



Balance

"HELPING TO BALANCE THE SCALES"

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Paradise lost: Violence against women and gender inequality in the Pacific islands

By Imrana Jalal

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A lawyer by profession, Ms. Jalal was a Commissioner with the Fiji Human Rights Commission. She is the author of the Law for Pacific Women, architect of the Family Law Act 2005, and former Chair of the UN Committee on Harmful Practices Against Women, and continues to be a member of the Fiji Women's Rights Movement, Women Living Under Muslim Law, and the Asia-Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development. Ms. Jalal is also a Commissioner on the International Commission of Jurists, Geneva.

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THE Pacific islands conjure up images of paradise: white sand beaches, transparent sparkling aquamarine seas, and happy smiling islanders. But what lies beneath is the unacceptable treatment of women and rampant gender inequality, as the iconic tourist images mask the highest rates in the world of intimate partner sexual and domestic violence against women, ranging from around 68% in Papua New Guinea (PNG), Fiji and Kiribati to 40% in Samoa. Against this milieu, paradise is surely lost for women and girls in the Pacific.

Not much appears to have changed since Susan Brownmiller wrote her brilliant seminal book *Against Our Will: Men, Women and Rape* in 1975. That book had such a profound impact on me becoming a feminist in my early 20s.

Gender equality appears to have advanced everywhere, and so, you would think, would attitudes about wife beating. However, according to a new UNFPA report, this is far from the truth.

The report highlights how in Timor-Leste a staggering 81% of teenage girls believe a husband is justified in beating his wife for at least one reason. The figures were slightly lower for Kiribati, Solomon Islands, Tuvalu, Samoa, and Vanuatu, but still speak volumes about how girls perceive their mothers' status. In Tonga, faring somewhat better, just over 25% of girls think domestic violence is acceptable in some circumstances.

Aren't we raising our daughters differently? Aren't we asking them to dream a different dream, one that allows them lives with dignity, husbands who respect them, and a decent education followed by paid work? Not so, it seems.

Picture how the intergenerational cycle of domestic violence, actual criminal assault against women in the home, is perpetuated. Teenage girls



A woman sitting in a traditional hut in Samoa.

watch their mothers being beaten by their fathers. The father is the patriarch after all. It is he who must be obeyed. These impressionable young women consider it justifiable, because their mothers do. They too get beaten when they are grown women, and in turn they teach their own daughters—even if it is only by subliminal socialization—that it is acceptable too. And so the cycle continues and that's why those 81% of Timorese girls think it's fine for their fathers to beat their mothers.

Last week, Dame Meg Taylor, Secretary General of the Pacific Islands Forum and the first female leader of the regional organization, reminded us of some of these problems in the Pacific. In ADB's Manila headquarters as annual Gender Month distinguished speaker, Dame Meg pointed out that the last 2012 Women's Economic Opportunity Index, published by the Economist Intelligence Unit, provided a global comparison of women's economic opportunities including,

for the first time, six Pacific countries. The Pacific ranked very poorly in this index of 128 countries, with most of the six surveyed countries in the bottom 25%. The Solomon Islands and PNG were ranked at 124 and 125, respectively.

"The urgency of dealing with gender-based violence in the Pacific is self-evident," she said.

It is important to remember that one cannot point to individual successful women to rationalize the advancement of gender equality, as is commonly done in the Pacific. Gender indexes measure women's advancement as a group. The success of individual women is laudable, but it is an anomaly, an exception to the rule. They succeed in spite of the system, not because of it. It is important and appropriate to celebrate them for many reasons, including their importance as role models to girls and young women. But this

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Greetings from FWRM!

The first quarter of 2016 was a traumatic time for Fiji, when we were hit by the most destructive hurricane in our recorded history on 20th February – Tropical Cyclone Winston. The loss of life and widespread destruction was unprecedented. We Fijians are resilient, but it is going to take a long time to recover.



Women and girls have been particularly affected by the disaster, which threw into stark relief the issues of violence, lack of access to decision-making and unequal burden of work. But what also emerged were stories of women's heroism in the face of great danger, as they protected their families in the height of the storm. And, perhaps even more important has been their resilience, strength and laughter as women have taken the lead in the arduous cleanup and recovery during the weeks and months since. Our Research Officer, Menka Goundan played a lead role in FWRM's contribution to the disaster response efforts, initiating a Dignity Pack Appeal for basic hygiene supplies for women and girls. She shares her experiences of visiting the worst affected areas and hearing firsthand the stories of young women and their families.

As Fiji was getting ready to face Winston, the women's movement was dealing with other losses, with the passing away of Shireen Lateef on 11th February and Peni Moore just two weeks later on 24th February. Both women have left a lasting legacy in Fiji's feminist history, and in particular the herstory of FWRM. Peni was our first Coordinator, whilst Shireen had significant influence in the development of one of our founding members.

We pay tribute to Shireen and Peni in this issue with personal reflections on their lives and legacies from three Fiji feminists: Claire Slatter, Virisila Buadromo and Imrana Jalal.

Our front-page features a first foray into blogging by one of our founding members. Imrana shares a very personal analysis of the astronomical rates of violence against women in the Pacific. While the figures are depressing – for example, that over 80% of teenage girls in Timor Leste believe wife-beating is justifiable – Imrana instead uses this to reenergize her commitment to the work we do. And I agree with her when she says, *"All of this reminds me of why I am still a feminist. For Pacific island women and girls, we need to keep working until paradise is regained."*

In Solidarity,
Tara Chetty
(Executive Director)

ELF Graduate Appointed to AWID Board of Directors

THE Fiji Women's Rights Movement and the Emerging Leaders Forum Alumni (ELFA) congratulate Betty Barkha on her recent election to the Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID) Board, an influential global organisation with over 30 years experience in development, sustainability, gender equality and women's rights.

