on peace and development issues and to share experiences, explore Pacific approaches, disseminate methodological tools, and build capacity;
- Technical and financial support for national-level initiatives that foster cross-sector engagement on peace related issues;
- The provision of small grants to civil society organizations to enable them to put theory in to practice and to support strategic, innovative and catalytic peacebuilding projects;
- The development and moderation of a virtual Pacific Community of Peace Practitioners on the Internet to share and reflect on experiences, share resources, encourage peer learning, and collect and disseminate stories, manuals, curricula and case studies on building peace; and,
- The documentation of Pacific peacebuilding and dialogue processes to develop best practices suited to the region.

Throughout the project UNDP has actively taken a gender sensitive approach. It has ensured that roughly equal number of men and women participate, built capacity in gendered approaches to peacebuilding, sought out and supported women practitioners who traditionally have played less prominent but still vital roles, analysed the gender differentiated roles in Pacific peacebuilding, and ensured that all CPAD supported projects are gender sensitive.

1.2 CASE STUDIES

As part of the CPAD project a compendium of case studies from the Pacific is currently being drafted to explore and share the unique Pacific approaches to dialogue and peacebuilding. The compendium will be published later this year. Some of these case studies are on projects that CPAD has supported through its small grants while others explore peace building processes that CPAD participants have been involved in prior to joining the CPAD community. Six of these case studies discuss at least in part the role of women in specific peace processes.

² Interview with Mary Kini. 11 June 2013 by telephone.

1.3 CPAD AND THE ROLE OF WOMEN PEACEBUILDERS

This paper draws its findings from the CPAD case studies and interviews, and correspondence directly with CPAD participants. The findings reflect the largely culturally ascribed roles of women in Pacific as outlined by the interviewees themselves and the case studies, but also shows them breaking out of those roles in to new ones and challenging structures. As this paper shows, women play a wide variety of roles but certain key roles stand out. For organizations that are interested in supporting women to move further in to new peacebuilding roles and develop structures that better empower women, understanding the recent history and baseline from where they are coming from is essential. Women peacebuilders will always work with men for peace and so preparing spaces for them in traditionally male dominated arenas, further strengthening their traditional peacebuilding roles, and supporting them to carry out their new roles effectively will lead to better outcomes for not only women, but for peace. The case studies and interviews show that crisis and peacebuilding can offer an opportunity for women to break through traditional roles. However, a conflict sensitive lens is needed in supporting that work to ensure effective results and to avoid a backlash from men and other aspects of society who may find it confronting.

2 PACIFIC WOMEN PEACEBUILDERS

Women are the first when there is a tribal fight to cross the lines, give food, to smile and share stories of suffering.

Mary Gele (Jiwaka Province, Papua New Guinea), Women's Representative Councilor, Local Level Government Council and CPAD member³

When we used to go to dialogue with the militants, we would say "We are not here to argue or fight. You are all our children and we would like you stop fighting" no matter which side of the conflict they were on.

Sister Lorraine Garasu, Coordinator, Nazareth Center for Rehabilitation and CPAD member⁴

The picture of Pacific women in peacebuilding that emerges from the CPAD case studies and interviews is one where their roles are generally low-key, undervalued, at the grass roots level, and are both varied and vital for peace processes to begin, gain momentum, and to take root. They provide the underlying foundation for societies to emerge from conflict without which formal peace negotiations and reconciliation could not occur. Once peace negotiations are underway women can help steer negotiations through challenges by keeping an eye on the bigger picture of peace and continually reminding the usually male negotiators what is important. Lastly after the formal agreement, they consolidate peace through their networks by socialization of the peace agreement to communities and through supporting reconciliation.

There have been a number of studies undertaken globally that have examined the role of women in peacebuilding and the implications for programming. One in particular titled *From the Ground Up - women's role in local peacebuilding in Afghanistan, Liberia, Nepal, Pakistan and Sierra Leone* completed by ActionAid

³ Interview with Mary Gele. 6 June 2013 by telephone.

