

# 15. Risej long Kakae blong Disasta long Tanna

## Numalin Mahana

Mi nem blong mi Numalin Mahana, mi kamaot long aelan blong Tanna long Waet Sands. Mi bin wok olsem filwoka blong Vanuatu Kaljorol Senta fo naen yias nao. So taem we mifala i kam stap givimaot ol ripot blong mifala long ol risejas we mifala i stap mekem, mifala i faenemaot se topik we mifala i stap kavremap hemi plante mo i go konektem wetem ol narafala laef long aelan. So from we mi mi kamaot long wan eria we ol taem nomo i gat disasta mo disasta ia i gat volcano, hariken mo drae sisen i stap afektem mifala be evri taem we ol disastas ia oli kasem mifala, mifala i stap askem kakae aot saed. So go go taem we risej wok blong mifala i stap go on ale mi mi faenemaot se no long ol bubu bifo olgeta oli gat ol stret fasin blong lukaotem ol famili blong ol taem we i gat disasta oli neva askem help. Mo ol help we i stap kam aot saed oli kostem watu samtaem ol man oli stap givim help oli glad blong givim. Samtaem we oli sot long watu bae mifala ino tekem eni samting so mi sidaon mi tingting se wanem nao wok blong mi olsem filwoka blong save mekem blong helpem komiuniti blong mi. Okei mi singaotem ol mama blong kam blong mi tokabaotem tingting from olgeta oli nomo save ol fasin blong ol bubu blong bifo we oli stap priperem kakae blong during long disasta mekem se mi mi go aot saed mi toktok long ol famili aot saed and oli agri long tingting ale mi mi askem long olgeta long ples ia blong givhan long mi. Blong smol smol samting olsem wanem we mi bin stap askem long olgeta ol bus naef blong save givim long ol mama mo ol naef blong kijen, baket blong kasem wota. Taem we mi tekem samting ia i go long fil mi faenem se oli intres mo mifala i gohed long ol tingting. During long 2003 mi bin holem sikis smol smol woksop blong ol disasta kakae mo long during long woksop ia mi disaed se bambae oli no yusum ol dishes mo naef mo kokonat kreta iven faea so evri samting mifala i mekem long kastom fasin nomo iven dresing ap olgeta oli bin dresap nomo long kastom, faea oli yusum wud nomo long traditional wei blong yumi blong bifo mo mi faenemaot se oli intres blong mekem. Bat long narasaed olsem yumi ol risejas yumi save wok blong yumi long fils samtaems hemi no isi mi mi karem fulap toktok. Ol toktok oli go agens ol fasin ia be mi mi jes ignorem nomo mo mi kontiniu blong wok wetem ol mama we oli gat intres.

Taem we mifala i mekem ol woksop ia mifala i givim long ol yangfala blong oli testem. Olgeta we oli plei futbol oli talem long mifala se taem mifala i kakae ol kakae ia mifala i go long fil mifala ino taet mifala i save plei long taem. Mo wei we mi mi traem blong mekem se taem oli get yus blong bringim bak ol kastom

fasin blong kakae ale bae mifala i grupim se kakae ia blong mama we i gat bel, kakae blong mama we i givim birth mo kakae ia i blong wan pikinini we i smol kam kasem hemi kam bigwan mo kakae blong ol boe we oli go long sakomsaes mo ol narafala erias long yumi long aelan. Mi mi traem blong putum ol kakae ia long grup sofa nao ia fulap mama oli stap intres mo mifala i stap gohed iet, mifala i stap gohed iet mo ating afta woksop bae mi go bak mi mi kontiniu nomo long wok we i stap. So ating hemia nomo smol ripot we mi mi save givimaot long saed blong disasta kakae. Taem we afta long hariken mi faenem se speseli ol banana oli wes kwiktaem se fes samting mi save se i gat gudfala fasin we yumi save kipim ol banana ia i stap fo anata sikis o wan yia. So fes samting ia nao mi mekem, i gat ol spesel banana blong hem nomo we mifala i kretem wasem long solwota putum long basket ale hangem. Be i gat ol narafala aelan o iven Tanna yumi save berem mo putum antap long ol foktri be hemia we mi mi mekem mifala i hangem. Ale mi faenemaot se oli mekem komen long hemia se hemia we mi mi mekem ino smel be stael laplap ia hemi smel tumas be hemia we mifala i mekem hemi oraet be from ating mifala I, mi mi mekem se mifala i jenisim lif evri tu wiks.

