



Food and Agriculture  
Organization of the  
United Nations



Pacific  
Community  
Communauté  
du Pacifique



# **COUNTRY GENDER ASSESSMENT**

OF AGRICULTURE AND  
THE RURAL SECTOR IN  

---

VANUATU



**COUNTRY GENDER ASSESSMENT**  
OF AGRICULTURE AND  
THE RURAL SECTOR IN

---

VANUATU

Published by  
the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations  
and  
the Pacific Community  
Port Vila, 2019

Required citation:

FAO and SPC. 2019. *Country gender assessment of agriculture and the rural sector in Vanuatu*. Port Vila.

The designations employed and the presentation of material in this information product do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) or the Pacific Community (SPC) concerning the legal or development status of any country, territory, city or area or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries. The mention of specific companies or products of manufacturers, whether or not these have been patented, does not imply that these have been endorsed or recommended by FAO or SPC in preference to others of a similar nature that are not mentioned.

Dashed lines on maps represent approximate border lines for which there may not yet be full agreement.

The views expressed in this information product are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of FAO or SPC.

ISBN XXX-XX-X-XXXXXX-X [FAO]

ISBN XXX-XXX-XX-XXXX-X [SPC]

© FAO and SPC, 2019



Some rights reserved. This work is made available under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 3.0 IGO licence (CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 IGO; <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/3.0/igo/legalcode>).

Under the terms of this licence, this work may be copied, redistributed and adapted for non-commercial purposes, provided that the work is appropriately cited. In any use of this work, there should be no suggestion that FAO endorses any specific organization, products or services. The use of the FAO logo is not permitted. If the work is adapted, then it must be licensed under the same or equivalent Creative Commons license. If a translation of this work is created, it must include the following disclaimer along with the required citation: "This translation was not created by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). FAO is not responsible for the content or accuracy of this translation. The original English edition shall be the authoritative edition."

Disputes arising under the licence that cannot be settled amicably will be resolved by mediation and arbitration as described in Article 8 of the licence except as otherwise provided herein. The applicable mediation rules will be the mediation rules of the World Intellectual Property Organization <http://www.wipo.int/amc/en/mediation/rules> and any arbitration will be in accordance with the Arbitration Rules of the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL)

**Third-party materials.** Users wishing to reuse material from this work that is attributed to a third party, such as tables, figures or images, are responsible for determining whether permission is needed for that reuse and for obtaining permission from the copyright holder. The risk of claims resulting from infringement of any third-party-owned component in the work rests solely with the user.

**Sales, rights and licensing.** FAO information products are available on the FAO website ([www.fao.org/publications](http://www.fao.org/publications)) and can be purchased through [publications-sales@fao.org](mailto:publications-sales@fao.org). Requests for commercial use should be submitted via: [www.fao.org/contact-us/licence-request](http://www.fao.org/contact-us/licence-request). Queries regarding rights and licensing should be submitted to: [copyright@fao.org](mailto:copyright@fao.org).

SPC information products are available on the SPC website (<http://www.spc.int/resource-centre/>) and can be purchased through [spc@spc.int](mailto:spc@spc.int).

Original text: English

Pacific Community Cataloguing-in-publication data

1. Women in agriculture – Vanuatu.
2. Women in development – Vanuatu.
3. Women in rural development – Vanuatu.
4. Rural women – Vanuatu.
5. Women – Vanuatu.

I. Title II. Food and Agriculture Organization III. Pacific Community  
305.4099614 AACR2

Cover photograph: ©FAO/.....

# Contents

Acknowledgements	v
Acronyms and abbreviations	vi
<b>Executive summary</b>	<b>ix</b>
<b>1. Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 Background and rationale	2
1.2 Scope and methodology	3
1.3 FAO in Vanuatu	4
1.4 Organization of the Assessment	4
<b>2. Country context</b>	<b>5</b>
2.1 Demography and population dynamics	6
2.2 National social and economic context	7
2.3 Agriculture and rural livelihoods	7
2.4 Climate change impacts and disasters	10
2.5 Human development	10
<b>3. Policy, legislative and institutional context</b>	<b>15</b>
3.1 Policy level commitments	16
3.2 Assessment of the institutional enabling environment	19
<b>4. Gender assessment of agriculture and rural sector</b>	<b>37</b>
4.1 Land tenure	38
4.2 Food and nutrition security	38
4.3 Agriculture extension services	39
4.4 Rural finance	39
4.5 Agricultural cooperatives	42
4.6 Climate change and disaster risk management	42
<b>5. Case study in rural communities on Tanna Island</b>	<b>43</b>
5.1 Key crops, livestock and fisheries activities <sup>2</sup>	44
5.2 Food and nutrition security	44
5.3 Gendered division of labour in rural livelihood activities	45
5.4 Time use	47
5.5 Culture, community institutions and services	50
5.6 Perceived impact of climate change	50
5.7 Perception of environmental, social and economic changes and their impact on men and women roles, workload, wellbeing, and perspectives	50
5.8 Rights of unmarried women, widows, young women to access/control natural resources	51
5.9 Access and control over resource	52
5.10 Gender dynamics and their impact on rural development and the empowerment of rural women	52
5.11 Level of participation of women and men in rural development	53
<b>6. Conclusion and recommendations</b>	<b>55</b>
6.1 Key findings	56
6.2 Recommendations	57
<b>Bibliography and references</b>	<b>59</b>
<b>Annexes</b>	
Annex 1: Key rural sector service providers in Vanuatu	62
Annex 2: List of governmental institutions consulted	63
Annex 3: List of consulted development partners and non-governmental organizations	64
Annex 4: List of community consultation members	65
Annex 5: List of the facilitation team member	65

## Figures and tables

Figure 1: Population by location, age groups and sex	6
Figure 2: Constant prices GDP by broad industry group, 2002–2016, in millions Vatu	8
Figure 3: Contribution to constant prices GDP by broad industry group, in 2015	8
Figure 4: Persons aged 15 years and over by location, main economic activity and sex	12
Figure 5: Bank account ownership, by gender and location	0
Figure 6: Number of active cooperatives, from 2010 to 2016	0
Table 1: Population by sex and location, in 2009 and 2016	7
Table 2: Agriculture and rural development laws, policies and strategies relevant for gender equality and rural women’s empowerment in agriculture	16
Table 3: Enabling environment summary assessment of the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development	22
Table 4: Enabling environment summary assessment of the Livestock Department	23
Table 5: Enabling environment summary assessment of the Department of Forests	27
Table 6: Enabling environment summary assessment of the Fisheries Department	29
Table 7: Enabling environment summary assessment of the DWA	31
Table 8: Enabling environment summary assessment of the Department of Cooperatives	33
Table 9: Enabling environment summary assessment of the Vanuatu Agriculture Development Bank	35
Table 10: Labour roles on average from groups consulted in Isla and Lounaula Tanna	46
Table 11: Summary of average time worked and leisure time in the two communities, by age groups, in years	48

# Acknowledgements

This Country Gender Assessment (CGA) was commissioned by FAO as part of the regional programme '*Promoting gender equality through knowledge generation and awareness raising.*' This programme aims to support the review and/or formulation of gender-responsive sectorial policies and strategies and to accelerate the implementation of the FAO Policy on Gender Equality and the Asia-Pacific Regional Gender Strategy and Action Plan 2017–2019.

The CGA was produced by CARE International Vanuatu under the guidance of Megan Chisholm, Country Director, and in cooperation with the Social Development programme of the Pacific Community (SPC), principally Brigitte Leduc, Team Leader for Gender Equality and Social Inclusion; Kim Robertson, Gender Statistics Adviser; and consultant Gayle Nelson.

The CGA was conducted under the overall supervision of Eriko Hibi, Subregional Coordinator for the Pacific Islands and FAO Representative in Vanuatu; the technical supervision of Clara Mi Young Park, FAO's Regional Gender Social and Rural Development Officer for Asia-Pacific; and the coordination of Rasmiyya Aliyeva, Subregional Statistician for the Pacific Islands. The report also benefitted from technical editing and comments by Monika Percic and Bettina Gatt of FAO.

Special acknowledgement goes to the team of CARE International in Vanuatu: Megan Williams, Gender and Program Quality Advisor, who authored the report and led the team in data collection and analysis as well as team members Mala Kenneth, John Bill Charley, Sam Fenda, Amon Japeth, Pauline Kalopi, Sandra Silas, Eddy Maliliu, Julia Marango and Harriet Smith.

The CGA team would like to convey a special thanks to the people of Lounaula and Isla villages in Tanna for their time and willingness to participate and share their knowledge and experience. Special thanks go also to Mr Paitia Nagaleva of SPC's Land Resources Division, who accompanied the CARE International Vanuatu team in the communities on Tanna Island.

The report was edited by Christina M. Schiavoni. Proofreading and layout were provided by QUO Global in Bangkok.

Special thanks to all.

# Acronyms and abbreviations

ADB	Asian Development Bank
ARD	agriculture and rural development
ASP	Agriculture Sector Policy
CDCCCs	Community Disaster and Climate Change Committees
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CGA-ARS	Country Gender Assessment in Agriculture and Rural Sector
COM	Council of Ministers
CRP	Comprehensive Reform Programme
CSO	civil society organization
DFAT	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade of the Government of Australia
DARD	Department of Agriculture and Rural Development
DOC	Department of Cooperatives
DOF	Department of Forests
DWA	Department of Women's Affairs
ECE	early childhood education
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FD	Fisheries Department
FSA	Farm Support Association
GDP	gross domestic product
HDI	Human Development Index
HIES	Household Incomes and Expenditures Survey
HSS	Health Sector Strategy
LD	Livestock Department
M&E	monitoring and evaluation
MALFFB	Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, Fisheries and Biosecurity
MJCS	Ministry of Justice and Community Services
MSMEs	micro, small and medium enterprises
NBV	National Bank of Vanuatu
NCDs	non-communicable diseases
NFP	National Forest Policy

NFSP	National Fisheries Sector Policy
NGEP	National Gender Equality Policy
NGO	Non-overnmental organization
NLP	National Livestock Policy
NSDP	National Sustainable Development Plan
OPSP	Overarching Productive Sector Policy
ORCBDS	Office of the Registrar of Cooperatives and Business Development Services
PLGED	Pacific Leaders Gender Equality Declaration
PPA	Pacific Platform for Action on Gender Equality and Women’s Human Rights
SAMOA	Pathway Small Island Developing States Accelerated Modalities of Action
SPC	Pacific Community
TC	Tropical Cyclone
UN	United Nations
USD	United States dollar
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
VAC	Vanuatu Agriculture College
VADB	Vanuatu Agriculture Development Bank
VANWODS	Vanuatu Women Development Scheme
VARTC	Vanuatu Agricultural Research and Technical Centre
VAWG	violence against women and girls
VNPF	Vanuatu National Provident Fund
VNSO	Vanuatu National Statistics Office
VT	Vanuatu vatu



# Executive summary

The Vanuatu Country Gender Assessment of Agriculture and the Rural Sector (CGA-ARS, or Assessment) examines how gender issues interact with social, economic and environmental development in Vanuatu. It will inform the country- and regional-level work of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations (UN) and help the Pacific Community (SPC) to more accurately target technical support for rural development to the Government of Vanuatu.

The report details findings of desk and field research undertaken in February and March of 2018 and outlines recommendations for gender mainstreaming in the agricultural and rural sectors in Vanuatu. Information collection for this report was carried out through desk review of current literature, consultation with two communities on the island of Tanna, and interviews and focus groups with government agencies, development partners and civil society organizations.

## Key findings

The desk review and rural consultations done for this Assessment yielded a number of findings. These include:

- Women and men participate in almost equal numbers in the agricultural sectors, although they may grow different crops and use different levels of technology. Women have a heavier workload than men due to expectations that, in addition to agricultural work, they are responsible for small-scale marketing, handicraft production for sale and/or household use, caregiving, housework and a considerable amount of voluntary community work.
- Women have less access to and control over resources than men at all levels of society in Vanuatu. Women in the fieldwork areas are rarely allowed to have a direct voice in community decision-making and have no control over customary land except through male family members.
- Prevalence rates of physical and sexual violence against women and girls are high. Social norms and attitudes that women deserve to be beaten if they do not conform to social standards are relatively common among both women and men.
- Climate change is a significant issue affecting rural livelihoods in Vanuatu, and in some cases men and women have different perceptions about its positive and negative effects. A primary concern among all individuals consulted is the increase in severe, destructive weather events.
- High-level commitment to gender equality is clearly reflected in Vanuatu's national plans and its National Gender Equality Policy. However, specific accountability mechanisms and technical capacity are key gaps.
- A stocktake of the enabling environment for gender mainstreaming in several government agencies found that there is a high level of openness to gender mainstreaming and interest in how gender analysis can increase each agency's effectiveness.
- A number of agencies are already implementing initiatives that have some degree of gender responsiveness. Some of these initiatives have been developed based on the experience of field staff as they intuitively adapt to field situations. Other gender-responsive approaches are based on staff having had some gender awareness training or exposure to good practice.
- Key gaps in the enabling environment framework are related to accountability mechanisms to enforce policy and measure progress, collection and analysis of sex-disaggregated data, technical capacity to do gender analysis and gender-responsive programme design, and investment of human and financial resources.

## Recommendations

At the policy and institutional level

- Develop policies, strategies and plans to support the use of gender a mainstreaming approach in planning, budgeting and delivery of programmes and services. Introduce gender-related criteria into ongoing or scheduled reviews of current policies.
- Based on evidence, recognize the scope of rural women's involvement in farming, forestry and fishing activities as agriculture producers in their own right so that agriculture and rural development (ARD) policies, strategies, plans and programmes are designed and implemented in a gender-responsive manner.



©FAO

- Establish an intra-governmental coordination mechanism, led by the Department of Women's Affairs (DWA), to fully take charge of the coordination of efforts on gender equality and rural women's empowerment across the governmental system (central and local).
- Improve the production and use of sex-, age- and location- (rural/urban) disaggregated data relevant for gender equality and rural women's empowerment in ARD policies, strategies, plans and programmes, as well as in monitoring and reporting processes.
- Strengthen the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, Fisheries and Biosecurity (MALFFB), DWA and the Department of Cooperatives (DOC) in provision of gender training, including gender and statistics training, to senior management staff, followed by a programme of similar training for all staff. Develop consistent and coordinated training programmes to raise awareness on gender analysis and gender mainstreaming in the context of agencies' mandates.
- Reinforce current gender-responsive initiatives that consider women's and men's respective participation and engagement in work and decision making and ensure gender-balanced decision making at all levels to promote women's agency.

#### At the community level

- Stimulate the participation of rural women in decision making through dialogue and collaboration with customary institutions, including review of gender-biased norms and practices, adoption of measures to support the representation of rural women in local and national institutions, and transformation of gendered stereotypes and adverse gender-biased practices.
- Improve the delivery of quality rural services adapted to women's needs, including services such as childcare, elderly care, mental health care and disability care, to alleviate the burden of rural women's unpaid care work.
- Include gender awareness training as an entry point activity in all new rural programmes and, where possible, retrofit such training into existing interventions.
- Work with both women and men at the community level, recognizing that, in general, farming is a family business. Training topics should pertain to household agriculture but also include modules on workload, decision making, communication and conflict resolution in the home.
- Support the development of small-scale agribusiness, fisheries and aquaculture to bolster the provision of healthy, locally-grown food in local markets to encourage people to eat more local food; build women's capacity to lead those businesses.

1

# INTRODUCTION



FAO recognizes that gender equality is both a human right and an absolute necessity for achieving the organization's mandate to eradicate hunger and poverty worldwide. In 2013, FAO published its policy on gender equality for the attainment of food security goals in agriculture and rural development.<sup>1</sup> In this policy document, gender mainstreaming and women-targeted actions are considered components of a two-pronged strategy for promoting gender equality in the agricultural and rural sectors.<sup>2</sup> The set of minimum standards for gender mainstreaming laid out in the FAO policy document includes a requirement to undertake a Country Gender Assessment (CGA). The CGA contributes to the formulation of the Country Programme that is established between FAO and a member country government and expressed in the Country Programming Framework. The CGA also supports gender analysis at the identification and formulation stages of technical assistance projects. The 2012 FAO Guide to the Project Cycle states that a gender analysis is essential for the preparation of concept notes for programmes and projects, and it is recommended by FAO that a gender assessment be carried out prior to any project formulation.<sup>3</sup>

**"Gender Mainstreaming is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality."**

*United Nations Economic and Social Council, 1997*

## 1.1 Background and rationale

Vanuatu is an archipelagic nation of 83 islands, 65 of which are inhabited, extending over 1 000 kilometres in a north-south direction between the equator and the Tropic of Capricorn. It lies some 2 000 kilometres to the northeast of Brisbane in the Coral Sea, at a similar latitude to Fiji. The population of Vanuatu is approximately 292 680 (2018), and the people of Vanuatu are described as Melanesian. Port Vila, on the island of Efate, is the capital. Formerly known as the New Hebrides, Vanuatu was jointly governed by British and French administrations before attaining independence on 30 July 1980. Vanuatu is divided administratively into six provinces. Each province is administered by a provincial council responsible for promoting regional autonomy, and there are three municipal councils for the cities of Port Vila (Shefa Province), Luganville (Sanma Province) and Lenakel (Tafea Province). Each province is further divided into Area Council administrative units. Ninety-nine percent of the population indigenous Ni-Vanuatu. There are over 100 languages spoken, of which approximately 80 are actively spoken, making Vanuatu one of the most linguistically diverse countries in the world. There are three official languages: Bislama, English and French.

Vanuatu was given the status of a Least Developed Country in 1985, which was set to expire in 2017 but was extended to 2020 because of the economic impacts of natural disasters due to the country's location in the Pacific Rim of Fire and Pacific Cyclone Belt. In 1999, UNDP's Human Development Index (HDI) ranked Vanuatu 140 out of 164 developing countries. This ranking improved to 118 in 2005 but dropped to 134 in 2015. Vanuatu is the world's most at-risk country for natural disasters, according to the UN World Risk Index, which measures exposure to natural hazards and the capacity to cope with and adapt to these events.

Vanuatu is an agricultural society in which 75 percent of the total population lives in rural areas and depends largely on subsistence agriculture and fishing for daily sustenance and livelihoods (Vanuatu National Statistics

<sup>1</sup> Both the policy document and this report use a broad definition of agriculture that comprises crop production, livestock, fisheries, aquaculture and forestry.

<sup>2</sup> *FAO Policy on Gender Equality: Attaining Food Security Goals in Agriculture and Rural Development* is available at: [www.fao.org/policy-support/resources/resources-details/en/c/427024](http://www.fao.org/policy-support/resources/resources-details/en/c/427024).

<sup>3</sup> *FAO's Guide to the Project Cycle* is available at: <http://www.fao.org/3/ap105e/ap105e.pdf>.

Office (VNSO), 2016). The 2016 Mini-Census found that 88 percent of households engage in some form of vegetable crop production, 57 percent in cash crop production, 69 percent in livestock production and 49 percent in fishing.

The purpose of this CGA-ARS is to enhance understanding of gender perspectives in agriculture and rural development in Vanuatu. It has been designed to provide information to the Government of Vanuatu to support the development and implementation of effective policies, programmes and services to tackle gender inequalities and to empower rural women in all areas of life. It is also intended to inform the work of FAO, to facilitate provision of country-specific inputs to larger UN processes and to support the SPC in identifying strategic actions to support the government in mainstreaming gender in ARD initiatives. Additionally, it examines the enabling environment for gender mainstreaming of the MALFFB and DWA and provides information to both agencies to support implementation of 1) objectives relevant to gender mainstreaming in the Vanuatu National Sustainable Development Plan (2016–2030) (Government of Vanuatu, 2016a) and 2) the Vanuatu National Gender Equality Policy 2015–2019 (Ministry of Justice and Community Services, 2015).

This report details the findings of the research undertaken for the CGA-ARS in February and March of 2018 and outlines key recommendations made by stakeholders to inform planning and action on gender mainstreaming, as required by national policy instruments.

## 1.2 Scope and methodology

The contents of this report are derived from a combination of literature review, policy analysis and consultations with stakeholders. Data collection methods employed include:

- **A desk review** of the national, regional and global literature to assess issues relevant to gender equality and advancement of rural women across natural resource management sectors. This included examination of policies and programmes and information provided by the government and other key stakeholders.
- **Consultations with two communities** in rural Vanuatu to provide some snapshots of gender issues in rural areas. The communities visited are

both located on Tanna Island in the southern province of Tafea. Both communities have had engagement in SPC projects, which made the research team's community interactions easier and facilitated the focus group discussions that were held. The community consultations included the use of specific rapid appraisal tools designed by SPC and used regionally in order to assess: a) women's and men's respective knowledge and roles in relation to both paid and unpaid work; b) women's and men's respective activities and decision-making responsibilities in agriculture, livestock, fisheries, forestry other areas of work, including within the community and household; c) the food security situation and impacts of climate change; and d) land tenure, among other factors associated with different levels of gender equality. Information from the site visits has been used to both supplement and validate the desk review findings.

Nine female and four male agricultural producers took part in focus groups discussions in the Isla Community of Isangel, Tanna Island, and eleven female and nine male agricultural producers took part to the focus groups in the Lounaula Community of Middlebush, Tanna Island.

- **Stocktakes of the enabling environments for gender mainstreaming** of several key departments within the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, Fisheries, Forestry and Bio-security, as well as the Department of Women's Affairs of the Ministry of Justice and Community Services, the Department of Cooperatives of the Ministry of Trade, Tourism, Commerce and Ni-Vanuatu Business, and the Vanuatu Agriculture Development Bank. These involved structured interviews with key informants in each of the designated departments.
- **Engagement with civil society organizations and the private sector** through interviews and workshops conducted to gain their perspectives on key gender inequality issues and opportunities for supporting positive changes in the enabling environment for gender-inclusive practice.

