

Vanuatu: Bringing Hope and Healing to Women

Overview

The World Day of Prayer celebrations for 2021 were hosted by Vanuatu with the theme: "Building on a Strong Foundation". Bible Society of the South Pacific, in partnership with World Day of Prayer, sought to take a holistic approach by advocating and empowering women who are victims of domestic violence.

Awareness workshops and healing sessions on domestic violence will be provided, as well as Scriptures and trauma- healing booklets, enabling them to have the word of God as their source of strength and comfort.

The Need

Too many Pacific women and girls experience violence, even though the call to acknowledge, address and act to end all forms of violence against women and girls is not new. Governments, NGOs and faith-based organisations are working together to close the gap between national commitments to gender equality and the empowerment of women.

Statistics reveal that 42% of women in Vanuatu have experience some form of violence. Domestic violence and child abuse are embedded in the gender and power relations that underpin the low status of women and children in Vanuatu.

What happens within the family is seen to be a family matter and community members will not intervene to protect a woman from an abusive husband. Chiefs counsel women to preserve the sanctity of the family unit, to maintain family and village harmony. It can be very difficult for a woman to leave a violent relationship. Married women cannot accumulate personal wealth, and men have better rights than women to the children of a marriage.



Project Goals

This project aims to reach women who have experienced some form of gender-based violence from all walks of life. This project focuses on three main goals: 1) trauma healing programs to meet the needs of women who suffer from gender-based violence; 2) violence prevention activities including human rights and legal workshops; and 3) helping women acquire reading and writing skills through literacy programs.

In 2022, 2,000 copies of the Domestic Violence booklet in Bislama will be published, along with 2,000 copies of the Bislama edition of the Scripture Companion booklet. The Bislama Five Core Lessons and other materials (2,000 copies) will also be printed. Four Healing Session Workshops are planned between April to June, and four additional Training and Healing workshops have been planned for the second half of the year.

Impact

The total number of people this project aims to impact is 60,000, through the three years of the project.

The project aims to bring healing, hope, forgiveness and an increase of awareness of God's word to women who have been traumatized by gender-based violence, through the Bible Society Trauma Healing program.

As a result of Bible Society raising awareness of gender-based violence, other programs run by faith-based organisations in Vanuatu will be supported. Also, improving legal literacy will elevate and educate women - especially young women - to know their rights within their society.

Prayer Needs

- Pray for a committed leader to coordinate the program on the ground.
- Pray for support from faith-based organisations and agencies who are familiar with the work in this area.
- Pray that the women of Vanuatu will embrace and benefit from the program.