Betty, who is originally from Lautoka, is a human rights advocate with extensive experience in gender equality, peace & security, youth inclusion and climate change. Betty is currently based in Thailand with the Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development. She is also involved with the FRIDA Young Feminist Fund, Women Deliver Young Leaders Program and the Asia Pacific Alliance on Women Peace and Security.

FWRM's Executive Director Tara Chetty says: "We are thrilled to have a young woman leader from Fiji on the AWID Board, to represent the concerns of Pacific women. Betty is a strategic leader, committed to the principles of feminism and human rights, and an outstanding graduate of our young women's leadership programme."

She graduated from FWRM's Emerging Leader's Forum in 2012. ELF is a year-long leadership-training programme for young women in Fiji, which began in 2002 and now has an Alumni of over 100 young women leaders.

ELFA Co-ordinator Funmike Lilo echoes similar sentiments expressed by Chetty: "The Alumni is



ecstatic about Betty's appointment to the AWID Board. She has dedicated herself to doing amazing work and this can only be one more step towards that and being a proud voice for young Pacific women."

Betty is currently involved in research under the Australian National University's Pacific Research Colloquium to understand climate change resilience initiatives undertaken by Pacific grassroots and indigenous women using traditional knowledge.

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cannot, and should not, be an overall indicator of gender equality.

So what can we do about it?

For a start we need to question the fundamentals of patriarchy that require fathers to reign supreme. Based on my experience representing hundreds of battered women in court, try counseling and mediation first, but if that does not work then prosecute and seek punishment. Women should expose their husbands and partners for their criminal acts. This would send an important message to their daughters.

We must raise our daughters and sons differently than we have been. We need to tell

them over and over again at home, at school and in the churches, mosques and temples that hitting a woman is a criminal assault, a violation of a woman's human rights. The same act committed outside the home would be considered a crime. They need to understand that if their father considered their mother his equal, he would not beat her.

Women have to defend themselves and say enough is enough. Ultimately they have to walk away from marriages in which men refuse to change. These small acts of dignity may turn the tide for their daughters.

All of this reminds me of why I am still a feminist. For Pacific island women and girls, we need to keep working until paradise is regained.



ELF 6 Graduate!

By Mamta Chand

THE 6th cohort of young women activists graduated from the Emerging Leaders Forum (ELF) on December 3rd, 2015.

Under the Young Women in Leadership Programme, 22 young women from diverse backgrounds completed an intensive year-long advocacy awareness training. The various workshops focused on topics such as Feminism, Gendered Power Relations, Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights, Climate Change, Violence Against Women, Mental Health and the representation of women in mass media.

The ELF programme encourages young women leaders to approach and analyse issues through a feminist perspective. Within meetings and retreats, the young women discussed personal challenges and engaged in creative and fun activities, further strengthening their solidarity as young feminist leaders.

The graduation saw the Honourable Tupou Draunidalo as Chief Guest and she emphasised the importance of young women's involvement at the political level.



Transgender graduate Felomeena, gained full realization as a feminist, that the transgender community plays an active role in contributing towards the empowerment of women.

Nigita Bharti found that the programme liberated her in terms of thinking compassionately and intersectionally.

It was encouraging to see ELF 6 complete the programme better informed as leaders, striving to address young women's agenda at the national and global levels. The graduates have now become part of the Alumni (ELFA), comprising 100 energetic women activists engaging in various spheres of influence.

Feminist voices echo in Fiji Parliament

THE Fiji Women's Rights Movement was affiliated with five of the twenty-five young women selected for last year's National Youth Parliament in Suva from 30th November to 4th December.

Georgia Lilo, Maryann Lockington, Monica Aguilar and Lagakali Tavaiaqia from Emerging Leaders Forum 6, along with FWRM's Research Officer Menka Goundan, joined youth from all over the country at Parliament Chambers.

The Fiji Parliament secretariat chose 50 young people to utilise this opportunity to learn about Parliamentary procedural process. Says Menka Goundan, "The program was an excellent opportunity to learn about the standing orders and rules of Parliament that would ultimately help in active citizen engagement through future submissions."

Through its work in the area of Democratization and Intergenerational Leadership, the Movement encouraged young women's political participation. The ELFs attended a workshop in June on Parliamentary Procedures which was instrumental in motivating young women to apply for the National Youth Parliament.

By Menka Goundan

According to Georgia Lilo, "Youth Parliament was different and exciting. Each and every one of us were enabled and given the opportunity to show our leadership capabilities. I gained some serious knowledge in political policies that can only really be learnt through practicing rather than theoretically, and being a member of the Emerging Leaders Forum was also a massive help and gave me and the other Elf members a leg up in terms of being able to speak more confidently and freely."

Miss Lilo went on to highlight how the 2015 Youth Parliament was a rather ominous experience for her on the first day.

"I'm not going to lie, I was very intimidated going in. As the week progressed though, I learnt that despite the differences in our ages, social classes, professions and religions, we were all just people. People who want to make a difference. People who want only the best for Fiji. People who are willing to pour our hearts into making Fiji better and I think that is what made the 2015 Youth

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Parliament such a great experience.

