



2022

**GENDER AND POWER
ANALYSIS REPORT**



ECAP

**ECOSYSTEMS-BASED
CLIMATE ADAPTATION
PROJECT**



live & learn
ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

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- Mr Penisemani Rakanace (Senior Project Officer)
- Ms Agnes Underwood (Project Officer)
- Ms Adi Veniana (Climate Resilience Officer)
- Ms Ateca Sovanivalu (Village Cooperative Coordinator & Trainer)
- Mr. Jona Vadiga (Village Cooperative Coordinator & Trainer)

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List of Acronyms

ADB Asian Development Bank

CBO Community based Organization

CEDAW Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women

FAO Food and Agriculture Organization

FGD Focus Group Discussion

GESI Gender Equality & Social Inclusion

ILO International Labour Organization

LLEEF Live and Learn Environmental Education Fiji

MDGs Millennium Development Goals

NGO Non- Governmental Organization

VCAR Village Cooperative Awareness Registration



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Live & Learn Fiji appointed a Gender and Resilience Officer in 2021. The role supports the staff of Live and Learn Environmental Education Fiji for gender inclusion and guides all programs and projects to mainstream inclusion during programming.

This report presents the results of a community-based gender and power analysis for climate adaptive livelihoods carried out by Live and Learn Fiji for the Ecosystem based Climate Change Adaptation Project funded by the European Union. The objective of the gender and power analysis is to better understand gender and power dynamics and socio-cultural contexts that can positively and negatively impact community climate-adaptive livelihoods and resilience. Moreover, it will effectively inform the project's working documents to define the best suited approach that will guide implementation of the project activities.

The gender and power analysis focussed on five areas:

- Access and control
- Gender roles and responsibilities
- Division of labour
- Participation in decision making
- Livelihoods

The primary data collection was undertaken between August 2020 and November 2021 in 20 communities across three provinces in Northern Division, Fiji. The three provinces are Bua, Cakaudrove and Macuata. The primary data collection methodology included Focus Group Discussions (FGD) and key informant interviews. The secondary data was from a desktop exercise conducted in April 2021.

3. INTRODUCTION

3.1 BACKGROUND

Live and Learn Environmental Education's mission is to reduce poverty, foster greater understanding and act towards a sustainable future through education, community mobilization, and supportive partnerships. LLEEF works with aid organizations, governments, intergovernmental organizations, and non-governmental organizations – both local and international – sharing knowledge for a sustainable planet and linking environmental knowledge to social change. The prime focus of LLEEF is the integration of environmental, cultural and development concepts in extensive education programs in Fiji. This is achieved through community education, community organization, community mobilization, curriculum development, interactive environmental programs, humanitarian actions and the development of environmental education materials.



Photo by LLEEF: Gender Analysis Workshop, Labasa

Climate change constitutes one of the greatest barriers to sustainable development. Climate change is a risk for Fiji's biodiversity and ecosystems. This has severe implications for Fiji's economic growth, as the country relies heavily on its natural resources for economic development – forestry, fisheries, and agriculture are its primary industries. The effects of climate change are widespread and crosssectoral.

Adapting to a changing climate means that people, communities, businesses, and governments will have to reconsider sustainable interventions. This means that the primary custodians (people, communities, businesses, and governments) are to adjust and evolve until the earth's natural processes are no longer affected by excess greenhouse gas in the atmosphere (Dr Jaap A Jasperse, 2013).

Adaptive capacity is the community's ability to cope with and recover from the impact of climate hazards and climate variability and to adapt to future climate impacts. A community that is well organized, with strong skills, access to traditional and scientific knowledge, financial resources and sustainable management of its natural resources and livelihoods, has a strong adaptive capacity to recover and withstand climate change. Adaptive capacity can be determined by gathering information on community governance, resource management and livelihood systems. It also includes the resources that the community has, its healthy ecosystems, and how well it has recovered in the past from natural hazards and times of stress.

The Ecosystems-based Climate Adaptation Project (the Project), fully supported by the European Union, is a targeted, 3-year development intervention that will build local socio-economic resilience to climate change in the northern parts of Fiji. It will deliver resilience benefits to communities that are vulnerable, by strengthening Community-based Organisations (CBOs) and expanding ecosystemsbased economies, including rainforest honey and carbon capture income.

