

## 8. Ol Woman Filwoka

Jean Tarisesei

Tangkiu long yufala evriwan we i stap, olsem ol big big man blong ol risejas we oli bin stap finis an ol filwokas an evriwan we i stap long ples ia ol staff. Mi talem tangkiu blong mekem se mifala tu mifala i save tek pat long sam toktok o sam risej blong mifala ol filwokas. Mi wantem talem smol nomo olsem se Richard hemi bin toktok finis olsem hemi talemaot wanem nao wok blong ol filwokas an ol woman filwokas olsem netwok blong olgeta i jes stat nomo. Long 1994 we fes woksop blong olgeta i bin stap olsem Richard i bin talem finis an hem nao hemi bin helpem aot helpem mifala blong soem mifala wanem nao mifala i sud mekem o ol woksop blong mifala i sud go olsem wanem an olsem smol toktok nomo long saed blong hao hemi bin kam antap olsem long taem ia kaljoral senta hemi gat bod blong hem finis, bod blong hem i stap finis. So long mi ting blong bod ia oli bin diskas long taem lelebet blong faenemaot se hao nao bae oli karem ol woman tu olsem filwokas. Ating long taem ia ol man we oli bin stap ia oli no tingbaot se ol woman tu oli pat blong ol wok blong kastom we oli stap mekem long ol aelans oli tinkabaot olgeta nomo. So toktok i kam se man hemi mekem wok i gud be sam samting we oli no tokabaot we woman hemi kontribiut long hem we hemi bigwan long ol wok blong olgeta tu long saed blong kastom. An so oli kamap wetem tingting se i gud blong gat ol woman tu from woman hemi mekem se wok blong kastom hemi balans from sapos man nomo i tokabaot wan samting be i gat woman tu i gat pat blong hem we hemi tokabaot mo hemi plei long hem blong mekem se kastom hemi ful hemi balans.

So let Grace Molisa hemi bin stap long tat taem ia so hemi bin toktok strong se hemi mas gat network blong ol woman filwokas an tu long taem ia yumi save se Dr. Lissant Bolton hemi bin stap long Australian Miusium mo hemi stap kam long Vanuatu Kaljoral Senta blong stap helpaot blong lanem olgeta staf blong mekem katalog ol samting olsem. So long taem ia hem wan i bin mekem risej blong hem long Ambae long saed blong mat blong Ambae.

Mi bin stap long taem ia mi wok klosli wetem netwok blong VNCW an tat taem ia hemi bin wok wetem narafala woman be i kam long wan taem se mi bin wok wetem hem festaem hemi no save mekem so mekem se mi mi stap long risej wetem hem. Olsem long taem ia tu mi lanem tu hao blong mekem risej an mi no save se kastom hemi olsem wanem be hemi stat an ten mi go tru mi save se yes kastom hemi olsem. So mifala i talem tangkiu long Dr. Lisa Bolton wetem long taem ia tu. Dr. Darell Tryon hem tu hemi stap kam long woksop blong ol man hemi bin helpem mifala tu hemi kontribiut an hao Kirk Huffman hem tu hemi bin kontribiut plante long woksop blong mifala ol woman. I save gohed an mi

gat wetem mi long ples ia tu ol woman we oli bin stap olsem filwokas. Long fes woksop blong mifala long 1994 mifala i bin gat ten woman nomo an as mifala i go along an ten mifala i stap tekem ol narafala oli kam nao ia mifala i gat abaot foti woman filwokas. An olsem mifala i bin wok, olsem ol topikis blong mifala we mifala i jusum hemi menli long saed blong wok blong ol woman olsem hao blong lukaotem pikinini taem hemi smol i kam antap an hao ol woman oli tekem rang blong olgeta olsem ol erias we mifala i luk se i nid blong ol woman oli save ol samting ia an wok hemi blong mifala ol woman an mifala i tokabaot kastom mared from hemia kontribusen i bigwan long saed blong ol woman an tu ol woman long sam erias oli gat rang blong olgeta. So i gat ol topikis blong mifala we i kam kasem tede olsem mifala i luk se wanem we i stap go blong lus mo wanem nao i impoten long laef blong mifala ol woman.