⁴ Interview with Sister Lorraine Garasu. 8 June 2013 by telephone.

International, Institute of Development Studies and Womankind⁵ looked at the role of women in local peacebuilding initiatives in Afghanistan, Liberia, Nepal, Pakistan and Sierra Leone. *Women Building Peace: What they do and why it matters* by women, peace and security expert Sanam Naraghi Anderlini⁶ also highlights the work of women peacebuilders by drawing from and reflecting on their experiences and contributions. The findings of these studies are comparable to roles of women in peacebuilding in the Pacific.

2.1 CONFLICT AND GENDER

Conflict impacts on gender relations and roles in society. Conversely, gender roles and relationships affect conflict dynamics and how conflict is managed by society.

A common source of conflict is the unequal distribution of privilege, prestige, power and resources, and gender is a key variable in that distribution. In conflict women also often suffer from sexual violence, sometimes used systematically to achieve military and political objectives. Moreover, women are more affected than men by the breakdown of social services and economic collapse caused by conflict as they endeavour to care for their families.

In a positive sense conflict can present an opportunity to address inequalities and challenge traditional gender roles that are unfair to women. For example, women often assume head of household roles when men are fighting in conflicts giving them new authority. Moreover, in Bougainville, prior to the conflict women carried produce to the market on their backs. In post-conflict Bougainville although men would not carry produce on their backs as this was seen to be a feminine task, they did begin to carry produce to the market in wheelbarrows. This new role was brought about by a change in gender relations and roles from the conflict according to Sister Lorraine Garasu.⁷ Through these new roles and relationships, women can to begin to influence the conflict dynamic more. However, if abuses against women increase due to lawlessness and a breakdown in societal norms, or groups that are against gender equality gain the upper hand in a conflict zone, the position of women in society may be further degraded.

Gender relations also affect the way that conflict is expressed and how it is managed in society. A conflict where systematic sexual violence against women as a weapon of war is prevalent; where women are not given a voice in conflict resolution; and, where support to women in post-conflict settings is not given adequate consideration, reflects a society with unequal and unjust gender relations.

Just as every conflict has a gender dimension to it, the CPAD project and studies such as *From the Ground Up* show that peacebuilding too has a gender dimension.

2.2 ROLES IN PEACEBUILDING

The specific roles played by women striving for peace include reaching across conflict lines using common values and traditions, advocacy for the cessation of violence, promotion of dialogue and traditional

⁵ ActionAID International, Womankind & Institute of Development Studies (2012). *From the ground up - women's role in local peacebuilding in Afghanistan, Liberia, Nepal, Pakistan and Sierra Leone*. Institute of Development Studies. Retrieved from http://www.actionaid.org/sites/files/actionaid/from_the_ground_up_-_full_report.pdf.

⁶ Anderlini, Sanam Naraghi (2007). *Women Building Peace: What they do and why it matters*. Boulder and London: Lynne Rienner.

⁷ Sister Lorraine Garasu in a comment made at the Consultation on Women's Empowerment for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence in the Pacific in Nadi, Fiji, 13-15 June 2013.

mechanisms to heal grievances, and appealing to political and military figures on traditional, religious and moral grounds.

This was observed during the conflict or the “tensions” as it is commonly known in the Solomon Islands from 1998 to 2003, when women’s groups built bridges between protagonists. For example one women’s church group crossed battle lines to hold prayer meetings with combatants. This activity underscored the common Christian faith and reminded “the combatants of a larger sense of shared Solomon Islands’ identity that transcended ethnic and communal lines, while also emphasizing Christian virtues of forgiveness and nonviolence.”⁸ Furthermore, in Fiji FemLINKPACIFIC, a regional civil society organization, currently uses radio dialogue to bring rural women and government officials together to discuss development challenges that women face. It also establishes peace building strategies with local women by building relationships within local regions and among key government policy makers.⁹

