



# CASE STUDY

## Like a shining light

By Millie Greaves + Elissa Webster

### PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Part of CARE International in Vanuatu's Leftemap Sista program, Life Skills training is giving young women in Tafea Province knowledge, resources and support to build the self-confidence and skills they need to participate fully in society and the economy, and become agents for change.

### Meet Mariam

I had just finished primary school when I found out I was pregnant. I had been selected to continue on to Year Seven at a secondary school in Port Vila, and I was so sad when my mother told me that because I was pregnant I would not be able to go. I never went back to school.

I went to stay with the baby's father. It was hard to get money and the other things we needed for ourselves and the baby. I stayed home a lot, and all different kinds of negative thoughts ran through my mind. Sometimes when I went to the garden, I would remember that I could have been going to school. I would cry and cry, having a little voice in my head saying, "Why is my life like this? If I had listened to my mum and dad I would not have ended up like this."

I felt so sorry for myself when I saw my relatives going to work at their jobs, while we had nothing. So I went over to my mother's house to ask for help. My mother told me, "Getting married and having children is a lot of work at home! That's why we told you to respect our words – so that you would find a good job that would help you in the future when you had a family. But because you did not obey us, now you will see how hard it is."

After hearing this, I cried and cried and walked back to where I live. I already knew how hard it would be.

A few months later, I heard that CARE would



Participating in CARE's Life Skills training has helped Mariam change her life, and her family's future. © Millie Greaves/CARE

visit Lowenata to give training about Life Skills. I went home and told my husband about it and he said it was fine for me to go this training in our village because I had been feeling so sad. He even said he would look after the baby. For the first time in a long time, I felt so happy, and I really looked forward to the training.

Finally the day of the training arrived, and it was really good! I realised that my negative thoughts were not good, and I started think better about myself. Afterwards, I went home and told my husband about what I learnt and he was really interested. Now, my husband allows me to attend any training CARE hosts in Lowenata.

A few weeks after the training, CARE called me to say that I had been selected to learn how to become a trainer in the Life Skills program at a workshop at central Tanna. I was so excited and my husband was very impressed.

Being part of the Life Skills training has made a big change in my life. My husband helps me a lot in cooking our food when I feel tired and he doesn't hit me anymore. Now sometimes when we argue my husband will say sorry. The skills I learnt from Life Skills help us to solve our own problems.

Now I am 21 years old. I have seen a big difference in my family, like a shining light that shines out of our house for others to see the changes that have happened in my home after attending the Life Skills training.

“Being part of the Life Skills training has made a big change in my life... The skills I learnt help us to solve our own problems.”