Ating bae mi si smol smol se risej long samtaems hemi isi mo samtaems hemi had olsem bae mi talem wan tingting se mifala ol woman mifala i gat fulap netwok olsem ol organaesesen mekem se sam oli go long ol komiuniti oli talem difren toktok an ten sam oli go talem difren toktok an samtaems mifala i go olsem long wok blong mifala an mekem se hemia nao i had tu blong go tru long ol komiuniti. Ating long mi, mi faenem olsem samtaems i had sam taems hemi isi bat wok blong ol risejas wetem ol projeks we mifala i karem tru long networks blong mifala ating hemia nao hemi help bigwan blong mekem se wok blong mifala i save kam antap an ol woman filwokas taem riseja i go stap wetem hem hemi mekem se hem tu i save hao blong mekem wok blong hem ol risej blong hem. So long saed blong mi, mi faenem se i olsem nao se projeks wetem ol risejas we oli kam stap long aelans wetem olgeta hemia nao oli promotem wok blong olgeta bigwan.

# The Women Fieldworkers

Jean Tarisesei

Thank you to everyone here, including all the senior researchers, all the fieldworkers, and staff. Thank you especially for making it possible to take part within the same forum, researchers and fieldworkers together. I would like to describe briefly, following on from Richard Leona, what the work of fieldworkers and especially the new women's fieldworker network is. The first women's fieldworker workshop was held in 1994. At this time Richard Leona helped to show us what we should do, and how our workshop should proceed. He also explained how the idea of a women's fieldworker network arose within Vanuatu Kaljoral Senta board meetings.

The issue of how to create a women's fieldworker program had been discussed for some time in Vanuatu Kaljoral Senta board meetings. I think that at this time the men who sat on this board hadn't thought about the idea that women, too, are a part of the work of *kastom* that occurs throughout the islands, but they only thought of themselves. However it became clear that while men perform good work, there are some things that women contribute that men don't talk about, and these are also a part of this work relating to *kastom*. As a result, they came up with the idea that it would be good to have women involved too, because women make the work of *kastom* balanced. If men are talking about something, and women also take part in the conversation, and play with it, this makes *kastom* full and balanced.

The late Grace Molisa was around at this time, and she spoke strongly about the need for a network of women fieldworkers. Also at this time Dr. Lissant Bolton was working at the Australian Museum, and would come to the Vanuatu Kaljoral Senta to help staff members learn how to do such things as make catalogues. At this time she was the only foreign researcher in the country, and was working on the topic of mats on Ambae. Meanwhile, I was here in Port Vila and working closely with the networks of the Vanuatu National Council of Women (VNCW), and while Lissant originally worked with another woman, that didn't work out, so I assumed the role of being her research counterpart. So at this time I also learned how to perform research, and although I didn't know what *kastom* was about, the more I worked the more I realised its importance. We therefore need to thank Dr. Lissant Bolton for her work at this time. Dr. Darrell Tryon was also coming to the men's workshops, and he also contributed to the instigation of the women's workshop, as did Kirk Huffman.

Here with me today are some of the first women fieldworkers. At our first workshop in 1994 we had only ten women. We have now grown to having about 40 women fieldworkers. The topics that we have chosen have mainly related to women's work, such as childrearing, *kastom* marriage, and how women acquire rank. These are all areas that we believe women have a need to know about. The topics we have covered so far relate to practices and knowledge that we believe are being lost, and things that are important to our lives as women.

I would like to add that sometimes our work is hard—sometimes easy, but also sometimes hard. For example, we women have many networks and organisations, and this means that some of these go into particular communities and say one thing, while some go and say another. As a result, sometimes when we arrive to work as fieldworkers we find it is difficult to enter these communities. I think that for me, while it is sometimes easy and sometimes hard, the work of researchers and the projects that we carry through our networks contribute greatly to the development of our work. It is also important that when researchers come to stay with women fieldworkers they have particular skills which help them with their research. I have found that projects involving researchers that work with women fieldworkers are more successful.