In playing these roles Pacific women draw upon a number of positions in society to achieve their aims. In some cases they draw upon their traditional authority as mothers to have their voices heard and to bring the two sides together. At the Burnham One talks held in New Zealand in July 1997 to facilitate the forming of a joint position between the rival Bougainville Revolutionary Army and Bougainville Resistance Force, women spoke out amidst accusations of murder and threats of violence saying “Look, I am here, there is my son over there, and over there is my other son. And all of you, you are all our sons”, thereby appealing as mothers for both sides to come together as Bougainvilleans.¹⁰

Women peacebuilders also made appeals to combatants on behalf of women and children as innocent victims of the conflict. In the Kondika triba I conflict in Jiwaka Province in the Papua New Guinea Highlands through the work of Voice for Change, a local civil society organization supported by CPAD for the intervention, women of the displaced Mindpakanem clan gave presentations to tribal leadership and government on the plight of women and girls in displacement. The women also provided valuable insight to the Peace Mediation Team in to the thinking of the Mindpakanem men, who felt ashamed at not being able to protect their women. These appeals and sharing of cultural insight helped to shape the peace process and influence decision making at the leadership level.¹¹ In the Solomon Islands as well, a group called Women for Peace (WFP) used their traditional authority as mothers to meet with combatants and make them understand the impact of the conflict on women, children and vulnerable groups, and negotiate for the return of child combatants.¹²

In other cases women were able to draw on tradition to be empowered to work for peace. In the Solomon Islands tradition or *kastom* was reported to have been both a hindrance and a help for women peacebuilders. In particular in rural communities *kastom* imparts traditional powers on elderly women and

⁸ Brigg, M. *et al.* (2012).

⁹ Murdock, J. (2012). *Radio Dialogue by FemLINKPACIFIC* (Sharing and Exploring Pacific Approaches to Dialogue: A Compendium of Case Studies from Pacific Islands Countries: Case Study 14). Suva, Fiji: UNDP.

¹⁰ Reddy, P. (2006). *Peace Operations and Restorative Justice: Groundwork for Post-conflict Regeneration* (Doctoral dissertation, Australia National University, Canberra, Australia). Cited in Lees, S., Havini, M., Murdock, J., Vienings, T., & Namgyal, J. (2013). *Bougainville Peace Agreement: The Burnham I and II Dialogues* (Sharing and Exploring Pacific Approaches to Dialogue: A Compendium of Case Studies from Pacific Islands Countries: Case Study 06). Suva, Fiji: UNDP.

¹¹ Lees, S., Be’Soer, L., M., Murdock, J., Vienings, T., & Namgyal, J. (2012). *The Kondika Tribal Conflict: A Sub-clan Mediation in the Papua New Guinea Highlands* (Sharing and Exploring Pacific Approaches to Dialogue: A Compendium of Case Studies from Pacific Islands Countries: Case Study 07). Suva, Fiji: UNDP.

¹² Brigg *et al.* (2012).

mothers. In Melanesian tradition as a whole, women have a traditional perception as ‘peacemakers’ who intervene in conflict to prevent violence. That said some interpretations of tradition have stifled the voice and actions of women peacebuilders, especially in public domains and high level decision making.¹³

Women church figures and groups have drawn from their respected position within the church and religious authority. In Bougainville it was easier for women to mobilize other women through the church networks. In 1996 the Bougainville Inter-Church Women’s Forum made up of 700 women from the main churches in Bougainville and led by Sister Lorraine Garasu held the Women’s Peace Forum in Arawa to advocate for a cessation of conflict and a greater voice for women in decision making at all levels. After the Peace Forum women established small groups to mediate with combatants in the bush.¹⁴ In the Solomon Islands as well women church groups met with combatants and used bible stories to convey messages of “loving thy neighbour as one’s own” and forgiveness. They emphasised that it was their Christian duty.¹⁵

