

## 20. Smol Toktok long Risej blong Kastom

Martha Alick

Tangkiu, mi nem blong mi Martha Alick mi mi kam long Epi long Laman aelan. Mi bin stap long wok ia olsem wan woman filwoka ia hemi eit yias blong mi nao. Mi mi gat wan woman filwoka long narasaed long wes we hemi stap staon longwe mo mi gat wan man filwoka tu i stap long Epi we hemi save stap blong wok wetem mi long risej blong mifala. Bae mi talem olsem ia se taem mi kam insaed olsem wan woman filwoka blong mi karemaot wok ia, mi faenem lelebet i had ia from mi mi ting se kastom hemi blong ol olfala man nomo blong oli karemaot be taem we mi kam tru long plante tu, tri yias we mi stap aot wetem ol topik blong evri yia mi faenem hemi intres long mi. Mi faenem se hemi helpem mi tu blong mi save tijim ol pikinini blong mi mo hemi helpem mi tu blong mi save tijim ol narafala man long ol kastom blong mifala we hemi bin lus bifo finis blong mifala i save faenemaot bakegen blong bringim ap i kam antap blong mifala i save lanem. Mi faenem se komiuniti blong wok olsem mi save we mi kari aot wok ia mi dil plante wetem ol komiuniti mo mi involv plante long ol aktiviti blong ol jifs mo ol woman olsem mi mi pat long plante, mi bin komitim mi long plante wok blong ol komiuniti mekem se mi faenem wok ia i isi nomo. Be olsem bae mi talem se mi mi glad from mi gat janis blong sam samting we i bin lus bifo we ol abu blong mifala i ded finis ale i gat risej long hem blong faenemaot olsem bae mi mi save bae mi mi faenem long mi se mi bin save plante samting long kastom bitim ol olfala man we ating oli ting se kastom hemi taem we yumi stap long deilaet hemi lus i lus nao. Oli ting se taem yumi kam ol kristen man hemi nomo taem blong yumi go bak long ol kastom fasin blong yumi bifo. Fo eksampol, topik blong mifala long tis yia hemi kastom dresing. Mi mi faenem i had lelebet ia blong traem faenemaot se bifo we ol waet man oli no kam long yumi long New-Hebrides yumi stap werem wanem o yumi stap yusum wanem. Hemi wan intresting topik we mifala i traem blong mekem risej long hem be mifala ino faenem evri ditel blong hem mo ol kastom histri blong kastom stori ia i kam wea hemi stap yet blong mifala i save go kontiniu blong mekem risej long hem.

Ating hemia nomo hemi smol toktok mifala i glad blong stap long ol pleses blong mifala sapos yufala ol riseja yufala i glad blong kam joenem mifala long ples blong mifala blong mekem risej blong yufala, mifala i welkam blong mitim yufala mo lukaotem yufala. Tangkiu tumas.

# Some Brief Words on Researching Kastom

Martha Alick

Thank you. My name is Martha Alick and I come from Laman Island, Epi. I have been working as a woman fieldworker for eight years now. There is another woman fieldworker working on the west and a male fieldworker on Epi who is able to work with me on our research. I will put it like this: when I started working as a woman fieldworker I found that it was a little hard because I thought that *kastom* was only for old men to perform, but over the years, and as we have gone through different topics, I have found that my work is very interesting to me. I have also found it helpful in teaching my children, and also in teaching other people about our *kastom* that has been lost for a long time, and that we can learn about it and promote it. I find that I work a lot with the community, and I'm very involved and committed to the activities of Chiefs and women. In this I find that my work becomes easy. I am glad to have a chance to revive some things of the ancestors that were lost, and that through research I have come to know many more things than the old men, many of whom think that once we are in the daylight (as converted Christians) *kastom* is lost forever. They think that when you become Christian it is not possible to go back to the *kastom* ways of the past. For example, our topic this year is *kastom* clothing. I have found it a little difficult to try to find out what clothes we wore before whites came to the New Hebrides. This is an interesting topic for us to attempt research on, and we have not uncovered every detail, and the *kastom* histories and *kastom* stories are still there for us to research.

I think that this is all that we have to say. We enjoy staying at our home islands and places, and if you researchers would like to come and join us there to undertake research projects, we will welcome you and look after you.