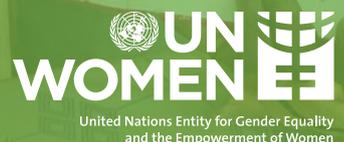




# MARKETS FOR CHANGE

FIJI | SOLOMON ISLANDS | VANUATU  
MARKET PROFILES



# CONTENTS

<b>The situation: Introducing Markets for Change</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Fiji</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Solomon Islands</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Vanuatu</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Notes &amp; credits</b>	<b>22</b>

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UN Women is the UN organisation dedicated to gender equality and the empowerment of women. A global champion for women and girls, UN Women was established to accelerate progress on meeting their needs worldwide.

UN Women supports UN Member States as they set global standards for achieving gender equality, and works with governments and civil society to design laws, policies, programmes and services needed to implement these standards. It stands behind women's equal participation in all aspects of life, focusing on five priority areas: increasing women's leadership and participation; ending violence against women; engaging women in all aspects of peace and security processes; enhancing women's economic empowerment and; making gender central to national development planning and budgeting. UN Women also coordinates and promotes the UN system's work in advancing gender equality.





## THE SITUATION

Participating in economic activities allows women to make positive changes in their own lives and their communities, with positive ripple effects for the whole nation. Markets provide great opportunities for increasing women's economic empowerment because they are central to livelihoods in many Pacific Island countries and territories (PICTs), and most of the vendors are women.

As a group of small and geographically dispersed countries far from international markets, economic growth across the Pacific region is often uneven. While the World Bank considers Nauru and Palau to be upper middle income countries, the United Nations classifies Kiribati, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu and Tuvalu as "least developed countries" based on their low incomes, economic vulnerability and weak human resources<sup>1</sup>.

Pacific populations are mainly rural and rely largely on subsistence activities: around 84% of women and 71% of men are involved in the subsistence or informal economies,

work for family or are self-employed, and are therefore classed as vulnerable workers<sup>2</sup>. Many of these activities fall outside the formal economy and are therefore not represented through more traditional economic measures such as gross domestic product.

The region is also particularly vulnerable to the increasing frequency and intensity of extreme weather events, as well as other aspects of climate change, making food security a growing concern.

Historically, gendered norms, behaviours and social relations have played a big part in disadvantaging women economically. Institutions, systems and structures often restrict women's economic opportunities, while gendered roles and status can limit women's voices and choices when it comes to household and community decisions. Women often also have reduced access to education and skills, as well as other resources such as savings and credit schemes.

## THE IDEA

Women in the Pacific perform a greater share of food growing and in-shore fishing activities, limiting their availability for formal employment, however, they dominate many small-scale market operations. By targeting market vendors, the Markets for Change (M4C) project has an opportunity to help improve the working conditions, leadership capabilities and earning power of women in Fiji, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu, which has a positive effect on entire communities.

The idea is to help increase market vendors' economic activity to a point where they are essentially running small enterprises and can consider formal sector employment or business opportunities in the agriculture, retail and hospitality sectors.

The benefits of this extend beyond the market vendors themselves and their families. Improving economic and social outcomes at marketplaces is also expected to improve efficiency along farm to market supply chains and reduce food wastage, increasing revenues for vendors and councils alike.

A range of training sessions, south-south exchanges and other learning opportunities are held on the market premises so women don't need to leave their place of business to attend them. This helps to ensure as many vendors attend as possible, making it an efficient and cost-effective strategy for strengthening capacity and teaching financial literacy.

These sessions are open to all vendors, providing an opportunity to increase awareness of the issues female vendors face and the benefits of participating in market governance among both women and men at the market.

UN Women is also working to support governments and businesses in enhancing the state's role in providing protection beyond health and education.

## THE PROJECT

The M4C project is a six-year, multi-country initiative that officially launched in Fiji in April 2014, Solomon Islands in May and Vanuatu in August.

It builds on the experience gained through UN Women's Partners Improving Markets series of pilot projects implemented from 2009 to 2012, as well as local initiatives and entry points for change identified in country-specific initiatives.