While many Pacific women do work for peace it should be noted that some have actively supported armed groups through assisting them with logistics, reconnaissance, spreading inflammatory rumours, and sabotage. Others have just tried to live their lives quietly without getting involved. It is important to remember that while women in Pacific cultures are generally thought to be less violent than men, a relatively small proportion of women also do perpetrate violence themselves.¹⁶ On the other hand many Pacific men of course work tirelessly for peace including during the difficult times of violent conflict. It is important to note that their contributions were acknowledged in the case studies and in interviews with CPAD members. The roles and qualities described here are acknowledged to be generalisations based on the experiences in the case studies and from the interviews.

These various roles often overlapped with women playing several roles at once as a mother, church member and a landowner for example. Whatever the role employed, the aim of building peace was the same.

2.3 QUALITIES

Women and men have different perspectives which is good. Women are more active in social parts of life like children, church and youth, while men are more serious and sober.

Alisi Taumoepeau, Partner TMP Law and CPAD member¹⁷

Pacific women are generally regarded to be more concerned about the welfare of the community as a whole than their own status and this is the cornerstone of their peacebuilding work. Throughout the CPAD case studies and interviews with CPAD members, women were described as being softer, more caring, and less aggressive. Just as the ActionAid study showed, Pacific women also have a broader definition of peace than men that includes putting food on the table, a sound education for their children, and a safe home and community environment to enable them to work and travel freely. This is in line with the broad security

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Interview with Sister Lorraine Garasu. 8 June 2013 by telephone.

¹⁵ Brigg *et al.* (2012).

¹⁶ Brigg, M., Chadwick, W., Griggers, C., Vella, L., Murdock, J., Vienings, T., & Namgyal, J. (2012). *Women and Peace: The role of Solomon Islands women in conflict resolution and peacebuilding* (Sharing and Exploring Pacific Approaches to Dialogue: A Compendium of Case Studies from Pacific Islands Countries: Case Study 09). Suva, Fiji: UNDP and the University of Queensland. Also see Noble, C., Pereira, N., & Saune, N. (2011) *Urban Youth in the Pacific: Increasing resilience and reducing risk for involvement in crime and violence*. Suva, Fiji: UNDP and the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat.

¹⁷ Interview with Alisi Taumoepeau. 7 June 2013 by telephone.

approach of the Pacific Human Security Framework for the Pacific, which was welcomed by Pacific Leaders in 2012.¹⁸ According to the CPAD members, the women's definition is based on their traditional roles, nature and their experiences of conflict.

In general women were thought to be more interested in restoring the fabric of society and human development rather than gaining power, keeping face and winning the conflict. On the other hand in general terms men were seen to be seeking political power, recognition, honour and status. In the conflicts in the Solomon Islands and Bougainville women were thought to be more willing than men to seek the connectors or common areas of interest between warring groups. Common connectors such as shared traditions, Christianity, and concern for family were all identified by women as a means of uniting protagonists. Men on the other hand were described as mainly seeing the differences or dividing factors between warring parties such as different ethnicity, different dialect or language, and differing access to resources.

The qualities of women were evident during the Burnham One Dialogue between the Bougainville Revolutionary Army and the Bougainville Resistance Force where women "reportedly had a calming influence, allowing the spirit of respect and non-aggression to prevail". Moreover "their continuous pressure ensured that male leaders stayed focused on the peace process at hand and were not derailed by personal rivalries".¹⁹ This reflects the findings of Anderlini who found that in South Africa small teams of peace monitors had to contain at least one women to "bring down the temperature".²⁰

Even though women are believed to be in general more caring, compassionate and interested in community welfare, the fact that women were able to effectively appeal to men on the welfare of families, Christian beliefs and common traditions means that men also recognised the importance of these connectors. The roles and qualities of Pacific women and men in peacebuilding are not clear cut and only broad generalisations can be made. The positive aspects of men's characters identified included being serious, decisive, and focused. Having a gender balance including minority gender groups provides the broadest range of perspectives for peace.