The socio-economic development is to take place in a way that factors in climate change and disaster risks. The Project initiative is to invest in local-level CBOs and village cooperatives that are in a unique position to advocate for inclusiveness and advice communities through creative dialogue and support climate resilience activities.

LLEEF reinforces the notion that understanding the different needs and roles of men and women and other marginalised groups (including people with disabilities, youth and the elderly) is a critical element to address vulnerability and build a climate resilient community. Therefore, Gender and Social Inclusion is mainstreamed in all LLEEF projects/

ECAP COMMUNITIES

An overview of the 20 mobilisation sites in Vanualevu, Fiji Islands

Legend

- Bua Communities
- Cakaudrove Communities
- Macuata Communities

Google Earth

50 km

The objectives of the analysis are to:

-

Photo by LLEEF: Rauriko Village, Macuata, during the group discussion activities on the importance of roles.

3.3 METHODOLOGY

A situational analysis has been used as the analytical framework for the assessment. The situational analysis of gender climate-adaptive livelihoods in the rural sector in three provinces is based on key informant interviews and focus group discussions. For the desktop research with the 20 communities, the KOBO tool application was used to interview key informants. The analysis includes a qualitative review of five areas of inquiry; (1) Gender roles and responsibilities (2) Division of labour; (3) Access to and control of natural resources; (4) Participation in decision-making; and (5) Livelihoods.

3.3.1 Respondent demographics

A total of 325 participants (116 females, 209 males) took part in the focus group discussions and interviews in 20 targeted communities in the three provinces of the Northern Division in Fiji.

Figure 1: Total Number of Respondent: 325

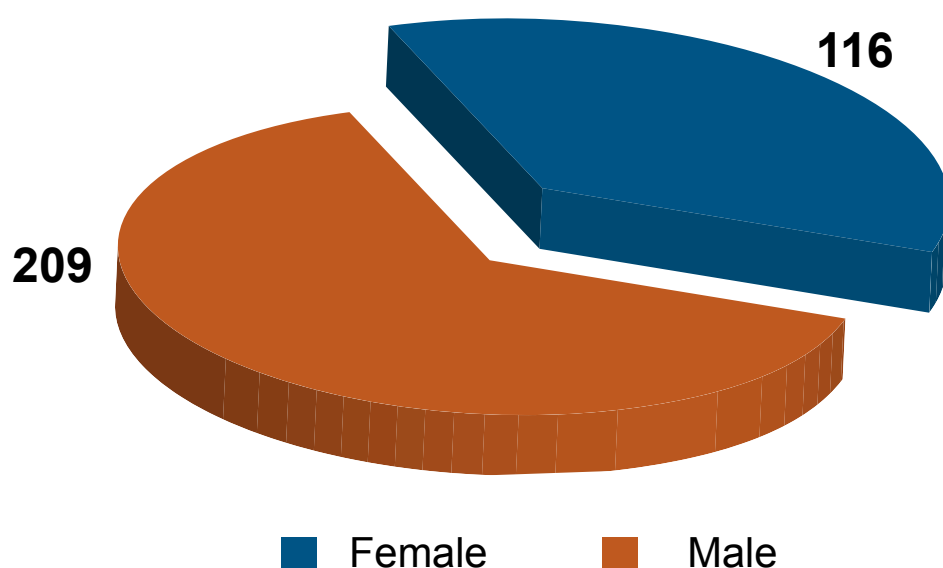


Table 1: The 20 target communities.

1. Banikea Village, Bua	6. Nawaisomo Village - Bua	11. Nabalebale Village - Cakaudrove	16. Vatukuca Village, Cakaudrove
2. Driti Village, Bua	7. Saolo Village, Bua	12. Nacodreudreu Settlement, Cakaudrove	17. Vanuavou Village, Cakaudrove
3. Kavula Village, Bua	8. Bagata Village, Cakaudrove	13. Vatukuca Village, Cakaudrove	18. Buavou Village, Macuata
4. Nakawakawa Village, Bua	9. Bucalevu Village, Cakaudrove	14. Nakasa Village, Cakaudrove	19. Nacereyaga Village, Macuata
5. Navakasali Village, Bua	10. Dawara Village, Cakaudrove	15. Nakawaga Village, Cakaudrove	20. Rauriko Village, Macuata