M4C will inject more than US\$17 million into making markets in the three countries safer, more inclusive and non-discriminatory. The bulk of this funding has come from Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

The project capitalises and builds on UN Women's existing working relationships with local governments throughout the Pacific. This includes nine municipal councils in Fiji, one city council and one provincial government in Solomon Islands, and two municipalities and one provincial government in Vanuatu.

M4C focuses on four key areas:

### Inclusive, effective and representative marketplace groups

Empowering female market vendors to organise and participate in marketplace governance and decision-making as a unified community.

### Improved socio-economic security of female market vendors

As the responsible party in this outcome, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) will assess and respond to the rights, needs and interests of market vendors and deliver appropriate services, training and interventions.

### Gender-responsive, effective and accountable local government and market management

Working with both sectors to build capacity and draft, adopt and implement bylaws, policies and budgets that ensure safe and secure market infrastructure, adequate amenities and services, and transparent revenue collection and expenditure.

### Physical infrastructure and operating systems

Working with the relevant stakeholders to improve marketplaces in order to make them safer, more sustainable and more accessible – including for people living with a disability – as well as more resilient to disaster risks and climate change.

75%  
TO  
90%

of all market vendors in the Pacific are women.<sup>3</sup>



"I STARTED SELLING FRESH PRODUCE IN THE MARKET IN 1960 AND I AM SO HAPPY TO SEE THE CHANGES THAT ARE CURRENTLY TAKING PLACE TO IMPROVE THE LIVES OF WOMEN MARKET VENDORS. I WAS SO NAIVE AND INNOCENT FOR 54 YERAS, I DID NOT KNOW THERE IS A MARKET BYLAW WHICH SAFEGUARDS US VENDORS. THANK YOU UN WOMEN."

Anisa Marama, 77  
Market vendor, Suva, Fiji

10m

Funding in Australian dollars contributed to the Markets for Change project by Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

## FROM IDEAS TO ACTION

The M4C project is already having an effect in several of its outcome areas and the exciting thing is that while the support and guidance given by the M4C team has been invaluable, it is often the vendors themselves and market management who are taking the lead in making change happen.

### Physical infrastructure

- UN Women, with the assistance of its New Zealand National Committee, supported the refurbishment and upgrade of sanitation facilities in Honiara Central Market, Solomon Islands.
- The SHEFA Provincial Local Government has worked in partnership with UN Women and its Australian National Committee to provide a new market building for fresh produce market vendors at Marobe in Port Vila, Vanuatu.
- A total of 42 new market stalls and a fence around the market infrastructure at Sigatoka market in Fiji have provided vendors with protection from the weather and increased security. These improvements were supported by UN Women's Australian National Committee.
- UN Women has been working with the Rakiraki Town Council to extend the sanitation and ablution block at the Rakiraki market in Fiji, providing higher quality and safer facilities for the 250 market vendors who work there.
- An overnight accommodation centre for women vendors was constructed at Lautoka market through the efforts of, and funding from, the Fijian government and UN Women.
- New fixtures inside Ba market's multi-purpose bure means a range of activities can now be held simultaneously, including training, workshops and handicraft sellers.
- An overhead roof extension at Labasa market in Fiji gives 120 market vendors protection from weather conditions.

### Effective and representative marketplace groups

"Getting Started" workshops have been rolled out at both Solomon Islands sites (Auki and Honiara), as well as three sites in Fiji (Suva, Nausori and Sigatoka). The aim of the workshops is to create accessible, inclusive and representative governance structures that will help the markets thrive, while also strengthening the role and influence of women market vendors.