The fact that we all had one goal, no matter where we sat in Parliament House. Right now, we're all just a collection of ideas and we hope to become more as we grow as a group."

FWRM hopes to include other youth members of Parliament in their programs through the National Youth Parliament Alumni.



Claire Slatter's Tribute to Peni Moore

(Most of this tribute was read at the gathering to farewell and pay tribute to Peni on Saturday, 27 February, 2016 - this version incorporates a few additional things which Claire said at a special celebration of the lives of both Peni and Shireen Lateef on International Women's Day, March 8, 2016).

On Wednesday I wrote to several friends abroad:

"It's another sad day for feminists in Fiji. Less than three weeks ago, we mourned the death of Shireen Lateef, feminist scholar/educator and advocate for gender equality within the ADB for the last 25 years. I believe that Shireen's early consciousness raising work in Fiji in the early 1980s inspired some of the women who went on to form the FWRM.

And now we have lost Peni Moore, one of the earliest members (if not a founding member) of FWRM. Like Shireen, Peni was battling late-diagnosed cancer. Both women were courageous in facing their illness, and in Peni's case, in facing the certainty of death."

WE are here today to pay our respects to Peni, to recognize the very special person she was, and to record our appreciation of her life's work and of her warm and loving friendship.

As we all know, Peni was the founder and (Creative) Director of Women's Action for Change (WAC), a feminist organization that specialized in providing education via playback and forum theatre, with a cast of committed, fulltime, poorly paid (and sometimes unpaid) actors. In the vein of Wan Smolbag Theatre Group in Vanuatu (which provided some early training to Peni and maybe others in WAC), WAC performed its many plays to hundreds of schools and villages around the country. According to Peni, WAC performed its plays well over a thousand times. Peni wrote all the scripts and performed as part of the cast, as well as engaged audiences in discussions on the issues covered. It was consciousness raising theatre, and some of the themes were heavy, serious, and very political.

Under Peni's bold leadership WAC also began the earliest advocacy work in support of gay and lesbian rights through what was initially called its Sexual Minorities Project. Pushing even further outside of feminist comfort zones at the time, Peni led WAC into working inside prisons with young, male offenders as part of what Peni conceptualized as a transformative justice project. This work was very courageous, went on for some years, did not always have the full support of the WAC collective, but had the effect of turning some young offenders' lives around. Peni received phone calls from some of them, who upon learning she was ill, called to thank her for being such a positive influence in their lives.

In 2007, WAC worked with women from four informal settlements - Jittu, Lakena, Nakelo and Narere - to produce a DVD titled 'No Space Between'. It records the "daily struggles" of women in these settlements - 'with overcrowding, violence, poverty, lack of essential services, health and education problems.' It also "celebrates the positive things women are doing to improve their own lives, and those of others." This documentation of "what women (in these communities) already contribute to their families,

communities, and Fiji' is illustrative of the feminist project of bringing recognition to, and valuing, the work that women do.]

I have always had a lot of respect for Peni. She was a maverick feminist, doing avant garde work where she believed it was needed. She was the most colourful and versatile character on Fiji's feminist landscape - it was not just that she dressed in hippie clothes and dyed her hair beetroot red, she was an 'out there' free thinking, free-wheeling, feminist spirit; a playwright and actor; an informal educator; and a radical transformative justice theorist and practitioner. She was, without a doubt, a fearless and far-sighted feminist leader and educator. Teresia Teaiwa, who was once part of the WAC collective, said Peni was 'the embodiment of a feminist free spirit'.

A fiercely independent thinker, Peni had the courage of her convictions. She may not have been religious but she was deeply spiritual and I think this is what gave her her internal strength. She respected all sentient beings, lived in harmony with nature, walked lightly on the earth. She was really a hippie, as Jade said - she chose an alternative lifestyle, subscribed to alternative values, and shared all she had. Peni was a vegetarian, practiced meditation, and truly lived by her principles, which were fundamentally about non-discrimination and equality in the broadest, most inclusive, sense.

Peni always described herself as an anarchist, and I guess she was, in terms of not subscribing to established institutions or ways of thinking. Peni was unafraid, to push the boundaries, to stand apart and follow what she felt was right. She showed immense courage in the last months of her life.

Peni served with distinction as a member of the Constitution Commission chaired by Prof Yash Ghai. She accepted the appointment to the Commission with the earnest hope of being 'a voice for 'normal people', as she put it. She was quoted by Radio Australia as saying:

"I'm not from any high ranking place, I don't walk around in a suit and high heels, people know me as just the person down the road, so they feel comfortable talking with me...I think that's what it is about; allowing people who wouldn't normally be part of decision making to know they'll be safe to come and talk." [http://www.](http://www.radioaustralianews.net.au/stories/201204/3487178.htm?desktop)



radioaustralianews.net.au/stories/201204/3487178.htm?desktop

Peni was, if you like, the people's representative on the Commission. And like Taufa Vakatale who also served as a member of the Constitution Commission, Peni was terribly demoralized by the trashing of what came to be referred to as 'The People's Constitution'.

For most of her adult life, Peni lived very simply, sharing her home and all she had with WAC members and everyone else who regularly turned up at her home cum WAC HQ. In the last few years, she has been living in 'splendid isolation', in a beautiful wooden house she built on a lovely piece of land, surrounded by forest, in Wainadoi. It is a dream home, spacious and airy and eco-friendly, with a rustic touch, and perfect for meditation. Sadly she was not to enjoy it for long.