### Limitations of the analysis

Limitations of this Assessment are linked to the short timeframe and the wide scope of the assignment. In order to access as many civil society and private sector players as possible, researchers chose to conduct workshops, however difficulties in timing and communications resulted in a poor turnout.

To compensate, researchers organized one-on-one meetings as well as a later consultation on the findings of the Assessment. Following the consultation on the findings, a draft version of the Assessment was sent to relevant stakeholders for further comment prior to finalization. Unfortunately, private sector perspectives are not reflected as strongly in this Assessment as originally planned.

### 1.3 FAO in Vanuatu

Cooperation between Vanuatu and FAO has been ongoing since the country joined the Organization in 1981 and was strengthened with the establishment of a country office in 2014. With the aim of sustainably increasing the production and marketing of domestic agricultural products and the consumption of safe and nutritious food, FAO assistance in Vanuatu focuses on:

- developing and promoting evidence-based recommendations to incentivize the production and consumption of safe and healthy food;
- promoting sustainable and climate-smart practices to help build resilient agriculture, fisheries and forestry production systems; and
- identifying and promoting food control and business practices to facilitate efficient agri-food value chains providing safe, nutritious and affordable food.

### 1.4 Organization of the Assessment

This report is divided into six chapters.

Chapter 2 provides information on Vanuatu's national social and economic situation, agriculture and rural development, and human development, including population dynamics, health, education, employment, infrastructure and gender equality.

Chapter 3 provides an analysis of gender responsiveness of policies and examines the gender mainstreaming capacities of key institutions in ARD. The content of this chapter is derived both from analysis of key policies and strategies and from interviews conducted with government officials.

Chapter 4 provides an overview of gender issues in agriculture and the rural sector. It examines different factors affecting rural livelihoods and, wherever possible, provides a gender perspective on those issues. Information generated through the focus group discussions with women and men agricultural producers from Tanna is used to illustrate the issues.

Chapter 5 presents a case study of gender issues in two rural communities on Tanna Island. Analysis is focused on gendered roles in agricultural production, looking at division of labour, time use, control over and access to resources and gendered impacts of climate change, as well as looking at culture, community institutions and services.

Chapter 6 concludes with a summary of the findings and with proposed recommendations for the Government of Vanuatu and development partners, notably FAO and SPC, to support gender equality and the empowerment of rural women in Vanuatu through agriculture and other facets of rural development.

# 2

## COUNTRY CONTEXT



In 2016, over three-quarters of the total population – 103 759 males and 100 951 females – were living in rural areas, relying on the land and sea to provide their subsistence (VNSO, 2016). Communities are widely dispersed across more than 80 islands. The geographic dispersion of Vanuatu’s population at low densities across a number of islands has resulted in inadequate and poorly maintained road, air and maritime infrastructure (Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, Forestry, Fisheries and Biosecurity, 2015).

### 2.1 Demography and population dynamics

The 2016 Mini-Census (VNSO, 2016) estimated the average annual rate of population growth to be 2.3 percent (the same as 2009 Census), one of the highest population growth rates in the world and the result of persistent high rates of fertility. The population growth rate is slightly higher in the urban areas of Port Vila and Luganville and peri-urban surrounds due to increasing urbanization. As a result, Vanuatu has as a typically ‘young’ population structure with 39 percent of the total population aged under 15 years and with a median age of

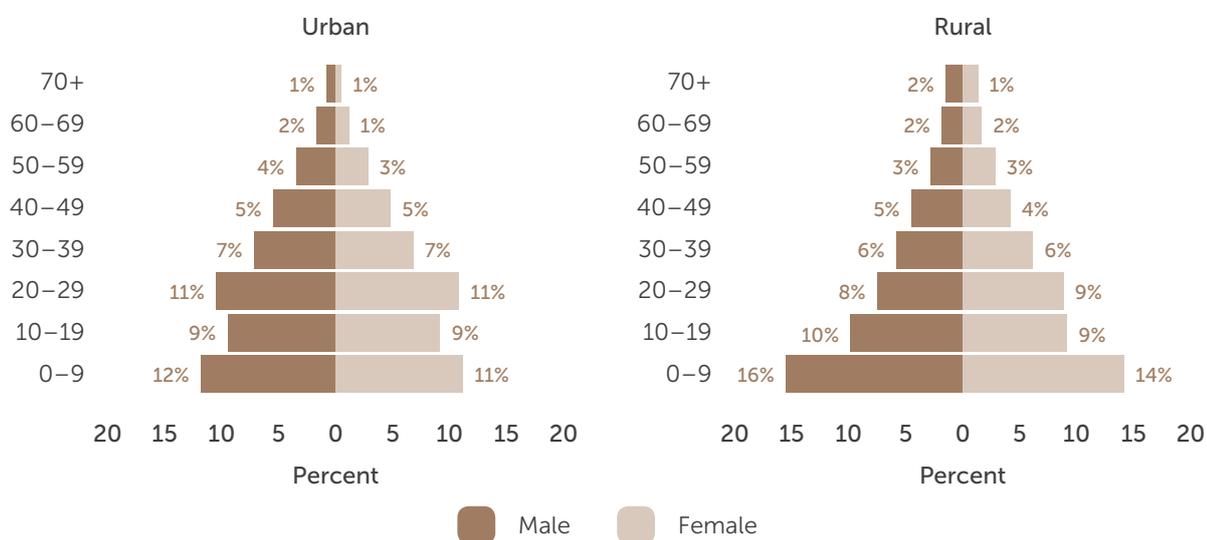
20 years (in rural areas, median age is slightly lower at 19 years). Youth (15–29 years) make up 26 percent of Vanuatu’s population (23.8 percent in rural areas and 31.3 in urban areas).<sup>4</sup> As of 2016, there are 55 285 private households in Vanuatu.<sup>5</sup> Seventeen percent of these, or 9 664, are female-headed households, 6 942 in rural areas and 2 722 in urban areas.<sup>6</sup> Average household size is 4.8 people per household in both urban and rural areas. The age dependency ratio is high, at 83 percent of the working age population nationally, and even higher in rural areas, at 94 percent (compared 57 percent for urban areas) (VNSO, 2016).

Life expectancy has increased and now stands at 69.6 and 72.7 years for males and females, respectively (2009 Census of Population and Housing).

From 1999 to 2009, the urban population grew two to three times faster than the rural population, suggesting a pattern of rural-urban migration. Both major urban centres have large communities and informal urban settlements just outside the town boundaries.

Figure 1: Population by location (urban/rural), age group and sex, 2016

The population living in rural areas has a ‘younger’ age structure compared with urban areas



Source: VNSO, 2016

<sup>4</sup> With increasing urban drift, there is growing concern about young people’s reduced interest in farming and agriculture (Pacific Agriculture and Forestry Policy Network, 2017).

<sup>5</sup> According to the VNSO (2016: iv), “A household is defined as ‘those persons who usually eat together and share the work of preparing the food and/or the cost of work of providing it.’ [...] A household may be found in a variety of forms. It may spread over more than one building. Members of a family may sleep in two or even more buildings but share one place to cook and eat.”

<sup>6</sup> According to the VNSO (2016: iv), the head of household “is an adult person who usually makes the final or most household decisions. It does not necessarily refer to the sole bread winner.”

Table 1: Population by sex and location (urban/rural) in 2009 and 2016

Population	2009			2016			Growth rate (percent)		
	Vanuatu	Urban	Rural	Vanuatu	Urban	Rural	Vanuatu	Urban	Rural
<b>Total</b>	<b>234 023</b>	<b>57 195</b>	<b>176 828</b>	<b>272 459</b>	<b>67 749</b>	<b>204 710</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>16%</b>
Male	119 091	29 618	89 473	138 265	34 506	103 759	16%	17%	16%
Female	114 932	27 577	87 355	134 194	33 243	100 951	17%	21%	16%

Source: VNSO, 2016

## 2.2 National social and economic context

The Vanuatu economy is based on agriculture (mostly subsistence farming), fishing, tourism and offshore financial services. Exports are dominated by a narrow range of agricultural commodities that are vulnerable to fluctuations in world commodity prices. Economic growth is constrained by access to markets, relatively remote and isolated island communities with associated high transport costs, and natural disasters. As a result, Vanuatu is dependent on aid for development projects. The International Monetary Fund Article IV consultations in 2018 found economic growth bouncing back to the levels it had been at before 2015, when Tropical Cyclone (TC) Pam devastated the country, attributed to a recovery in the tourism and agricultural sectors and infrastructure improvement projects. The current account deficit is expected to widen to around 9 percent of gross domestic product (GDP) in 2017/18 due to the high import content of infrastructure projects (International Monetary Fund, 2018).

In Vanuatu, 12.7 percent of the population lives below the national poverty line (Asian Development Bank, 2018). Poverty is generally viewed as hardship. Vanuatu recorded a decline in the proportion of the population living below the basic needs poverty line between 2006–2010 (VNSO, 2013b). Following TC Pam, one of the worst natural disasters in the country's history, many households plunged into hardship, reversing earlier gains. However, in the areas participating in the consultations, there was no specific indication that people were not able to access sufficient food or shelter, and the community members reported having access to services such as water, health and primary education.

## 2.3 Agriculture and rural livelihoods

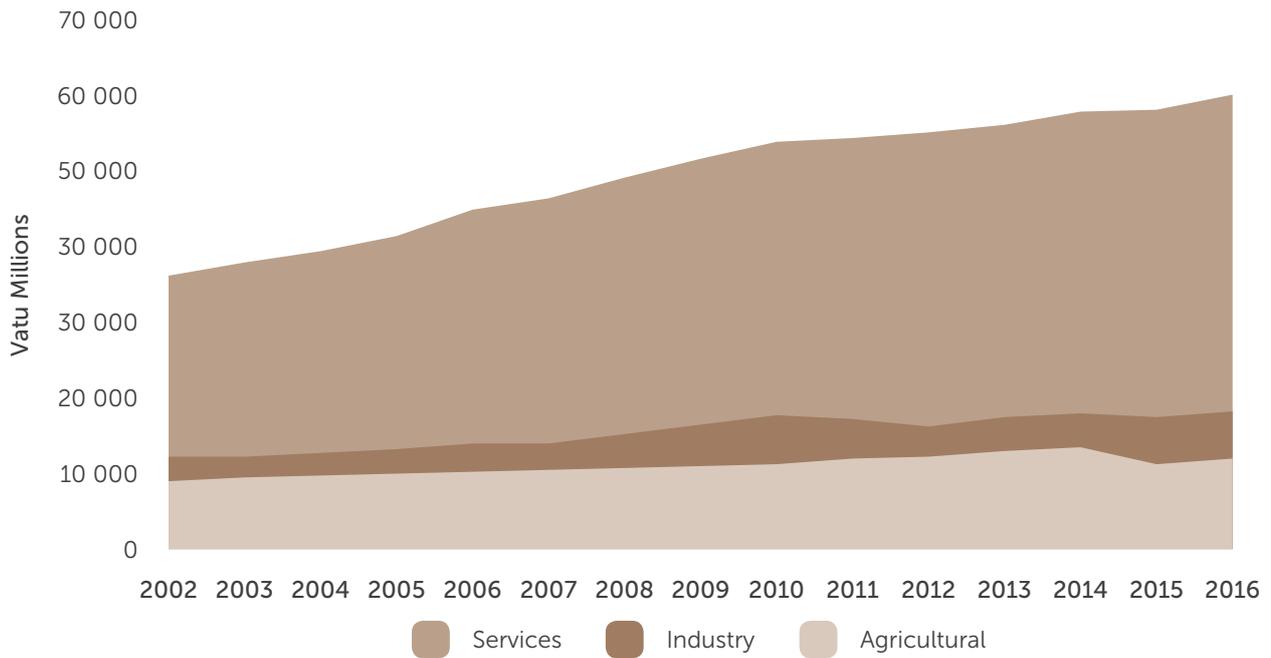
### 2.3.1 Agriculture

Agriculture continues to be of major importance to the population of Vanuatu, the vast majority of which relies on subsistence production. In rural areas, 97 percent of households are engaged in vegetable crop production, 85.6 percent manage livestock, 73.9 percent are engaged in cash cropping, and of these, 6–9 percent grow spices. 57.8 percent are engaged in the fishing industry, 55.8 percent are engaged in forestry activities and 51.3 percent of households are engaged in value adding activities (VNSO, 2016). Men and women play quite different roles in agricultural production, processing and marketing.

Of Vanuatu's total land area of 1 223 178 hectares, only 492 177 hectares – 40 percent of the total area – consist of good agricultural land, amounting to 10.4 hectares per household. Only one third of the cultivable customary land area is presently being farmed (Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, 2015).

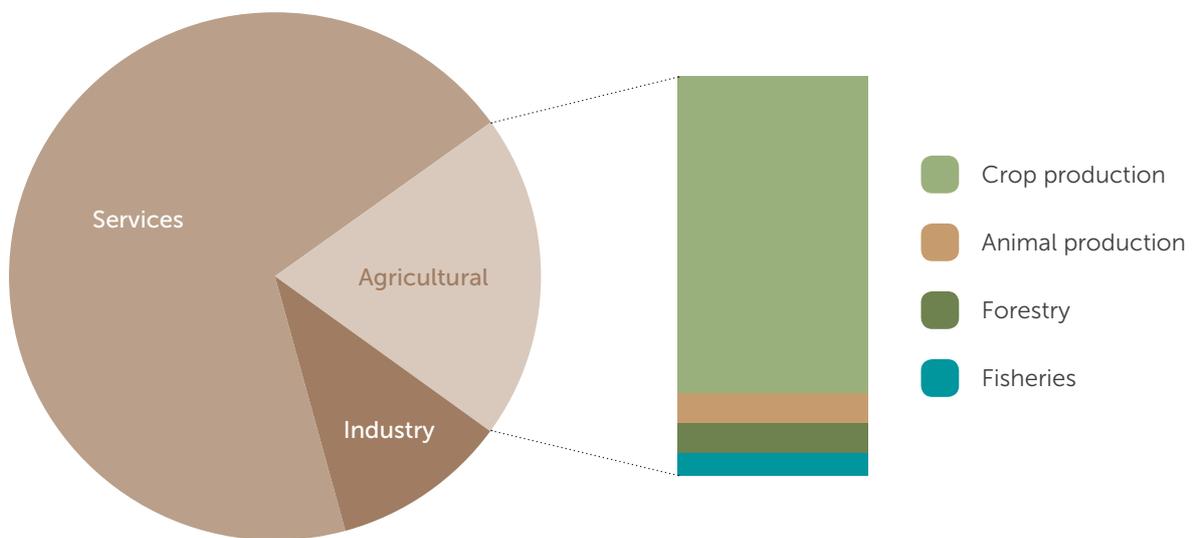
Although agriculture is the primary activity for the majority of the population, only about one-third of production is commercial, resulting in the sector's relatively low share of GDP, while the majority of economic activity is in the services sector, largely driven by tourism. The agricultural sector's contribution to GDP was severely impacted by TC Pam in 2015, with a decrease in the value of agricultural sector output by 16 percent and a decrease in the constant price value of animal production by 58 percent in from 2014 to 2015. Likewise, commodity exports decreased. In 2017,

Figure 2: Constant price GDP by broad industry group, 2002–2016, in million VT<sup>7</sup>



Source: Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, 2015

Figure 3: Contribution to constant price GDP by broad industry group, 2015



Source: VNSO, 2015

Vanuatu’s highest-value export commodities were copra, kava, coconut oil, sawn timber, beef and cocoa.

The agriculture GDP in 2012 was United States Dollar (USD) 168.4 million, 21.3 per cent of GDP, or USD 681 per capita (Whitfield, 2015). In 2012, the combined

<sup>7</sup> One Vanuatu vatu (VT), the national currency, is equal to 0.00844706 USD (United States dollars) as of October 2019.

primary sector contribution to GDP was 20 percent (of which 75 percent was attributed to agriculture, 9 percent to forestry, 8 percent to livestock, 6 percent to fisheries and 2 percent to other sectors) (Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, 2015). In terms of gross national product (GNP), the agriculture sector is contributing more significantly, demonstrated by the capacity of farmers and fisherfolk to produce for market and/or food security purposes (Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, 2015).

The main agricultural staples for subsistence are root crops, including taro, yam, cassava and sweet potato. These are grown for consumption and cultural purposes. Production is rain-fed and labour-intensive, based on use of rudimentary implements. Many farmers use organic farming practices (Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, 2015). A notable level of risk and uncertainty exists regarding potential yield loss at any given time, which gives rise to food insecurity and vulnerability to shocks (Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, 2015).

The four main commercial crops include cocoa, coconut, kava and coffee. Twenty-four percent of Ni-Vanuatu households are engaged in cocoa production, 69 percent in coconut production, 50 percent in kava production and 2 percent in coffee production (Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, 2015). Semi-commercial crops include varieties of cabbage and other leafy greens, corn, tomatoes, capsicum and eggplant (Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, 2015).

Livestock is also a key part of the economy in Vanuatu, with 85.6 percent of rural households rearing small and large livestock for consumption and/or income. The livestock survey conducted as part of the 2016 Mini-Census shows that households had less livestock in 2016 than was reported in the 2009 Census (VNSO, 2016).

### 2.3.2 Forests

Forests in Vanuatu occupy 74 percent of the country's total land area, of which productive forests occupy 36 percent (Department of Forests, 2011). Only 20 percent of productive forests are used commercially due to inaccessibility, low tree

density and cultural reasons, as well as some areas already having been heavily logged during the 1980s and 90s.

Approximately 50 percent of deforestation in Vanuatu is due to subsistence land use. Large areas of logged-over forests and abandoned agricultural land have been invaded by an invasive vine known as American Rope (*Mikania micrantha*), which impedes the natural regeneration of the logged forest (Department of Forests, 2011).

Forests and forest products play a significant role in providing and supporting basic livelihood needs for Ni-Vanuatu, including food, clean water, fuel, medicine and income. Forests provide a broad range of non-wood forest products such as tubers, fruits (e.g. breadfruit), nuts, fibres, grass and leaves for thatch, other construction materials and game (e.g. wild pigs). Forests are also used to house at least 44 percent of the population by providing bamboo and thatch (VNSO, 2016). Forests also play an important spiritual role in Vanuatu's traditional societies, providing materials for ceremonies and traditional medicines (Department of Forests, 2011).

Men and women make different use of forest products. For example, women use non-timber products for weaving and food, and men collect and sell traditional medicines gathered from the forest. Men generally use timber products and bamboo for construction purposes (Department of Forests, 2011).

Ninety-one percent of the population of Vanuatu uses firewood as the primary source of cooking fuel (VNSO, 2016). Vanuatu's annual consumption of wood for fuel wood and charcoal in 2010 was estimated at 105 000 cubic metres. The value of wood for fuel has reached VT 180 million (USD 1.8 million) in 2007.

A reason why fuel wood usage is so high is that 73 percent of the population, primarily in rural areas, lacks access to electricity (Government of Vanuatu, 2013a). Only 20 percent of the population has access to modern cooking fuels such as electricity, kerosene and/or propane. The use of dirty fuels (e.g. wood-based biomass or charcoal) adversely affects health and wellbeing, particularly of women and children (Government of Vanuatu, 2013a).

### 2.3.3 Fisheries

Fish and seafood are a mainstay of food security throughout Vanuatu. Fishing is considered a predominantly male activity, although women in some areas fish from canoes, engage in reef gleaning and participate in aquaculture activities (Vunisea, 2007). Nearly half (49 percent) of all households, or 27 000, engage in fishing activities (including aquaculture) annually (VNSO, 2016). Nearly all households in coastal villages are involved in coastal fishing activities at different levels of intensity. The most common fishing gear, in order of quantities, are fishing lines, hand spears, spear guns and gill nets (Whitfield, 2015).

Subsistence fish consumption amounted to 2 800 metric tonnes in 2015 (Gillet, 2016). Average per capita consumption ranged from 16 to 26 kilograms, with inland populations consuming less fish than coastal groups.

## 2.4 Climate change impacts and natural disasters

Vanuatu is ranked number one in the world in terms of vulnerability to natural disasters (Integrated Research on Disaster Risk, 2013). The country suffers from the third highest rate of annual losses to GDP resulting from natural disasters (particularly cyclones) losing, almost 7 percent of GDP every year (Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, Forestry, Fisheries and Biosecurity, 2015). Vanuatu is affected by a major cyclone every 1.7 years, and the size and impact of these are likely to increase with the effects of climate change (Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, Forestry, Fisheries and Biosecurity, 2015).

Communities in Vanuatu are already experiencing the effects of climate change. A major issue is water availability, which is impacting food production (Mael, 2013). It is predicted that across the Pacific, island countries will face increasingly severe water shortages due to reduced precipitation. This anticipated intensification of water shortage will likely lead to land use change, possibly requiring farmers to move their crops away from drier areas and change to drought-resistant varieties and new propagation techniques (Mael, 2013).

## 2.5 Human Development

Vanuatu's HDI value for 2017 was 0.603, placing the country in the medium human development category and positioning it at 138 out of 189 countries and UN-recognized territories (United Nations Development Programme, 2018). Sex-disaggregated HDI values are not available for Vanuatu, nor are Gender Inequality Index (GII) and Gender Development Index (GDI) values.

### 2.5.1 Health

The Health Sector Strategy 2017–2020 notes that health issues in Vanuatu are increasingly complex, with the double burden of communicable diseases like malaria, tuberculosis (TB) and sexually transmitted diseases (STIs), as well as non-communicable diseases (NCDs), notably diabetes and hypertension, combined with challenges of delivering health services to a small but widely dispersed population with a limited, ageing workforce (Ministry of Health, 2017a). Research on deaths from 2000–2007 indicates that among the main causes of deaths in children aged under five years were perinatal disorders (45 percent) and malaria, diarrhoea, and pneumonia (27 percent). For men aged 15–59 years the main causes of deaths were circulatory disease (27 percent), neoplasms (13 percent), injury (13 percent), liver disease (10 percent), infection (10 percent), diabetes (7 percent), and chronic respiratory disease (7 percent). For women aged 15–59 years, the main causes of deaths were neoplasms (29 percent), circulatory disease (15 percent), diabetes (10 percent), infection (9 percent), and maternal deaths (8 percent) (Carter, 2016).

