

## **16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence**

16 Days of Activism is a global campaign encouraging organisations and individuals across the world to take a stand against gender-based violence.

The campaign starts on 25th November: The International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, and ends on 10th December: World Human Rights Day.

16 Days of Activism was started by the Centre for Women's Global Leadership 18 years ago. The campaign's beginning and end dates highlight that violence against women is a human rights violation.

Thousands of diverse groups and individuals now take part in 16 Days, together calling for an end to all types of violence against women. Each year people organise events in their communities, including meetings, conferences, demonstrations, exhibitions and performances.

This year at IWDA, we have decided to use the 16 Days to highlight the work our partners in Asia and the Pacific are doing to improve the situation for women and girls in their communities, as well as the work IWDA is undertaking in Australia. Each day between 25th November and 10th December, we will post a short article about 16 Days on our website, Facebook page, and Twitter page.

### **25<sup>th</sup> November: Day One fem'LINKPACIFIC**

fem'LINKPACIFIC is a Fiji based women's non-profit community media organisation. The organisation empowers women and communities by giving them a voice to fully participate in decision making for equality, development and peace.



This year, as part of the Women's International Network of the World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters (AMARC-WIN), fem'LINKPACIFIC will be joining in the global community radio broadcast campaign to highlight the 16 days of activism against gender violence, with 16 days of community radio broadcasts to honor groups and individuals who have committed to bringing Violence Against Women (VAW) to the forefront of global attention and to encourage everyone in their various capacities to take action to end VAW, and to demand accountability for all of the promises made to eliminate VAW.

In line with this year's international campaign theme: "Commit - Act - Demand: We CAN End Violence against Women!" fem'LINKPACIFIC will be staging local broadcasts, using their suitcase radio station, with women from communities in Nausori Town (approximately 30 minutes away from the capital city) to enable rural women to amplify the call for an end to all forms of violence against women.

In addition, as a member of the Fiji NGO Coalition on Human Rights, fem'LINKPACIFIC's team of young women Producers and Broadcasters, "Generation Next", will be producing a series of programmes with members and other civil society partners to add to the message for the 16 Days Campaign.

Finally, during the 16 Days Campaign, members of Generation Next will also be producing a "radio conversation" with the visiting World YWCA General Secretary Nyaradzai Gumbonzvanda.

*When women benefit, the whole community benefits.*

To read more, please visit fem'LINKPACIFIC's Facebook page or visit their website.

## **26<sup>th</sup> November: Day Two Breakthrough**



During the 16 Days of Activism, Asia Pacific Breakthrough: The Women, Faith and Development Summit to End Global Poverty will take place in Melbourne on 2nd - 3rd December 2009. For the first time, women's organisations, faith communities and development agencies will come together in the common call to eliminate poverty, and the feminisation of poverty, by empowering women and girls.

At the Breakthrough Summit, a new Alliance will be launched to catalyse an Asia Pacific-wide movement to increase investment in women and girls.

Our vision for Asia Pacific Breakthrough is that it will catalyse a new movement of collective action and investment for women and girls in the Asia Pacific Region. We are focusing our efforts on the support of women in the Pacific, South East Asia, Indigenous women and refugee women of Australia and New Zealand.

Highlights of the Summit will include the announcements of new Commitments to programs for women and girls, an interfaith ceremonial celebration, the launch of the Asia Pacific Women, Faith and Development Alliance, and a Leadership Council meeting for the Alliance. In addition to the delegates program, there will be a free public event in Federation Square on Wednesday 2 December.

For more information please visit the Breakthrough website.

## **27<sup>th</sup> November: Day Three Fiji Women's Rights Movement**

We spoke with Virisila Buadromo, Executive Director of Fiji Women's Rights Movement, about what they are doing for the 16 Days campaign:

*Can you tell us a little about your organisation's work?*

The Fiji Women's Rights Movement (FWRM) is a non-governmental organisation. FWRM is a multiethnic and multicultural organisation dedicated to promoting democracy, good governance and human rights on the basis of feminist principles. FWRM was established in 1986.

FWRM's main area of work is to advocate for the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women through legislative reform and policy change and by developing leadership of young women. The long term objectives of the Movement are:

- To publicly address all issues affecting women's human rights, status and opportunity within Fiji including cultural, domestic, legal, social, health, economic, employment, religious and political situations;



- To advocate improved policy and legislation on issues affecting women's rights;
- To promote equal access to services by women and equal opportunity through appropriate enabling actions; and
- To ensure the Movement remains a well managed and sustainable organisation, giving leadership opportunities to women, networking and sharing experiences with others in the Pacific, regionally and internationally.

