

**OUTCOME XM-DAC-41146-SLB\_D\_1.2****Women are perceived as equally legitimate and effective political leaders as men  
(FPI WPEL Outcome 3)**

With the support of women-led organisations, and Provincial and National government bodies, women in rural and remote areas in Solomon Islands are now better informed of their civic and political rights and have enhanced leadership skills and increased agency to engage with formal and informal justice systems. The Access to Justice Project engaged communities in Guadalcanal and Malaita Provinces to recognize deeply entrenched discriminatory and gender-biased attitudes, norms and practices that exist in their communities. These communities were able to dissect the rules, practices and situations that directly or indirectly discriminate against women and girls, including recognising how women and girls in their communities have internalized harmful gender norms, which has over the years limited their leadership and justice-seeking behaviour. In addition, the Project is also working to build a cadre of rural women leaders who can promote women's rights and access to justice in their communities, in tandem with traditional governance systems. This work has led to rural communities in Guadalcanal and Malaita Provinces now having more information and skills on how to access formal and informal justice systems, the latter through prescribed persons in the communities. These women leaders have also led engagements to voice their concerns on issues that directly concern them such as climate change and gender-based violence with the Ministry of Justice and Legal Affairs (MJLA), Ministry of Women, Youth, Children and Family Affairs (MWYCFA), Solomon Islands National Council of Women (SINCW), Women's Rights Action Movement (WRAM), Guadalcanal and Malaita Provincial Council of Women (GPCW), Guadalcanal and Malaita Provincial Government Women's Desk, facilitated by UN Women. It the first time for the majority of the rural communities were able to learn and connect gendered roles and perspectives to issues like climate change and women's participation in traditional governance, and how these issues exacerbate participation and decision making of marginalized and vulnerable groups in their community.

**OUTCOME XM-DAC-41146-SLB\_D\_2.1****Inclusive, effective and representative marketplace groups are created and grow, contributing to gender, social and economic advancement, the elimination of gender-based discrimination and violence and expanded economic opportunities**

The four market vendor associations (MVAs) in the Solomon Islands, namely the Auki MVA, the Gizo MVA, the Honiara MVA and the Munda MVA, continue to be inclusive, effective, and representative under the leadership of strong women leaders. All four MVA presidency positions have been taken up by women. Moreover, in all four MVAs, women fill almost all of the executive and leadership roles. This strong leadership presence of women in the MVAs are ensuring that the voice of women are heard and magnified at all levels, and that workplace barriers caused by gender biases are removed. This role has become increasingly important as MVA Presidents (all women) are also members of the Market Steering Committees established by the Market Management that provide overall oversight to the management of the market. In addition, these MVAs have demonstrated good governance, transparency and increasing accountability through effective operations and management, demonstrated in ways such as holding their annual general meetings and general elections for members. The MVAs are now functioning under new constitutions, which has given the women leaders greater confidence to plan, organize, negotiate, and implement activities.

These activities include those which open up social and economic opportunities for market vendors to actively participate in. Increasingly, more and more market vendors are able to claim their rights through active participation in the MVAs. These include active engagements in consultations for the development and/or reviews of marketplace policies and plans of action, broad-based participation in local and regional fora and panel discussions on women's empowerment and economics, amongst other topics, and representation of members at various national and regional meetings.

#### OUTCOME XM-DAC-41146-SLB\_D\_2.2

##### **Improved socio-economic security of urban and rural women**

There was no activity implemented in 2022 by the implementing partner due to lack of staff in Honiara, Solomon Islands. A recruitment process will take place in early 2023.

#### OUTCOME XM-DAC-41146-SLB\_D\_2.3

##### **Local Govts and market management are gender-responsive and accountable to women market vendor needs**

The capacity and commitment of Solomon Islands partners to ensure safe and secure market spaces have continued to grow. In 2022, local government bodies, namely the Malaiata Provincial Government, the Western Provincial Government, and the Honiara City Council that are overseeing the Auki Market, Gizo Market, the Honiara City Market, and the Munda Markets, worked with UN Women and other partners to strengthen the legal landscape for marketplaces, through the development of market public ordinances. A feature of the ordinances is the promotion of gender equity in market management and market supervisory roles. In addition, the four markets, namely the Auki Market, Gizo Market, the Honiara City Market, and the Munda Markets have developed their respective Market Disaster Preparedness Plans, which are gender responsive and protection inclusive – the development of which also led by the Malaiata Provincial Government, the Western Provincial Government, and the Honiara City Council in partnership with the Solomon Islands National Disaster Management office. UN Women provided technical support and guidance for the development of the ordinances and plans.