In 2011, it was found that 19 percent of the adult Ni-Vanuatu population was obese (with obesity more prevalent amongst women than men), 51 percent was overweight and around 29 percent had high blood pressure. These rates are reported to have increased over the past decade. An area where some improvements have been seen is in maternal and child health (Ministry of Health, 2017b). However, despite almost all births being attended by medical professionals,<sup>8</sup> the maternal mortality ratio and neonatal mortality ratio remain high. In 2015, there were 78 maternal deaths per 100 000 live births and

<sup>8</sup> Eighty-nine percent of births were attended by medical professionals in 2013 (96 percent urban and 87 percent in rural areas).

12.2 neonatal deaths per 1 000 live births (World Bank, 2015). About one in three children under five years of age living in rural areas are stunted, compared with one in five children under five years of age living in urban areas (VNSO, 2013a).

### 2.5.2 Education and literacy

Literacy rates vary between urban and rural areas, and between young and older people as a result of increasing access to education. Self-reported literacy levels from the 2009 Census were 86 percent for adult men and 84 percent for adult women (aged 15 years and over). Eighty percent of rural women said they were literate compared to 98 percent of urban women, with the difference in reported literacy levels about the same for urban and rural men. Some people, especially older women, can only speak their local vernacular language and cannot communicate with people beyond their local community or island. The majority of communities use their local vernacular on a daily basis, as opposed to one of the three official languages. The 1999 Census reported that 73 percent of the national population spoke a local language within their home. In 2009, this decreased to 63 percent of the national population, with 77 percent of rural households speaking a local language in their home.

Education is provided on a fee-free basis for primary education in government schools for children aged 6–13 years, with some schools allowing enrolment from five years of age. The vast majority of students are enrolled in government and government-assisted (faith-based) schools. Between 2012 and 2015, there was a 6 percent increase in pupils enrolled in pre-primary early childhood education (ECE) programmes, with approximately 14 000 students enrolled by 2015 (Ministry of Education and Training, 2015). Kindergarten schools are run by communities. Improving access to and quality of learning at the pre-primary level is a priority for the educational sector.

The education situation for girls is steadily improving, with high school attendance of both girls and boys at the primary and secondary levels. The gender

parity index is slightly in favour of girls at the secondary level and about equal at primary level (Pacific Community, 2015). Education curriculum now includes life skills and gender-based violence awareness and prevention.<sup>9</sup> The percentage of girls and women accessing government scholarships improved from 40 percent in 2015 to 45 percent in 2016 (Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, 2016). The enrolment rate of girls as a percentage of that of boys from 2008–2012 was 95.2 at the primary level and 101.5 at the secondary level (United Nations Children's Fund, 2013).

Despite the rolling out of free basic education across Vanuatu, access to education remains a challenge, and anticipated increases in enrolment rates have not materialized. The 2016 Mini-Census reported that 11 percent of all children aged 6–13 years were not attending school and that most of these children lived in rural areas.<sup>10</sup> The Vanuatu Women's Centre found, furthermore, that 23 percent of women were prevented from accessing or continuing their education, mainly by their parents (72 percent) but also by their husbands/partners (10 percent), in an effort to control the behaviour of their wives (Molony, 2014).

The Ministry of Education and Training reported in 2015 that 43 percent of ECE-aged boys and girls were enrolled in ECE programmes (Ministry of Education and Training, 2015). Forty-two percent of new entrants into Year 1 had attended ECE. The net intake rate in Year 1 was 31 percent, with a survival rate to Year 6 of 79 percent. This indicates that, once in primary school, students tend to complete, but a significant proportion never attends. The completion rate of the basic education cycle (Year 8) stood at 68 percent (71 percent of girls and 65 percent of boys). The post-primary education obstacles for rural youth include a limited number of secondary school places, difficult access to school and high costs of schooling.

### 2.5.3 Workforce participation and employment

The majority of people in Vanuatu live a subsistence lifestyle and rely on subsistence-based income

<sup>9</sup> A standard curriculum has been implemented across government schools since 2012 with emphasis on promoting agriculture, forestry and fishing skills; building resilience and promoting food security; climate change science and climate change adaptation skills; and sustainable fisheries. This curriculum is accompanied by associated materials and teaching resources such as the *Teachers' Resource Kit on Fisheries for Vanuatu* that includes 23 information sheets and a teacher's guide.

<sup>10</sup> Non-attendance of rural children was at 13 percent, while non-attendance of urban children was at 6 percent.

generation activities as their main source of income. The 2009 Census showed that 95 of subsistence workers lived in rural areas, with minimal differences in rural women’s and men’s participation in subsistence work. Female-headed households were more likely than male-headed households to rely on the sale of goods as their main source of income. Economic and employment opportunities for women in remote, rural areas are more limited compared to women in urban areas due to lack of access to education, training, financial services and markets (VNSO, 2009).

In 2016, 50 percent of urban women aged 15 years and above were employed (working for pay or profit) compared to 13 percent of rural women.<sup>11</sup> During the same year, 71 percent of urban men and 26 percent of rural men in the same age group were employed. Almost the same proportions of adult women (44 percent) and men (47 percent) in rural areas were working producing goods for subsistence. A small proportion of urban women (6 percent) and men (3 percent) produced goods for subsistence (VNSO, 2016).

About 40 percent of working-age rural and urban women declared unpaid family work as their main status in employment, compared to about 20 percent of working-age rural and urban men (VNSO, 2016).

In 2016, women comprised 49.5 percent of producers in the informal/traditional economy. This includes production and processing of subsistence foods, cash crops and handicrafts. Of the total workforce, 63.6 percent women engaged in unpaid reproductive (family/household) work (VNSO, 2016).

The most recent statistics available on occupation and industry of employed people are from the 2009 Census. The statistics suggest while employment in the services sector has increased, overall distribution has changed little, with occupational concentration, in traditional jobs in lower paid occupations in retail, education, health and the household (domestic workers) sectors.

More rural than urban women have at some point participated in a seasonal employment scheme, with 481 rural women and 274 urban women reporting participation in 2016. In contrast, 912 urban men and 2 870 rural men reported participation.

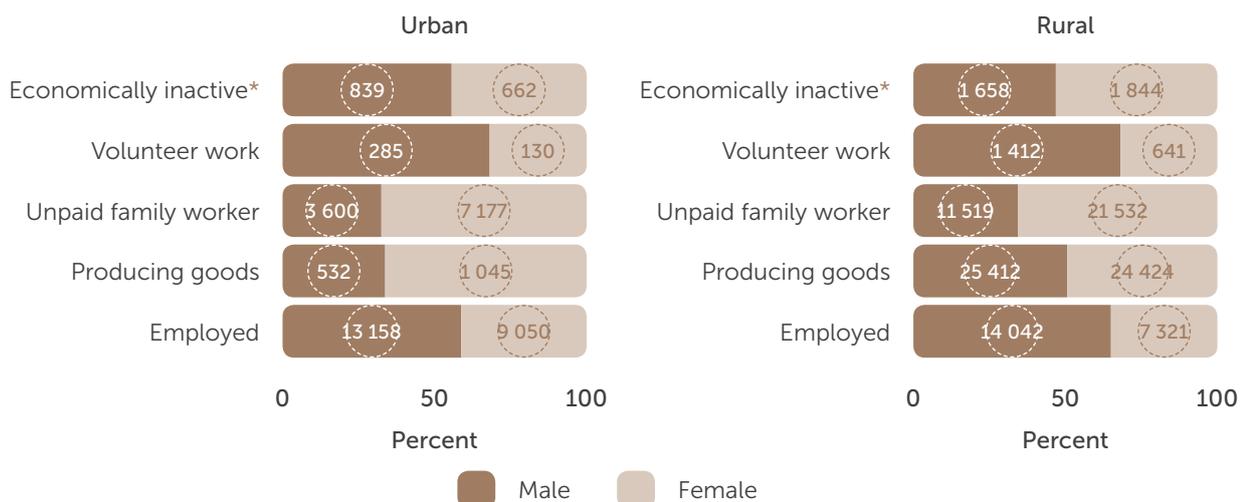
### 2.5.4 Basic infrastructure and sanitation

#### Services

Due to the geographic distribution of people in Vanuatu’s islands, communities in rural areas have limited access to public services such as health care,

Figure 4: Persons aged 15 years and over by location (urban/rural), main economic activity and sex

Women’s share of employed people is 34% in rural areas and 41% in urban areas



\* Excludes full time students  
Source: VNSO, 2016

<sup>11</sup> Excluding full-time students.

education and the justice system and limited support for income-generating opportunities, including access to markets and credit. There is also limited access to transport around and between islands, and where it is available, it can be very expensive. Another challenge lies in accessing telecommunications. The Vanuatu Broadcasting and Television Corporation (VBTC) television and radio transmission network does not have national coverage, although a broadcast infrastructure upgrade project began in late 2017.

There are many different actors engaged in service provision within the rural sector. These include the government, civil society organizations, the private sector, churches and financial institutions.

### **Water and Sanitation**

The water and sanitation situation for rural communities in Vanuatu remains concerning. Water quality and quantity is problematic despite improvements in services over the last decade. During the dry season and in drought conditions, including those associated with El Nino, some communities are forced to declare 'water emergencies.' Communities are experiencing growing tensions over water access rights (United Nations Children's Fund, 2015). Water is commonly collected in rainwater tanks, and groundwater and/or surface water sources are also often piped to central points in villages. In addition to water scarcity, many communities experience lack of clean water following extreme weather events (e.g. cyclones and storms). In these situations, contamination of water sources and salinization of groundwater can occur because many communities do not have back-up water systems (United Nations Children's Fund, 2015). Lack of access to water supply systems has a significant impact on time spent transporting water, which can take up to five hours per day (United Nations Children's Fund, 2015).

The majority of rural households (16 470, or about 40 percent of all rural households) use private pit latrines as their main toilet type, as compared to only 733, or 5 percent, of all urban households using the same toilet type. The main toilet type for the majority of urban households (5 489, or 39 percent of all urban households) is a private flush toilet, as compared to only 1 955, or about 5 percent, of all rural households that use this toilet type (VNSO, 2016).

### **Transportation**

Transportation constraints negatively impact the productive sector, including agriculture and fisheries in Vanuatu. The high cost of air, marine and land transportation for products, coupled with extremely poor road, marine and market infrastructure, constrain rural people's ability to sell their products. In 2010, the land transport network in Vanuatu consisted of about 1 800 km of roads – 90 per cent of which were unsealed and located on the two most populous islands of Efate and Espiritu Santo. Where there has been increased road development, this has led to a considerable increase in cash incomes. The 2010 Household Incomes and Expenditures Survey emphasized that "the Efate ring road is providing a vital artery for rural Efate communities and those on the close offshore islands to increase access to markets (...) both in the larger rural communities and the main urban centre of Port Vila. The road is making impacts in terms of increased incomes in rural Efate" (VNSO, 2013b).

### **2.5.5 Gender equality situation**

#### **Leadership and political representation**

The Republic of Vanuatu is a parliamentary democracy (52 seats) with a President elected for a five-year term. The Prime Minister and the Council of Ministers constitute the executive portion of the government. Members of Parliament are elected by popular vote every four years. The national Council of Chiefs, the Malvatumauri, advises the government on all matters concerning Ni-Vanuatu culture and language. Women are not represented in this customary institution.

Since independence in 1980, only five women have been elected to Vanuatu's National Parliament. In 1990, women held 4.3 percent of seats in Parliament, but in the 2016 election none of the 10 women candidates was elected (Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, 2016). There were no women in Parliament in 2018.

Gender balance in leadership is also an issue in the private sector, where women hold only 3.4 percent of senior management positions (Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, 2016).

In 2013, the Parliament made an amendment to the Municipalities Act that reserved seats for women in the municipal councils. The first municipal election following this amendment, in the Capital of Port Vila

in 2013, resulted in the occupation of five seats (out of 13) by women in the Municipal Council.

### Violence against women and girls

Vanuatu has one of the highest prevalence rates of violence against women and girls (VAWG) globally. Research conducted by the Vanuatu Women's Centre in 2011 found that 60 percent of women with an intimate partner had experienced physical violence, 68 percent had experienced emotional violence and 69 percent had experienced coercive behavioural control by men (Vanuatu Women's Centre, 2011). Male family members and partners perpetrate most of the violence, which occurs in all provinces and islands and among all age groups, education levels, socio-economic groups and religions. VAWG is higher in rural (63 percent) than in urban (50 percent) areas (Molony, 2014). Social values held by both women and men reinforce the acceptability of VAWG. Sixty percent of women agree with at least one of the common excuses for men to beat their wives (Vanuatu Women's Centre, 2011).

Sexual and physical violence is also high against women and girls with disabilities, both physical and mental. Family members are often afraid to leave women and girls with disabilities alone in the home for fear of sexual abuse by male community members (Braaf, 2017).

The threat of violence against women is one of the factors that forces women to remain in their designated and often subservient roles. Women prioritize the tasks that support men. This includes preparation of the food for the *nakamal*, a traditional meeting place, and preparation of the evening meal for the man/men of the household (even if they do not return home until after the women have gone to bed, as failure to do so could result in a violent reaction by the men.<sup>12</sup>

Women in Vanuatu who experience violence are 3–4 times more likely to attempt suicide than women not experiencing violence (Molony, 2014). This is an issue in both urban and rural areas. Young women are constantly at risk of violence, especially sexual violence, even when just going to their food gardens or to collect water or firewood. This threat means they have little freedom of movement (Molony,

2014). There are limited services for victims of VAWG in Vanuatu in general and even fewer in rural areas.

Vanuatu has the highest documented rates of child marriage in the Pacific, with 9 percent of girls married before 15 years of age and 27 percent married before they turn 18. Additionally, some communities still practice bride price or forced marriage (Molony, 2014). The prevalence of sexual abuse of girl children under the age of 15 is at nearly 30 percent, among the highest in the world. The majority of perpetrators are male family members and boyfriends. For more than 1 in 4 women (28 percent), their first sexual experience was forced (Molony, 2014).

### Teenage Pregnancy

The teenage fertility rate is high. In 2013, the fertility rate of teenage girls aged 15–19 years was 97 per 1 000 births in rural areas and 52 per 1 000 births in urban areas<sup>13</sup> (VNSO, 2013a). These rates indicate that women living in rural areas are severely constrained in their relationships with men and are likely to exercise less control over their own lives.

### Participation in management of natural resources and decision-making mechanisms

Rigid social norms in rural areas reinforce the decision-making power of males, including regarding natural resources, land and other productive resources. In Vanuatu, women's participation in decision making on land use is limited to informal discussions within the household and in community gatherings. Men control formal community decision making, and community chiefs are the final decision makers on the use of productive and natural resources.

The National Council of Chiefs, or Malvatumauri, must be consulted by the Parliament on any matters related to land. Since women cannot be high chiefs, they are not part of the Malvatumauri and do not have a say on decisions related to tenure of customary land.

However, women do play a role in land management. Some detailed examples of this can be found in Chapter 5.

<sup>12</sup> This information was obtained during the community consultations conducted for this Assessment.

<sup>13</sup> The global average for adolescent fertility rates in 2013 was 45.8 births per 1 000 women aged 15–19 years (World Bank data, accessed in July 2019).

# 3

## POLICY, LEGISLATIVE AND INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT



### 3.1 Policy-level commitments

#### 3.1.1 International and regional commitments

Vanuatu is a signatory to the *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)*. The country signed on to the Convention in September 1995 and signed the Optional Protocol on 17 May 2007. By endorsing the Convention, Vanuatu has committed itself to ending discrimination against women in all forms and is legally bound to put its provisions into practice.

Vanuatu is also a signatory to a number of other international and regional agreements on gender equality and the advancement of women, including:

- The Beijing Platform for Action (1995)
- The Accra Agenda for Action and the Busan Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation 2012
- The International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) Programme of Action (1994)
- The Framework for Pacific Regionalism and its precursor, the Pacific Plan for Strengthening Regional Cooperation and Integration (Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, 2014)

- The Pacific Platform for Action on Gender Equality and Women's Human Rights (PPA) 2018–2030 (Pacific Community, 2017)
- The Pacific Leaders Gender Equality Declaration (PLGED) (Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, 2012).

Vanuatu has also endorsed the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2015), which includes a specific goal on gender equality and women's empowerment (Sustainable Development Goal 5) and the Small Island Developing States Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway (2014), also inclusive of gender equality and human rights.

#### 3.1.2 National commitments

National-level policies that provide strategic guidance to the agricultural and rural sectors include the overarching National Sustainable Development Plan 2016–2030 and the National Gender Equality Policy 2015–19.

A number of additional policies guide more detailed work at the sector level. These include the Overarching Productive Sector Policy 2012–17, the Vanuatu National Agriculture Sector Policy 2015–2030, the Vanuatu National Livestock Policy 2015–2030,

**Table 2: Agriculture and rural development laws, policies and strategies relevant for gender equality and rural women's empowerment in agriculture**

Title	Integration of issues relevant for gender equality and rural women's empowerment in agriculture and rural development
National Sustainable Development Plan (NSDP) 2016–2030	The NSDP 2016–2030, prepared by the Department of Strategic Policy, Planning and Aid Coordination, includes three main focus areas or 'pillars' that focus on 1) the environment; 2) the economy; and 3) society. The NSDP notes that Vanuatu aspires to "...an inclusive society which upholds human dignity and where the rights of all Ni-Vanuatu, including women, youth, the elderly and vulnerable groups are supported, protected and promoted in our legislation and institutions." The pillar on society includes commitments to 1) implement gender-responsive planning and budgeting processes; 2) prevent and eliminate all forms of violence and discrimination against women, children and vulnerable groups; and 3) ensure all people, including people with disabilities, have access to governmental services (Government of Vanuatu, 2016).
National Gender Equality Policy (NGEP) 2015–2019	The NGEP 2015–2019, prepared by the Department of Women's Affairs of the Ministry of Justice and Community Services and launched in December 2016, directs the government to implement gender mainstreaming nation-wide through all governmental departments (Ministry of Justice and Community Services, 2015). The NGEP prioritizes four strategic areas: 1) reduction of domestic and gender-based violence; 2) enhancement of women's economic empowerment; 3) promotion of women's leadership and equal political participation; and 4) building a foundation for gender mainstreaming.

Table 2: Agriculture and rural development laws, policies and strategies relevant for gender equality and rural women's empowerment in agriculture (*continued*)

Title	Integration of issues relevant for gender equality and rural women's empowerment in agriculture and rural development
Overarching Productive Sector Policy (OPSP) 2012–2017	<p>The OPSP 2012–2017 asserts that its policy goals and strategy development have been guided by fundamental principles that include social and gender equity. In its second policy goal, it aims to <i>“improve farm incomes and livelihoods with a particular focus on gender equity and vulnerable groups.”</i> The document identifies only a small number of activities for fostering change in how women are involved in farming and livelihood activities, and these are not strategically designed to promote women's rights or equality.<sup>14</sup> There is discussion of trying to influence cultural norms, however this is in reference to attitudes to agribusiness development rather than gender and social inclusion (Government of Vanuatu, 2012).</p>
Agriculture Sector Policy (ASP) 2015–2030	<p>The ASP 2015–2030 was prepared by the Vanuatu Department of Agriculture and Rural Development. None of the guiding principles of the ASP 2015–2030 mentions gender equality as such, but they do refer to <i>“...stakeholder participation and commitment at all levels”</i> and that the <i>“...protection and sustainable use of Vanuatu's prime agriculture land is the duty of all citizens of the Republic of Vanuatu and therefore requires full participation and sense of responsibility and ownership from relevant stakeholders”</i> (Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, 2015). There is no breakdown in the Policy of the key stakeholders for agriculture, however.</p> <p>The ASP has an objective of <i>“equal opportunity in agricultural development”</i> under the thematic area of Gender and Vulnerable Groups. The objective includes points on 1) ensuring participation of women, youth and vulnerable groups in all agricultural practices; 2) giving due recognition to contributions of women, youth and vulnerable groups in development initiatives; 3) providing equal opportunities in the agriculture workforce; and 4) allocating specific funds for agriculture activities undertaken by women, youth and vulnerable groups. To ensure more effective results, the policy directives require more explicit recognition that the agricultural workforce is made up of 49.5 percent women, along with a clear monitoring and implementation framework that includes indicators of progress on gender equality and women's empowerment.</p> <p>Gender issues are also raised in the section of the Policy focused on training, which includes the directive to <i>“...increase the participation through the conduction (sic) of gender-based training for women, youth and vulnerable groups.”</i> The desired result of this directive is not stated, however. More clarity is needed on the target group(s) and the training topic(s), in addition to defining the expected outcome.</p>
National Livestock Policy (NLP) 2015–2030	<p>The NLP 2015–2030, prepared by the Department of Livestock, cites <i>“enabling inclusiveness”</i> as one of the seven guiding principles of the Policy (Department of Livestock, 2015). Women and vulnerable groups are identified as the 14<sup>th</sup> thematic and policy area, specifying that women and vulnerable groups are an integral part of livestock development in Vanuatu (as well as young people) and that <i>“women have huge potential to be drivers in livestock farming.”</i> Throughout the Policy, farmers are referred to as <i>“him/her,”</i> indicating an acknowledgement that women are farmers as well as men. The NLP also includes recognition of <i>“demand driven and beneficiary led approaches in selection of technologies and extension messages,”</i> which indicates a commitment to engage with all beneficiaries.</p>

<sup>14</sup> For example, Strategy 7.7 to *“ensure gender balance in recruitment of training staff and enrolment of students on all training courses.”*

**Table 2: Agriculture and rural development laws, policies and strategies relevant for gender equality and rural women’s empowerment in agriculture (continued)**

Title	Integration of issues relevant for gender equality and rural women’s empowerment in agriculture and rural development
National Forest Policy (NFP) 2013–2023	The NFP 2013–2023, prepared by the Department of Forests, asserts that gender balance and equality should be considered in all forest operations and activities. This includes in employment in the Department of Forests at all levels, involvement of women in forest industries, provision of extension and awareness programmes to women, involvement of women in forestry-related decision making at all levels and involvement of women in village-level forestry discussions and activities (Department of Forests, 2011).
National Fisheries Sector Policy (NFSP) 2016–2031	The NFSP 2016–2031, prepared by the Department of Fisheries, was developed with input from youth and women’s groups and recognizes and promotes gender equality and the participation of vulnerable groups in fisheries (Department of Fisheries, 2016). In its guiding principles, it promotes inclusivity and ensures inclusion of relevant stakeholders in decision-making processes on fisheries and aquaculture management and development (guiding principle IV). One of the principles includes recognition of gender equity and vulnerable groups. The Policy specifies stakeholder engagement in all activities, but does not mention gender specifically. It does, however, assert the need to provide equal opportunities to all sectors of the community through encouraging: 1) fair participation of women in all positions in the Fisheries Department; 2) training opportunities open to all community groups, including vulnerable groups; and 3) participation of youth in training opportunities in fisheries, aquaculture and value-adding processes.

the National Forest Policy 2013–2023 and the National Fisheries Sector Policy 2016–2031.