3.4 FIJI DEMOGRAPHICS PROFILE

As of the 2017 Census (Fiji Bureau of Statistics Releases 2017 Census Results, n.d.), the total population of Fiji stands at 884,887 (50.7 percent males and 49.3 percent females). The median age of the population is 27.5 years, which means that half of Fiji's population is below that age. The proportion of Fiji's population living in urban areas is 56% in 2017. Forty-four percent of the total population lives in rural areas (51.9 percent males and 48.1 percent females). These figures would have changed as a result of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic that commenced in 2020.

According to the Country Gender Assessment in Agriculture and the Rural Sector in Fiji conducted by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) in 2015:

Agriculture remains an important pillar of the Fijian economy, accounting for 44 percent of total employment. Thirteen percent of the population aged 15 and older is engaged in subsistence agriculture and fisheries. In rural areas, nearly one-quarter of women (23 percent) are involved in subsistence employment.

Data from the International Labour Organisation (2019) indicated that in 2018 Fiji's labour force participation rate was 58.1 percent and the employment-to-population ratio was 54.57 percent. Both these rates are more than 34 percent higher for men compared to women. The total unemployment rate in 2016 was 4.31 percent, and the youth unemployment rate was 18.76 percent. The female youth unemployment rate is 12 percent higher than the male percentage rate. The proportion of youths aged 15-24 years, not in education, employment or training was 20.08 percent in 2016. Employment is heavily reliant on services and agriculture, and on medium-skilled occupations. In 2016, 19.1 per cent of total employment was in the agriculture, forestry and fishing sector. Although reliance on agriculture is significant, there are opportunities for job creation in sustainable production and organic farming.

Fiji has ratified a number of national and international conventions that are committed to gender equality, including the Fiji National Gender Policy (Ministry of Social Welfare, Women & Poverty Alleviation, 2014), the Fiji National 5-Year and 20-Year Development Plan (Ministry of Economy, 2017), the Convention of the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) (UNWomen, 2008), and the revised Beijing Platform for Action (Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, 1995). In spite of these national and international commitments, gender inequality, entrenched in traditional norms, customs, and decision-making frameworks and perpetuated by discriminatory practices (including unequal access to resources), remains a growing concern. In 2015 (Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, 2015), the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat reported (amongst other goals) that Fiji had achieved mixed progress for Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in promoting gender equality. In spite of some achievements, women in Fiji experience high rates of domestic violence (Fiji Women Crisis Centre, 2011).

4. FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

4.1 GENDER ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The roles of men and women are significant for the relationship between climate change and livelihoods in Fiji. These roles are rooted in patriarchal cultures, gender-differentiated access to resources, and decision-making (Asian Development Bank, 2015). The 2015 Fiji Country Gender Assessment Report states that:

Rural communities, in general, maintain more traditional gender norms than urban communities, and there are fewer opportunities for rural women to earn their own incomes and engage in activities independent of their families.

Based on the key informant survey and focus group discussion conducted, it was evident that gender roles and

responsibilities are generally divided and fixed, e.g., men are responsible for preparing the land to plant and harvesting root crops, while women tend to vegetable gardens closer to home. In some households, husbands work together with their wives in the garden or help them occasionally, and in a few cases, men take complete responsibility for vegetable gardening. Women and men take on a variety of similar and complementary tasks related to livestock. However, certain roles are based on gender norms – for example, men’s role in killing birds or women’s role in milking cows. Women in the village sometimes require additional labour, and even those with husbands sometimes call upon male youth to work in their gardens or to help raise pigs, paying them in cash or exchanging livestock for labour. Fishing activities in the village are undertaken by both women and men on a regular basis. Women appear to have considerable freedom to fish when and with whom they choose, at times going out alone on the flats, or with other women or in large mixed groups to fish on the reef. In settlements, it is the men who mainly fish, whereas women who go out fishing do so occasionally and only with their husbands or together with another couple. Both women and men from the village sell fish in the market, with women generally concentrating on the sale of seafood. In both communities (Nakasa village in Cakaudrove & Nakawakawa village in Bua), men generally highlighted fishing as a subsistence and income-generating activity, whereas women also emphasised the social aspects of fishing. Women are also largely responsible for the majority of caregiving for children, the elderly and the ill, cooking and cleaning work within the household, and preparation of food.