Jade, Zoe and Eli, Shaday, Che and Tamarangi, we share your grief at losing Peni. Our hearts are with you today as you prepare to carry out the final rites for your beloved mother and grandmother, as per her wishes. To Jade, Zoe and Eli, we know that Peni was your rock. She was a wonderful mother. And you have been brave and strong in your loving support of her in these last few difficult months, while handling the fear and pain of losing her. We want you to know that you have been in our thoughts and prayers, and that you can count on us to give you support if/whenever you need it. Moce Peni - you were a very special person and will be long remembered for all that you were.

Virisila Buadromo's tribute to Peni

In the span of two weeks, two inspiring women, feminist who blazed trails passed their torches on to a new generation and began the next phase of their journeys.

Today I remember Peni Moore, the first coordinator of the Fiji Women's Rights Movement.

When I first met Peni, as a junior journalist I knew instantly that she marched to the beat of her own lali.

She was the first 'radical' feminist I had ever met and while I would go on to meet many others on my journey; she has always been the picture I conjure in my head when the term is used. As I grew to understand that the term 'radical' is generally used to label those that are beyond what peoples expectations are, I began to understand Peni. Over the years she managed to continue be fascinating, intimidating and frustrating.

Peni and I became neighbours when I moved next door to her home and office where she ran the then Women's Action for Change on Waimanu Rd. Peni had 4 dogs and several cats. I had three dogs. Needless to say our paths crossed when our pets were getting along, not getting along or not getting along with any pedestrians on Waimanu Rd. There we were talking about our children, prying them apart or saving some poor unsuspecting souls from our terrors. If anything our common attempts at dog whispering, and Peni was way better at it than I ever could hope to be said a lot about our work. We were always in the thick of things,

Imrana Jalal's tribute to Shireen

I WAS privileged to do a Eulogy at Shireen's funeral service in Brisbane on Sat, and at the Memorial service at ADB today in Manila. Here are some excerpts from both, for those of you not able to be there.

Shireen was not a religious person, in fact she was an agnostic but because I do not like to think that this is the end for Shireen and I, for us, it gives me comfort to say – "Inna LillahiWainnallahRaji-un (Surely we belong to Allah and to him we shall return)".

Shireen had a famous plaque in her office at ADB which said "A woman needs a man like a fish needs a bicycle". To many at ADB that was their first introduction to her.

Shireen Rexina Lateef was my mentor and friend and she drove me crazy. We fought and argued all the time. We also made up pretty quickly, and this was a strength of our friendship, and part of the reason for its durability, since it has lasted over 33 years. She would push me and prod me or yell at me about writing something that she considered mediocre at 9am, remind me that at ADB she was my boss and not her friend, and then would call me before 12 and sheepishly say "how about lunch"? "Never let a small dispute ruin a great friendship" as our friend, Dinesh Shankar would quote. Her beloved friend Fabia Shah would say that Shireen was my biggest admirer and biggest critic. She was like that to people she either loved or cared about. This means that she drove alot of people crazy.

Bossy, tenacious, opinionated to a fault, impatient for results, always wanting to be right and have the last word, no matter how unimportant the issue, ...but she was also truly brilliant and strategic.

1983 was when Sufi Dean, AtuEmberson-Bain and I met her. Caesar, her brother and one of my closest friends, had told Sufi and I, "hey girls, my sister is coming to do research on "feminism and that type of shit" could you meet her and talk to her?" We groaned but did his bidding. As he would say "you know the rules, girls!" Needless to say we all ended up as subjects in her PhD thesis, "Indo Fijian Women - Purdah and Segregation in the Pacific". She was relentless when she wanted something and she hounded people until it was done. We were blown away by Shireen and her ideas. She pushed us to think beyond the narrow confines of local small town gossip in Fiji, the latest parties, how we looked, fashion, and, the men in our lives on whom she had long, loud, and strong opinions. Particularly those she disapproved of as husbands! Thankfully she loved my second husband, SakiusaTuisolia, and when she broke her hip he carried her out of hospital and up and down the stairs at her home a number of times. I was grateful for my big, muscular indigenous Fijian husband on those days.

always trying to create peace.

That was Peni, a peace-builder, an animal lover; a hippie, a social justice activist and a strong ally to at risk communities. She had a strong sense of community and had no qualms in voicing a dissenting view if she felt that people were being wronged. She was brave, feisty, fierce and always looking for ways to make this world a better place for everyone.

There was many times during my 14 years at FWRM, that Peni and I did not agree with each other, our politics or our methods but I always felt that our disagreements never carried any malice and that we

And in the later part of our lives Shireen also spouted unsolicited advice, based on absolutely no experience at all, on how to raise our children – what say William Parkinson? Her favourite theme was how we were too indulgent of our children and not tough enough. She continued to challenge us during her yearly visits to Fiji and arguments would be picked up where it let off the year before like no time had gone by. Caesar said at the funeral on Saturday in Brisbane, that "Shireen came to Fiji as an adult and stole my friends!"

She has had a profound influence on all of us, with her feminism and political views - Atu, Sufi, AshaPillai Whiteside, Fabia, Julie Apted, Carolyn, Tasneem, Lisa, and her loyal, long suffering and wonderful sister-in-law Sharan, were all "victims" of her ideas and beliefs, in a deeply personal way. Our dear friend Jon Apted, dubbed us the "sisTHAS" some 20 years ago. Many of my own ideas about women and life were vastly influenced by her. Three things stand out, her pushing me to enroll for a Masters in Gender Studies in Australia, writing my book on Law for Pacific Women, and most importantly, pushing me to establish with Shamima Ali, Atu, Helen Sutherland, KuiniBavadra and others, the Fiji Women's Rights Movement (FWRM). It was a journey, that, as it turns out, was one without a return. FWRM has become a respected feminist and human rights organisation globally. I put many of her theories into practice at FWRM even though she was not directly involved.