*How does your organisation's work impact women's lives?*

Laws have impact on women's lives and realities. As such FWRM strongly feels that by advocating for the change in laws as well as creating awareness for behavioural change means that women and men will benefit. FWRM has three core programmes which are aimed at working towards eliminating all forms of discrimination against women:

- CEDAW Monitoring and Implementation Programme- this programme aims to assist Fiji in complying with the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), which Fiji ratified in 1995. The key objective of the programme is to advance the status of women in Fiji in the economic, social, cultural, political and civil environment, while promoting human rights and international standards in the CEDAW implementation and monitoring process. This work is supported by AusAID.
- Transitional Justice for Fiji (TJF) - this programme encompasses much of FWRM's work towards peace and security in Fiji and ending the conflict cycle of the last two decades. TJF activities work toward the enhanced recognition of democracy, the rule of law and human rights principles, particularly women's rights among rights holders and duty bearers. The Movement's strategy included awareness of the importance and indivisibility of democracy, the rule of law and human rights; strengthening partnerships within civil society that support these principles; and monitoring human rights violations. This work is supported by AusAID and Oxfam New Zealand.
- Young Women in Leadership Programme (YWLP) - works closely with young women and girls in developing leadership and advocacy skills. Some of the projects that fall under the YWLP include a year-long leadership training programme called the Emerging Leaders' Forum (ELF) and the regional DAWN/FWRM Young Feminist Advocacy Training. The Movement is also developing leadership programme for girls aged 10 to 14. The YWLP is also working with regional partners in PNG (Kup Women for Peace) and Solomon Islands (YWCA) to help these organisations develop their own young women's programme. This work is supported by Oxfam New Zealand.



*How will these program outcomes contribute to ending Violence against Women?*

By changing the laws as well as creating awareness on the need for behavioural change, it is hoped that the outcome would be the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women. Women's human rights can not be realised in an environment that is militarised and as such FWRM strongly believes that there is a need for public awareness of the

importance and indivisibility of democracy, the rule of law and human rights. By monitoring human rights violations and by using both national and international

human rights mechanisms, it is hoped that the state will be held accountable and will take appropriate measures to rectify the situation.

*What is your organisation doing for the 16 days of Activism?*

In partnership with UNIFEM Pacific, Indonesian Embassy, Emerging Leaders' Forum Alumni, FWRM will be showcasing an Indonesian Movie "Chants of Lotus" which is a collection of four short films which have been directed by women.

FWRM will also be conducting gender awareness trainings with UNIFEM Pacific student volunteers from the University of the South Pacific and the Fiji Institute of Technology. At the end of the training FWRM will be inviting two graduates of the ELF program to share their experiences from the ELF program with the volunteers and how they have used these experiences or hope to use these experiences in the current work that they do.



On 29th November to celebrate Women Human Rights Defenders Day, FWRM in collaboration with FemLink Pacific will be producing a full page advertisement in the local newspaper and t-shirts with the slogan "Insist, Resist, Persist, Exist".

On 10th December to celebrate Human Rights, FWRM in collaboration with the NGO Coalition on Human Rights, will be organising a march during the day to create more awareness on the importance of Human Rights Day. In the evening there will be a poetry night organised with the University of the South Pacific, Pacific Writing Forum and the NGO Coalition on Human Rights. The poetry reading will reflect the themes of peace and universality of the principles of human rights.

*What needs to be done to end Violence against Women in your region?*

A strong stand for the return of rule of law, democracy and upholding human rights with legislative and policy reforms and awareness on these issues.

Please visit FWRM for further information.

**28<sup>th</sup> November: Day Four  
IWDA Youth Advisory Group**

On 27th November, the IWDA Youth Advisory Group met for the first time. The Youth Advisory Group engages young women to explore social justice, gender and human rights issues.

Through devising and implementing awareness-raising activities, networking with not for profit organisations and creating their own group objectives, roles and agenda, participants will develop increased decision making and management capacity; experience leadership opportunities; and dialogue on community issues with a group of diverse young women, including discrimination and Violence Against Women.