The (United Nations Development Programme, 2010) Asia-Pacific Human Development Report highlights the value of unpaid household work in Fiji at approximately FJD480 million (US \$237 million), a figure that is greater than the income derived from Fiji’s main income-earning industries; sugar and tourism. Shared responsibility for childcare and domestic work is slowly becoming more acceptable within some households, particularly in urban areas and in families in which women are employed outside the home; however, for the most part, this work remains far from equal.

Discussions from the focus groups reported that women have the confidence and skills in running their own small businesses (such as beekeeping), and it could be a source of independence for them. They shared that, historically, funds raised for their projects were being used in the development of village projects.

A study undertaken for Women in Fisheries (Vunisea, 2005) highlighted that women in Fiji worked fewer hours than men in paid employment but women worked 26%–31% more hours in total than men because of their disproportionate share of household responsibilities. The 2010/2011 Employment and Unemployment Survey (Baledrokadroka, 2012) shows similar results with women working longer working hours than men. Market gardening and income-generating activities, as well as formal employment, demand much of the time and energy of women without any accompanying reduction in the work at home and related to obligations to their extended family, the community or vanua (the land) and the church.



Photo by LLEEF: Women of Nakasa Village, Cakaudrove attended focus group discussions during the assessments.

4.2 DIVISION OF LABOUR

4.2.1 Household roles

Women are largely responsible for household chores such as cleaning the house, washing clothes, and caring for children, the elderly, and people who are ill within their immediate and extended families. They also prepare meals, cook for family and relatives, and clean up and wash dishes. Some men occasionally help with food preparation or cooking, for example when women are busy with other work, although some men, particularly in the settlement, do not assist with meals at all. Some women stated a preference for food that can be prepared and cooked quickly - highlighting their interest in reducing their food-related workload. Daughters help their mothers with household chores and food-related activities and sons also help with some of these tasks. Gathering firewood is a daily activity for women in the vil-



Photo by LLEEF: Mr Meli Salato of Buavou Village, Macuata contributes during discussion on gender roles.

lage. However, men lend additional hands when heavy rain or storms are forecast. In the settlement, it is primarily the men's responsibility to collect firewood from nearby bushes and mangroves. At times their wives accompany them to assist. Women's daily use of indoor fire cooking exposes them to risks in respiratory health and vision. Women in the settlement preserve a much larger quantity and range of food, drying fruits, making chutneys and jams, and freezing food when there is an oversupply to eat in the off-season, as well as to prepare for extreme weather conditions and disasters. Sometimes their husbands help with this activity. For example, when preparing for a cyclone, women and men will collect root crops and dig a pit near their houses to store the crops for a couple of days to meet their needs. This is one way a traditional Fijian (iTaukei) community uses their traditional storage methods.

4.2.2 Workload, seasonal variation, hazards, and other challenges

Women generally have long days, as they get up earlier and get to bed later than men. Some, but not all, husbands occasionally help their wives when they have a lot of work or are ill. Compared to women, men have more leisure time socialising, drinking kava in the evenings. Women's time in the evening often involves carrying out activities such as childcare, household chores, or incomegenerating activities. Of the key informants, 80% that were interviewed said that women played a critical and more responsible role in looking after the welfare of the family member whereas males were more involved in attending village meetings or social events. According to International Labour Organization (International Labour Organization, 2016), 156,000 workers from the western division were affected during TC Winston. An estimated 60% of all workers were affected with an equivalent to around 94,000 women and men who were informally employed before the crisis hit. This exacerbates the vulnerability of informal workers to poverty and hampers the scope to accumulate precautionary savings. The older children in the family assisted their mothers to provide care to relieve the workload in the evenings, during school break and holidays where they take on gender-designated roles aligned with those of their parents. For church functions, community and family events, and religious holidays women take lead roles to prepare food, collect firewood, clean and decorate. Although these additional chores add to women's workload, they are generally considered enjoyable due to their social dimension. Men also carry out a range of tasks to prepare for these events but may have more time than women. Men's task timeframe is at times seasonal and fixed, which allows extra time for leisure and self-focused activity, unlike for women who have to perform tasks on a daily basis throughout the year. Furthermore, the global data CARE 2008 and the recent CARE International's Rapid Gender, Protection and Inclusion Analysis of Tropical Cyclone Josie and Tropical Cyclone Keri reports highlighted that women's workloads increase during and after a disaster.