It was this "focused energy," to quote my friend Annette Sachs Robertson describing Shireen, and being "unencumbered" by a husband, children or other dependants to distract her, which allowed her to change a huge institution, profoundly and hopefully forever– with a gender policy in 1998, and to create a unique gender mainstreaming architecture in 2010, for ADB, to persuade ADB to adopt it and through that to inspire many women and men at ADB to do better for women in Asia and the Pacific, "do more, do better and do it fast," she would say. This ADB system of gender mainstreaming (GM) system has now taken on legendary proportions amongst the Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs) of the globe.

Some 20 yrs ago every development agency was requiring gender mainstreaming in projects, but very few people knew what it actually meant in practical terms, and what to do about it! Innovator Shireen Lateef developed a 4-tier category system with matching criteria in which every ADB project was categorized for GM. This measures the extent to which gender designs are integrated into the project designs. If there were substantive gender designs directly benefiting women it was counted towards the

both understood the endgame.

Peni's cutting edge work in restorative justice, activist and playback theatre created inclusive and safe spaces for many people who were marginalized by the mainstream, particularly after the 2000 crisis in Fiji. When her work was connected to the policy work carried out by organisations like FWRM, our analysis and advocacy was strengthened for the lived experiences of the most marginalized within our communities. This often meant that FWRM's work was better targeted and had a bigger impact to create meaningful and sustained change.

top 2 categories, and considered GM. Because of this, we know now what GM is, and what it is not at ADB! This 20 year odyssey, changing minds and mind sets, not to mention hearts, finally resulted in the 2010 GM Guidelines, and in 2012, the first target of 40% GM in projects, was introduced in the ADB corporate Results Framework – the first MDB to do so. To translate this in non-development speak, this means that roughly 45% of our projects (financing support of annually over USD\$22 billion to over 30 countries in the Asia Pacific region) has project gender mainstreaming, bearing the hallmark of Shireen's legacy.

Shireen's biggest challenge in her 25 year career at ADB in Manila was changing the mind sets of staff to accept GM in their projects and to implement quotas for women and gender designs to benefit women within the financing and she did that with passion and drive. These ADB projects designs have benefitted millions of women in education, water & sanitation, agriculture, skills, infrastructure saving women's time poverty and empowering them socially and economically. She told me time and time again not to assume that the battle was won. And she is right, we really can't let down our guard, EVER. ADB is a global industry leader in the MDBs in GM in projects, something little known outside gender circles. Other Banks look to our GM system as one to emulate. We, (and countless Asian and Pacific women) owe a debt of gratitude to the incomparable Innovator Shireen Lateef for having the vision, tenacity, fortitude and courage to see the vision through to its practical realization, and to ADB for having the grit to embrace it.

Not bad for a girl born in little Fiji eh? As Tara Chetty, current head of FWRM said in a Press Release, "Shireen inspired the women who established ADB. . . FWRM will always remember and be grateful to Shireen. Through her influence, the ADB was able to support FWRM's advocacy on Women and the Law in the areas of family and labour etc..."

Such is the influence of Shireen – she cut such a wide swathe in gender circles and left such a mark I have never been able to pay Shireen back for what she has done for me over the 33 years I have known her, all I can hope is to keep her legacy alive and to Pay it Forward to other young women.

In the immortal words of Cat Stevens later known as Mohammed Yusuf Islam -

"Oh, baby, baby, it's a wild world
It's hard to get by just upon a smile
Oh, baby, baby, it's a wild world
I'll always remember you like a child, girl"

Farewell Shireen, you will live in our hearts forever.

Shamima Ali and I visited her a week before she passed, at her beautiful Wainadoi residence. She was surrounded by her children and grandchildren, her cats, and dogs. She looked frail but her words and eyes were as feisty as ever. We chatted about everything from Fiji politics, feminism, women's rights, local gossip and everything else in between. I am so glad we shared that time. Her peace gave us peace.

Dear Peni, You fought the good fight, you finished the course, and you kept the faith. Rest in Power.

Reflections of A Young Feminist in Training

I'M SITTING at the keyboard trying to align my thoughts, which have been in disarray for the past couple of days. How do I condense almost eleven months of enlightenment and learning into 500 words? How do I talk about the different phases of awareness that I underwent during the one-year program that was the Emerging Leaders Forum?

I guess I should begin my reflection from the first day, walking into the Salvation Army hall like a plain white t-shirt being thrown in with bright coloured garments in a washing machine.

I walked in on the first day, thinking we would have a room full of diverse young women who were going to create their own little form of revolution. I thought, finally, I could be part of a team of like-minded people who were passionate about human rights issues and the rule of law. Obviously, we would agree on the issues we faced and how to solve them because we were after all, young women facing the same issues.

By the third month I realized how dreadfully wrong I was to even think that being women meant anything near an identical perspective. Instead, I was met with a mix of combustible strength that hadn't been taught to merge in order to create that indestructible unit we were all yearning for.

I'm getting ahead of myself here.