Participants will become involved in advocacy events, and will hold their own activities in schools and communities, to draw attention to gender inequality issues.

After the initial meeting during the 16 Days of Activism, the Youth Advisory Group participants will continue their involvement in advocacy, networking within the development sector, designing and implementing events and informing IWDA's youth engagement strategy in 2010.

**29<sup>th</sup> November: Day Five**  
**CAAVAW – Project Reports**

As part of the **16 Days of Activism Campaign**, International Women's Development Agency is pleased to share the **Men's Talk** report, a detailed document presenting the findings of research undertaken into men's attitudes towards men, women, and Violence Against Women in Cambodia.

The research was undertaken by Helen Brereton and Vannak Lim within the Community Action Against Violence Against Women (CAAVAW) project, which is implemented in Cambodia by IWDA partners Banteay Srei and The Cambodian Human Rights and Development Association (ADHOC). The report is available in both English and Khmer, on the IWDA website and we invite you to share the findings with your networks.

Also available is the earlier Somroh Somruei (local reconciliation process) & Violence Against Women report, also completed within the CAAVAW project by Domrei Research and Consulting.

**30<sup>th</sup> November: Day Six**  
**Women's Action for Change**

On 18th November, Fiji based organisation Women's Action for Change (WAC) held a learning circle on gender and sexuality baiting as part of their 16 Days of Activism against Gender Violence campaign.

The learning circle addressed the issue of negative ideas about diverse gender identity and sexuality being used around the world, often systematically, to discredit individuals, organisations, and political agendas, and acknowledged that this can prevent or slow us from acting together against gender based violence, and toward gender equality.

The learning circle focused on listening, sharing and learning with others by asking such questions as:

- What is gender and sexuality baiting?
- Is it a useful concept?
- What examples are there in my own life, and others?
- What, if anything, can I do to address gender and sexual baiting - for myself and others, including women human rights defenders?
- How are we challenging and changing this, some of which we internalise, so that we are more independent, defiant, questioning, active and free?!
- What can we do better together?

**1<sup>st</sup> December: Day Seven**  
**Pacific Centre for Peacebuilding**

Koila Costello-Olsson, Director of Pacific Centre for Peacebuilding (PCP) talks about the organisation's work and the 16 Days campaign:

*Can you tell us a little about your organisation's work?*

Our work is in the area of peacebuilding and conflict transformation. We work with different sections of the communities in Fiji and the Pacific providing training, facilitation or counselling for individuals or groups. Our approach is gender sensitive, respectful of human rights, and we embrace the principles of non violence and restorative justice. The approaches we use also work at finding a balance between evolving and traditional processes of handling conflict and building a positive peace.

*How does your organisation's work impact women's lives?*

Our work involves encouraging men and women to understand deeply conflict situations by doing conflict analysis, and looking at ways that one can help to better improve the way that they are dealing with the conflict. There is also an emphasis on the effects that conflicts can have on people who are directly and indirectly involved in the conflict and this may lead to trauma. Awareness raising is also provided on stress and trauma and ways to better handle it.

The programme that deals with military families and peacekeepers is geared towards raising awareness and re-learning better ways to handle stress and trauma. There is recognition that if stress is managed well and better communication skills are used, and proper support is given, relationships in families and the communities will improve and there will be better decisions made that involve women and children in a respectful and holistic way.

*How will these program outcomes contribute to ending violence against women?*

We believe that if there is analysis and reflection on situations of conflict and violence, there is also an opportunity to make decisions and re-examine better ways to deal with issues of conflict, then there will be changes in behaviour and attitude. Through awareness raising programmes, group processes and counselling the messages are shared constantly.

As we have access to individuals who are both victims and offenders in the cycle of violence, and our approach uses the principles of restorative justice, our audience has received this information well. We also have had access to more males than females, and we are able to share these messages with them.

*What is your organisation doing for the 16 days of Activism (if applicable)?*

Our PCP North Office will be participating in some activities with the Ministry of Women and some other civil society organisations in Labasa.

In Suva, we will continue to do our work in this area and will attend other events hosted by civil society. We will also be working with the Fiji police and members of the security forces to facilitate a workshop on handling change management in the Command Centre from December 1st-3rd, 2009.

More specifically, Paolo Bale, our programme manager will be attending a two week training with IFOR in the Netherlands to become a male trainer in non-violence.