4.3 CONTROL OVER AND ACCESS TO NATURAL RESOURCES

Land ownership and leasing in Fiji, like many patrilineal societies and in line with traditional inheritance norms, is usually held by men and therefore decision-making about land rests with men. Land in Fiji is registered through three systems; freehold land, crown land, and native leased land. This has a huge impact on women's access to land and natural resources. A study undertaken by ADRA and CARE in 2019 found that:

While some widows inherit the land, legal ownership does not guarantee women control and decision-making often rests with their late husband's male relatives or sons-in-law. In some cases, women may be required to vacate the property or give land up upon the death of their husband.

It was evident that women and men who have undergone training in leadership, governance, climate change, and gender, and are actively involved in community work and development activities, share equal sentiments on the benefits of embracing and implementing an integrated and inclusive development approach, especially in considering the adverse effects of climate change on their livelihoods. Despite men and women undertaking training, women are taking on extra work to their existing workload to manage their village development projects and income-generating activities. Reportedly, women are more committed and productive compared to men in terms of managing village development projects and income-generating activities and this was evident in the response from a majority of the communities during the FGD. One in particular was the Mataqali of Waiwai in Nakasa, Cakaudrove, where women's groups emotionally reported back on how much work they carry on their shoulders compared to men:

Sometimes I have to personally go to our farm because I know my husband and other men in the village go to the farm and sleep in the bush. I would like to encourage us, women, to accompany our husbands to the farm as most of the time they are just relaxing in the farm
(-middle aged female, Nakasa Village)

In Fiji, the informal economic sector provides a vital economic contribution to households, especially the poorer and those in more remote areas. Typically dominated by women, the informal sector in Fiji involves a range of income-generating activities which depend on strong ecosystem integrity. A rural community's climate vulnerability is closely connected to its local ecosystems and in turn, an ecosystem's vulnerability is influenced by the communities that use its services. Floods, droughts, storms, sea-level rise, and extreme changes in temperature affect the availability of water, food, shelter, and many other critical resources that healthy ecosystems provide, but they may not always be the most immediate or biggest threat to these ecosystems. Human activities such as logging, overuse of resources and development of new roads can also weaken ecosystems.

A country-level study (Fiji Women Rights Movement, 2020) conducted by the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) suggests that having gender-integrated forest policies alone is not enough to reduce pervasive gender inequalities in forestry. These policies must be supported by technical expertise for facilitating gender-sensitive policy implementation and practice. Moreover, clear targets, gender guidelines, strategy and action plans supported by adequate budgets and institutional mechanisms in forestry departments and agencies must be in place so that gender mainstreaming becomes an achievable milestone within a set time frame. The findings from this study also suggest that forest-related policies and institutions must consolidate a gender-responsive approach as poor rural women in many parts of Asia and the Pacific have limited influence on decision-making and rely more heavily on common-pool natural resources, such as forests, compared to their male counterparts.

Discussions from the focus group with women from the 20 communities highlight that they have equal access and control over their natural resources. However, this is limited to those who are registered in the Native Land Registry (Vola Kawa Bula) of the village. In 2013, findings (Elder, 2013) from a review of the Fiji Forest Policy revealed that the agriculture and forestry industries in Fiji were male-dominated and that women contributed to labour on family farms through small-scale businesses such as floriculture and food processing. The review also reported that women are excluded from indigenous inheritance systems and in rural communities; indigenous hierarchies have remained and male members have been dominating decision-making processes.

Respondents in the focus group discussions reported that most of their natural resources are still intact except for those that have logging and gravel extraction activities. These impacts are felt by coastal communities thus affecting marine ecosystems. It was further reiterated that the impact of unsustainable agricultural practice was evident in their freshwater environment, with substantial decrease in prawns and fish.