- A total of 67 market vendors (62 women, five men) took part in the workshops held at Honiara Central Market in Solomon Islands in April and May 2014. During these workshops, participants made a unanimous decision to form an official vendors association and nominated members for an interim committee. Since then the constitution has been presented, terms of reference for executive committee member positions have been ratified and the first executive committee has been elected. Sixteen of the 19 positions are now filled by women. The Honiara Central Market Vendors Association was endorsed under the Charitable Trust Act in July and has already recruited more than 200 members among stall holders.
- A total of 59 market vendors took part in the workshops held at Auki Market in Solomon Islands in June 2014. The participants made a unanimous decision to form an official vendors association and held elections for the executive committee directly after the workshops finished. Ten of the 16 positions have been filled by women.
- More than 80 market vendors took part in the workshops at Nausori and Suva markets in May and June 2014. Since then, the Suva association has been re-energised and re-activated, while the two Nausori organisations – the general vendors association and the Women's Club set up in 2012 to give women a safe space to express their views – have agreed to hold joint executive committee meetings to ensure the needs and interests of all vendors are represented.



## INTRODUCING EPAU RING ROAD MARKET, VANUATU

Meet Leisong. She is the president of the women vendors at Epau's Ring Road Market in Vanuatu. She has been working there since 2013 when the market was established, replacing a smaller stall at the other end of the village, both of which were initiated by the women market vendors.

The women sell fresh fruit and vegetables to villagers as well as a small number of customers who are passing through and it means they don't need to travel to Port Vila every day to sell their produce.

The market also sells cooked food prepared in a kitchen behind the market; a gong tells everyone when there is hot food available so that no one misses out. There is no wastage because it is in such high demand in the village.

Leisong and the other women vendors work on a rotation schedule based on family units so that the market can open every day.

*Epau Ring Road Market is on the island of Efate and is one of five ring road markets in Vanuatu participating in the Markets for Change project.*



## FIJI

Fiji has an estimated population of 880,000<sup>4</sup> spread across 322 islands and 522 smaller islets. The majority of the population lives on the two main islands – Viti Levu, which hosts both the capital city of Suva and the tourist hub of Nadi, and Vanua Levu. The country has two main population groups: Itaukei (57%) and Indo-Fijian (37%)<sup>5</sup>.

The World Bank classifies Fiji as an "upper middle income" country, but just over 35% of its population are estimated to be living below the poverty line<sup>6</sup>. About 39% of women in Fiji aged 15 years and over are categorised as economically active, women make up one-third of those involved in informal sector economic activities, and they form 30% of the non-agricultural workforce<sup>7</sup>. In fact, women actively participate in almost all aspects of agricultural production from farming to marketing, food processing, distribution and export processing.

Rural women typically farm land that belongs to their male relatives as father-to-son inheritance practices tend to make it difficult, if not impossible, for women to own land<sup>8</sup>.

While each of the markets that UN Women works with is different, there are some common issues that the Markets for Change project is looking to help market vendors and management resolve:

- Lack of disabled access.
- Weak grievance processes that make it difficult for vendors, especially women, to raise issues and concerns.
- Non-existent or inactive market vendors' associations and where they do exist there is a lack of women in executive committee positions.
- A lack of understanding and awareness of market bylaws, where they exist.
- A lack of access and opportunities for training to strengthen capacity in areas such as financial literacy, communications and leadership.
- A lack of infrastructure that caters to the specific needs and interests of female market vendors, such as overnight accommodation facilities and enough covered space for stalls.



## ON THE GROUND

The Markets for Change team in Fiji is currently working with nine municipal markets on Fiji's main island Viti Levu, as well as one on Vanua Levu. This involves working closely with two city councils and seven town councils, as well as the Fijian government through the Ministry for Local Government, Urban Development, Environment and Housing.

Under the current structure, each town council has a special administrator who oversees policy and decision-making, including chairing the market committee for any municipal market that falls within their region. The market master is responsible for day-to-day administration and operations.

The Markets for Change Project Management Committee for Fiji convened its first meeting in August 2014 with 100 per cent participation from its key stakeholders. This committee will play an instrumental part in shaping the project in Fiji and ensuring it is implemented effectively. It will meet every six months, with members providing quarterly updates on what is happening at market project sites.