These policies recognize gender (variously described as gender, women, and in some cases, vulnerable groups) as an issue in Vanuatu. With the exception of the Livestock Policy, however, their guidance on what needs to happen to promote gender equality and transform the situation of women is written in general language and does not clearly lay out desired outcomes or implementation approaches.

At an even more specific level, departmental policies within the MALFFB all include some mention of “women and vulnerable groups.” However, similar to the sector-wide policies, there is a lack of clarity on how to implement gender-related directives (Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, Forestry, Fisheries and Biosecurity, 2014). None of MALFFB’s departments has a specific gender policy or strategy. It was noted in discussions with stakeholders for this Assessment that the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) previously had a gender policy, but it is no longer in effect and current staff is not familiar with its content.

### 3.1.2.1 Potential effects of policies on rural women and men

All sectorial policies have highlighted gender to varying degrees. This in itself is a positive step and provides a foundation from which to start implementing the National Gender Equality Policy directive on gender mainstreaming. National-level policies provide the guidance for formalizing gender-responsive practice through technical inputs such as gender analysis and collection of sex- and age-disaggregated data. The resulting evidence and analysis can inform design of programmes that suit the priorities of all stakeholder groups and the development of more effective gender-responsive policies, plans and budgets. This can in turn guide gender-responsive revision and development of effective strategies for equitable engagement of women and men in the development of the agriculture sector in Vanuatu.

Implementation of some of the sector-specific policies as they stand, without first ensuring that foundational gender mainstreaming steps are taken, may lead to ineffective and confused results. For example, directive 2.1.7 of the **Agriculture Policy** states “increase the participation through the conduction (sic) of gender-based trainings for women, youths

and vulnerable groups” (Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, 2015). It is unclear what “gender-based training” is and why women, youth and vulnerable groups are being targeted. It is not clear what participation is referring to – for example, does it refer to decision making or to participation in agricultural work? It is also unclear what the objective of training is.

There is a lack of comprehensive and strategic gender analysis in the policies that guide the departments of MALFFB. In addition, while they all designate a section (often the last section) for “women, youth or vulnerable groups,” the grouping of those populations undermines targeted action and does not recognize that women make up half the workforce in agriculture, livestock, fisheries and forestry. Combining women, youth and vulnerable people as one group infers all are “vulnerable,” when in fact women and youth are often dynamic, well-educated and capable people who should be fully engaged in all phases of policy development and implementation along with men. Additionally, the fact that women are nearly half the rural sector workforce is another rationale for moving to more equitable policy design and delivery.

The **Livestock Policy** makes a very general statement about the need for women’s efforts to be better appreciated in light of their contributions to the livestock sector. The Policy does not, however, provide a clear idea of how this will be implemented, although the action plan and monitoring and evaluation (M&E) framework provide some additional detail (Department of Livestock, 2015). Without clearly defined expected outcomes, the suggested actions in the action plan and M&E framework risk setting up unrealistic expectations of what can be achieved, while also raising some concerns about feasibility. This is a particular issue in the context of customary land ownership and control of decision making about land. Overall, there is a need for a more detailed risk analysis and implementation strategy.

The Livestock Policy’s implementation strategy includes plans for a number of activities to empower women and increase their profile in families and communities. However, there is no clear risk management associated with these activities. Risk management is critical where social norms and gender roles are rigid and activities may change dynamics of gender relations and potentially challenge men’s power. The main risk is that there will be backlash and violence against women. Lessons learned in the Pacific

show that planning interventions to ensure that men are aware of why activities are taking place and that changes will benefit families and communities can reduce risk and increase the social value attributed to women’s increased participation.

The **Forest Policy** speaks very broadly about “*involv(ing) women in forest industries*” and “*involv(ing) women in all levels of forestry related decision-making*” without actually specifying what that means in reality. The Department of Forests also has a Decade on Reforestation Implementation Strategy that does not seem to relate directly to the Forest Policy, although it clearly indicates that a specific forestry programme will be designed for women to ensure their effective participation in implementing reforestation activities. The main issue with these documents is whether they align and work towards the same ends.

### 3.2 Assessment of the institutional enabling environment

The departments of the MALFFB are the main institutions intervening in the agriculture and rural sector in Vanuatu. MALFFB’s Departments of Agriculture and Rural Development, Livestock, Forestry and Fisheries participated in this Assessment. Due to time constraints, the Department of Biosecurity was not included in the Assessment. In addition to the above-listed departments, the Department of Women’s Affairs hosted within the Ministry of Justice and Community Service, the Department of Cooperatives of the Office of the Registrar of Cooperative and Business Development Service, and the Vanuatu Agriculture Development Bank were included in this stocktake of governmental agencies. Representatives from all seven agencies participated in interviews, responding to similar sets of questions on the current efforts of the departments to provide an enabling environment for gender mainstreaming.

**“Gender mainstreaming is a whole of government agenda rather than a sole responsibility of a single department. Strong leadership from the top...is required to ensure gender-responsive approaches are systematically integrated across all government policies, programmes and projects.”**

***Vanuatu National Gender Equality Policy 2015–2019***

Despite the absence of specific gender strategies in MALFFB, there are examples of effective gender mainstreaming. All departments are guided by policies that make a commitment to gender equality. The Fisheries Department reports that they have conducted gender analysis and are gathering sex- and age-disaggregated data. The Agriculture Department has started to employ women in senior roles as well as in extension roles to more effectively engage with their client group. The Forestry Department, as part of their forthcoming strategy, has identified women as one of their major target groups for programme work and has laid out some key steps to engage stakeholders in the development of specific programmes that suit their needs. The Livestock Department has an M&E plan in place that includes collection of sex- and age-disaggregated data to help track progress as they implement their strategy.

The Department of Women's Affairs has sponsored a targeted Gender Equality Policy that is designed to support the process of gender mainstreaming and has started to introduce gender budgeting.

The Department of Cooperatives has started to ensure that they have female officers in place in each provincial office so that women clients feel comfortable to engage with the Department.

The Vanuatu Agriculture Development Bank has a female chair and gathers and reports on sex-disaggregated data in its products. All departments have identified an interest in understanding more about gender mainstreaming and how it can benefit their work.

### **3.2.1 Gender responsiveness and institutional capacity for mainstreaming gender**

There is real potential, in the form of both policy direction and commitment by department directors and senior management, within the departments and institutions of the agriculture and rural development sector in Vanuatu to do gender mainstreaming. Senior staff expressed willingness to implement gender mainstreaming. In most cases, those who participated in this Assessment recognize a need to increase their understanding of gender equality. Some are working towards that now, with staff engaged in gender awareness training.

Additionally, some departments have accountability measures in place, while others are yet to develop these but have resources allocated. The technical capacity to identify and address gender issues varies widely across all departments. The Department of Fisheries has designated individuals who have some gender training and have been directed to disseminate information to other staff. Most other departments have identified a lack of technical knowledge but express interest in increasing the collective skills and capacity of their staff.<sup>15</sup> The Department of Livestock indicated that they are satisfied with their level of skills and have not identified the need for further capacity development.

The *allocation of financial and human resources* to implement gender mainstreaming within the departments is a gap area. Only one of the departments has indicated that they consider gender mainstreaming in their planning and budget allocation, although this does not necessarily result in action, and no other department is reporting that they allocate staff time/responsibility or budget to effectively mainstream gender into their respective departments or programmes.

#### **3.2.1.1 The Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, Forestry, Fisheries and Bio-security (MALFFB)**

The Ministry's willingness to engage in the process of this Assessment through the participation of various departments in interviews was a positive sign of leadership commitment to the concept of gender mainstreaming.

MALFFB's Corporate Plan 2014–2018 indicates that the government, through the Ministry, "...recognizes the role of women, youth and vulnerable groups in agriculture" (Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, Forestry, Fisheries and Biosecurity, 20014). The Plan, however, details no specific activities or priorities to support women, youth and vulnerable groups in this role. The Ministry is in the process of developing a Human Resources Plan that has identified skills gaps and training needs.

#### **Department of Agriculture and Rural Development**

There is growing recognition within some parts of the DARD of the need to mainstream gender into plans and programmes. At the policy level, there is a definitive commitment to provide equal

<sup>15</sup> This was the case for the Agriculture, Forestry and Cooperatives departments and Vanuatu Agriculture Bank.

opportunities to women, youth and vulnerable groups in the agricultural sector. This is supported by the commitment of the Overarching Productive Sector Policy to gender equality. The Vanuatu National Gender Policy provides key outputs to guide the department on gender mainstreaming.

However, the lack of a gender policy or strategy within the Department makes the task of mainstreaming gender difficult. Internally, *organizational culture* is very slowly starting to be more accepting of gender inequalities as a development issue, although there is not yet a real openness to discuss gender issues in the work of the Department. Here it is important to look at strategies of staffing and training. The employment of women in management, technical and extension roles (the piloting of female extension officers to engage with women farmers and young farmers was planned to commence in the middle of 2018) is helping the Department to better understand and meet the needs of half of its stakeholders. However, with only 15.7 percent female staff, this is a difficult task. The Department is targeting training to both women and men in recognition of the important roles that both play in agriculture, which is a positive step.

Although the National Agriculture Policy cites an evaluation as an accountability measure, the monitoring indicators are incomplete and therefore not in place to measure progress on the implementation of the policy. The department does not collect sex- and age-disaggregated data or conduct gender analyses and thus lacks the information required to assess quality or track progress on gender equality, as listed in the policy directive.

The technical capacity of the Department is rated as medium by respondents due to some staff participating in gender training. However, it is suggested that gender training both at the Department and community levels is required to effectively work towards gender equality changes. There are no trained gender focal points, and the Department asks the Acting Principal Officer South, who is a female, to attend to any gender-related issues. This is reinforcing the idea that gender is “women’s business,” when in fact it is the business of everyone.

In terms of resources (financial and human), there are currently neither financial nor human resources allocated to gender mainstreaming activities. The gender balance in the Department of Agriculture is nine women out of 56 permanent and contract staff (15.7 percent).

Table 3 provides a summary of issues related to strengths and gaps of the enabling environment for gender mainstreaming within DARD.

#### Livestock Department

The Livestock Department (LD) expresses confidence in its capacity to be gender-responsive. The National Livestock Policy has a focus on women and vulnerable groups that recognizes their significant role in livestock management. In terms of organizational culture, however, the department has indicated that they do not see any differences in the priorities of women and men, and thus their services do not take into account the differences in women’s and men’s roles, needs and access to and control over resources. As a result of their desire to be fair and not discriminate against any one group, they are actually opening up the potential for their services not to meet the needs of their clients or stakeholders, as every group has different needs, priorities and circumstances.

The Department of Livestock’s accountability systems, which should support them in endeavours such as conducting a gender analysis or collecting and analysing sex- and age-disaggregated data, are not currently practiced by the department. The collection of sex- and age-disaggregated data is a requirement of the M&E plan associated with the National Livestock Policy in order to track progress on the implementation of the Policy. The gender technical capacity of the department is self-rated as medium to high, but with no gender focal points or staff who participated in gender training, the level of technical capacity may need to be reviewed. There are no resources (financial or human) allocated for gender mainstreaming. The department, however, has indicated that an increase in the number of female staff may be a strategy for increasing technical capacity on gender. This will only happen, however, if the new staff members have a background in gender issues as well as training, facilitation and analysis skills, and if it is built into their roles and responsibilities to introduce these concepts to the Department as part of their job. An increase in men with gender skills would also be a great benefit to the livestock team.

The gender balance of staffing at the Livestock Department is 21.4 percent female, with nine female staff out of 43 permanent and contract staff.

Table 4 provides a summary of issues related to strengths and gaps of the enabling environment for gender mainstreaming within the Livestock Department.

Table 3: Summary of the assessment of the enabling environment of the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development for advancing gender equality<sup>16</sup>

Indicative findings		
Enabling environment criteria	Enabling factors	Constraints
Commitment at leadership level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Vanuatu Agriculture Sector Policy 2015–2030 has a specific objective of “equal opportunity in agricultural development” under its thematic area 13 on ‘Gender and Vulnerable Groups.’</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There is no gender policy, which reduces commitment to implementing the general statements about inclusion of women in the Ministry’s corporate plan and the Department’s policy.</li> </ul>
Organizational culture and internal willingness to address gender issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The respondents interviewed for recognized that gender inequality affects every level of Vanuatu’s society and that women’s needs are overlooked by society at every level.</li> <li>Respondents indicated that some of the staff recognize that women and men have different priorities (including growing different crops and having different perceptions on the gendered division of work, with variations from one island to another).</li> <li>There has been some change in attitude and practice and some increased focus on training women and men as couples in recognition of the farming work done by family units.</li> <li>DARD has started working with women farmers growing Tahitian lime. This came about through changes in leadership and increased availability of information on women’s capacities.</li> <li>There have been proposals to develop a “Women@work in MALFFB” group as a space for women to come together for personal and professional development.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Respondents rated DARD with low understanding of gender issues and an imbalanced focus on agricultural support to men, exacerbated by having only male extension officers.</li> <li>Respondents indicated that many of the staff focused mainly on men’s issues, resulting in more benefits to men than women.</li> <li>DARD is not fully open to discussions on gender issues and needs more awareness raising as well as male advocates for gender-responsive approaches.</li> <li>Respondents indicated that 1) female staff members cannot always express themselves confidently and 2) women’s perspectives are not included in programming.</li> </ul>
Accountability mechanisms and systems to enforce commitments to gender mainstreaming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An accountability mechanism identified to enforce the commitment to engage women in the future work of the Department is the evaluation for the end of the policy period.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There are no specific milestones or targets for women’s engagement in the policy or M&amp;E framework.</li> <li>There is no central database of sex- and age-disaggregated data. Individual officers collect their own data for baselines.</li> <li>DARD has not conducted gender analysis to support the development of programmes.</li> </ul>

<sup>16</sup> Note that the information provided in this table is indicative only and is based on interviews with DARD representatives and the review of relevant documents.

Table 3: Summary of the assessment of the enabling environment of the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development for advancing gender equality (*continued*)

Indicative findings		
Enabling environment criteria	Enabling factors	Constraints
Technical capacity to identify and address gender issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Respondents rated DARD's technical capacity on gender issues as <i>medium</i> because they feel the Department is moving forward but that it lacks the resources to increase its technical capacity to identify gender issues, to integrate a gender perspective into programmes and services and to monitor impacts.</li> <li>• Some staff members have participated in gender-related trainings, including training through UN Women's Markets for Change project and food security training from numerous agencies, resulting in improved planning and practice for gender inclusion.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Respondents rated DARD's technical capacity on gender issues as medium because they feel the department is moving forward but that it lacks the resources to increase its technical capacity to identify gender issues, to integrate a gender perspective into programmes and services and to monitor impacts.</li> <li>• Some staff members have participated in gender-related trainings, including trainings through UN Women's Markets for Change project and food security training from numerous agencies, resulting in improved planning and practice for gender inclusion.</li> </ul>
Adequate financial and human resources to implement gender mainstreaming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not identified.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No financial, human or technical resources are allocated for gender mainstreaming.</li> <li>• Respondents indicated that having more women working in the department would help to increase the voice of women.</li> </ul>

Table 4: Summary of the assessment of the enabling environment of the Livestock Department for advancing gender equality<sup>17</sup>

Indicative findings		
Enabling environment criteria	Enabling factors	Constraints
Commitment at leadership level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Vanuatu National Livestock Policy cites <i>enabling inclusiveness</i> as one of seven guiding principles of the Policy. 'Women, youth and vulnerable groups' are identified as a thematic and policy area.</li> <li>• The Livestock Department director emphasized organizational commitment and indicated that the development of a specific policy is on the agenda.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is no specific gender policy for the department, which makes the implementation of the policy directives difficult.</li> </ul>

<sup>17</sup> Note that the information provided in this table is indicative only and is based on interviews with LD representatives and the review of relevant documents.

Table 4: Summary of the assessment of the enabling environment of the Livestock Department for advancing gender equality (continued)

Indicative findings		
Enabling environment criteria	Enabling factors	Constraints
Organizational culture and internal willingness to address gender issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In the Livestock Policy, farmers are referred to as “him/her” which supports change in organizational attitudes.</li> <li>• Respondents noted that the cultural situation in Vanuatu has changed and that “...women can do whatever men can do and vice-versa.” This attitude, combined with the fact that there are some women in senior positions, indicates openness to changing ways of working with women and men beneficiaries.</li> <li>• Respondents felt that the Livestock Department is already gender-inclusive in its staffing, management and programmes. This attitude may support integration of gender awareness and mainstreaming.</li> <li>• The Livestock Department has supported the development of Women’s Livestock Associations.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Respondents felt that there was “...no difference in priorities of women and men, priorities were all the same...” and therefore, services were the same for both men and women. This could be interpreted as a lack of understanding of stakeholders’ different situations and constraints and of barriers to gender equality.</li> <li>• Respondents indicated that gender inequality was an issue for women countrywide, but they did not think it was an issue in the Livestock Department. This demonstrates some lack of understanding of the barriers faced by women in gaining equal access to opportunities and higher-level positions within the department itself.</li> </ul>
Accountability mechanisms and systems to enforce commitments to gender mainstreaming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are general indicators for change in the National Policy Action Plan and M&amp;E framework that the Department will track over 10–15 years as part of the implementation of the policy for women’s engagement.</li> <li>• Respondents said they understand women and men have different roles in the management of livestock and that there is a need to appreciate women’s efforts and contributions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is no central database of information. Livestock officers report on women and men who are part of their trainings but there is no formal requirement to collect sex- and age-disaggregated data because they “...just know within their programmes that they are targeting specific groups.”</li> <li>• The department has not conducted a gender analysis of its work. It was indicated that Livestock Department staff consulted with groups within the community, but it is not clear if and to what degree women were consulted.</li> </ul>
Technical capacity to identify and address gender issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Representatives rated their departmental technical capacity to identify gender issues and/or integrate a gender perspective into programmes and services as <i>medium</i> to <i>high</i>. This demonstrates potential for advancing gender issues.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No staff have participated in gender-related training, and there appears to be a lack of awareness and understanding of the technical aspects of gender analysis and mainstreaming.</li> <li>• Respondents incorrectly correlated gender balance in staffing with technical capacity for gender analysis and mainstreaming.</li> </ul>

**Table 4: Summary of the assessment of the enabling environment of the Livestock Department for advancing gender equality (continued)**

Indicative findings		
Enabling environment criteria	Enabling factors	Constraints
Adequate financial and human resources to implement gender mainstreaming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not identified.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No financial, human or technical resources are allocated to gender mainstreaming.</li> </ul>

### Department of Forests

There is a willingness and desire to improve capacity in gender mainstreaming at the Department of Forests (DOF). There is policy commitment, and senior management has indicated interest in learning more about how to mainstream gender. There are no gender-related accountability measures in place, but there is interest in developing a gender strategy to guide the work of the department.

Technical capacity for gender mainstreaming was rated as low due to lack of training and absence of gender focal points. There are currently no resources (financial or human) allocated for gender mainstreaming. The gender balance in the DOF. is 10.8 percent female, with 5 women out of 48 permanent and contract staff.

Table 5 provides a summary of issues related to strengths and gaps of the enabling environment for gender mainstreaming within the DOF.

### Fisheries Department

The Fisheries Department (FD) indicated that they have high capacity to mainstream gender into their work based on a clear policy commitment and an understanding of need. There is a supportive organizational culture and internal willingness to address gender issues to increase effectiveness. The department has some accountability measures in place such as clear targets for gender inclusion. The department also noted that they conduct gender analyses and collect sex-disaggregated data – key measures that contextualize and inform programme development for specific target groups. There is also a policy directive to develop a monitoring system to measure progress.

There is some technical capacity for gender analysis and planning, as some staff have had gender training. There is also an understanding that training and

awareness raising on gender mainstreaming will benefit all staff. There are no trained gender focal points, but it was mentioned that staff in the field should act as gender champions. In terms of financial and human resources, it was stated that gender is considered in resource allocation, but no details were provided.

In terms of staffing, 15 out of 52 permanent and contract staff are female (30 percent).

Table 6 provides a summary of issues related to strengths and gaps of the enabling environment for gender mainstreaming within the FD.