*What needs to be done to end Violence Against Women in your region?*

There needs to be more programmes to work with families on anger management, communication skills and handling conflict in non violent ways.

More specifically there needs to be more programmes that work with violent men to assist them in working through their violent behaviours.

More work needs to be done to examine ways that structural violence contributes to violence against women and children and what structures need to be changed to improve their lives.

## **2<sup>nd</sup> December: Day Eight** **Shan Women's Action Network**

During the 16 Days campaign, the Shan Women's Action Network (SWAN) are coordinating community awareness raising events, bringing women and men together to acknowledge and address issues of Violence Against Women in their communities.

Events, comprising games, speeches, community theatre performances and information dissemination, will be held at three locations on the Thai Burma border on the 25th of November to highlight the need for all community members to take responsibility to end violence against women.

SWAN are an independent, community-based, feminist network of women from the Shan ethnic group in Burma, now living in Thailand and working towards gender equality and justice for Shan women in the struggle for social and political change in Burma.

For more information about the work of SWAN, check out their website.

## **3<sup>rd</sup> December: Day Nine** **Commonwealth Local Government Forum**

Megan Praeger, Project Officer at the Commonwealth Local Government Forum (CLGF) Pacific Project, talks about the organisation's work and the 16 Days campaign:

*Can you tell us a little about your organisation's work?*

The CLGF Pacific Project works to promote and strengthen democracy, good governance and service delivery capacity at the local government level through advocacy, capacity building, research, networking and the exchange of good practice. The Project works with national ministries of local government, local government associations and local councils themselves



comprising the largest local government organisation network in the Pacific, with members in the Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu and partners in Australia and New Zealand.

The Project currently has a 5-year *Regional Capacity Building Project* ('RCB' Project) that comprises six key components or thematic areas of work: representative and participatory governance, intergovernmental relations and central government support, international and regional cooperation, local government capacity building, urbanisation and urban management, and project management and monitoring. The component on representative and participatory governance focuses the work of CLGF on advancing the role of local governments in achieving gender equality and women's empowerment.



*How does your organisation's work impact women's lives?*

Through partnerships and alliances, the CLGF Pacific Project works to strengthen the capacity of local governments to deliver services to their communities. Since women and girls make up some 50 per cent of communities in most cities and towns effective, sustainable and inclusive service delivery can only be achieved when this share of the population has an equal say. Specifically, this means that women must be involved in local decision-making, so that their needs and priorities are reflected in urban planning and design, roads and transportation, shelter, water and sanitation, solid waste management, environmental management, peace and security, local economic development and recreation as well as in politics and administration.

The CLGF Pacific Project is currently working in partnership with the IWDA through a grant from the UNDEF on a 2-year project aimed at 'Strengthening Women's Participation in Municipal Governance'. The SWPMG Project promotes women's right to engage and participate in local governance activities as councillors, management and constituents of municipal councils in Fiji. It will assist councils undertake gender audits, develop gender sensitive policies and strategies, and create inclusive approaches to public participation.

The Project is also working with the Pacific Island Forum Secretariat to establish a database of women in decision making at all levels, including local government. This will assist in encouraging Pacific governments to meet the 30-50% target of women in decision making.



*How will these program outcomes contribute to ending violence against women?*

In their mission to represent and serve the social, environmental and economic well-being of all residents, local governments cannot ignore violence against women. Local governments can play a key role as leaders in local crime prevention, and providing safe, secure and healthy public spaces. The SWPMG Project will assist councils develop gender sensitive policies and strategies that address VAW and build strategic links with national women's machineries, women's groups and communities.

*What is your organisation doing for the 16 days of Activism?*

The SWPMG Project will be organising its second networking event with women in local government to be held in the first week of December. A local partner,

fem'LINKPACIFIC will be interviewing the women as part of a series of community radio broadcasts.

*What needs to be done to end Violence Against Women in your region?*

Historically local governments have not been actively involved in campaigns to end VAW. CLGF sees this as a key strategic entry point for promoting gender awareness and activism in councils. There are important areas of intervention that are still lacking, such as training relevant personnel to respond to victims of violence, ensuring street lighting is adequate, removal of overgrowth from public parks, ensuring the security of market women and their produce, and generally making public spaces safer. Local government relations with law enforcement agencies also need to be improved.