### TAVUA MARKET

Tavua was declared a town in 1992, but its market was established in 1945. A market extension was built in 2004 and the site currently has the capacity of 326 stalls, with around 270 currently in use. The recent addition of water storage tanks, along with improvements to drainage systems, have provided vendors with water reserves and sanitation facilities for use during regular water disruptions or flooding.

### BA MARKET

The Ba Market is located in the western division of Fiji, around 37km from Lautoka and 62km from Nadi. Most of the female market vendors buy their produce either from wholesalers – who usually arrive at the market between 2am and 5am – or direct from the farm. Some of these vendors come from remote villages, taking as long as four hours to arrive at the market.

### LAUTOKA MARKET

Located immediately north of the town's central business district, Lautoka Market serves the north-east sector of Fiji and is accessible to the Yasawa Islands communities. The town is an emerging industrial centre and the market is an important additional source of income for seasonal workers in the sugar industry.

### NAMAKA MARKET

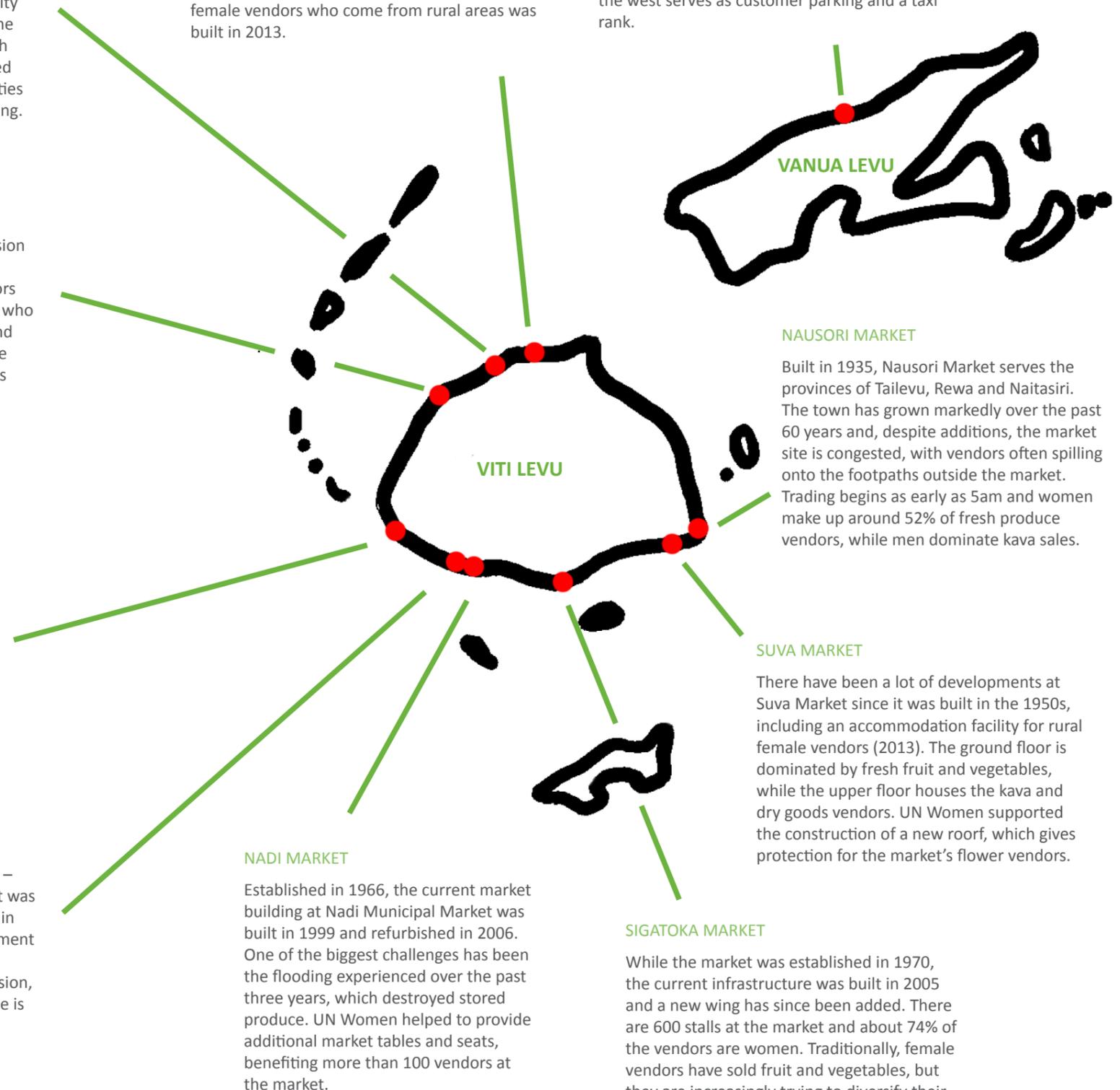
Namaka Market operates 12 hours a day – from 7am to 7pm – seven days a week. It was built in 2005 and is strategically situated in an area that attracts expatriates, government departments and tourists. The growing demand for space necessitated an extension, which was added in 2010, however, space is still an issue.