2.4 THE SIGNIFICANCE OF WOMEN'S PEACE WORK

The peacebuilding work of Pacific women is indispensable. Women are able to create the necessary conditions for formal peace negotiations and wider reconciliation to begin due to the fact that they work throughout the conflict and its aftermath trying to build bridges for the sake of their communities and are able to gain the trust of all stakeholders more easily than men. Before, during and after formal negotiations when an impasse arises or tensions flare up women are able to appeal to both sides to find middle ground, to understand the suffering caused by the conflict, to recognise cultural and other connectors, and to remember their religious obligations. Without these efforts the minimum amount of political will exercised

¹⁸ The Human Security Framework for the Pacific was welcomed by Pacific Leaders at their 2012 meeting "as a strategic guide for FICs [Forum Island Countries], the Forum Secretariat and other stakeholders to improve understanding, planning and implementation of human security approaches in stand-alone and broader peace, security and development initiatives in the Pacific." The Framework was developed by the PIFS and UNDP in consultation with a broad range of stakeholders and based on four years of practical application of concepts. See <http://www.forumsec.org.fj/pages.cfm/political-governance-security/human-security-framework/> for further details.

¹⁹ Lees, S., Havini, M., Murdock, J., Vienings, T., & Namgyal, J. (2012). Bougainville Peace Agreement: The Burnham I and II Dialogues (Sharing and Exploring Pacific Approaches to Dialogue: A Compendium of Case Studies from Pacific Islands Countries: Case Study 06). Suva, Fiji: UNDP.

²⁰ Anderlini (2007). p. 42.

almost exclusively by men would not be reached for negotiations to begin, for a settlement to be reached, and for peace to be consolidated.

In these roles women do participate directly in decision making on conflict issues at the community and in institutions like the church. However, in national level negotiations and planning they mainly participate in decision making indirectly through influencing men. As can be seen above, this role is vital for steering the peace process and consolidating it in society. Women are beginning to play more of a role in high level decision making and many are eager to take on that role if given further opportunities. This is explored further below.

3 CHALLENGES AND EMERGING TRENDS

The chiefs handed the talking spear to the women at the meeting. It was a breaking of a cultural barrier.

Mary Kini, Human Rights Defender, Kundiawa Human Rights Advocates²¹

The case studies and CPAD participants indicated that there is an ongoing shift happening in the Pacific that is allowing women peacebuilders to be more recognized for their important work and women to have a greater say in decision making at all levels. At the local level, the fact that women's empowerment organization, Voice for Change, led a resolution of the deadly Kondika Tribal Conflict in Jiwaka Province, Papua New Guinea is testament to that. That said there is still a long way to go, especially in high level decision making and peace negotiations.

Although women are influencing high level decision making the challenge of enabling more women to be active themselves directly in high-level decision making is ongoing. If women participated in high level decision making more equally with men, CPAD members argued that decisions, including peace agreements, would reflect greater concern for social welfare including education and health.

The largest barrier are cultural norms and traditional structures according to the CPAD members interviewed. The Inter-Parliamentary Union reported that from 1995 to 2008 the average percent of women in legislatures across the globe had risen from 11.3% to 17.7%. However, in the Pacific (excluding Australia, NZ and the French Territories) the percentage remained static with the average remaining at a low 2.5% for the same period.²² CPAD members reported that while some women are not interested in taking up a role in high level decision making, some are qualified and eager but are not given adequate opportunities. Although women in parliament is a broader issue than women leaders in peacebuilding, it is representative of the challenges that women face in having an active voice in peacebuilding. Moreover, parliamentarians and other government leaders often represent national interests in peace negotiations so more women parliamentarians and officials would facilitate the participation of more women at the highest level. Anderlini claims that the "paucity of women in leadership positions...is perhaps the most prominent reason for their absence in peace talks".²³ In the same way, more women in high positions in traditional governance structures would allow them to represent their communities in peacebuilding roles.