### 3.2.1.2 Ministry of Justice and Community Services Department of Women's Affairs

The DWA seeks to advance the status of Ni-Vanuatu women and to enhance their lives through focused policy formulation, targeted action plans and strategic partnerships. There is a core staff of four working to implement the National Gender Equality Policy, as well as six provincial officers reporting to the Director of DWA, with finance and human resources services provided by the Corporate Services Unit of the Ministry of Justice and Community Services (MJCS). The National Gender Equality Policy 2015–2019, endorsed by the Council of Ministers (COM) for full resourcing to support implementation, has not been fully resourced. Thus, while the DWA has the ambition to fully implement the policy, this has not been realized. The DWA is also tasked with leading implementation of activities in response to the CEDAW Committee's concluding observations, reporting to the National Human Rights Committee. Additionally, the DWA Director was a member of the 23rd annual Conference of the Parties to the 1992 United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP23) in the Vanuatu delegation.



Table 5: Summary of the assessment of the enabling environment of the Department of Forests for advancing gender equality<sup>18</sup>

Indicative findings		
Enabling environment criteria	Enabling factors	Constraints
Commitment at leadership level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The NFP asserts that gender balance and equality should be considered in all forest operations and activities, including employment, involvement in forest industries, provision of extension and involvement in forestry-related decision making.</li> <li>• Respondents noted that ten women were involved in the development of the NFP, although it is not clear if they were from communities or if they were managers or users of forest products.</li> <li>• The Reforestation Strategy recognizes the importance of women and youth as different stakeholder groups to participate in and implement the Strategy and identifies some relevant groups including Department of Women's Affairs and Vanuatu National Council of Women to support engagement of women.</li> <li>• The DOF Director indicated a strong commitment to gender equality and to understanding the gender situation better in order to inform the work of DOF.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is no specific gender policy for the department, which makes the implementation of the sectorial policy directives difficult.</li> </ul>
Organizational culture and internal willingness to address gender issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Respondents felt that if DOF were to prioritize a specific stakeholder group (e.g. women or men), this could be considered discrimination and noted that "we try to promote that everyone is the same."</li> <li>• Identification of women and men as stakeholders supports attitudes of inclusiveness in the DOF.</li> <li>• There is an openness to consider how to make practices more inclusive and to better integrate gender concerns into forestry efforts.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is a lack of understanding of what gender equality means and what is involved in gender analysis, which can undermine clarity of planning and discussions.</li> </ul>

<sup>18</sup> Note that the information provided in this table is indicative only and is based on interviews with DOF representatives and the review of relevant documents.

Table 5: Summary of the assessment of the enabling environment of the Department of Forests for advancing gender equality (continued)

Indicative findings		
Enabling environment criteria	Enabling factors	Constraints
Accountability mechanisms and systems to enforce commitments to gender mainstreaming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Department staff expressed interest in developing a gender strategy to further clarify gender issues and how they can be addressed: "once we know, we can direct our work."</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The DOF does not consistently collect sex-disaggregated data on training participants. Information collection protocols are ad hoc.</li> <li>• The DOF does not do gender analysis and asserts that they look at the needs of the whole community rather than its different parts.</li> <li>• There are no specific milestones or targets for women's engagement identified in the strategy.</li> </ul>
Technical capacity to identify and address gender issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Respondents felt they had low capacity to identify gender issues or integrate a gender perspective into programmes and services and monitor impacts.</li> <li>• There is recognition that training is required and a hope that the new human resources policy/plan that is being developed will include training and capacity building.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is no gender focal point. If requested, The DOF sends a female staff member to attend gender-related meetings.</li> <li>• No staff have participated in gender-related training.</li> </ul>
Adequate financial and human resources to implement gender mainstreaming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not identified.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No financial, human or technical resources are allocated to gender mainstreaming.</li> </ul>

The DWA has made progress by increasing coordination to enhance the effectiveness, efficiency and impact of various efforts and activities. One area of focus is gender-responsive budgeting, in line with the 2017 COM decision for gender-responsive budgeting to be built into the planning and budget systems of certain ministries, including the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, Fisheries and Biosecurity.<sup>19</sup> Other focus areas include elimination of violence against women and girls (through the implementation of the Family Protection Act), increasing women in political leadership at the provincial and national government levels, and the promotion of gender in humanitarian response to disasters. Regarding the last point on gender in humanitarian response, this

has been a concerted effort since Tropical Cyclone Lusi struck Vanuatu in 2014, when a Gender and Protection Cluster was formed. Since then, there have been efforts to mainstream gender more broadly across all disaster response clusters, in partnership with the National Disaster Management Office (NDMO). These efforts are complemented by broader policy implementation work, which is supported and informed by annual consultations with communities across Vanuatu and the work of gender officers at the provincial level. There is recognition across the government of the DWA's expertise, outreach and community mobilization capacities in post-disaster recovery, evidenced by the DWA's lead role in the Gender and Protection Cluster.

<sup>19</sup> Other ministries identified for gender-responsive budgeting include those pertaining to climate change, lands, education and local authorities.

However, the reality of ‘working where the resources are’ has affected progress in broader gender policy implementation and the integration of mainstreaming. In light of persistent, entrenched traditional gender stereotypes, the DWA promotes gender mainstreaming through broader social inclusion approaches. Most of the programmes are donor-funded, with human and financial resource constraints, and political will for policy implementation is weak, with coordination constrained by a ‘silo’ mentality across the

government. The above-mentioned gender planning and budgeting system work began with gender mainstreaming training in the ministries involved, but has stalled due to current planning and budget systems not being conducive to good practices in gender budgeting.

At the province level, provincial gender officers work with communities on educational and awareness-raising programmes to promote gender equality

**Table 6: Summary of the assessment of the enabling environment of the Fisheries Department for advancing gender equality<sup>20</sup>**

Indicative findings		
Enabling environment criteria	Enabling factors	Constraints
Commitment at leadership level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Vanuatu National Fisheries Sector Policy was developed with inputs from youth and women’s groups. It recognizes and promotes gender equality and the participation of vulnerable groups in fisheries, promotes inclusivity and ensures inclusion of relevant stakeholders in decision making on fisheries and aquaculture.</li> <li>• The FD Director indicated a strong commitment to gender equality.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is no specific departmental gender policy for the department, which makes the implementation of the policy directives difficult.</li> </ul>
Organizational culture and internal willingness to address gender issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gender awareness and sensitivity are apparent at the senior level, although this is less apparent at the junior level.</li> <li>• An increase in the number of female staff has influenced understanding and appreciation of the capacity of women at all levels of the Department.</li> <li>• FD involves female staff in engagement of women at the community level.</li> <li>• There is a commitment to building an environment where women and men are treated equally.</li> <li>• There is also recognition that cultural constraints need to be addressed to improve women’s participation in training and programmes.</li> <li>• Respondents indicated that they are open to discussing any gender issue that may be raised in the department.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• While some staff have had gender training, none has been provided within the Department.</li> <li>• Although gender is addressed in the National Fisheries Sector Policy, implementation of the Policy is slow.</li> <li>• Respondents said the main barrier to gender-responsive fieldwork was linked to the expectation that women staff must travel to undertake stock and marine surveys; not all women are able to leave their caregiving and home-based responsibilities.</li> <li>• There was also some concern about requirements for male staff to travel frequently and for extended periods, leaving their families alone.</li> </ul>

<sup>20</sup>Note that the information provided in this table is indicative only and is based on interviews with FD representatives and the review of relevant documents.

Table 6: Summary of the assessment of the enabling environment of the Fisheries Department for advancing gender equality (continued)

Indicative findings		
Enabling environment criteria	Enabling factors	Constraints
Accountability mechanisms and systems to enforce commitments to gender mainstreaming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The FD indicated that they also collect sex-disaggregated data.</li> <li>• Gender analysis is done prior to programme development. Workshops and separate male/female group discussions are used to assess needs, which “helps people feel ownership over our programmes.”</li> <li>• There are specific milestones/targets for women’s engagement identified in the strategy, including that there be at least one female in each Fisheries Management Advisory Committee, at least one or two females in all Provincial Fisheries Associations and at least 20-30 percent of women and young people participating in trainings.</li> <li>• Respondents indicated that all staff members have the right to have a say during discussions and in decision making.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No specific accountability mechanisms to enforce the commitment to engage women in the future work of the department were identified.</li> </ul>
Technical capacity to identify and address gender issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The department assessed its own ability to integrate a gender perspective into its programmes as <i>high</i>.</li> <li>• There is an understanding of the different roles women and men play, their different priorities and the different benefits that fisheries programmes bring to both women and men.</li> <li>• Several staff members, especially at the senior level, have participated in gender-related trainings, and there are plans to send more staff to gender trainings. One male staff member is currently enrolled in a JICA gender training programme in Japan.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are no gender focal points, although respondents suggested that the six male staff based in the provinces are gender champions in their work with communities.</li> </ul>
Adequate financial and human resources to implement gender mainstreaming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Respondents said that gender is considered in the allocation of resources in the FD, but did not say if financial resources are allocated to gender mainstreaming specifically.</li> <li>• Resources are allocated to organized groups such as those engaged in aquaculture or running rural fish markets.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No dedicated or specialised human or technical resources appear to be allocated to gender mainstreaming.</li> </ul>

and social inclusion through human rights-based approaches. A family livelihood agribusiness model is used as an entry point for discussion of gender issues. Civil society organizations (CSOs), notably the Vanuatu Women's Centre and faith-based organizations, also conduct educational and advocacy programmes and training using human rights principles to promote gender equality. At the community level, there is

limited access to governmental services, and traditional institutions and leadership prevail.

Table 7 provides a summary of issues related to strengths and gaps of the enabling environment for gender mainstreaming within the Department of Women's Affairs.

**Table 7: Summary of the assessment of the enabling environment of the Department of Women's Affairs for advancing gender equality<sup>21</sup>**

Indicative findings		
Enabling environment criteria	Enabling factors	Constraints
Commitment at leadership level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Political will within the DWA is strong and focused on implementation of components of the National Gender Equality Policy and supporting women's leadership in emergency and disaster planning, response and monitoring.</li> <li>COM has endorsed the Gender Policy and its full resourcing, as well as the implementation of gender planning and budgeting,</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Overall, political will for the promotion of gender equality in MJCS is relatively high. Yet, apart from the work of the DWA, gender analysis is not comprehensively integrated at the policy level within other departments or ministries.</li> <li>Accountability and monitoring systems for the implementation of COM decisions are weak.</li> </ul>
Organizational culture and internal willingness to address gender issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The DWA has a strong organizational culture supportive of gender equality.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Competing interests within MJCS in terms of financial and human resources impact the work of the DWA.</li> <li>There are limited coordination and accountability mechanisms for compliance with gender planning and budgeting decisions.</li> <li>There are limited human resources to support ongoing gender mainstreaming because of conflicting priorities (notably disaster response).</li> </ul>

<sup>21</sup> Note that the information provided in this table is indicative only and is based on interviews with DWA representatives and the review of relevant documents. Indicative findings were prepared by SPC based on in-depth consultation with the Director of the DWA.

Table 7: Summary of the assessment of the enabling environment of the Department of Women's Affairs for advancing gender equality (*continued*)

Indicative findings		
Enabling environment criteria	Enabling factors	Constraints
Technical capacity to identify and address gender issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The DWA has some technical capacity to undertake gender mainstreaming in specific sectors.</li> <li>• The DWA staff have skills in gender analysis, gender training and in specific areas such as ending violence against women and girls and gender and climate change.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The DWA has limited capacity and mandate to analyse gender issues and data, assess needs and invest in mainstreaming efforts across the areas falling under the technical mandates of other ministries.</li> <li>• Other MJCS units have varying capacities to conduct gender analysis and gender-responsive programming in the technical areas of family protection, child rights, disability, social inclusion and formal and non-formal justice.</li> </ul>
Accountability mechanisms and systems to enforce commitments to gender mainstreaming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DWA accountability mechanisms to track implementation are linked to externally-funded programmes or projects.</li> <li>• DWA reports against its programme priorities based on key results and achievement.</li> <li>• There is increased focus on and support for monitoring, evaluation and learning across the government through the Prime Minister's Office and Vanuatu 2030.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 'Whole of government' accountability mechanisms related to gender mainstreaming are weak since DWA does not have the authority over the implementation of gender mainstreaming across the government.</li> <li>• Coordination of accountability across the DWA mandate is challenging, as it overlaps with other technical areas under the mandate of other ministries.</li> <li>• Monitoring, evaluation and documentation skills are limited in the DWA, with support provided by MJCS Corporate Services Unit and the Prime Minister's Office.</li> </ul>
Adequate financial and human resources to implement gender mainstreaming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Donor funding for gender mainstreaming in disaster preparedness and response has supported progress in this area.</li> <li>• The DWA collaborates with CSO partners to implement complementary programmes to promote human rights and gender equality.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The MJCS, and DWA specifically, has limited budget and staffing from the recurrent budget to implement gender mainstreaming and support gender planning and budgeting across the government.</li> </ul>

### 3.2.1.3 Ministry of Trade, Tourism, Commerce and Ni-Vanuatu Business

#### Office of the Registrar of Cooperative and Business Development Services (Department of Cooperatives)

The Office of the Registrar of Cooperatives and Business Development Services (ORCBDS) is hosted by the Ministry of Trade, Tourism, Commerce and Ni-Vanuatu Business and it is commonly referred to as the Department of Cooperatives (DOC).

DOC respondents commented that there is low capacity to mainstream gender into their work and expressed interest in understanding the benefits of mainstreaming. There is existing policy commitment to gender equality, and women make up a large percentage of the department's clientele. Internal willingness and understanding of the importance of addressing gender issues to ensure effective work of the department demonstrates an organizational culture that could support mainstreaming. There are no specific accountability measures such as clear targets or quotas for including women as stakeholders

or beneficiaries, however. Department representatives said that gathering sex-disaggregated data would help them understand the situation of their clients and support better targeting of services to needs.

Each provincial office has female staff available to serve women who feel more comfortable talking with women than men. This demonstrates gender responsiveness in service provision to clients. The department does not have a gender focal point and no staff members have participated in gender training. In terms of financial and human resources, there are no resources allocated for gender mainstreaming.

The staff composition is 10 women out of 31 permanent and contract staff (32 percent). There are no senior executive or managerial posts held by women.

Table 8 provides a summary of issues related to strengths and gaps of the enabling environment for gender mainstreaming within the DOC.

**Table 8: Summary of the assessment of the enabling environment of the Department of Cooperatives for advancing gender equality<sup>22</sup>**

Indicative findings		
Enabling environment criteria	Enabling factors	Constraints
Commitment at leadership level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The DOC collaborates with MALFFB on training and legal frameworks for agricultural cooperatives.</li> <li>• A large proportion of the DOC's clients are women, particularly those operating small businesses.</li> <li>• The participation of senior in this Assessment is a demonstration of commitment to gender issues.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The department does not have a gender policy, although it actively encourages women in business, and respondents expressed that policy direction would be useful.</li> </ul>

<sup>22</sup> Note that the information provided in this table is indicative only and is based on interviews with DOC representatives and the review of relevant documents.

Table 8: Summary of the assessment of the enabling environment of the Department of Cooperatives for advancing gender equality (*continued*)

Indicative findings		
Enabling environment criteria	Enabling factors	Constraints
Organizational culture and internal willingness to address gender issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The department recognizes that women have equal rights and that gender roles, culture and tradition hinder the achievement of gender equality.</li> <li>• Respondents said that gender inequality used to be an issue in the past but that more women now have access to education and opportunities.</li> <li>• Representatives said that the DOC does not provide different services for women and men, although there are examples of trying to provide gender-responsive services where women staff deal with women clients.</li> <li>• Respondents noted that senior staff are open to gender mainstreaming and discuss gender issues in the office.</li> <li>• Respondents expressed interest in understanding more about gender within their mandate.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of understanding about what gender equality means and what is involved in gender analysis can undermine clarity of planning and discussions.</li> </ul>
Accountability mechanisms and systems to enforce commitments to gender mainstreaming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is some collection of women-specific information within programmes directly targeting women.</li> <li>• Respondents noted it would be useful to have sex- and age-disaggregated data.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The DOC collects data and reports annually on its work, although data on clients is not sex- and age-disaggregated.</li> <li>• DOC does not conduct gender analysis; the provincial offices make provincial plans without gender analysis.</li> <li>• There are no targets for the engagement of women.</li> </ul>
Technical capacity to identify and address gender issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is an understanding of the different roles women and men play and recognition of the need to have women work with women to ensure accurate and complete collection of information.</li> <li>• Expressed need to increase the number of women in provincial offices because women are more comfortable talking with each other.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Respondents indicated that they do not focus directly on social or gender issues.</li> <li>• No staff members have participated in gender related training.</li> <li>• There are no gender focal points now, although there had been one in the past, back in 1992.</li> </ul>

Table 8: Summary of the assessment of the enabling environment of the Department of Cooperatives for advancing gender equality (continued)

Indicative findings		
Enabling environment criteria	Enabling factors	Constraints
Adequate financial and human resources to implement gender mainstreaming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not identified.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No financial, human or technical resources are allocated to gender mainstreaming.</li> </ul>

### 3.2.1.4 Vanuatu Agriculture Development Bank

The Vanuatu Agriculture Development Bank (VADB) was set up in 2006 to support the development of Vanuatu's natural resources. It provides small loans to support small business start-ups. The bank currently has no specific directives on gender in their vision or mission. Senior management have indicated an interest in knowing more about gender mainstreaming but feel that the bank operates effectively as it is. To date, there has been no analysis of how gender roles impact women and men's experiences in banking. There are no accountability measures in place such as performance appraisal systems or targets for gender inclusion. The bank does not collect sex- and age-disaggregated data, although representatives have indicated that this could be useful for understanding their clientele.

Technical capacity on gender is currently low within the bank. There are no gender focal points, nor has there been any gender training. In terms of human and financial resources, none are currently allocated to gender mainstreaming, although those consulted said the VADB has indicated that their resources are adequate to cover the costs of gender mainstreaming if required.

The bank has 13 staff, five of whom are women (38 percent). All senior-level staff are male, although the chairperson of the VADB's board of directors is female.

Table 9 provides a summary of issues related to strengths and gaps of the enabling environment for gender mainstreaming within the VADB.

Table 9: Summary of the assessment of the enabling environment of the Vanuatu Agriculture Development Bank for advancing gender equality<sup>23</sup>

Indicative findings		
Enabling environment criteria	Enabling factors	Constraints
Commitment at leadership level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• While there is no mention of women in the VADB's guiding documents, it does report on numbers of female clients.</li> <li>• The director of the VADB has indicated interest in and potential organizational commitment to gender equality.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The bank has no guiding commitments to gender equality or gender mainstreaming.</li> </ul>

<sup>23</sup> Note that the information provided in this table is indicative only and is based on interviews with VADB representatives and the review of relevant documents.

Table 9: Summary of the assessment of the enabling environment of the Vanuatu Agriculture Development Bank for advancing gender equality (*continued*)

Indicative findings		
Enabling environment criteria	Enabling factors	Constraints
Organizational culture and internal willingness to address gender issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Respondents made an anecdotal observation that women are better at loan repayment than men. This was linked to women having strong priorities for the security of their families.</li> <li>• Respondents stated that all staff are free to express their opinions and seek opportunities within the organization.</li> <li>• The VADB's female board chairperson models that women can seek higher-level positions.</li> <li>• The VADB is an established and well-functioning organization with potential to increase its promotion of gender equality.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consistent with other institutions assessed, the VADB representatives indicated that focusing on the priority of one stakeholder group such as women or men separately would be considered discriminatory: "We don't treat women and men differently. (...) We are not aware that we should be doing gender mainstreaming to promote gender equality. We exist as a business and think that all our clients are the same."</li> <li>• The VADB Director expressed concern that discussions on gender issues may promote divisions between women and men.</li> </ul>
Accountability mechanisms and systems to enforce commitments to gender mainstreaming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• VADB keeps a record with sex- and age-disaggregated data on the loans it approves.</li> <li>• Respondents indicated that it would be useful if the information collected within their mandates was sex- and age- disaggregated.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is limited collection and analysis of sex- and age-disaggregated data.</li> <li>• No specific accountability mechanisms are in place to enforce commitment to engage women in the future work of the bank.</li> </ul>
Technical capacity to identify and address gender issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not identified.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are no gender focal points or gender champions and there has been no gender training or awareness raising.</li> </ul>
Adequate financial and human resources to implement gender mainstreaming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Funding for gender mainstreaming is not a barrier, if it were to be made a priority.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No financial, human or technical resources are currently allocated to gender mainstreaming.</li> </ul>

# 4

## GENDER ASSESSMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL SECTOR



## 4.1 Land tenure

The Constitution of Vanuatu stipulates that: “all land in the Republic of Vanuatu belongs to the indigenous custom owners and their descendants” and that “Only indigenous citizens of the Republic of Vanuatu who have acquired their land in accordance with a recognized system of land tenure shall have perpetual ownership of their land” (Articles 73 and 75).

Most land, sea and related resources are under the customary tenure system. Customary land cannot be leased; land does not belong to an individual but to a clan. This system can present some challenges with the development of infrastructure and the private sector. However, land is much more than a commodity. For the Ni-Vanuatu, land is intrinsically part of their identity and culture. “Land is part of the web of life that holds together custom, culture, history, and the beliefs of each person in a community”. As member of a clan, all individuals, male or female, “have the right to use a piece of land within the clan’s territory” (Simo J., 2005). Both patrilineal and matrilineal systems exist in Vanuatu, in which the land is passed on through the father’ or mother’s lineage. In Northern Vanuatu, patrilineal and matrilineal systems are practiced simultaneously, and women and men can inherit land through both parents (Simo J., 2005). Today, however, not every Ni-Vanuatu lives within the boundaries of her/his traditional community.

Since Vanuatu gained independence in 1980, changes in the land tenure system have involved navigating tensions between “*Western concepts of ‘ownership’ versus traditional notions of ‘custodianship’ or ‘trusteeship’ for future generations of Ni-Vanuatu; individual rights versus communal rights; kastom laws versus introduced laws; active versus silent participation by women in decision-making; and unparalleled land speculation versus holding land for perpetuity*” (AusAID, 2009: 62). The increasing commodification of land, which threatens usufruct rights of both women and men, is likely to affect women’s access to land.