Let me first highlight that I have been very fortunate to be able to work with and be inspired by these young women who have become my sisters. There are too many of us for me to write about individually (I really wish I could) but collectively, we brought together a wide range of different experiences and skills. We were involved with the One Billion Rising movement and the My Revolution monologue. I participated in the IDAHOT unplugged event. After the tragedy of Cyclone PAM, ELF6 mobilized to start a #DonateAPad campaign for the affected women in Vanuatu. I participated in commemorating International Women's Day at the GIRLS fun day, with ELF6 launching an online campaign to share images of inspirational women. I took part in the West Papua marches. ELF6 came together to organize a mid-year event themed "Rise of the Feminist Phoenix" where we showcased our activities and achievements to our family and friends.

We are now mobilizing for the 16 Days of Activism. We have done so much and learnt so much with ELF6. It was an amazing experience and I am grateful to those that have been part of it.

First, I shall introduce the key factors of this

By Maryann Lockington

wonderful yet challenging journey (the challenge only adding to the positive growth this programme had instilled.)

FWRM being the most prominent example throughout the program of the effectiveness, passion and success behind the feminist movement and history in the country, we were quite fortunate to not only be accepted into the ELF program but also work with a few of their staff, former staff and colleagues. The two people that were most instrumental in the different sessions were our two coordinators, with Veena taking us through the first half of the year before Mamta stepped into the role for the rest of the year.

Veena guided us with a reservoir of unrelenting tolerance and patience with our sometimes-flighty behavior. With a room full of eager-to-please and eager-to-change-the-world sparkly eyed young women whose ideas and strategies could sometimes stray towards the impractical, Veena was the firm reminder that steered us towards keeping a goal in mind. Veena inspired me especially with her form of poetry and encouraged me to channel my love for the art into an instrument of advocacy and awareness. She set up a timeline activity explaining the history of feminism in Fiji and while admittedly some of the dates have escaped me (regrettably numbers and I don't necessarily get along), a new clarity dawned on me about the reality of women now and the long continuing journey that led up to it. In the same way, FWCC's Shamima Ali during her session on EVAW was the drop of sobriety on the history of women human rights defenders in Fiji and the role of FWRM and FWCC.

It was as if I was in a passageway between two doors and the one behind me had become unscrewed and dropped to the floor to reveal a line of different women who had come before me carrying the same torch. It was the torch that burned with the radical idea of justice and equality. I say radical because in the 21st century, the idea of women's equality and potential in leadership is still undermined by the deep-rooted institution of patriarchy. The second door, the one in front of me was unlocked but only partially open because while I wanted to continue what those before me had started, I needed the skills and knowledge to do so.

That was where ELF came in.

Our second co-ordinator (second not meaning less or more than first) was Mamta, a ball of energy that kept things rolling and kept discussions going. Mamta was just as encouraging and inspirational, as she was a no-nonsense leader. Her organizational methods were no bore as she taught us to build a structure within our teams based on our different strengths. There were many things I appreciated in Mamta's style of facilitation but mainly, I was grateful that she was always accessible and accommodating to our needs (some bringing aching head pains, surely). Her approach was slightly different to Veena and I secretly entertain the idea that ELF6 was so special that our potential for greatness needed two co-ordinators!

In the same way, I appreciated the different women that graced our sessions each month, like DIVA's Noelene and Shirley who taught me that having different interests and paths didn't necessarily mean I was unfocused but merely reconciling my own social identities. There was also Roshika, an unwavering force of passion and conviction in her fight for equality. Roshika pushed us to turn our ideas into a solid form of activism and to understand the way patriarchy works, as well as the power dynamics that result from it.

FWRM's Tara Chetty simplified and livened up what could have otherwise been a boring session on legislation and parliament (to which I'm accustomed to at university). Instead, we had a series of lively discussions on our realities as young women, indigenous women, gay women, transgendered women and how being visible and active in decision making could change some of the negative realities. Tara also helped us relate to the roles and existing international law and national law, using local examples (like the family law) on how to lobby and bring about change.

Asinate and ELFA's Rosie were instrumental in our team building and helping us realize the importance of mental health. Ala and Lillian, amazing, inspirational and cheerful individuals whose sessions were lively and enjoyable. Shazia Usman, whose session I closely related to as someone studying media and hoping to utilize it for advocacy and storytelling. Not forgetting of course easy-going Kris whose immeasurable support throughout the year and encouragement to disseminate was heavily appreciated. During his session on LGBTQI, Kris welcomed our

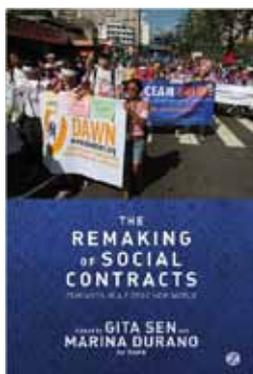
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The Remaking of Social Contracts - Feminists in a Fierce New World

Review by: **Sehin Teferra**

(At the 'Africa Rising: Promise or Challenge for Gender Equality?' Public Forum in Addis Ababa, May 2015.)



Let me start by stating that this is a brilliant book. It invites us to imagine what the authors characterize as a 'fierce new world' (a term I love) and which is obviously a counterpoint or perhaps a complement to the 'Brave New World' envisioned by the World Social Movements.

Before the book's offer of the concrete ways in which a new, more egalitarian world may be created, the authors, an impressive set of inter-generational activists and academicians from all over the global South, offer an arresting critique of all the ways in which what they term the social contract of the world has been fractured, from environmental degradation to the runaway greed of the capitalist system to conflict and violence.