The recent SWPMG survey on gender and local government in Fiji found that there were no gender policies in place in any of the councils where the research was conducted. It was also found that national gender and women's policies and strategies that address VAW do not identify the role of local governments in the implementation process. There needs to be a consolidated effort to translate the national policy and program framework into clear and targeted benchmarks for action at the local government level. Of course, this also means that more resources will need to be channelled towards gender work at the level.

**4<sup>th</sup> December: Day Ten  
Banteay Srei**

We spoke with Panha Sok, Executive Director of Cambodian organisation Banteay Srei, about their work and the 16 Days Campaign:

*Can you tell us a little about your organisation's work?*

Banteay Srei is a Cambodian women's non-government organisation that empowers vulnerable women to improve their political, economic and psycho-social situation through implementation of community development projects, advocacy work and encouraging men's participation in addressing issues affecting women.

*How will your program impact on respect for women and women's empowerment?*

Banteay Srei works to raise the communities' (especially women's) knowledge and understanding of their rights. The training and activities that Banteay Srei facilitate involve awareness of international and national law that related to human and women's rights and how that law should be implemented in society. Understanding of rights is central to the empowerment and enables communities, especially women to participate and take more responsibility for the development process as they analyse their own situation and act to increase the way in which they and others fulfil their obligations to the community.

*How is women's status related to violence against women in your community?*

Violence against women continues to be an endemic problem in the target communities. An awareness of and desire to use more peaceful problem solving methods is present, but the culture of violence is strongly rooted in communities. The problems are made worse by other issues of poverty, alcoholism and lack of

education. For women the patriarchal values, weak system of law and lack of safe places to flee can make them very vulnerable.

*What is your organisation doing for the 16 days of Activism?*

Banteay Srei will assist female commune council members and staff of district Office of Women's Affairs to organise a public meeting in Kampong Tkov commune. It is expected that 250 villagers and local authorities will participate. The meeting will provide people [with] knowledge on the background of 16 Days of Activism, and real experiences of a man and a woman who got success in positive behaviour change toward domestic violence. The white ribbon will be pinned to the participants and people in the public march (rally). They will speak out for ending all forms of violence against women.

*What do you think needs to be done to end Violence Against Women?*

- Promotion of positive behaviour change among men and women, increased participation of women in social activities and increased shared household decision making
- Awareness-raising and education on women's rights, to explore and discuss women's rights and gender roles in the family and clarify the difference
- Village based models should be promoted to empower community men and women to support each other to combat VAW and to find their own solutions

#### **5<sup>th</sup> December: Day Eleven**

#### **Karen Women's Organisation and Women's League of Burma**

As reported by Burma Partnership below, IWDA partners Karen Women's Organisation and Women's League of Burma participated in a march and seminar focusing on ending violence against women, on 25th November, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women.

"On November 25, women from Burma and Thailand gathered in Chiang Mai to mark the 10th anniversary of the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, with a march and seminar on stopping violence against women and families. The Karen Women's Organisation also held events to raise awareness about violence against women in IDP and refugee camps along the Thai-Burma border.

Women in Burma experience discrimination, physical and sexual violence at work, in public places, and in their own homes. In recent years, many Burma groups have highlighted how sexual violence against women is being used systematically by the military as a weapon of war. The Women's League of Burma (WLB), Burma Lawyers Council and other organisations around the world are advocating that such sexual violence, as well as forced displacement, extrajudicial killings, the use of child soldiers and torture, are all grounds according to which Senior General Than Shwe should be referred to the International Criminal Court to be tried for crimes against humanity.

In their statement this week, the WLB criticized the junta's 2008 Constitution for providing impunity for military officials, encouraging them to continue perpetrating human rights violations and sexual violence against women, rather than protecting them. The women's group declared their opposition to next year's elections that will bring the junta's Constitution into effect, and pave the way for further violence against the women and people of Burma."

## **6<sup>th</sup> December: Day Twelve Women's Action for Change**

We spoke to Noelene Nabulivou, Coordinator, and Peni Moore, Creative Director, about the work of Women's Action for Change (WAC).

*Can you tell us a little about your organisation's work?*

Women's Action for Change was founded in 1993 by a group of local women who identified a need for more community-based, participatory work on gender equality issues for diverse women in Fiji.

The aim was to create a feminist, ecologically sustainable community-based organisation using a wide variety of theatre and arts-based learning methods, working toward full gender equality and social justice for all. WAC also believes that work to envision and create a gender equal future necessarily includes attention to conflict transformation, active non-violence and peacebuilding.