According to a study by Women in Fisheries (Vunisea, 2014), gaps and challenges faced by women fishers are primarily related to cultural and social norms and practices, which in many cases limit women's progress in the fisheries sectors and places fisherwomen at a disadvantage. Women in fisheries now have to depend on their menfolk for access to financial support and to be their voices in decision making relating to fisheries development and management. The cultural and restrictive demands of village life and modern market demands have exposed women to marketing and participation in fisheries. Women having to straddle two worlds is still an issue today because marketing and engagement in the modern economy do not mean a reduction of domestic chores, child-rearing, and other village responsibilities, which can become very stressful as there is no support from men.

Respondents from the communities of Cakaudrove and Bua highlighted that land in the communities under the Fiji Forest Industry Concession Agreement have been returned to landowners as the Fiji Forests Industries business has come to an end. Hence, in order to implement project awareness activities, landowners are willing to lease forest for conservation. This will enable landowning units to engage in carbon trading and rainforest honey production through the Ecosystems Based Climate Adaptation Project, especially considering the catastrophic impacts of climate change on their ecosystems. The ecosystems-based development intervention requires consent from mataqali members of the landowning units to implement the project. The landowning unit comprises men, women, girls, and boys registered under the Native Land Commission Registry (Vola ni Kawa Bula). Therefore, in this context, and unique to this community, there is a strong indication that women and girls have equal control with men and boys over resources.

4.4 PARTICIPATION IN DECISION MAKING

Decision making takes place at individual household and community level. In line with traditional and societal norms, particularly in rural communities, a majority of the decisions are made by men. Women face a range of barriers to participating in community decision making and they are often further constrained by additional factors such as disability. Women in the village have opportunities to participate in some, but not all, community discussions and decision making via community governance structures. Women in the village are elected members of village committees - except the Water Committee. Leadership positions of all committees are held by men.

Approximately 98% of communities that the ECAP project visited were led by the Turaga Ni Koro (male village administrator) and only 2% were either by a Marama ni Koro (female village administrator) or women-headed Mataqali (clan and land-owning unit).



Photo by LLEEF: Bagata Village, Cakaudrove Focus Group Discussion.

Men in the village, including the Turaga ni Koro, are generally supportive of women's participation in meetings and in committees. Although some men appear to be open to change, there is significant male peer pressure to maintain existing gender norms and some sense of overall control over women. While some women in the village feel comfortable sharing their views in meetings, others lack the self-confidence and skills needed to effectively contribute to discussions.

At the household level decision making takes various forms. Many women make decisions around gardening such as what and where to plant, what to buy, and what to eat together. Men often have more flexibility to make decisions about the use of their own time, for example, arriving late for dinner after drinking kava. However, "when dinner's not ready on time, arguments sometimes ensue with abuse from husband towards the wife," said an anonymous respondent. Women and men in communities have very limited discretionary income and generally use the money to pay for family expenses such as food and household items, school supplies, and occasionally for personal items. Both women and men are aware of the need to save for unexpected events, including disasters. However, some people earn too little and the intention is to save a penny at a time. Both women and men hold traditional ideas about men being the main breadwinner, even though women play key roles in generating income for the family. Few men in the village 'allow' their wives to control family expenditure 'in order to avoid arguments.' Some women make their own decisions to have a savings account and help others.

An anonymous respondent from one of the districts shared that decision making is usually made by the village chief, usually a male. The respondents fear that during project implementation, decisions will be solely made by the chief and funds might be directed towards the chiefly family which poses a risk to the community. The respondents added that with this decision-making approach, there are risks around sustainable development and the community being more vulnerable to exposure to climate change and poverty; and potential disunity may arise due to poor governance and leadership. Respondents also reported that at the community level there are huge disparities in decision making concerning land. Most decisions at the community level around land tenure are made by the men (head of the Mataqali (clan) and Yavusa (tribe)).

These views are supported by a study (ADRA Fiji & Care, 2019) undertaken by ADRA and CARE in Vanua Levu where women respondents highlighted that they faced challenges in their ability to participate in public discussions and decision-making. At a household level, women had more say in child care, and household level vegetable farms. In addition, at a community level, women in the village have opportunities to participate in some, but not all, community discussions and decisionmaking via community governance structures.

4.5 LIVELIHOODS

Understanding the current threats to livelihoods is crucial in framing future livelihood interventions

(The Energy and Resources Institute , 2019).