With its focus on 'gender power', the book questions the 'institutionalized gender approach' by governments and non-governmental organizations, which we know to be often weak, without teeth. 'Remaking the Social Contract' reminds that beyond interpersonal relations, the gender regime is shaped by economic, political, ecological systems and structures.

It follows that the feminist lenses that DAWN turns on examining the state of the world unearth the complicated interplay between trade, globalization, finance, climate change and militarization. As a feminist text, the book explores the gendered facets of these phenomena; pulling together feminist economists' assertions that economic systems all over the world

depend on women's unpaid labour as well as the gendered causes of climate change including consumption habits. An example of the more obscure political economy systems examined from a gender perspective is Free Trade. Whereas most free trade agreements are considered harmful to poor women and men, it was Luce Cokanasiga's short ('boxed') insert in the book on trade in the Pacific which elucidates the argument that the loss of land which is considered sacred by Pacific Islanders not only marginalizes women from economic benefits but also results in women detaching from their traditional status, roots and authority.

Included in the narrative of *The Remaking of Social Contracts: Feminists in a Fierce New World* is a series of texts which are highly critical of the neo-liberal state which the authors argue causes women's unpaid care to stretch to breaking point when common resources such as land for food and water get privatized and commercialized. *The Remaking of Social Contracts* is also critical of state policies that offer token prescriptions of the 'add women and stir' variety.

The human rights approach to development which is often offered as the antidote to the neo-liberal state is likewise problematized for its reliance on the state machinery, which doesn't always leave room for feminist activism. In addition to problematizing the neo-liberal system which is usually no friend to women, *The Remaking of Social Contracts* also expresses concern over the authoritarian nature of the developmental state. I could relate personally to many of the arguments presented in this regard: in Ethiopia our nascent feminism faces most of the constraints outlined in the article 'The State of States' by Claire Slatter, Chair of the DAWN Board, including the political conditionality of 'good governance', as well as the tension between democracy versus authoritarianism.

The book is particularly strong in its dissection of climate change from a feminist perspective, highlighting the absence of women's groups in the citizens' organizations demanding climate justice. In another instance, land grabs are discussed as a gendered phenomenon affecting women's access to agricultural lands and biodiversity while 'investments' by international companies often create opportunities for feminized jobs. I particularly appreciated the examination of current fads and trends designed to counteract the disasters characterizing our world as she stands currently. These range from a feminist exploration of the challenges of secularization in an increasingly conservative state of religiosity - with an associated increase in a backlash against gender equality - to climate finance mechanisms such as Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation (REDD) which may prove to be business as usual where gender equality is concerned.

The DAWN position is clear; it advocates feminist query as a key analytical tool for the transnational activism of the feminists of the global South, with the United Nations questioned as the appropriate locus for this multilateral engagement. However, global conferences such as the International Conference on Population and Development held in Cairo (1994) and landmark documents such as the Beijing Platform for Action which both featured strong voices from the Global South are discussed appreciatively. A key component of both ICPD and Beijing was, of course, reproductive rights; and the abortion debate is highlighted in the book beyond the US, where it is almost always under debate. The discussion is timely at a point when we are hearing reports about the Uruguayan ten-year-old who, raped and pregnant, was denied an abortion. Lastly, the rise in homophobia in Africa and particularly in Uganda following the passing of the controversial anti-homosexuality legislation in 2012 is treated to an impressive Foucauldian analysis which critiques Western liberal human rights and humanitarian discourses which would save us Africans from ourselves.

One of the gems offered by this book is the reframing of women beyond their vulnerability, recognizing women as agents in the very social contracts the book considers dangerous including as willing participants in religious fundamentalist organizations. Women as agents engaged in the effort to recreate a better social contract are featured well, including a great story from Gujarat where Muslim and Hindu women were able to overcome their mutual distrust to work together.

There were a few pieces in the book where I was left hungry for a deeper feminist analysis, as for example, in the article discussing the new colonization of Africa by China. However, most of the contributions offer a rich set of feminist viewpoints, which greatly enhanced my feminist understanding of the processes shaping our world. In conclusion, I would say that DAWN has done it again, it has produced a definitive text that creates necessary discomfort, that poses as many questions as it answers but which always positions women and the perennial quest for equality as the key ingredient in the reworked social contract of the fierce new world DAWN has boldly drawn for us.

Sehin Teferra is a PhD Candidate in Gender Studies at SOAS, University of London. Sehin is also the co-founder of Setaweet, a feminist network in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Star Wars: The Force Awakens

by **Shyana Ali & Fumike Lilo**

If you're old Star Wars fans like us, then you either went willingly to Premier night or you were dragged there by your significant other. Either way, aren't you ecstatic that you watched it? You were part of history in the making, with the start of a new chronicle in the Star Wars franchise.

A brilliant ode to the old one while introducing an exciting new cast, amongst whom we meet Rey! Rey (Daisy Ridley) is no damsel in distress, nor is she the typical female superhero in the sexy, impractical, skin-tight outfit...None of that!

She is her own hero, constantly reminding Finn (John Boyega) that she did not need rescuing. Having survived on Jakku (a backwater planet) as a scavenger for many years, hints to her story were revealed throughout the film and her role in the series and connection to old characters leaves us all with exciting theories on who she may be.

With Leia (Carrie Fisher) as a General within the Resistance Movement, showing how the franchise has evolved from the iconic bikini wearing standard set for women and even revealing the presence of a female within the higher ranks of the First Order, Captain Phasma (Gwendoline Christie). This caused quite a stir amongst hard core fans of the franchise, as the movie put women at the forefront, a welcome change from the male dominated films we are used to.