The legislation related to land in Vanuatu is gender neutral. The Customary Land Tribunal Act of 2001 reaffirms customary laws in its founding principles, but women’s right to land and their participation

in the tribunals are not defined. In 2008, there were 18 women out of 197 adjudicators in the Customary Land Tribunals (AusAID, 2009).<sup>24</sup>

Although usufruct modalities may differ from one clan to another based on the patrilineal or matrilineal system, women have limited control over land and decision-making power over land use, as such decisions are made by the men of their households – by their husbands in the case of patrilineal systems, or by brothers and uncles in the case of matrilineal systems (AusAID, 2009).

The rules of custom define land ownership. The National Council of Chiefs, or Malvatumauri, composed exclusively of men, have published a Custom Policy in 1993 that reinforces the entitlements of men as the customary owners of the land (Monsoon, 2004 cited by AusAID, 2009).

## 4.2 Food and nutrition security

The Pacific islands countries suffer from high rates of non-communicable diseases. The prevalence of undernourishment in Vanuatu was reduced from 24.8 percent in 1990–1992 to 6.4 percent in 2014–2016. However, the incidence of obesity among the population 15 years and older in 2010 was 31.4 percent among women and approximately 17 percent among men (Food and Agriculture Organisation, 2014).

The Vanuatu national plan of action on food and nutrition security highlighted that, although the majority of the population lives in the rural areas and is engaged in subsistence agriculture, most investments in agriculture are made towards cash crops (Government of Vanuatu, 2013b). In 2012, 41 percent of total household expenditure was dedicated to food (VNSO, 2015) compared to 49 percent in 2006. Incidence of food poverty is highest in rural areas, affecting 7 percent of rural population (Government of Vanuatu, 2013b).

There is a scarcity of sex-disaggregated data and gender analysis in the area of food and nutrition security in Vanuatu. Interestingly, a household nutrition analysis conducted in 2015 showed that there is

<sup>24</sup> Recent figures on the number of women adjudicators in the Customary Land Tribunals could not be found.

a significantly higher average intake of calories by members of households headed by a woman (3 490 kcal per day) than those headed by a man (2 993 kcal per day) (Martyr, Yi, & Fiti, No date).

However, data indicate that 20.9 percent of reproductive age women suffered from iron deficiency anaemia in 2007 (United Nations Children's Fund, 2007).

More detailed field-level information related to food and nutrition security in two rural communities on the Island of Tanna is available in the case studies elaborated upon in Chapter 5.

### 4.3 Agriculture extension services

MALFFB is the main provider of extension services nationwide, with extension officers located in all six providences.<sup>25</sup> The extension services are supported by the Vanuatu Agricultural Research and Technical Centre (VARTC) and the Vanuatu Agriculture College (VAC). VARTC carries out applied and development-oriented research in the fields of agriculture and livestock and works with MALFFB to facilitate the application of the results of research. VAC provides training to support business-oriented farmers to transform subsistence agriculture into commercial production, while maintaining core features of Vanuatu's traditional mixed cropping practices. VAC utilizes a range of learning modalities, including blended learning, distance education, flipped classroom and other digital learning platforms. Neither VARTC nor VAC has specific programmes targeting women in the rural sector.

The Comprehensive Reform Programme (CRP) of the 1990s resulted in the restructuring of staffing and resourcing of what is now MALFFB at the same time that a large number of donor-assisted development programmes building capacity for extension services ended. This resulted in service delivery by "extension staff largely based at the provincial headquarters struggling to fulfil their duties within the constraints of limited operational funds provided by the government's recurrent budget, a lack of transport, few projects and a general lack of direction, motivation and weak management" (NZAID, 2008: vi). Re-establishing effective and efficient extension services across

Vanuatu has been a priority for MALFFB over the past 10 years.

Several non-state organizations also provide extension services to the rural community. These are mostly focused on specialist crops such as vanilla, spices and livestock, addressing production, processing or export. The Alternative Communities Trade in Vanuatu Association (ACTIV Association) was established in 2008 to identify economic opportunities and support livelihoods in disadvantaged communities, mostly in rural areas, with a focus on improving product quality. ACTIV launched the AELAN (Island) brand in 2015, increasing access to markets domestically and internationally for a range of products, including handicrafts, spices, oils, honey and chocolate. The Farm Support Association cooperates with DARD to provide technical training for specialist crops (mainly spices vanilla and pepper), which it does very effectively, working closely with its sister organization Syndicate Agricole. The Cocoa Grower's Association provides support to cocoa growers and was instrumental in improving the quality of cocoa to export grade by European Union (EU) standards. Several other businesses and CSOs are active in supporting aspects of the agricultural sector, including the Vanuatu Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Live and Learn, Oxfam, World Vision, Save the Children, CARE Vanuatu, Kava Store, Venui Vanilla, Tanna Coffee and Sandalwood Futures Limited.

### 4.4 Rural finance

Vanuatu is a participating country in the Pacific Financial Inclusion Programme (PFIP), and in 2011, a PFIP baseline assessment found that financial services were highly concentrated in the two urban areas of Port Vila and Luganville, dominated by four commercial banks, a superannuation fund, and four domestically licenced general insurers with very low uptake of insurance for protection in times of emergency (Pacific Financial Inclusion Programme, 2011). PFIP noted that only the National Bank of Vanuatu (NBV) was providing services on any scale to low-income or rural clients (as required under its charter). Formal sector services were complemented by two much smaller semi-formal providers, the Vanuatu Women's Development Scheme (VANWODS) and the Department of Cooperatives, each of which

<sup>25</sup> Each of MALFFB's main departments has extension officers, although not every department has extension officers in all six providences.

serves thousands of clients. It was estimated that 19 percent of the population had access to formal or semi-formal financial services. The PFIP assessment noted that, “The history of Vanuatu is marked by the failure of financial service providers and people still find it hard to gauge their performance or trajectories. The savings and loans societies seem to be implementing a copy of the model the credit unions used, almost all of which failed, while VANWODS is reporting to be financially sustainable, but is not profitable” (Pacific Financial Inclusion Programme, 2011: 4).

In 2006, the government established the Vanuatu Agriculture Development Bank “to facilitate and promote the economic development of the national resources of Vanuatu with special regard to agriculture, forestry, fisheries, livestock, manufacture and tourism,”<sup>26</sup> with a share of capital of VT 500 million. VADB offers loans of up to VT 500 000 with zero deposit.

In 2008, the Personal Property Securities Act was passed, allowing farmers to register and use their immovable and movable assets as collateral, meaning that everything owned by an individual or a business, such as vehicles, machinery, crops, inventory and accounts receivable (excluding land or buildings), can be used to secure credit. However, despite numerous initiatives encouraging rural farmers to register security interests electronically, the most active users of the registry have been wholesale businesses and the banks. Key challenges noted include the digital divide in rural areas combined with limited financial and digital literacy among farmers.

NBV is the country’s fourth largest bank and the only bank targeting rural clients. NBV’s mission is to reach out to the most remote communities to provide information and training on financial services and to educate rural people about savings potential from income generated from primary resources. Through a network of over 30 branch locations combined with outreach activities reaching over 300 rural and remote community centres each month, NBV has expanded banking services in rural Vanuatu. Its specially developed products to serve the rural sector include credit products targeting rural businesses (small and medium sized), loans allowing farmers to borrow against credit to improve agricultural productivity

and housing loans for selected islands. NBV is in the process of migrating rural customers from a legacy paper-based passbook system to electronic and mobile banking to reduce transaction time and costs for both the bank and its customers. NBV provides customers support in the use of electronic and mobile platforms through its financial literacy training programme, with support from development partners.

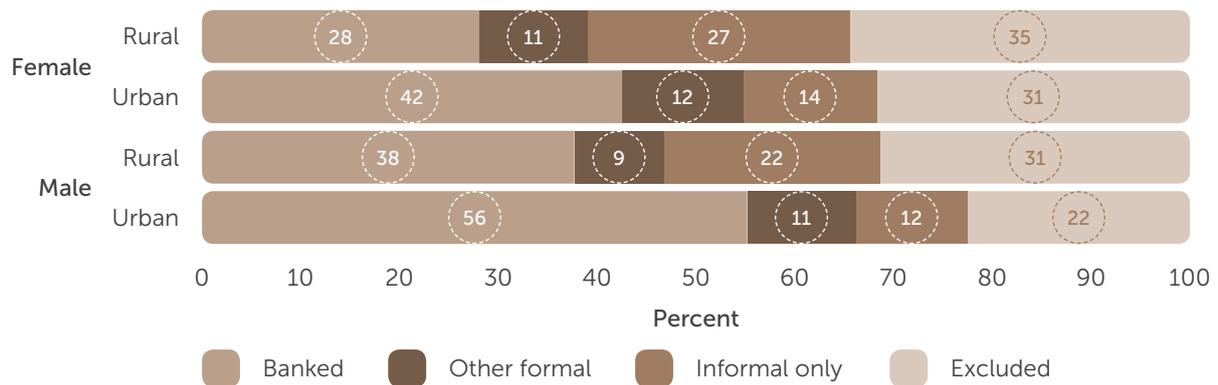
The NBV financial literacy education programme includes trainings to support market vendors from Port Vila and Luganville and surrounding areas. Through this programme, vendors are encouraged to open bank accounts if they don’t have one, and some vendors have extended their activities from savings into micro loan business activities, typically for small family-operated stores.

There is a significant gender gap in bank account ownership and business ownership in Vanuatu. According to the findings of the Financial Services Demand Side Survey of Vanuatu conducted by PFIP (Pacific Financial Inclusion Programme, 2016), 32 percent of female adults reported owning a bank account, compared to 41 percent for men. In rural areas, 28 percent of women had a bank account compared to 38 percent of men. About 10 percent of rural women and men had accounts with non-commercial banks, and over one quarter of rural women saved through informal mechanisms, reflecting the network of savings clubs, including VANWODS’ microcredit scheme, and cooperatives in rural areas. Despite women’s incomes being lower than men’s incomes on average, women were found to be more financially active and more likely to report saving in the past year compared to men. Overall, 65 percent of women reported saving in the past year, compared to 53 percent of men. These savings were most likely allocated for education and/or to start or expand a business.

The 2016 Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) Finance Survey conducted by the Reserve Bank of Vanuatu (2017) found that in 20 percent of the businesses surveyed, a woman was the sole owner of the business, compared to 60 percent with a man as the sole owner (while other businesses were owned by families or through other forms of collective ownership). Business ownership by a woman was higher in urban than in rural areas, perhaps because

<sup>26</sup> Vanuatu Agriculture Development Bank Act, section 3 (2006).

Figure 5: Bank account ownership, by gender and location



Source: Pacific Financial Inclusion Programme, 2016

rural enterprises are more likely to be family-owned businesses. The survey also found that informal sector businesses operated by women were concentrated in the primary sector in activities like food stalls, kava bars, handicraft markets, fresh produce markets, etc., and formal sector enterprises included women with agricultural businesses (Reserve Bank of Vanuatu, 2017).

The Government of Vanuatu recently endorsed the Vanuatu National Financial Inclusion Strategy 2018–2023, which aims to improve access to and usage of appropriate financial services by the underserved adult population and by micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) in Vanuatu (Reserve Bank of Vanuatu, 2018). Inclusive financial services and the empowerment and protection of consumers are at the heart of the Strategy.

The Strategy recognizes that people who are most financially excluded are likely to be lower-income earners, women, those earning incomes from agriculture, and those living in the rural area. It notes that more than half of adults in Vanuatu do not know what insurance is (Reserve Bank of Vanuatu, 2018).

The main components of the Financial Inclusion Strategy, led by the Reserve Bank of Vanuatu, are to facilitate access to financial services for individuals and for MSMEs; to strengthen financial competencies through financial literacy; and to improve regulation and supervision of financial service providers. Women and youth are clearly identified as targets across the Strategy (Reserve Bank of Vanuatu, 2018).

VANWODS, established in 1996, is the only micro finance institution operating in Vanuatu.

It is a non-profit organization and a registered Non-overnmental organization (NGO). VANWODS is dedicated to eradicating poverty by empowering women in rural villages with the opportunity to start, grow and maintain sustainable, income-generating microenterprises. The organization provide loans for small businesses, conducts training on financial literacy and provides support to small businesses owners. VANWODS has adopted the Grameen Bank model around group formation, with peer savings (loan guarantees) a precursor to lending. The organization runs a number of awareness-raising campaigns, promoted via outlets such as radio programmes, workplace promotions and activities at markets. VANWODS has over 5 000 members and is one of the largest community organizations in Vanuatu with a clear objective to support the empowerment of rural women (Suen and Fred, 2010).

In addition to the above, most of the organizations providing extension services incorporate financial literacy and business management training, and some, such as World Vision, support community-based savings clubs.

If formal sector employment is measured by accounts with the Vanuatu National Provident Fund (VNPF), a compulsory pension scheme, only 10 percent of rural women have a VNPF account compared to 18 percent of rural men, 42 percent of urban women and 56 percent of urban men.

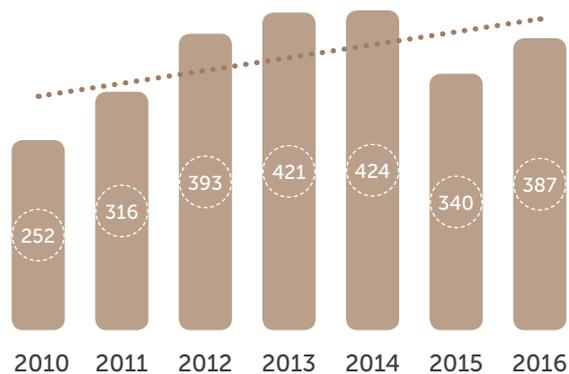
## 4.5 Agricultural cooperatives

There is a long tradition of agricultural cooperatives in Vanuatu. Formalized during the Condominium, agricultural cooperatives comprising groupings of small-scale family producers were the second largest source of copra exports after large-scale 'estate' commercial plantations. The cooperatives were historically based on commercial sale of surplus from the prevalent family-type farming systems, and women were actively involved. To some extent, post-independence development policies and programmes neglected to utilize and build upon the existing cooperative system, and the sector received little support until development priorities shifted to the rural sector. The cooperative sector was adversely affected by the CRP. The 2001 Co-operative Development Fund introduced rules and regulations that excluded many of the existing cooperatives, with the exception of those with strong development partner support, particularly those producing cash crops, including cocoa, coffee and spices.

The Government of Vanuatu began to rebuild the cooperative sector with the Priorities and Action Agenda 2006–2015, which mobilized resources and fostered an enabling environment for small-scale farmers to organize in cooperatives or other associations to reach the minimum scale needed for efficient processing. The Department of Cooperatives and Rural Development and the Ni-Vanuatu Business Development Centre were intentionally designed to facilitate and promote greater participation of Ni-Vanuatu people in business, with a focus on the rural sector. The two agencies merged under the umbrella of ORCBDS.

Annual reports from ORCBDS illustrate that the number of active cooperative societies has increased, mainly as a result of wider geographic coverage. The largest number of cooperatives are registered as savings, loans and retail groups, with a small proportion of cooperative societies registered in the fisheries sector. Women comprise 80 percent of the savings and loan sector clientele, although an analysis has not yet been undertaken to determine the breakdown of areas of economic activity of their loans. ORCBDS operates a programme to support women in business,

Figure 6: Number of active cooperatives, 2010–2016



Source: Government of Vanuatu, 2016b

providing business advice and training to enhance their confidence. ORCBDS reported that in 2015 there were 130 women employed as managers of cooperatives, increasing to 219 in 2016 (Government of Vanuatu, 2016b). (Government of Tonga, 2016 A).

## 4.6 Climate change and disaster risk management

As noted earlier, traditional systems of governance and emphasis on community wellbeing over individual rights restrict women's abilities and agency, including in the scope of disaster risk management. However, some development interventions have introduced proactive engagement of women in public decision-making spheres, with beneficial effects. In July and August 2016, CARE International in Vanuatu undertook research into the impacts of gender-balanced Community Disaster and Climate Change Committees (CDCCCs) in two communities in Erromango and Aniwa with a focus on disaster response to TC Pam. One of the key findings was that when women had more equal roles in decision making, this resulted in more effective disaster risk reduction activities "because both men's and women's voices and roles (were) respected" (Webb, 2017: 44). The appointment of women to the CDCCCs also led to a higher incidence of women and men working together and increased social inclusion at the community level.

# 5

## CASE STUDY IN RURAL COMMUNITIES ON TANNA ISLAND



To strengthen the findings of this Assessment, consultations were done in two rural communities on Tanna Island to provide contextual details of gender relations in rural life. It is important to note that views and information shared during these consultations cannot be generalized across the country, as living conditions and social structures vary from community to community throughout Vanuatu, and even on Tanna alone. The two research sites chosen for the Assessment varied in a number of ways that are described throughout this section.

- **Isla** is a community close to a small commercial centre but is still considered rural. It is made up of several villages with a total population of 886 people (438 females and 448 males). The community is located approximately four kilometres from the settlement of Isangel. The larger centre of Lenakel, the major township of Tanna, is slightly further away.
- **Lounaula** is a more remote community, further from town but still accessible by road. It has a total population of 134 people (67 females and 67 males) and is located in the Middlebush Area of Central Tanna.

### 5.1 Key crop, livestock, fisheries and forestry activities

Both communities grow crops for subsistence/ household use and for income. They also engage in fisheries, livestock and forestry activities. Staple crops for both communities include fruits, vegetables (especially island cabbage), root crops and coconut, all of which are multipurpose in that they are sold at market and used for subsistence and customary purposes. Cash crops include kava, coffee, peanuts, vanilla and sandalwood.

- People in Isla grow over 26 types of vegetables and fruits, five types of root crops and six different cash crops.<sup>27</sup>
- People in Lounaula grow over 35 types of vegetables and fruit, five types of root crops and four different cash crops.<sup>28</sup>

Other activities contributing to livelihoods in both communities include:

- **Livestock:** management of small and large livestock (pigs, chickens, cattle, goats and ducks).
- **Fisheries:** shoreline fishing, diving for shells and tilapia pond aquaculture.
- **Forestry:** harvesting of timber for housing (whitewood) and cash cropping (sandalwood) as well as non-timber products such as nuts, breadfruit and traditional medicines.

### 5.2 Food and nutrition security

To understand the food security situation and links between household food security and food production, the community members were asked what they were eating ten years ago compared to what they are eating today. More specifically, they were asked to describe the food they would have had for breakfast, lunch and dinner and at a special occasion in 2008 and then describe the same meals today. For both communities, there has been a significant increase in the consumption of imported foods.

In the past, the communities produced 95–100 percent of the food they consumed. Imported foods were largely limited to sugar and salt, with rice purchased only on special occasions due to its expense. Today, approximately 40–50 percent of food consumed is imported (rice, chicken wings, noodles, flour, sugar, salt, juice), sourced from local stores.

At breakfast time, in the past, people would have boiled banana or leftover food roasted in bamboo. Now it is very common for people to only have breakfast crackers and either tea, coffee or Milo drink with relatively large amounts of sugar.

A change in behaviour around lunch was also noted, where in the past lunch was simply a snack from the garden such as vegetables or fruit, which would keep people going until the evening meal. Now a full meal is consumed.

<sup>27</sup> These include tomatoes, beans, sugarcane, island cabbage, paw paw, banana, corn, cucumber, watermelon, pineapple, capsicum, chili, passion fruit, broccoli, coconut, carrot, lettuce, round cabbage, onion, spring onion, pumpkin, choko, orange, mandarin, peaches, mango, manioc, taro, yam, taro Fiji and kumala.

<sup>28</sup> These include tomatoes, beans, sugarcane, island cabbage, paw paw, banana, corn, cucumber, watermelon, pineapple, capsicum, broccoli, coconut, carrot, round cabbage, onion, spring onion, pumpkin, choko, orange, mandarin, avocado, eggplant, guava, potato, beetroot, soursop, lime, lemon, garlic, turmeric, ginger, pamplemousse, Chinese cabbage, breadfruit, manioc, taro, yam, taro Fiji, kumala, kava, coffee, peanut and sandalwood.

The men and women of the communities consulted agreed that dinner in the past had consisted of nearly 100 percent locally produced food. Regarding dinner in 2018, the women consulted estimated that about 60 percent of the food at dinner is imported, while men estimated it as just under 50 percent. There was a clear consensus by all, however, that there had been a significant increase in the use of imported foods over the past 10 years.

#### **Causes of changes in food consumption**

Changes in food consumption patterns have resulted from a combination of factors. These include an increase in the amount of cash available in communities for use on foods together with increases in the amount of imported food available to purchase. In the past, there were fewer ships coming to Tanna and so less imported food was available to rural communities. There are now more stores located within small communities, making imported food more accessible.

Another factor is linked to women's heavy workloads. Women are engaged in a large number of activities, including agriculture, caregiving and providing support to local school, church and community work programmes. They are time-poor and use of imported food items, which are quick to prepare, help women save time and energy. Informants noted that a consequence of this preference for easier to prepare food is a noticeable decline in knowledge about traditional cooking methods such as roasting foods in bamboo.

Other factors that influence people's preference for store-bought food relate to its availability in all seasons and its reliability as a secure food source in times of disaster. Parents are also responding to the demands of their children for imported food, which implies a generational change in food preferences. Overall, there has been significant change in people's food choices, food preparation skills, cooking choices, and eating habits

#### **Effects of changes in food consumption**

Among those consulted, women in particular were keen to continue using imported food to supplement the food they grow, while they were also interested in understanding health issues related to diet. While some information on diet and NCDs is disseminated through the school curriculum, women requested more information on how to produce balanced and healthy diets incorporating imported food.