²¹ Interview with Mary Kini. 11 June 2013 by telephone.

²² Inter-Parliamentary Union (2008). Women in National Parliaments: Statistical Archive. Retrieved June 11, 2013 from <http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif-arc.htm>.

²³ Anderlini (2007). P. 58.

Although getting women in to high level decision making decisions is important including for peace negotiations, ensuring that those women are qualified and strong enough to play leadership roles in the government and traditional structures was identified as a prerequisite by Sister Lorraine Garasu.²⁴

The work of organizations like Voice for Change in Papua New Guinea on peacebuilding issues has empowered women not to just be more active in conflict resolution but also to become more active in a range of development and local governance issues. Through working with civil society they have learnt more about their rights to be free from gender and sexual based violence in the home and community. They have learnt to speak out on a range of issues that affect their lives, which previously they would have felt reluctant to do due to cultural norms. This bodes well not just for resolution of conflict but for improved human security and women's empowerment in the broader sense. A number of rural women that Voice for Change have worked with have gone on to be active in the village courts, coops, as ward representatives and to stand in local government elections. According to Mary Kini "they become empowered and came out from their hiding places".²⁵

Crisis can be a time of transition and despite the suffering endured, conflict in the Pacific has afforded an opportunity for women to challenge disempowering traditions. This has been facilitated through the work of civil society organizations but also through church groups and village women's groups. As noted in the ActionAid International report on women in peacebuilding,²⁶ in patriarchal or at least politically male dominated societies²⁷ women peacebuilders find greater strength, voice and influence when they come together. When Pacific women organize themselves collectively, they can more effectively create spaces for dialogue, undertake dispute resolution, seek justice, have a voice in decision making, and contribute to community development on their own terms. In times of conflict, the group approach offers better peacebuilding results for the community but also strength and protection for the women in male dominated societies.

Women's commitments to child care, domestic duties and income generation activities were also identified by CPAD interviewees as obstacles to participation in peace building, especially at higher levels. Arieta Koila Costello-Olsson of the Pacific Centre for Peacebuilding noted that if peace building initiatives happen at the village level nearby where women live and at times and in circumstances that are convenient, women are eager to be involved collectively. However, many women cannot afford to abandon everyday duties to attend meetings, trainings, and activities. This also hinders their ability to participate in intensive high level negotiations.²⁸

The increasing support of men for women peacebuilding initiatives was another trend that emerged from the interviews. Mary Kini said that the recognition and support from men was important for opening up spaces for women and that when men talked to other men about women taking a more active and upfront role in peacebuilding, it helped to dissipate feelings of threat. Many men recognise the mediation role that women play in families and communities, and understand that they can play that role in violent conflict situations too. According to James Laki of the Melanesia Peace Foundation, when women do speak out at

²⁴ Interview with Sister Lorraine Garasu. 8 June 2013 by telephone.

²⁵ Interview with Mary Kini. 11 June 2013 by telephone.

²⁶ ActionAid International *et al.* (2012).

²⁷ Most tribes in Bougainville are matriarchal but politically men dominate decision making.

²⁸ Interview with Arieta Koila Costello-Olsson. 12 June 2013 by telephone.

village meetings outside the norms of culture, men know there is a serious problem and will generally listen, especially if many women are standing together.²⁹

Sexual and gender based violence was recognised as being extremely disempowering for women. That said some respondents felt that survivors could use that suffering to fight harder for peace and women's rights so that other women don't have to go through what they did. However, this would depend on having an opportunity to break out of violent situations, having adequate support mechanisms to enable the trauma to heal, and the personality of the woman herself.

Short-term and inadequate funding to civil society organizations that work to support women in peacebuilding was identified as an issue. Many of the CPAD members interviewed that are active in civil society felt that although they are qualified to carry out the work, they are restricted in their work due to the high transportation costs and the need to stay engaged for extended periods of time in peacebuilding in the Pacific.