#### OUTCOME XM-DAC-41146-SLB\_D\_2.4

##### **Physical market structures and operating systems are improved to make markets more gender-responsive, safer, more accessible and sustainable, resilient to disaster risks and climate change**

Markets in the Solomon Islands have improved their physical environments to better meet the health, safety, universal access and needs of women market vendors. Operations by market management in the four Solomon Islands markets continue to improve, ensuring that markets are kept open, adhering to COVID-19 safety regulations and remain clean, hygienic and safe for selling. In 2022 the Auki Market, Gizo Market, Honiara Market and Munda Market worked with Provincial Governments and the National Disaster Management Office to develop disaster response management (DRM) plans. The DRM plans are enabling market management to improve its systems to ensure that market vendors, visitors or general public are safe during disasters. The implementation of the DRM plans will help to ensure that not only are market vendors' needs and issues addressed but also that relevant skills and disaster awareness are provided to enhance vendors' capacity to prepare for disasters, and to better cope during and after a disaster. As part of the Markets for Change project, the implementation of these DRM plans and action

plans at these four markets will also ensure that the market buildings are more resilient to disaster risks including climate change, thereby making the market environment more comfortable and safer for market vendors. The Munda Market worked to improve women's access to water, sanitation and hygiene through the provision of four water tanks and water pumps for its washrooms and ablution blocks. The improved water access is providing much relief as women spend long hours in the markets – often daylong. These facilities were often without water for days. Proper security services have also been established in the markets. This is to enhance vendor and customer safety by reducing the risk of theft and violence in the markets. The Markets for Change team conducted market infrastructure surveys and audits to confirm that markets are now more gender-responsive, accessible, and disaster resistant. UN Women provided financial and technical support towards the strengthening of markets operating systems in the Solomon Islands through the Markets for Change Project.

#### OUTCOME XM-DAC-41146-SLB\_D\_2.5

### **Women market vendors have the ability to succeed and advance economically**

Supportive and enabling marketplace environments are empowering women market vendors in the Solomon Islands to thrive and advance economically. This has included the institutionalising of policies and practices that are addressing gender biases in the markets and promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women. In 2022, the development of the public market ordinances, and the implementation of established ongoing SOPs and other marketplace plans are ensuring women market vendors' inclusion and protection. In addition, enhanced gender-responsive capacities of duty bearers such as local governments and market management at the point of day-to-day market operations are creating experiences for women market vendors where they feel safe, secure, content and empowered to participate in market activities (apart from selling their goods and produce). This includes leading market vendor associations, actively participating and speaking at market meetings and claiming their rights. Membership of MVAs have also given women market vendors access to information, resources and goods to further progress their economic participation and growth.

#### OUTCOME XM-DAC-41146-SLB\_D\_3.2

### **Women and Girls, especially from particular groups (with disabilities, rural, sexual and gender minorities) from target countries, who experience violence have access to quality essential services (health, social service, police and justice) to recover from violence**

Progress was made to ensuring women and girls from the Solomon Islands have increased access to quality essential services. SAFENET 2022 data demonstrated how COVID-19 community transmission has impacted the number of new clients accessing SAFENET services, particularly in Honiara. The number of new clients registered in 2022 is 1,571, in contrast to the 3,165 clients registered in 2021. This approximate 50% decrease is consistent with the fact that most services were not operating in full capacity from January to June 2022. Despite the coordinated and well planned for response, COVID-19 brought many challenges to frontline service providers. Each organization had to adapt rapidly and move services online or implement thorough COVID-19 prevention measures. The Solomon Islands Police Force, for example, utilized their vehicles for COVID-19 response therefore de-prioritizing emergency transportation of survivors. Organizations faced challenges in obtaining vehicle passes to transport VAWG survivors to various services during lockdown as well as a lack of capacity to physically house survivors of violence and meet the case demand. Other essential services were disrupted, including the via court, health care and police systems. Health providers were focused on preventing and treating COVID-19 patients. The crisis centre SeifPles was at capacity and did not have sufficient space to accommodate survivors of violence, leading to a closure of

their services. MWYCFAs' Department of Women personnel and resources were diverted to support broader national COVID-19 response amidst the state of emergency. As documented globally, resources and interventions for survivors of VAWG were deprioritized or re-routed to respond to the broader public health emergency. While SAFENET maintained a strong and steadfast commitment to providing services, capacities were stretched and efforts focused on supporting broader national priorities. It is widely accepted that GBV cases increased during the COVID-19 pandemic, which is supported by SeifPles data showing a comparatively high number of women calling the hotline number compared to previous years. SeifPles total genuine hotline calls for 2022 is 7,581. While this figure is the lowest for a calendar year between 2019-2021, the number of women calling the hotline service is 4,144 which is the highest compared to previous years. This might be due to the increased GBV cases during the COVID-19 period and increased awareness of services and rights in communities.