16 years on, WAC works in 12 provinces around Fiji (with limited regional and international work), using participative arts to connect with people in remote, rural and urban communities, and especially working among individuals and groups, including women and girls, experiencing intersecting forms of discrimination, marginalisation, violence and poverty.

2009-10 programmatic areas:

- Gender equality, peacebuilding and restorative justice;
- Elimination of all forms of gender based violence;
- Sexual rights and SRHR advancement;
- Gender equality and alternative, sustainable development;
- Child and youth rights, health and safety;
- And other areas of urgent community response

*How will your program impact on respect for women and women's empowerment?*

WAC work with women and girls, and other marginalised groups in Fiji, by identifying and sharing resources with individuals and communities working toward gender equality, social justice and peace. We listen carefully to associated networks and communities, and respond accordingly with participative programmes and activities.

There are currently emerging women's groups in 18 settlements, youth restorative justice groups, including girls, in 7 schools in rural and urban areas. These groups are working on a wide range of issues and concerns as they survive, thrive and transform their own lives and their communities. Work includes national travelling community theatre and training workshops on critical issues such as violence against women, HIV and AIDS, peacebuilding and non-violent leadership, recognition of women as leaders and decision-makers, prevention of child sexual abuse, SRHR and sexual rights, aspects of women's health and wellbeing, etc. There is also ongoing work to support emerging networks of women, young people, LGBTIQ and sex workers in Fiji.

*How is women's status related to violence against women in your community?*

The ways that all communities define gender and sexuality roles, and how they attribute power to those roles (or not), has a direct impact on the levels of violence faced by women, girls, and people with perceived or actual non-heteronormative gender and sexual identity in that community.

*When women benefit, the whole community benefits.*

So if women are thought of as servers and helpers, they will continue to be mistreated and beaten. If lesbians are treated as 'bad' or 'lesser' women, they will continue to experience discrimination and violence. Where this is reinforced by the media, by traditionalist leaders, by politicians, by school teachers and religious leaders, women's status is further reduced.

Where women are kept out of decision-making spaces by political design (including supposed 'cultural practices'), these false ideas are reinforced, and over time many women and men begin to believe that it is natural and inevitable that women can be treated with disrespect, with discrimination, and our rights violated.

However, what is also true is that not everyone believes this, and also that not everyone gets an equal chance to define women's status. Society is changing as women themselves start to speak out, and more men support us in this change. For example, while many of the traditionalist and masculinist ideas about Fiji and the right of men to lead, are believed and reinforced by a significant section of our society but it is also true that there are many of us in Fiji, of all ethnicities and socio-economic classes, from rural and urban areas, women and men and transgender people alike, who believe differently.

That is why at WAC we believe that in order to address violence against women, girls and trans persons, we need to look very deep into our society's views about power, hierarchy and status overall, and to unpack, explore and question prevailing views, including both here at home, and abroad.

Culture is fluid and ever-changing, and our traditions are here to support us all, not to make some of us live in fear and pain. And we know that change is always possible, whatever community we live in.

We also know that as women's and girls' status is changed and transformed toward equality through hard-fought gender equality and sexual rights work at local, national, regional and global levels, that there is inevitable confusion, backlash, conflict and struggle as well as the positive benefits of increased equality, choice and freedom for women and girls. So in all gender violence and gender equality work by WAC, we include conflict analysis, transformation and peacebuilding. WAC also works extensively with men and boys.

*What is your organisation doing for the 16 days of Activism (if applicable)?*

WAC are performing the gender and non-violence play 'Size Doesn't Matter', which includes explorations of nonviolence leadership and positive male leadership models, in the rural areas of Naitasiri, and Tailevu, in partnership with the Ministry for Women and the Social Welfare Department.

We have also hosted two learning circles for women and transgender community activists at WAC, on the subject of gender and sexual baiting. During those circles, the group decided on issues to share in a special 16 days edition of WACky Peace e-newsletter.

The learning from the circles, and other upcoming work, will contribute to the upcoming 2009-2010 play 'The F Word', supported by UNIFEM, in which women share stories of their struggles and power to survive and thrive through experiences of discrimination and violence. The participants will share these stories through song, dance, theatre and poems with the wider community in Fiji, and an advocacy DVD will be produced.