An overview of the movie (SPOILER ALERT): "Thirty years after the defeat of the Galactic Empire (bad people), the Galaxy faces a new threat from the evil Kylo Ren (Vader wannabe) and the First Order (bad people). When a defector named Finn (good guy) crash-lands on a desert planet, he meets Rey (Super-Shero), a tough scavenger whose droid (robot) contains a top-secret map. Together, the young duo joins forces with Han Solo (Great Guy) to make sure the Resistance (good people) receives the intelligence concerning the whereabouts of Luke Skywalker (Superhero) who is the last of the Jedi Knights (basically superheroes)." - Wikipedia with our layman's definitions.



About us

The Fiji Women's Rights Movement is a multi-ethnic and multi-cultural non-governmental organisation committed to removing discrimination against women through institutional reforms and attitudinal changes.

By means of core programmes and innovative approaches, FWRM practices and promotes feminism, democracy, good governance and human rights. We strive to empower, unite and provide leadership opportunities for women in Fiji, especially for emerging young leaders in Fiji, indigenous and locally-born women. The FWRM vision is for the women of Fiji to be free from all forms of discrimination, have equal access to opportunities and to live in a healthy environment where the principles of feminism, democracy, good governance, multiculturalism and human rights prevail.

Join us

YES! I want to support the
Fiji Women's Rights Movement

ANNUAL FEE:

Waged - \$10 • Organisation - \$30

Non-waged/Student - \$5

Name: _____

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TC Winston- a common denominator

By **Menka Goundan**

A Category 5 cyclone hit Fiji on 20th February 2016. It was to be the biggest, most damaging storm that we had ever seen in this country. As Tropical Cyclone Winston churned through our waters and made landfall that Saturday, 43 people were killed and tens of thousands lost their homes and livelihoods. The Fiji Women's Rights Movement joined in the national response to this unprecedented disaster in a number of ways, including with a Dignity Appeal for basic sanitation and hygiene supplies for women and girls. As the coordinator of FWRM's Dignity Appeal, I made four trips to critically affected areas to distribute supplies. In the midst of distributing hygiene packs and assisting with relief efforts, I distinctly remember thinking that in the eye of the storm, everything in its path was equal.

I' Taukei, Fijians of Indian descent, Rotumans and other ethnic minorities, male, female, adult, infant, farmer, labourer, teacher, Turaga ni Koro... everyone and everything was intertwined, twisted and tossed as the Category 5 cyclone tore through the Fiji group.

However, are the relief efforts equal and inclusive? Once the cyclone had passed, 5% of Fiji's population were in evacuation centres with many more seeking haven in temporary shelters - erected from debris close to their once existing homes. Patriarchy, power, and position were becoming

evident in the stories that transpired afterwards.

Women-headed households, single mothers and widows were further marginalised within their communities. Many of these women were not given access to ration packs and basic needs, despite evacuation centres being resourced.

Patriarchy systematically disadvantaged and oppressed women at the micro level even though state and non-state actors worked tirelessly to provide those displaced with food, shelter and clothing.

There was also the issue of women's security. Evacuation centres were deemed support spaces for the displaced, affected and equally traumatised but sexual harassment and rape were reported in these centres. Knowing there was such forced intrusion into these women's individuality and privacy (which was already minimal), was a sheer act of shame.

In the aftermath of TC Winston, women's autonomy has been severely compromised. Women's sexual and reproductive health and rights are little recognised in the communal sphere, with women absent from the decision-making spaces on the ground.

In all these struggles however, the common denominator that binds these women is not just the experience and trauma of surviving TC Winston, but rather, their resilient spirit and desire to rebuild despite the odds. As Fiji recovers from Winston, women's participation and leadership in all sectors will be vital to our future.

	CENTRAL	WEST	EAST	NORTH	TOTAL
Death During TC Winston	9	11	21	2	43
Evacuation Centres	6	315	329	54	698

Courtesy of National Emergency Operation Center Tropical Cyclone Winston Situation Report 53 of 04/03/2016

Reflections of A Young Feminist in Training

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conversation without dominating the space even though he was more of an expert in the field than any of us. I'm also grateful that I could tap his list of contacts and networks for my stories.

There was also Michelle, who, as busy as her schedule was, stepped in to guide us when we as Mamta put it, "lost the plot". ELFA's support throughout the journey has been amazing and I sincerely hope that they're as eager to embrace us after graduation as we are in being part of a powerful group of women.

So here I am, in my passage way still holding my torch and ready to open that door in front of me. The journey has been and would probably continue to be difficult but definitely worth it. I have refrained from saying much about my ELF6 sisters because there is so many of us and I cannot write about them all (though I sorely wish I could). However, I will say that I have been blessed to work with

and know strong, brilliant, amazing, crazy and inspirational young women in ELF6. I have taken away with me strong bonds of friendship and have created an amazing network. At the end of the day, we became that great unit we had been striving tirelessly to achieve throughout this year. We brought to the table different experiences, knowledge and skills and while it took us some time, we learnt to use it in a way that would better the women's movement, the climate justice movement, the West Papua movement and any future undertakings to challenge patriarchy and injustice.

The Emerging Leaders Forum opened the door for my future journey and my torch burns much brighter. Like I had hoped, ELF gave me something to help me move forward but most importantly, reminded me that I wasn't taking this journey alone. There were 28 other young women beside me and we were on different paths but we all carried the torch.

Here's to breaking barriers, bringing change and achieving equality.