Narafala fasin blong wan kakae bakegen we konkon yam we fulap long yumi i lego i stap wes nomo long ol aelan blong yumi be from mi save se i mas gat wan gudfala wei blong hem so mi go tru long risej karem save long ol samfala mama ale mifala i wokem, mekem se yam ia ino konkon nating taem mifala i wokem folem fasin blong bifo. I gat narafala hemi wan rus blong wan rop we mifala long saot evri aelan long saot, long Aneityum tu oli yusum we oli stap tekem mi kil kilim afta kukum. Hemia tu mi faenem se hemi gud from ol kakae ia speseli konkon yam ia mo rop ia oltaem oli stap andanit long kraon. I gat taem we trifala disasta i save kam in wan yia blong mekem se oli waepem gud ol kakae blong mifala. Be mi faenem se ol kaen kakae ia hemi stap andanit long kraon so hemi sef i stap so mi faenem wei blong mifala i lukaot gud long hem mo tijim ol mama. Sori mi no save tokabaot ol narafala aelan be mi mi tokabaot long aelan blong mi, yes Tanna nomo we tingting blong mi se mifala i mas grupum ol kakae akoding long helt blong man. Mi gat kakae blong sikman, kakae blong ol yangfala boe mo gel olsem. So hem blong mi nao ia we VKS hemi stap inkarejem mifala blong mekem moa awenes and blong mi se mi mas traem faenemaot ol grup blong ol kakae ia. Ating hemia nomo. Tangkiu.

# Researching Disaster Food on Tanna

Numalin Mahana

My name is Numalin Mahana and I am from Whitesands in Tanna. I have worked as a fieldworker for the Vanuatu Kaljoral Senta (VKS) for nine years. When we make our reports to all the other researchers we find that each topic connects with all other aspects of life in the island. I am from an area which has lots of disasters—volcanoes, cyclones and drought—which affect us and so we have to find food from other places. So, as our research proceeded I found out that the old people had their own ways of looking after their families during disasters and they never asked for help. And if you got help from outside it cost *vatu*, sometimes it came as charity. Sometimes if they had no money we couldn't get any food. So I thought, what is my role as a fieldworker in helping my own community? I asked all the women to come and talk and, since they also didn't know about the old people's way of preparing food for disaster times, I asked if we could get some help from outsiders and they agreed that I could. We asked for small things like bush knives, kitchen knives to give women to work in their kitchens, buckets to carry water. When I took this out to the field they were all interested and we could go ahead with the project. In 2003 I ran six small workshops about disaster food and we found that they knew how to do without dishes and knives and coconut graters and even fire, so all of this could be done in a *kastom* way, even clothes, they wore *kastom* clothes and we found that people today were still interested in making clothes in this way. On the other hand, we know that our work as field researchers is not always easy. Some people criticise us, but I just ignore them and continue to work with the women who are interested.

When we ran these workshops we gave food to the youngsters to taste. Footballers said that when they ate this food they don't get tired on the field and can play a long time. And the way I tried was, as they got used to reintroducing *kastom* food, then we would group the food. Some is for pregnant women, some for the time of giving birth, and food for small babies until they grow, and food for boys who are being circumcised and all other categories that we have on the island. So we are trying to put all these foods into groups and a lot of women are interested. After this workshop I'll go back and continue with this work. That's all I wanted to say about disaster food. After a cyclone I found that bananas went bad very quickly so I found there was a good way of preserving bananas so they lasted another six months or one year. So the first thing, there are special bananas we grated them and washed them in salt water and put them into a basket to hang. On other islands, or even on Tanna, you can bury them, or even

put them in a tree fork, but what we did was to hang them. So I found that they made the comment that the way I did it didn't smell, but the *laplap* style smelled too much, because we changed the leaves every two weeks.

Another way of preparing food was the cheeky yam that most of us don't eat, but I thought there must be some way to eat it, so I did my research and got the information from some women and we tried it and found that the yam wasn't bitter, when we followed the *kastom* way of preparing it. There's another one, a vine root that is on all the southern islands, on Aneityum too they use it. You beat it and then cook it. I found that these were particularly good because the yam and the root are underground. When three disasters come in one year they can wipe out all the food. But I found that these foods that are under the ground are safe so we can look for them and teach all the women about them. Sorry I can't talk about other islands but I am talking about Tanna and I think we need to group the food according to people's health. I have food for sick people, food for young boys and girls and so on. So that's what VKS is encouraging us to do and to raise awareness and I think I need to find out more about different food groups. I think that's all. Thank you.