

Denise Nawara - Housing Rights In Melanesia: Women Live In The Shadow Of Silence In Squatter Settlements

pacmas.org. November 18, 2013. Denise Nawara was a participant at the PACMAS-funded Housing Rights in Melanesia workshop. Here, she explores how women are disproportionately affected by a lack of housing rights through the experience of two Solomon Islands women living in the squatter settlement of Kalekana on Suva's outskirts.

While shelter is a basic need and a key indicator of development and social wellbeing, the women of Kalekana, a few kilometres outside Fiji's capital, Suva, have for decades suffered in the shadows of silence. Here, where direct descendants of Solomon Islanders call home, chronic water shortage and poor hygiene have plagued families for generations, some as long as 60 years.

Women like Akesa Tinai, who have young children to raise, feed and send to school without the presence of their husbands, suffer the most. Akesa lives in a cramped four-room flat that does not have running water and toilet facilities, compounding her burden of bringing up five children on a meagre budget. When there is no money, she often skips lunch so that her children can have food after school. They sometimes have tea with rice or

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