Both women and men are concerned about health issues and illnesses related to imported foods and the changes they have observed in the growth patterns of their children. While the communities felt they were producing the same subsistence crops as always, CSOs have noted a decrease in the production of legumes and climbing beans in rural areas. This has reduced the availability of plant-based protein sources in local diets.

### **5.3 Gendered division of labour in rural livelihood activities**

Women and men have quite specific roles in agriculture, livestock, fisheries, forestry and other small enterprises, as detailed in Table 10.

Informants highlighted that women tend to do the "lighter" agricultural roles of cleaning the ground, planting and maintaining crops, and selling produce in the market. Men take on the "heavier" roles of clearing and ploughing the land. In livestock management, women do the feeding and caring for the animals while men are responsible for construction of fencing/housing for the animals, moving them to feed in other locations and butchering. In forestry, men cut down trees and both women and men plant and collect nuts.

Fishing from boats is primarily the responsibility of men, while both women and men do some form of reef gleaning and shell collection.

Women are more involved than men in handicraft production and other small enterprises, while men are the main ones who have outside employment. At the community level, men participate in political activities, and both women and men are involved in church and community work. Women take on the majority of reproductive/household roles, but share water and fuelwood collection with men.

Some of these roles are changing, particularly if money is involved. When men perceive there to be considerable financial gain in doing work traditionally undertaken by females, they will do so. An example provided was of a man participating in sewing or handicrafts as part of a family business.

Table 10: Labour roles by gender, according to community consultations in Isla and Lounaula, Tanna

Agriculture: vegetables, fruits and root crops –productive labour	Mainly men's role	Mainly women's role	Both men and women
Clearing the ground (Brushem bush)	•		
Burning and cleaning ground		•	
Ploughing/breaking up ground	•		
Planting vegetable crops		•	
Planting root crops			•
Weeding		•	
Looking after, maintaining and harvesting crops		•	
Tithing – allocating for church and <i>nakamal</i>		•	
Selling goods at market		•	
<b>Livestock – productive labour</b>			
Fencing	•		
Changing the rope (moving tethered animal)	•		
Feeding and watering livestock		•	
Selling – preparing and livestock to market			•
Butchering	•		
<b>Forestry – productive labour</b>			
Planting sandalwood trees			•
Cutting trees (sandalwood) for selling	•		
Cutting trees for housing use	•		
Collecting nuts			•
<b>Fisheries – productive labour</b>			
Fishing from canoes in the sea	•		
Diving fishing	•		
Gathering shells			•

Source: Community consultations in Isla and Lounaula for the purpose of this Assessment

Table 10: Labour roles by gender, according to community consultations in Isla and Lounaula, Tanna (continued)

Agriculture: vegetables, fruits and root crops –productive labour	Mainly men's role	Mainly women's role	Both men and women
<b>Small enterprises and other productive labour</b>			
Small enterprise (shop, petrol, bread and gato, road market)		•	
Handicrafts (baskets, textiles, fans, grass skirts, feathers, mats)		•	
Carving tools and canoes	•		
Employment outside	•		
<b>Community labour</b>			
Political activities	•		
Church activities			•
Maintaining or building community assets			•
<b>Household – reproductive labour</b>			
Cooking		•	
Cleaning		•	
Washing clothes		•	
Taking care of children		•	
Taking care of elderly family members		•	
Collecting water			•
Collecting fuelwood			•

Source: Community consultations in Isla and Lounaula for the purpose of this Assessment

## 5.4 Time use

The research team interviewed a women's group and a men's group in each community, which were asked the same questions about the work and leisure activities of women and men in different age groups (including girls and boys and elderly women and elderly men, among other household members). These discussions revealed that women are working significantly more hours than men and taking significantly less time for

rest or leisure than men. The two communities had very similar time use findings, as indicated in Table 11.

Overall, the general perception held by both women and men was that adult women did at least twice as much productive, reproductive and community work as adult men and had only a fraction of the leisure time of men. An interesting finding from the consultations was that adult men are working even fewer hours per day than elderly men.

**Table 11: Average amounts time spent on work and leisure in the two communities, by gender and age group (in years)**

Activity	Men (18–59)	Women (18–59)	Boys (8–17)	Girls (8–17)	Elderly men (60+)	Elderly women (60+)
Productive work	5.1 hours per day	8.4 hours per day	6 hours per day	2.2 hours per day	4.6 hours per day	4.8 hours per day
Reproductive work	0.8 hours per day	6.5 hours per day	15 mins per day	4 hours per day	1.7 hours per day	7.3 hours per day
Community work	0 mins per day	30 mins per day	0 min per day	0 min per day	1.2 hours per day	15 mins per day
Leisure/rest	8.1 hours per day	1 hour per day	3.1 hours per day	2.1 hours per day	5 hours per day	1 hour per day
<b>Total work</b>	<b>5.9 hours per day</b>	<b>15.4 hours per day</b>	<b>6.2 hours per day</b>	<b>6.2 hours per day</b>	<b>7.7 hours per day</b>	<b>12.4 hours per day</b>
<b>Total leisure/rest</b>	<b>8.1 hours per day</b>	<b>1 hour per day</b>	<b>3.1 hours per day</b>	<b>2.1 hours per day</b>	<b>5 hours per day</b>	<b>1 hour per day</b>

Source: Community consultations in Isla and Lounaula for the purpose of this Assessment

Following the time-use exercise, men in the communities expressed surprise at the large workload of women. They made comments such as "...their workload is too much" and that much of the work that women do is work that "...men are supposed to do." They realized that women have very little time for rest and or spending leisure time with others and that, despite all their labour, they were not in control over the decisions about the assets gained from this work: "Mothers wake up early in the morning to prepare for market, but decisions over money are made by men." Some of these ideas were also reflected in the analysis by the women's groups, for instance that "women's work converges with that of their husbands" and "men waste time".

When asked what they would change if they could, men said "no more waking up women to make food at night," referring to the habit of women serving food at night for men. They said they would balance the respective roles, responsibilities and amounts of work women and men. Men talked about either stopping drinking kava or modifying their practice. Men's statements included that "If I stop drinking kava, I can share responsibility" and that the community

should "follow what people used to do – drink less kava, wake up at the same time as women... and spend time with my family." They also said that "men should cook." Women were keen to share the burden of work with their husbands and to change roles. They expressed that "It would be good if fathers could help mothers and daughters so that they can go to school" and also "...for women to sit down and men to cook." Women wanted to place more of a focus on family. They felt that men should do what the older men do, i.e. "...drink kava early then come home," and that "the house should wake up together." Women expressed concern that the boys who have to chew the kava<sup>29</sup> for the men before the men can drink are getting to bed too late and missing out on time to do homework, and they wanted the boys to return home earlier. Women were also keen to change attitudes for the next generation and said it would be "good to teach new parents to give the same rights to boys and girls."

When asked what should stay the same, some men said "everything should stay the same," but others said that there should be a prioritization of time to work together, which was also expressed by the women.

<sup>29</sup><https://howtovanuatu.com/kava/>



## 5.5 Culture, community institutions and services

Isla and Lounaula follow the traditional customs of Tanna, and local governance is conducted through the system of chiefs. The men attend the *nakamal*, which the traditional meeting place, every night to drink kava, tell stories and discuss community issues. In neither community are women allowed to enter the *nakamal* except to perform customary dances. The chief is the final decision maker of the community and is responsible for dispute resolution.

### Isla

In Isla, the community has a kindergarten and a centrally located primary school with teachers from outside the community living within the grounds of the school. There is a first aid post staffed by an unpaid health worker (female). There are two churches (Seventh Day Adventist and Church of Christ), although some members of the community continue to follow only customary belief systems. Residents of Isla are expected to work for the community one day per week to maintain shared resources such as roads and common areas. They are also building a community hall as an alternative venue for community discussions where women will be able to participate, given that they are barred from the *nakamal*. Isla has a water management system that provides water access to most members of the community. There are also six water tanks available to community members.

### Lounaula

Lounaula has a dispensary where community members access first aid services and some medicines. There are three churches – Bhai, Presbyterian and John Frum. Similar to Isla, Lounaula residents give their time to community work and meetings each week, and some of the women run a local savings and loan group through VANWODs. A water project has increased access to water.

## 5.6 Perceived impacts of climate change

Both communities indicated that there have been significant changes in weather patterns over the past 10–20 years. Issues identified include 1) stronger cyclones; 2) decreased predictability of wet and dry seasons and hotter temperatures; 3) warmer sea temperatures; and 4) higher tides.

### Isla

In Isla, people have noticed that the mango trees are bearing fruit all year round. The damp swampy patches have dried up and more land is now available to farm. Residents noted more rain during the dry hot season than before, and that the dates for harvesting are different from the past. They also noted that seasonal risk periods for fish poisoning (ciguatera) have been changing and becoming less predictable.

In Isla, men and women expressed similar observations and concerns. These included concerns that quality and size of agricultural products have changed. Men indicated that kava has reduced in size and that it is not keeping for as long. They also felt that taro and yams are now smaller. Women mentioned that mangos are fruiting more often but that the fruit does not taste as good as it used to.

### Lounaula

In Lounaula, people indicated there has been a decrease in water levels as well as a reduction in rainfall. They also highlighted that temperatures are much warmer than before and that they are growing fruits such as coconuts that previously they would not produce because it was too cold.

Women and men had some different observations and concerns about climate-related changes. Men felt that trees were not growing as big as they used to and that the quality and quantity of root crops had declined. They saw that some new species of trees and grasses were emerging but that some types of birds had disappeared. They also felt that there are now more and new type of pests than they had before, including millipedes, African snail and fire ants. Men also felt that the quality and production levels of food crops had dropped and that some foods tasted different. Women were excited about the changes in the size of produce, noting that vegetables such as cucumbers are larger than in the past.

## 5.7 Perceptions of environmental, social and economic changes and their impact on men's and women's roles, workloads, wellbeing, and perspectives

Consultations in communities highlighted a number of issues linked to environmental, social and economic changes.

### Environmental change

Climate change and weather patterns such as El Niño adversely affect rural communities' ability to have sustainable livelihoods. Inconsistent weather patterns and intense changes within short periods of time result in rural farmers losing crops or needing to employ different methods to save their crops. Since climate change has also changed pest outbreak patterns, local knowledge needs to be updated to manage infestations accordingly. Some farmers have relocated their gardens into swamp areas to increase water access as previous water sources dry up. As discussed above, however, women in Lounaula feel that the warmer weather has provided them with new opportunities to grow products they have not been able to grow in cooler times.

### Social change linked to education

Most people in the community see the value of sending their children to school and thus strive to find income to pay for school fees while at the same time coping with the reduction of labour available in the household. Both factors have a considerable impact on women's and men's workloads. In the past, the tradition was to not send the girls to school. However, attitudes are changing and are "slowly going over the boundaries of the past," as one community member put it. An interesting aspect to monitor is that most of the younger generation are better educated than their parents.

### Changes in tradition

In Tanna, in the past, no women could drink kava because it was only available at the nakamal, where women were prohibited from entering. Now, in Lenakel, there are kava bars and women drink kava and make an income from selling it.

### Impact of social media and technology

People in Vanuatu are now socially connected to each other and to the wider world through social media. This has both positive and negative aspects to it as related to agriculture and rural livelihoods. A positive example is that social media has allowed youth to remain connected to each other and to share experiences following an Agriculture Youth Conference that took place. On the flip side, social media has also taken time away from farming work because it is an attractive alternative pastime for youth.

There are also gender disparities in access to social media, as most access is through mobile phones and women rarely have control over phones in Isla and Lounaula, although they sometimes have access.

### Population increase

The increasing population is putting considerable strain on resources such as fisheries and forests. People are cutting more trees for houses than in the past and depleting stocks of reef fish.

### Leadership

Women are increasingly taking up leadership roles following TC Pam in 2015. This has presented an opportunity for community members to observe women as responsible and effective leaders, which has led to increased acceptance of women as decision makers.<sup>30</sup>

### Economic changes

People in rural Vanuatu have an increasing need for cash. This is a significant change from the past, when cash was not a major part of rural lifestyles. Westernized lifestyles have created more demand for consumer goods and, as a result of the need for cash, people are moving from Tanna to Santo or Efate. Some are migrating seasonally to New Zealand or Australia to be seasonal workers. The need for cash is also affecting the types of crops that people are deciding to grow. Cash crops such as copra and cocoa are taking space previously used for food crops. Nutrition is consequently being affected by planting choices.

## 5.8 Rights of unmarried women, widows and young women to have access to/control over natural resources

In both Isla and Lounaula, only men own land. Land ownership passes through patrilineal bloodlines, and a woman is only guaranteed use of her husband's land for her whole life if she has a male heir (either a son she has with her husband or a boy adopted from within his bloodline). Male chiefs allocate land for community use and to ensure that people have land to live on and garden. Both men and women are technically allowed to lease and use land in town (Lenakel). Allocated family land within the community cannot be bought or sold, only allocated by the grandfather.

<sup>30</sup> Women standing for election in Tanna had been rare before 2016, when two women stood for election. A community member explained that "In the past, Mary Jack wouldn't have been allowed to stand for Parliament in Tanna."

Social norms dictate that *if a woman is unmarried* she lives with her family. After marriage she moves to her husband's house, which may mean a different community or island. If the relationship does not work out, she moves back to her family and her father or grandfather will ensure she has access to land to use for growing food.

Widows are able to continue to use the land of their husbands as long as they have a son or male heir with them and living on the land. If there are no male children, widows are generally still allowed to remain on family land, but land rights become more tenuous. For this reason, adopting a male child from the husband's family is strategic to ensure a woman's continued right to use land. In Isla, the community members consulted suggested that if there were no other male blood relatives of the deceased, then women could inherit the land, although this would need to be confirmed.

### 5.9 Access and control over resources (productive resources, financial resources, markets, etc.)

Analysis and discussions with community members identified that men have control over land, marine and forest resources, and decision making. Women generally have access or use rights to natural resources in line with existing divisions of labour. However, they do not have access to tools and machinery such as grass cutters, motorbikes, trucks or generators. Women reported that there are further restrictions on their access to specific resources during pregnancy or when they are menstruating.

In terms of financial resources, although men have final control over the income that women generate through their productive activities, the women reported that husbands and wives generally negotiate within the family as to how the financial resources are used. Where women are involved in savings and loans groups such as VANWODs, men do not access the group, but they have a certain amount of control over their wives' participation and the income derived by their wives. Women indicated that they are the main members of their families to engage in markets (both road and main markets in Lenakel and Vila). Men are involved in selling, but only in the case of specific large-scale or expensive items, such as bullocks or coffee for processing.

### 5.10 Gender dynamics and their impact on rural development and the empowerment of rural women

#### Women's assets

Women's mutual cooperation and the relationships they maintain with each other provide them with emotional and practical support for livelihood activities. Their traditional knowledge and experience and their management skills help them to farm and raise livestock as well as to ensure that their families and homes are managed effectively. The women consulted said that the strength of the family unit/team approach is a clear asset, especially when there is strong support from husbands.

Despite not being able to own land within their communities, women generally have access to land and resources. Women in Lounaula indicated that they have strong support from their husbands and the broader community to participate in decision making. This was not strongly expressed in Isla, however. Women in both communities said their commitment to protect and look after their families (always putting family first) was an asset for their families. But the amount of work this requires often constrains women's ability to engage in different activities.

#### Men's assets

Control over land is an asset for men. Their customary and cultural roles, and the related respect and benefits that come with those roles, give men confidence to access new information and to engage in leisure activities and community discussions. Men's control over land and other resources also comes with responsibilities to protect and conserve these resources, and the chief's role is to ensure that the basic needs of the community are met.

#### The impact of gender inequalities

Social norms and practices in Vanuatu are discriminatory against women and girls. These norms are particularly rigid in rural communities, where traditional customs and practices remain strong. Discriminatory social norms reinforce both men's ability to control women's behaviour and stigmas associated with women and girls who try to exercise their rights to decision making and full participation in development. These social norms also allow violence against women as a way for men to control women's behaviour.

The community consultations also highlighted that traditional beliefs and models of governance in rural Melanesia generally prioritize community harmony and family relations over the rights of the individual, as mentioned earlier.

### Roles and responsibilities

Women's heavy workloads negatively affect their time to rest and prepare for the next day, their ability to engage in education and training and the social time they are able to spend together with their own families, as well as affecting their overall physical and mental health. In the focus groups discussions, women indicated that they would like to change the balance of work with their husbands. They want to be able to sit down sometimes. They would like men to cook to help them out. They want time to talk with their husbands and plan the day's work.

The seasonal workers scheme for Ni-Vanuatu workers who access temporary agricultural employment in Australia or New Zealand involves more men than women. This means an increase in the workloads of the women left behind. At the same time, it also means that, without their husbands present, women are taking on more decision-making roles within their families and households.

## 5.11 Levels of participation of women and men in rural development

Those who participated in the community consultations felt they had relatively good access to services. Individuals were currently accessing, or had accessed, services from governmental agencies, CSOs, churches and private sector organizations. The governmental agencies they cited included the Departments of Agriculture and Rural Development, Fisheries, Livestock, Forestry, Health, Water and Education, as well as Rural Training Centres. They identified Red Cross, UNICEF, Farm Support Association, SPC, CARE International, Nasituan, World Vision and VANWODs as the non-governmental service or project providers. Tanna Coffee, INIK Coffee Cooperative and the ANZ Bank were identified as private sector service providers.

Particular services and projects noted include emergency response projects for water, shelter and livelihoods from Red Cross, UNICEF New Zealand and CARE International following TC Pam, such as community water management initiatives, participatory

hygiene and sanitation trainings, and provision of shelter, hygiene kits, seeds and tools. Other services/projects noted include extension support from the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, project support and advice from SPC, Red Cross and the police department, and the Farm Support Association (FSA) run by Oxfam focused on increasing knowledge and skills in using nurseries, seed saving, planting new varieties of vegetables and increasing spice or vanilla production. Other specific forms of extension and project support noted included provision of materials such as tools, water tanks, wheelbarrows, watering cans, seeds, seedlings and planting materials, as well as sharing of farming techniques through use of demonstration plots.

Other initiatives within the two communities supported by one or more of the above-mentioned partners include:

- Fisheries projects: These have included the creation of tilapia ponds/tanks and instruction on how to support the growth of fish. Education, materials and fingerlings have been provided.
- Forest projects: These have included the planting of trees and provision of seedlings and plants.
- Livestock projects: These have included poultry projects with the Livestock Department, FSA and SPC that have involved education on feeding and care of chicks.
- Sewing projects: These church-supported projects have involved the provision of sewing machines to teach women how to sew.
- Cyclone preparedness projects: These projects, supported by the Education Department and the Department of Infrastructure, have helped to strengthen some classrooms so they can be used as evacuation centres during a cyclone.
- Additional projects: These have included the establishment of an aid post and dispensary with the Department of Health, a life skills project oriented towards building women's self-confidence supported by CARE International and coffee processing projects with INIK and Tanna coffee.

Both women and men have participated in such projects with varying levels of engagement. Some of the women consulted shared a critique of the "lead farmer" model used in some of the projects because this model is restricted to a small number of participants and thus the benefits to not always reach

the wider community. The focus on lead farmers does not necessarily take into account the cultural habit of not sharing knowledge and information in Vanuatu. The women expressed that they hoped that the pilot lead farmer projects would be expanded to other women in the communities.

Some of the men suggested that the women had greater engagement in these projects than men and felt that the projects were targeted more at women. FSA indicated that they took care to understand the cultural context before working with the communities and stated that they targeted both women and men, as they work together as a family unit: "We work with the households – we have to see the husband and the wife as a unit...because they have complementary roles. They live as a unit to match with the challenges of life in the rural areas. The women who do well are the ones who have good support from their husbands."

The beneficial impacts of these projects include improved sanitation and hygiene practices, access to water closer to the house, introduction of new vegetables, marketing of vegetables and coffee products, saving of seeds and shorter distances to walk for health services. Community members also highlighted improved health and hygiene through these projects (both from better access to water and better understanding of hygiene and sanitation), more marketing of produce and increased income to pay for school fees. They reported that they are now eating a greater variety of vegetables and feeling healthier. They do not have to walk as far for water as they did previously and are therefore safer. They can access good teachers with their new facilities, and some women have gained the confidence to express their views.

While these positive results were reported, there was also a general feeling that much was promised in terms of service provision but not always followed through

by both governmental and nongovernmental service providers, which had caused people to lose some faith in them.

There are some services, such as transport, that the community members reported to have trouble accessing. They also noted that water services are not always consistent. The opening hours of the dispensary are not conducive to effective services at night time, which is often when children are sick. There is no nearby secondary school in Middlebush, so choices must be made about keeping older children out of school or sending them to live with relatives or board in dormitories in order to attend school.

Women noted specific barriers in accessing services and trainings, including restrictions on their mobility and on their ability to speak publicly, as well as being too busy. The men believed that women have good access to training and services because of some community trainings targeting women. Women indicated that many women are scared to ask for services. One shared that "if we go ask, then we are worried that they will say no or they will make promises but never come." Women also felt that the Department of Women's Affairs should get more involved in engaging in service provision at the community level to facilitate women's greater access to services.

Both the Department of Cooperatives and Farm Support Association indicated that women needed women to talk to – i.e. women officers in the offices and in extension services. FSA said that the original reason for extension was to support communities on cash cropping and since men were mostly the ones growing cash crops, all of the extension workers were male. There appears to be a clear need for women extension officers to support activities primarily done by women, such as raising small livestock and growing vegetables.

# 6

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS



This Country Gender Assessment of Agriculture and the Rural Sector integrates literature reviews, field research and key informant interviews conducted over a two-month period. While not an exhaustive assessment, it provides a scan of the policy environment and some sampling done in rural communities. Stakeholders expressed interest in more detailed assessments, indicating potential for further research and multiple entry points for piloting of gender mainstreaming initiatives.