The Pacific Regional Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security; the Pacific Leaders Gender Equality Declaration; UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (and related resolutions 1820, 1888, 1889, and 1960)³⁰; and the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) were all referred to as instruments for furthering women's involvement in peacebuilding. Through their association with the Pacific Islands Forum and the United Nations, Pacific nations have acknowledged and approved these instruments.³¹ However, increasing the awareness of these instruments and what they mean in practical application for regional organizations, national governments, civil society organizations and village councils is necessary for them to have any meaning.

All CPAD participants interviewed regarded CPAD as an important initiative to further the role of women in peacebuilding. The capacity building training was viewed as practical and has been applied in the field already. The opportunities to meet other peacebuilders for building networks, cross-learning and to be inspired was also valued. The small grants to women led civil society organizations were highly appreciated. Arieta Koila Costello-Olsson stated that CPAD was "an excellent model" that needs to be built on further. She claimed that through CPAD, UNDP in line with its global commitments to gender equality and crisis prevention and recovery, could ensure that women peacebuilders are supported in the Pacific.³² UN Women's and the Pacific Islands Forum's work and Australia's commitments to supporting women in development in the Pacific were also mentioned favourably.

4 IMPLICATIONS FOR PROGRAMMING

To further strengthen the work of women peacebuilders the below recommendations are made for organizations and governments involved in supporting and implementing peacebuilding initiatives.

²⁹ Interview with James Laki. 12 June 2013 by telephone.

³⁰ See UN Women, *Resolutions and Instruments at http://www.unifem.org/gender_issues/women_war_peace/resolutions_instruments.html* for further details on these resolutions and other related instruments.

³¹ In regard to CEDAW, as of July 2013 among PIF countries only Tonga has not acceded. Palau has acceded but is yet to ratify the convention.

³² Interview with Arieta Koila Costello-Olsson. 12 June 2013 by telephone.

1. Explore ways to support not only NGOs but also traditional structures and faith-based groups that empower women involved in peacebuilding.

While NGOs are doing a good job and need further support, traditional structures and faith-based organizations such as churches that already empower women to take a leading role in peacebuilding offer supporting and funding organizations an alternative option. While there are cultural and faith structures which disempower women, structures that do empower need to be identified and strengthened. Channels for this could be: informal village women's groups; in-kind support for inter-tribe gatherings and ceremonies; faith-based peace events; support for high chiefs, religious leaders, or influential national figures (both men and women supportive of women's leadership in peacebuilding) to visit conflicting areas to talk peace; and, support for traditional gatherings of women from all sides of the conflict. This support does not have to be directed specifically at women, but it must be managed to ensure that women's participation is given importance throughout. Ultimately this work may be facilitated through NGOs but its aim should be to strengthen traditional structures and faith-based groups.

2. Expand support to women to undertake peacebuilding through training, networking opportunities, technical advice and funding.

The work of UNDP through CPAD and other UN agencies such as UN Women to support women's peacebuilding is appreciated by the women and men involved. Although the purpose of this paper is not to evaluate CPAD, members interviewed all regarded it as an effective project. Further opportunities for training, networking, grants, and technical advice through CPAD and other programmes can strengthen women's peacebuilding work. This shouldn't be done exclusively for women but ensuring that there are equal opportunities women and men is essential. At the grass roots level, the expansion of programmes that empower village women to have a voice through capacity building and dissemination of information about rights by local organizations that have the ability to engage long term such as Peace Foundation Melanesia and Voice for Change is recommended.

3. Explore ways to increase the involvement of men in organizations pursuing women's rights and promoting women in peacebuilding.