Fiji is endowed with natural resources – the tropical rainforests that sustain numerous floral and faunal species, the corals that support numerous aquatic species, and the highlands which now support the grasslands. With close to 58% of Fiji being forested (The Energy and Resources Institute, 2019), livelihoods in Fiji are intrinsically tied to natural resources where communities derive many benefits from fragile ecosystems. Forests provide non-wood forest products to the marine and fresh waters which help sustain fishing-based livelihoods.

Both women and men in the village sell fish in the market while women sell other sea creatures such as molluscs, crustaceans and echinoderms. In village and community settlements, men highlighted that fishing is for subsistence and income-generating activity, whereas women highlighted these activities as a means to support social needs. Women sell surplus vegetables and fruit in the market and in the community. Farmers occasionally sell livestock from home, signalling their interest through word of mouth. Both women and men encounter transportation challenges in getting their goods to market due to the geographical location/distance and costs involved. Women from the settlement stated they never go to Labasa Town/ Savusavu town alone or with other women, but only go with their husbands.

Men are largely responsible for growing and harvesting sugar cane and kava while women assist as and when needed. Men and women in the settlement sell pandanus leaves (suluka) in the market. Even though women play a key role in these activities, men usually control the income for shopping. Although largely designed as a 'women's project', Soqosoqo Vakamarama (Women's Group) planned to weave mats for the community hall. This project benefits all community members by providing a mat to sit on when attending community gatherings such as weddings, birthday parties and when there is a death in the family. Harvesting and making pearl jewellery provides income for both men and women in the village, with activities often designated according to gender and men receiving slightly more money based on the physical effort involved in the task. Both women and men in the village appear to have benefited from external technical support, while in the settlement men have largely been the main beneficiaries of technical support, mainly for sugar cane. Wives and family members benefit indirectly.

Since the onset of the COVID19 pandemic in 2020, Fiji has faced detrimental impacts to its tourism sector, which accounted for 40% of the country's GDP. The tourism sector directly supports 42,500 jobs (13% of total employment) and indirectly contributes 119,000 jobs to the economy (37% of total employment). Women comprise a third of the tourism workforce, mostly at minimum wage earning level, including cleaners, restaurant staff, and receptionists.

Many women are market vendors, with women making up 85% of all market vendors in Fiji. Fifteen percent of women market vendor incomes remain unbanked and their access to finance is limited. For 77% of market vendors, vending is the only source of income on a weekly basis. The majority have small savings but not enough to withstand a major downturn in business activity for more than one or two weeks. This is the same for women farmers. Forty percent



of rural women in Fiji work as farmers or workers on farms in the informal economy. Women farmers and market vendors and others in the informal sector are not covered by benefits such as paid sick leave or unemployment allowances, and they were particularly affected by lockdowns due to their dependence on access to public spaces. Many community members mentioned the inability to travel to markets to sell or buy due to COVID-19 restrictions as a key challenge. In addition to tourism, many other businesses have also been severely impacted with numerous workers laid off or on reduced hours. As a result, many have turned to backyard gardening and subsistence farming and fishing and/or have returned to their villages. However, those in informal settlements without access to land will be particularly affected by the loss of livelihoods and food insecurity.

An anonymous respondent who took part in the focus group discussions mentioned that their women's groups are active and registered. However, there is tension between the women's groups that hinders their progress in development initiatives. Some women's groups have been operating beekeeping businesses. While it has not undermined their ability to run the business successfully, they believe that they will not receive much support from villages. In contrast, a women's group in Nakasa village (Senidakua honey) which has been operating a beekeeping business and has village support has been successful enough to use their profits for building a kindergarten in the village. The kindergarten has allowed the children in the village to attend in their own locality rather than having to travel long distances.

Another anonymous respondent from the survey said,

Women's group is very much active in this settlement; therefore, the beekeeping business brought in by the project will be executed successfully. Women are the best treasurers and backbone in a family.

Fiji Women's Rights Movement has found that intersecting risks coupled with caregiving responsibilities can seriously comprise some women's food security and health. Widows and people with disabilities are particularly at risk of food scarcity or poor nutrition and often face challenges to meet their basic food needs and accessing social welfare. Heavy workload and loneliness particularly affect the food security and mental wellbeing of widows. Traditional safety nets, social assistance, and money sent by family members are often insufficient to meet the needs of the most vulnerable, particularly during difficult planting seasons or following disasters.