## 6.1 Key findings

At the policy and institutional level

- The National Gender Equality Policy 2015–2019 is the overarching guiding document that directs the Government of Vanuatu to implement gender mainstreaming nation-wide. It focuses on four strategic areas: 1) reduction of domestic and gender-based violence; 2) enhancement of women's economic empowerment; 3) promotion of women's leadership and equal political participation; and 4) building a foundation for gender mainstreaming.
- The National Sustainable Development Plan 2016–2030 highlights that the rights of all Ni-Vanuatu, including women, are promoted at the policy, legislative and institutional level. One of the three pillars of the Plan includes commitments to key aspects of gender equality at all levels.
- Despite this overarching policy guidance, most of the ARD-related governmental institutions do not yet have sufficient awareness of or potential for gender equality and rural woman's empowerment, which could then be translated into sectorial gender-related policy commitments and directives.
- None of the sectorial ARD-related departments has a gender policy, which hinders the implementation of their general commitments to gender equality promotion laid out within their respective sectorial policies or plans. The assessed departments also lack gender focal points, as well as lacking a functioning inter-institutional coordination mechanism for the promotion of gender equality in ARD and rural women's empowerment.
- However, all governmental departments consulted for the Assessment have some gender-responsive activities that could contribute to more coordinated gender mainstreaming.

- Leadership is receptive to change, and in some cases strongly committed to the concept of gender mainstreaming, yet there is very limited technical capacity for gender analysis and strategic, coordinated gender-responsive planning and programming.
- Few accountability measures are in place to support gender mainstreaming. There are key gaps in collection and analysis of sex-disaggregated data and in criteria for equitable engagement of women and men in the agricultural sector and in rural development in general.

Generally, across all the assessed governmental institutions, there are very limited or no allocations of financial and human resources to implement gender mainstreaming.

At the community level

- Rural women's contributions to the agricultural sector and rural economy in Vanuatu are significant. They constitute about half (49.5 percent) of the work force in agriculture and spend more time than rural men on agricultural production, income generation and household work. Rural women generate income through marketing of agricultural goods and handicrafts and they participate in savings and loan groups. Rural women's heavy reproductive and domestic workloads inhibit their ability to engage in more effective productive activities, which in some cases negatively affects their health and wellbeing.
- Rural communities are eating more and more imported foods, which are becoming increasingly available. More people have cash income to spend on imports today, plus rural women are becoming ever more time-poor and the imported foods are quicker to prepare. There is some awareness that processed foods can contribute to poor health, but information on nutrition and how to make wise food choices is not readily available to rural people. Rural women can be influential in fighting non-communicable diseases linked to eating imported processed food, but their lack of knowledge is a barrier.
- Women continue to be subject to violence or the threat of violence if they do not meet the expectations of their families and male partners. Expectations are strongly linked to traditional gender roles.

- Women have little voice in public decision making, although those consulted expressed that within the household, decisions are made together with men. However, there was consistent acknowledgement by both women and men that men are the final decision makers.
- Rural women have access to most resources, but men retain control over productive resources, including most of the community resources. Women have no right to customary ownership of agricultural lands in communities, leaving them vulnerable if their husbands die.
- Women are less likely to seek services and information due to cultural barriers, restrictions on their mobility, lack of time, lack of self-esteem and low self-confidence. Women indicated that they find support through their relationships with other women and within their traditional roles and relationships.
- Establish an intra-governmental coordination mechanism on gender equality and rural women's empowerment, led by DWA, to fully take charge of the coordination of gender equality and rural women's empowerment across the governmental system (central and local). This could include setting up a Gender Focal Points network in all ARD-related ministries and establishment of working groups composed of government agencies, development partners, the private sector and civil society organizations working on gender equality and ARD.
- Improve the production and use of sex-, age- and geography (rural/urban)-disaggregated data relevant for gender equality and rural women's empowerment in ARD policies, strategies, plans and programmes, as well as monitoring and reporting processes. Identify gender indicators linked to existing and forthcoming policies, plans and programme designed to facilitate monitoring and evaluation of gender mainstreaming objectives.

## 6.2 Recommendations

The following recommendations highlight specific areas of work that require attention and action from the Government of Vanuatu and development partners, notably FAO and SPC, to maximize their impact in the promotion of rural women's empowerment and enhancement of gender equality in Vanuatu's agricultural and rural sector. They also reflect recommendations and commitments made by the Government of Vanuatu at the international, regional and national levels with the objective of supporting the implementation of said commitments.

At the Policy and institutional level

- Develop ministry-level gender policies and department-level strategies to support the use of a gender mainstreaming approach in planning, budgeting and delivery of programmes and services. Introduce gender-related criteria into ongoing or scheduled reviews of current policies.
- Based on evidence, recognize the scope of rural women's involvement in farming, forestry and fishing activities as agricultural producers in their own right so that ARD policies, strategies, plans and programmes are designed and implemented in a gender-responsive manner.
- Improve statistical surveys to adequately measure the complexity of rural women's contributions to the rural and national economies, including the informal economy. In parallel, conduct age- and sex-disaggregated time-use surveys in rural areas to assess women's and men's respective amounts of time dedicated to productive and reproductive work (including unpaid household work and care, community-related activities, subsistence activities and income-generating activities).
- Strengthen MALFFB, DWA and DOC in provision of gender training, including gender and statistics training, to senior management staff, followed by a programme of similar training for all staff. Develop consistent and coordinated training programmes to raise awareness about gender analysis and gender mainstreaming in the context of the agencies' mandates.
- Design gender-responsive policies and strategies for climate change adaptation and disaster risk management that support rural women's activities and needs in small-scale agriculture, fisheries, aquaculture and cultural industries.
- Reinforce current gender-responsive initiatives that consider women's and men's relative participation and engagement in work and decision making and ensure gender balanced decision making at all levels to promote women's agency.

- Allocate financial and human resources to apply a gender mainstreaming approach. This could include establishment of gender focal point positions, hiring and/or training female extension officers and establishing measures to help women advance into senior leadership positions.
- Include gender analysis and gender-responsive needs assessments at all levels and with all stakeholders and invest in developing gender-responsive agricultural value chains that include women as producers, processors and business owners.
- Assess good practice models for their potential to support women into leadership positions and advance gender equality. An example is the 'lead farmer strategy' for engaging with women agricultural producers. Pilot development of a women farmers' association to support information exchange, learning and advocacy.
- Stimulate the participation of rural women in decision making through dialogue with customary institutions, including on reviewing gender-biased norms and practices, adopting measures to support the representation of rural women in local and national institutions and adopting governance mechanisms to transform gendered stereotypes and gender-biased practices.
- Improve the delivery of quality rural services adapted to women's needs, including services such as child care, elderly care, mental health care and disability care, to alleviate the burden of rural women's unpaid care work.
- Work with rural men and boys as well as rural women and girls to plan ways to balance the workloads of women and men and support generational change in gender roles.
- Develop criteria for inclusion of both rural women and men in community trainings and workshops.

#### At the community level

- Include gender awareness training as an entry point activity in all new rural programmes and, where possible, retrofit such training into existing interventions.
- Work with both women and men in community projects, with the recognition that in general farming is done as a family business. Training topics should be relevant to household agriculture (planning, budgeting, marketing, etc.) and also include modules on workload, decision making, communication and conflict resolution in the home.
- Work with community leaders (church leaders and chiefs) to champion and foster ongoing gender-equitable social change.
- Provide nutrition information to rural women and men to support them in making healthy choices when using imported foods.
- Support the development of small-scale agribusiness, fisheries and aquaculture to support the provision of healthy, locally-produced foods in local markets, along with supporting the consumption of such foods. Build women's capacity to lead local agrifood businesses.
- Adopt a 'do no harm' approach in all rural programming. Map the violence referral services (community, justice and health) available to women to ensure that programme staff manage risks of violent backlash against women.

# BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES

- Asian Development Bank. (ADB). 2018. *Poverty in Vanuatu*. (also available at [www.adb.org/countries/vanuatu/poverty](http://www.adb.org/countries/vanuatu/poverty)).
- AusAID. 2009. *Vanuatu land programme – program design document*. DFAT.
- Braaf, R. 2017. *Initial gender and social inclusion assessment for Vanuatu*. Port Vila: NGO Green Climate Fund Consortium.
- Carter, K. 2016. *Causes of death in Vanuatu*. Population health metric.
- Department of Agriculture and Rural Development. (DARD). 2015. *Vanuatu Agriculture Sector Policy 2015–2030*. Port Vila: Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, Forestry, Fisheries and Biosecurity.
- Department of Forests. (DOF) 2011. *Vanuatu National Forest Policy 2013–2023*. Port Vila: Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, Forestry, Fisheries and Biosecurity.
- Department of Forests. (DOF) 2016. *Vanuatu Decade on Reforestation 2016–2025, Implementation Strategy*. Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, Forestry, Fisheries and Biosecurity.
- Fisheries Department. (FD) 2016. *Vanuatu National Fisheries Sector Policy 2016–2031*. Port Vila: Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, Forestry, Fisheries and Biosecurity.
- Fisheries Department. (FD) 2017. *Vanuatu national fisheries sector policy 2016–2031*. Noumea: SPC.
- Food and Agriculture Organization. 2014. *State of food security and nutrition in the small island developing states (SIDS)*. Rome.
- Food and Agriculture Organization. 2018. *Fishery and aquaculture country profiles. Republic of Vanuatu*. (also available at [www.fao.org/fishery/facp/VUT/en](http://www.fao.org/fishery/facp/VUT/en)).
- Gillet, R. 2016. *Fisheries in the Economies of Pacific Island Country and Territories*. Noumea: SPC.
- Government of Vanuatu. 2012. *Vanuatu overarching productive sector policy 2012–2017*. Port Vila
- Government of Vanuatu. 2013a. *National energy road map 2013–2020*. Port Vila.
- Government of Vanuatu. 2013b. *Vanuatu national plan of action on food and nutrition security 2013–2015*.
- Government of Vanuatu. 2016a. *National Sustainable Development Plan 2016 to 2030*. Port Vila.
- Government of Vanuatu. 2016b. *ORCBDS Annual Report 2016*. Port Vila: ORCBDS.
- Integrated Research on Disaster Risk. 2013. World Risk Index. (also available at [www.irdrinternational.org/2016/03/01/world-risk-index](http://www.irdrinternational.org/2016/03/01/world-risk-index)).
- International Monetary Fund. (IMF) 2018. *Vanuatu 2018 Article IV consultation – press release and staff report*. Washington.
- Livestock Department (LD). 2015. *Vanuatu national Livestock Policy 2015–2030*.
- Mael, S.H. 2013. *Climate Change and Agriculture in Vanuatu: A study of crops*. FAO. Port Vila.
- Martyn, T., Yi, D., & Fiti, L. (no date). *Household nutrition analysis Vanuatu. Identifying the household factors, and food items, most important in Vanuatu*. FAO.
- Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, Forestry, Fisheries and Biosecurity. (MALFFB) 2014. *Corporate Plan 2014–2018*. Port Vila.

- Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, Forestry, Fisheries and Biosecurity. (MALFFB)** 2015. *Cyclone Pam. Medium and long term recovery and rehabilitation strategy 2015–2017*.
- Ministry of Education and Training.** 2015. *Annual statistical digest*. Port Vila.
- Ministry of Health.** 2017. *Vanuatu reproductive, maternal, newborn, child, and adolescent health policy and implementation strategy 2017–2020*. Port Vila.
- Ministry of Health.** 2017a. *Health Sector Strategy (HSS) 2017–2020*. Port Vila.
- Ministry of Justice and Community Services.** 2015. *National Gender Equality Policy 2015–2019*. Port Vila: Ministry of Justice and Community Services.
- Molony, T.** 2014. *Desk Review Women's and girls;' empowerment program*. Port Vila: CARE International Vanuatu.
- NZAID.** 2008. *Review of Vanuatu's Agriculture Extension Services*. Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade of New Zealand.
- Pacific Agriculture and Forestry Policy Network.** 2017. Youth in agriculture: adapting the "Tutu model" in Vanuatu. (also available at <https://pafpnetblog.wordpress.com/2017/05/01/youth-in-agriculture-adapting-the-tutu-model-in-vanuatu>).
- Pacific Community.** 2015. Compare education indicators. (also available at [www.spc.int/nmdi/education](http://www.spc.int/nmdi/education)).
- Pacific Community.** 2017. *Pacific Platform for Action on Gender Equality and Women's Human Rights 2018–2030*. Suva.
- Pacific Financial Inclusion Programme.** 2011. *Vanuatu financial services sector assessment*. Suva.
- Pacific Financial Inclusion Programme.** 2016. *Financial services demand side survey in Vanuatu*. USP.
- Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat.** 2012. *Forum Communique*. Pacific Leaders Gender Equality Declaration. Suva.
- Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat.** 2014. *The Framework for Pacific Regionalism*. Suva.
- Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat.** 2016. *Pacific Leaders Gender Equality Declaration 2016 Progress Report*. Suva.
- Reserve Bank of Vanuatu.** 2017. *Vanuatu micro, small medium enterprises (MSMEs) finance 2016 survey: Exploring the MSMEs survey challenges and understanding the MSME characteristics for ways forward*. Port Vila.
- Reserve Bank of Vanuatu.** 2018. *Vanuatu National Financial Inclusion Strategy 2018–2023*. (also available at [www.pfip.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Vanuatu-National-Financial-Inclusion-Strategy-Rreport-2018-2023.pdf](http://www.pfip.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Vanuatu-National-Financial-Inclusion-Strategy-Rreport-2018-2023.pdf)).
- Simo, J.** 2005. *Report of the national review of customary land tribunal program in Vanuatu*. Vanuatu National Cultural Council. Port Vila:
- Simo, N.A.** 2008. Matrilineal Land Tenure in Vanuatu. In PIFS, Land and women: the matrilineal factor. In. *The cases of the Republic of the Marshall Islands, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu*. Suva: Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat.
- Suen, V. & Fred, P.** 2010. *VANWODS Microfinance – Impact Assessment December 2010*. (also available at [www.findevgateway.org/sites/default/files/mfg-en-paper-vanwods-microfinance-impact-assessment-2010-dec-2010.pdf](http://www.findevgateway.org/sites/default/files/mfg-en-paper-vanwods-microfinance-impact-assessment-2010-dec-2010.pdf)).
- United Nations Children's Fund. (UNICEF)** 2007. *Vanuatu nutrition survey 2007*. UNICEF Pacific Office. Suva.
- United Nations Children's Fund. (UNICEF)** 2013. *Vanuatu Statistics*. (also available at [www.unicef.org/infobycountry/vanuatu\\_statistics.html](http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/vanuatu_statistics.html)).
- United Nations Children's Fund. (UNICEF)** 2015. *Gender equity and social inclusion in the wash sector in Vanuatu*. UNICEF Pacific.

- United Nations Development Programme. (UNDP) 2018. *Human Development Indices and Indicators: 2018 Statistical Update on Vanuatu*. (also available at [http://hdr.undp.org/sites/all/themes/hdr\\_theme/country-notes/VUT.pdf](http://hdr.undp.org/sites/all/themes/hdr_theme/country-notes/VUT.pdf)).
- UN Women. 2018. *2018 Commission on the Status of Women agreed conclusions. Challenges and opportunities in achieving gender equality and the empowerment of rural women and girls*. New York.
- United Nations General Assembly. 2014. *SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway*. United Nations.
- Vanuatu National Statistics Office. (VNSO) 2009. *2009 National Population and Housing Census. Gender Monograph*. Port Vila.
- Vanuatu National Statistics Office. (VNSO) 2013a. *Key Vanuatu DHS indicators*. Port Vila.
- Vanuatu National Statistics Office. (VNSO) 2013b. *Vanuatu hardship and poverty report. Analysis of the 2010 Household Income and Expenditure Survey*. Suva: United Nations Development Programme Pacific Centre.
- Vanuatu National Statistics Office. (VNSO) 2015. *Household expenditure patterns in Vanuatu*. (also available at <https://vnso.gov.vu/index.php/special-report/vanuatu-living-standard>).
- Vanuatu National Statistics Office. (VNSO) 2016. *2016 Post TC Pam mini-census report*. Port Vila.
- Vanuatu Women's Centre. 2011. *Vanuatu national survey on women's lives and family relationships*. Port Vila.
- Vunisea, A. 2007. Women's Changing Participation in the Fisheries Sector in the Pacific. In *Women Agriculture and Rural Development in Vanuatu*.
- Webb, J.E. 2017. *Does Gender Responsive Disaster Risk Reduction make a difference?* Port Vila: CARE International in Vanuatu.
- Whitfield, S. 2015. *Situation Analysis: Food security*. CARE International.
- World Bank. 2015. *Maternal and neonatal mortality rates for Vanuatu*. (also available at <https://data.worldbank.org>).

# ANNEXES

## Annex 1: Key rural sector service providers in Vanuatu

*Government departments and institutions* involved in rural sector development include: Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD), Department of Fisheries, Department of Livestock, Department of Forestry, Department of Biosecurity, Department of Cooperatives and Ni-Vanuatu Business, Department of Women's Affairs, Department of Education, Department of Health, Ministry of Trade, Tourism, Industry and Commerce, the Vanuatu Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Vanuatu Agricultural Research and Technical Centre, Vanuatu Investment Promotion Authority (VIPA) and the Department of Strategic Policy Planning and Aid Coordination (DSPPAC) of the Prime Minister's Office.

*Financial institutions (national-level)* include: Vanuatu Agriculture Development Bank, National Bank of Vanuatu (NBV) and VANWODS.

*Private sector entities* include: Alternative Communities Trade In Vanuatu (ACTIV), Lapita Café, Vanuatu Direct, Tanna Coffee, Oils of Paradise, Vanuatu Agriculture Supplies, Tanna Farms, Pandanus Consulting, Summit Gardens Vanuatu, Vanuatu Cattle Company and VAL Pacific, South Pacific Meat Supplies and Loli Enterprises Limited.

*Civil society organizations* include: GIZ, Farm Support Association (FSA), Nasi Tuan Christian Service, Wan Smol Bag (WSB), CARE International in Vanuatu, Oxfam in Vanuatu (OiV), World Vision, Vanuatu Disability Promotion and Advocacy Association, Vanuatu Christian Council, Vanuatu Society for People with Disabilities, Live and Learn, Vanuatu National Council of Women, Malvatumauri National Council of Chiefs, Farm Support Association and Syndicate Agricole.

*Donors and development partners* include: Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), SPC, FAO, UNICEF, UN Women, International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), European Union, IFC/World Bank, Pacific Horticultural and Agricultural Market Access Program, Pacific Islands Private Sector Organisation, Pacific Organic and Ethical Trade Community, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) of Australia, New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT), South Pacific Tourism Organisation (SPTO) and Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation (CTA).

*Community-based organizations* include: women's farming cooperative 'Inside lo garden'

*Training institutions* include: Vanuatu Agricultural College, Rural Training Centres (RTC), Vanuatu TVET Sector Strengthening Programme 'Skills for Economic Growth'

## Annex 2: List of governmental institutions consulted

Ministry/Department	Role	Gender
Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, Forestry, Fisheries and Biosecurity	Director General for Agriculture	Male
	HR consultant for HR strategy	Female
Department of Agriculture	Acting Principal Officer North	Female
	Principal Officer South	Male
	Information Officer	Male
	Volunteer	Female
Department of Fisheries	Acting Director of Fisheries	Male
Department of Forestry	Director Forestry	Male
Department of Livestock	Director of Livestock	Male
	Livestock Senior Officer – Acting Principal Livestock Officer	Male
	Project Officer	Female
Department of Women's Affairs	Director of Women's Affairs	Female
Department of Cooperatives	Manager Provincial Operations	Male
Vanuatu Agriculture Bank	General Manager	Male
Vanuatu Chamber of Commerce and Industry	Export Industry Officer	Female

### Annex 3: List of development partners and civil society organizations consulted

Organization	Role	Gender
Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)	Assistant FAO Representative, Vanuatu	Male
Pacific Community (SPC)	Administration Assistant	Female
	Gender Statistics Advisor	Female
Farm Support Association (FSA)	Head of FSA	Male
	Finance and Programme Manager FSA	Female
	Information Management Advisor	Female
	Finance and Admin Assistant	Female
	Not defined	Male
Wan Smol Bag	Nutrition Centre Manager	Female
	Consultant – Nutrition	Female
	Garden Supervisor	Female
Oxfam in Vanuatu	Gender Equality Programme Manager	Female
	Representative	Male
World Vision	Development Facilitator	Female
	Programme Quality Consultant	Female
CARE International in Vanuatu	Programme Director	Female
	Volunteer Young Women's Leadership Program	Female
	Senior Programme Quality Officer	Female
V-Pride	Representatives	Female
Tonga Shepherds Association	Representative	Female
Youth Challenge Vanuatu	Representative	Female
Pango Youth Association	Representative	Female
Fiji – connected to V-Pride	Representatives	Both

#### Annex 4: List of community consultation participants

Community	Role	Gender
Isla Community, Isangel, Tanna Island, Vanuatu	Agricultural producer	9 females and 4 males
Lounaula Community, Middlebush, Tanna Island, Vanuatu	Agricultural producer	11 females and 9 males
	Trainer	1 female
	Manager	1 male

#### Annex 5: List of the facilitation team member

Organization	Role	Gender
CARE International in Vanuatu	Gender Officer	Female
	Gender and Programme Quality Manager	Female
	Resilience Officers	2 males and 1 female
	Field Coordinator	Male
	Programme Quality Team Leader	Female
	AVID Volunteer Gender	Female
	Volunteers	1 male and 1 female
SPC Fiji	SPC/LRD	Male







**PACIFIC WOMEN**  
SHAPING PACIFIC DEVELOPMENT

**Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations  
Representation in Vanuatu**

FAO Subregional Office for the Pacific Islands (FAO SAP)  
Apia, Samoa

ISBN 978-92-5-131920-8



9 789251 319208

CA6864EN/1/11.19