



## Bringing Hope and Healing to Women

### Overview

The Bible Society of the South Pacific is taking a holistic approach to advocating and empowering women who are victims of domestic violence in Vanuatu through this trauma-healing project.



### The Need

Approximately 42% of women in Vanuatu have experienced some form of violence. Domestic violence and child abuse are embedded in gender and power relations, underpinned by the low status of women and children in Vanuatu.

What happens within the family is seen as a 'private family matter.' This means that community members will not intervene to protect a woman from an abusive husband. Community Chiefs counsel women to preserve the sanctity of the family unit, to maintain family and village harmony. Most churches don't proactively denounce violence against women.

It is often very difficult for women to leave a violent relationship. Married women cannot accumulate personal wealth and men have stronger rights than women to their shared children.

# 145,000

women call Vanuatu home

# 42%

of women in Vanuatu have experienced some form of gender-based violence

# 60,000

people could be impacted by this project

**"Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock."**

Matthew 7:24, NIV

# Goals

To reach women in Vanuatu who have experienced some form of gender-based violence, this project focuses on three main activities: 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 2024, workshops are planned in the following provinces: Shefa (including its outer islands), Torba, Sanma, Tafea, South Ambae, Penama, Pentecost Island, Uripiv Island and Malampa.

The ultimate goal of this project is to bring healing, understanding, hope and care to the women of Vanuatu who have experienced gender-based violence, through Bible Society's Trauma Healing program. This initiative further seeks to enhance advocacy efforts with churches and other agencies to bring an end to violence against women.

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# Impact

Over the course of three years, this project aims to impact a total of 60,000 people.

As a result of this project, other programs conducted by faith-based organisations in Vanuatu which are raising awareness of gender-based violence will be supported. Additionally, enhancing legal literacy will empower and educate women, particularly young women, about their rights within society.

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# Testimonies

"One part of their culture is that men don't wash, and men don't cook," explains Geoffry, BSSP General Secretary. "Yet after being confronted with the stories of Jesus, the husband knelt before his wife and held up both his hands, asking his wife to buy him two washing brushes, one for each hand. He said, 'from today on, I have learnt that men can also wash.'" — testimony of a man impacted by the trauma healing training in Vanuatu around the issue of domestic violence

"The workshop has helped me. I am ready to help our women in the community who are facing domestic abuse. I am thankful...for this workshop." — male workshop attendee, 2022

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# Prayer Needs

- Give thanks for the progress of the Domestic Violence workshops carried out in Vanuatu and its impact on the communities.
- 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.