A study by (Vunisea, 2014) Women in Fisheries highlighted that there has been significant income reduction and loss of livelihoods for women market vendors due to a range of factors, including possible price controls, higher input and supply chain costs, reduced market hours, reduction in customer demand, and increased transportation/logistics costs. Additionally, there has been significant income reduction and loss of livelihoods for women farmers (mostly small-farm holders) as they may not be able to bring their products to market or sell to wholesalers due to lockdowns and supply chain disruptions. The study further adds that there is increased economic vulnerability for women farmers and market vendors due to limited savings, pension contributions, and access to financial resources and there are high levels of vulnerability and exposure to other risks including gender-based violence as well as food security and nutrition.

An issue that was raised by respondents was the disparity in engagement of expatriate women (the field research consultant defined expatriates as those local women from other provinces/districts married to men from the said community) who were able to take part in the survey and who are more informed. If there are more expatriate women in the village than local women, the respondents added that expatriate women were more vocal than local women. Another issue raised by respondents is that the number of new religions and denominations being brought into the villages has created some tension in the various villages.

6 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE OVERALL APPROACH

- 1) Develop an inclusion guideline that can be implemented for the remainder of the project.
- 2) Ensure male and female staff use approaches that continually foster gender equality, equal opportunities, and shared decision-making. Support gender training for male and female staff and volunteers and use approaches to engage male staff, volunteers, and male community members and leaders to avoid backlash as well as support male champions for gender equality.
- 3) Support community ownership of the program, including its gender equality objectives, among both women and men so they can see and sustain positive changes and address any challenges.
- 4) Ensure targeted communities have both a female and male project staff representative during implementation, with shared roles and responsibilities, and gender-balanced committees with shared roles and opportunities for leadership.
- 5) Explicitly target communities where women's participation in public decision-making is very low and develop strategies to address barriers and constraints, taking small incremental steps towards change.
- 6) Work with women in communities to identify and address any barriers or constraints to women's meaningful participation and decision-making in the project. Ensure activities do not increase women's workload and involve men to help alleviate women's workload.
- 7) Continue to advocate for and champion gender equality and women's empowerment in all Live & Learn Fiji programming, identifying appropriate entry points and drawing on the organization's wider community-focused approach.
- 8) Support transparency and accountability by involving women and men in participatory selfassessments and monitoring of impacts, especially those related to gender equality and women's empowerment. Ensure women have regular access to information about the project and related climate change and livelihood activities in their community and provide regular opportunities to share ideas and feedback in a safe space. Disaggregate and analyse data to the widest extent possible to identify groups that are making progress towards gender equality or facing particular challenges.
- 9) Reflect and report on progress and challenges to support gender equality. Use qualitative and quantitative gender-sensitive indicators to monitor, evaluate and share learning related to the positive (and any negative) impacts on women and men and any changes related to gender equality and women's empowerment in each domain of the Gender Equality Framework, namely, Agency, Relations, and Structures.



7 CONCLUSION

The study focused on 20 communities in Vanua Levu and it supports the global findings that climate change disproportionately affects women. This is evident in the findings as women in these communities are increasingly more vulnerable than men to the impacts of climate change, mainly because they are proportionally more dependent on threatened natural resources. The findings also highlight the difference between men and women's differential roles, responsibilities, decision making, access to land and natural resources, opportunities, and needs. Women in the target 20 communities have less access to resources such as land, financial access opportunities, agricultural inputs, decision-making structures, technology, and training, which would enhance their capacity to adapt to climate change.

The impact of climate change on gender is not the same, hence the adaptation initiatives should identify and address gender-specific impacts of climate change particularly in areas related to water, food security, agriculture, energy, health, disaster management, and conflict. Important gender issues associated with climate change adaptation, such as inequalities in access to resources, including financial resources, extension and training services, information, and technology should also be taken into consideration.

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To build local socio-economic resilience to Climate Change in vulnerable communities in the Northern Parts of Fiji by strengthening local-level civil society and expanding ecosystems-based economies through the sale of carbon credits including production and sale of certified rainforest honey.