*When women benefit, the whole community benefits.*

*What do you think needs to be done to end Violence Against Women?*

- We can transform our ideas and actions about gender based violence, and about wider societal violence. WAC has found that:
- Violence is multifaceted, and all forms of violence are connected to desire for power and control, whether of resources, other human beings, or ourselves.
- Gender violence is the most deadly, destructive and widespread face of violence. Ending it will positively impact all forms of violence.
- Gender equality must be at the core of gender violence work.
- Some gender violence is visible, and the most deadly kinds are hidden from view and perpetrated by those closest to us, including family members.
- Systemic violence against women is still violence - whether it's by our own or other governments, transnational corporations, military, police, schools, media, academia, development experts, and others.
- We learn and reproduce ideas about power and control throughout our lives that allow us to ignore or justify violence.
- We learn and reproduce ideas about respect, equality and justice that enable us to resist and transform violence.
- Women, girls, and people with diverse gender and sexual identity face intersectional violence specifically because of their gender identity.
- Women human rights defenders and sexual rights defenders face added violence because of their work.
- Knowledge about violence without participation in practical action to change it, is useless.
- Advocacy action without full, meaningful participation of victim/survivors of violence is ineffective.
- We can all play a part in ending violence against women and girls, and gender violence.
- We can work toward a long-term goal of non-violence and active peace, but first we have to envision it.

### **7<sup>th</sup> December: Day Thirteen** **Eastern Highlands Family Voice**

On 25th November, Papua New Guinea organisation Eastern Highland Family Voice hosted a Take Back the Night vigil in Goroka to launch their 16 Days of Activism.

To learn more about Eastern Highland Family Voice, you can download their Newsletter [here](#).

### **8<sup>th</sup> December: Day Fourteen** **Naomi Yupae - Eastern Highlands Family Voice**

Following the Asia Pacific Breakthrough Summit held in Melbourne 2-3rd December 2009, Naomi Yupae of Eastern Highlands Family Voice (EHFV) spoke to IWDA about an experience of personal activism in her community. Naomi is the Executive Director of EHFV which provides paralegal advice and training, community mediation and conflict resolution support, awareness and advocacy programs, and direct counselling services to communities in the Eastern Highlands of PNG.

EHFV has counselled literally thousands of people and worked with hundreds of communities in their ten years of operations. It also works with men on issues of

violence and promotes men's responsibility for dealing with these issues while maintaining a support and focus on victims who are predominantly women.

Watch the video of Naomi's Story

### **9th December: Day Fifteen The Cambodian Human Rights and Development Association**

IWDA partner, The Cambodian Human Rights and Development Association (ADHOC), is a non-profit, non-governmental organisation based in Phnom Penh, Cambodia. ADHOC work in partnership with IWDA on the Community Action Against Violence Against Women (CAVAW) project which is jointly implemented in two provinces of Cambodia with another non-government organisation, Banteay Srei (see Day 10).

ADHOC's work focuses on addressing the absence of basic rights, freedoms and liberties in Cambodia by providing people with training to increase understanding and knowledge of human rights, law and democracy and of how to defend these rights and freedoms, themselves.

A large part of ADHOC's work within the CAAVAW project is focused on providing legal support and advice to women who have experienced violence.

To find out more about ADHOC's work please visit their website.

### **10<sup>th</sup> December: Day Sixteen Safe Houses for Women**

There are currently limited services in Cambodia for women who experience violence, particularly for those who choose to leave their situation and seek support and shelter elsewhere.

IWDA partner Banteay Srei run an essential service for women in Battambang province and surrounding areas, through providing accommodation; medial support; women's rights training; counselling; orientation on basic rights; basic health education; assistance in filing legal complaints; and assistance through long term rehabilitation and reintegration for women and their children who have left situations of violence.

As this 16 Days campaign highlights, it is a human right for women to live free from violence, and this ongoing service addresses the ongoing barriers which women face in claiming this right, including a costly legal system; transport costs; and a lack of shelter for women and their family. Appropriate services and programs are essential in creating a safe environment and addressing practical needs to enable women and girls to overcome the consequences of violence, access systems and justice and rebuild their lives.

The 16 Days of Activism campaign highlights not only specific examples of advocacy and action linked to the campaign, but also the ongoing work of women and men across our region who are striving every day to support women in claiming their human rights. IWDA would like to thank our partners and supporters for their participation in this important campaign.