

Caritas Australia supporters hear about the vital role of women in development.

Caritas Australia has hosted its latest Mission in Action online seminar, this time focused on the Women for the World campaign, which wraps up at the end of September. Now in its 10th year, Women for the World supports vulnerable women in marginalised communities across the world.

This online seminar, now [available online](#), celebrated the impact of women in the world, with speakers sharing inspiring stories from across the world about the vital role women play in their communities and in the global fight against poverty.

Speakers included:

- **Lana Hanley, Africa and Pacific Associate Director at Caritas Australia.** With over 15 years of experience in international development, Lana has worked with both local and global NGOs.
- **Viloki Gohil Monitoring & Evaluation Officer at FRIEND, Fiji.** Viloki works with the Foundation for Rural Integrated Enterprises & Development, which focuses on managing projects that address social issues and community improvement in Fiji's Northern region.
- **Lucy Espila Regional Coordinator at Caritas Africa.** Elected as Caritas Africa's first female Regional Secretary General in May 2023, Lucy Espila is a passionate supporter of regionalisation and women's leadership.

The speakers reflected on how women and girls experience higher rates of poverty and violence, and how addressing these issues has a whole of society benefit.

Lucy Espila gave an example from Kenya, where women have been instrumental in building peacekeeping committees to prevent conflict around the sharing of scarce resources. In another she talked to the role of women in establishing savings and loans groups and establishing microfinance in communities.

Viloki Gohil spoke to some of the challenges around food insecurity in Northern Fiji, and the vital role women play in that. From establishing backyard gardens to feed their families, to producing organic pesticides from lemongrass and papaya, which their husbands then take to work to contribute to sustainable agriculture.

Lana Hanley hosted the session, alongside a Q&A where she asked both Lucy and Viloki about some important themes such as the receptiveness of men in their communities to female leadership.

Lana Hanley said of the session, "The best development programs start with women because they are often the most vulnerable members of communities and have this incredible capacity to create wider societal change. Time and time again they prove themselves to be wonderful leaders, decision makers, peacekeepers, and to possess an unwavering commitment to the wellbeing of those around them."

"We were so fortunate to have had Lucy and Viloki join us for this Mission in Action online seminar to share their stories of women's empowerment with us and our supporters" she concluded.

To support Caritas Australia's Women for the World appeal, visit <http://www.caritas.org.au/women> or call 1800 024 413 toll free.

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