Men's support for women in peacebuilding through activities such as joining women's organizations, expressing support publically and working with them on the ground may help to alleviate any concerns men in conflicted communities may have about women speaking up and leading peacebuilding processes. Influential male champions for women's peacebuilding can help open up the public space for women. Also creating opportunities for young men to become involved is recommended as they are generally more supportive of women's empowerment and have plenty of energy. Influential male champions and young men both need to be equipped with sound communication skills and a keen understanding of peacebuilding and gender equality to undertake these roles. Minimizing any backlash from men who feel that women are going against cultural norms by expressing their voice and displaying leadership in peacebuilding is important. Communicating clearly with male leadership through culturally appropriate channels the aims of women peacebuilding initiatives and the fact they are not trying to promote women as better than men or usurp power from men is essential. In this vein involving men in initiatives in ways that do not compromise the roles of women needs to be considered. In general a more nuanced

understanding of the different gender perspectives in supporting peace is required, including the perspectives of minority gender groups such as gay, lesbian and transgender groups.

4. Raise awareness of major declarations, conventions and plans that promote women's leadership, rights and involvement in peacebuilding.

From the highest political level to the grass roots, further awareness and understanding of the major instruments that support women's leadership and rights such as the Pacific Regional Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security; the Pacific Leaders Gender Equality Declaration; UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (and related resolutions 1820, 1888, 1889, and 1960); and the Convention on the Elimination of all Form of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) need to be implemented to facilitate women's involvement in peacebuilding. Lack of information and awareness disempowers women and hampers the creation of space for them. These instruments can also be used as powerful advocacy tools when negotiating for women's voice in peacebuilding as they have been agreed upon by political leaders.

5. Support women to play higher level decision making roles for peacebuilding.

While supporting women to undertake roles at the community level is important and should continue, support for women to participate in high level conflict resolution and peacebuilding is necessary as it is a space where women's involvement is currently very limited but is needed to complete a perspective that is representative of society. This can be achieved through more women in parliament, governments and high level traditional structures as these structures often form the basis for high level peace negotiations. There are other studies that deal in detail with increasing women's participation in Pacific politics,³³ but enabling legislation on temporary special measures for women in parliament, leadership and parliamentary training, and targeted communications are all key for achieving this. Women need to be willing, capable and understanding of these high level leadership positions and this may require support in the form of capacity building, mentoring and technical advice. While working to create more opportunities for women in high level leadership it is also important to consider how the link between women's leadership at the community level and women's leadership at the national level can be strengthened.

6. Actively aim to improve gender equality in all peacebuilding programmes and ensure gender analysis is included in broader conflict analysis when designing, monitoring and evaluating peacebuilding projects.

Without addressing unequal gender roles and relationships, conflict, instability and insecurity will persist and gender discrimination may be further compounded. For this reason improving gender equality should be considered part of all efforts to build peace. For example even if a project's main aim is to reintegrate an all-male former combatant force back in to society,³⁴ working with those

³³ See Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (2012). *A Women's Place is in the House: The House of Parliament*. Suva, Fiji: Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat and Council for International Development (2012). *Pacific Women in Power: A Discussion Paper*. Retrieved June 11, 2013 from <http://www.cid.org.nz/assets/Resources/Other/Pacific-Women-in-Parliament-Final-Nov-2012.pdf>.

³⁴ An all-male combatant force is highly uncommon, if not impossible. The term combatant usually covers not only armed combatants, but also unarmed combatants (usually due to a lack of weapons), logistics operatives, communications, porters,

former combatants to increase understanding of gender equality and human rights is imperative. In line with this idea and given the close relationship between gender and conflict, no conflict analysis for programme design, monitoring and evaluation should be considered complete without a gender analysis as part of it. Understanding the gender dynamic in a society is a critical aspect of understanding the conflict dynamic. Throughout the implementation of peacebuilding programmes, ongoing monitoring of gender relations is an important indicator of wider human security in a society. Furthermore, a peacebuilding approach to women's empowerment in general is needed especially in conflict and post-conflict societies.

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informants, political leaders, strategists and spies. Even if women are not playing armed combat roles (which they often do), they are considered combatants due to the other active roles they play in a combat force.