### RAKIRAKI MARKET

Situated on Crown land with a 99-year lease, Rakiraki Market – also known as Vaileka Market – was built in the 1970s. Around 54% of the market vendors are women, most of whom buy their produce wholesale. An accommodation block for female vendors who come from rural areas was built in 2013.

### LABASA MARKET

Vanua Levu's main produce market is situated on the banks of the Labasa River, north-west of the town's commercial centre and next to the bus station. Customers can access the market from the river via a wooden jetty and a paved area to the west serves as customer parking and a taxi rank.



### VANUA LEVU

### NAUSORI MARKET

Built in 1935, Nausori Market serves the provinces of Tailevu, Rewa and Naitasiri. The town has grown markedly over the past 60 years and, despite additions, the market site is congested, with vendors often spilling onto the footpaths outside the market. Trading begins as early as 5am and women make up around 52% of fresh produce vendors, while men dominate kava sales.

### SUVA MARKET

There have been a lot of developments at Suva Market since it was built in the 1950s, including an accommodation facility for rural female vendors (2013). The ground floor is dominated by fresh fruit and vegetables, while the upper floor houses the kava and dry goods vendors. UN Women supported the construction of a new roof, which gives protection for the market's flower vendors.

### SIGATOKA MARKET

While the market was established in 1970, the current infrastructure was built in 2005 and a new wing has since been added. There are 600 stalls at the market and about 74% of the vendors are women. Traditionally, female vendors have sold fruit and vegetables, but they are increasingly trying to diversify their produce to include kava, grocery items and handicrafts.

### NADI MARKET

Established in 1966, the current market building at Nadi Municipal Market was built in 1999 and refurbished in 2006. One of the biggest challenges has been the flooding experienced over the past three years, which destroyed stored produce. UN Women helped to provide additional market tables and seats, benefiting more than 100 vendors at the market.

## BA MARKET

The Ba market is managed by the Ba Town Council, which employs a market master, two supervisors and eight attendants.

**Infrastructure:** The market consists of a single storey concrete building and its stalls are mostly run by vendors who have rented them for the entire year. The toilets are in good condition and are regularly maintained by the council's market staff. There is a restaurant within the market facility.

**Vendors:** Most women vendors buy their produce wholesale, either at the market or direct from the farm. Many of them are sole traders and the market is often their main source of income. Women vendors who need to stay at the market can now sleep in the multipurpose overnight accommodation facility that was co-funded by UN Women.

**Challenges:** The 2012 floods had an impact on vendors and the market through destruction of produce, and damage and losses. The market's governance and decision-making processes are dominated by men, so support is needed to increase the awareness and understanding of women vendors' needs, strengthen their representation on the market vendors' association and engage them on any proposed changes to the market. There also needs to be encouragement and skills strengthening for women, in order to support the sharing of ideas with each other and speaking out on issues that matter to them.

## LABASA MARKET

The main produce market on the island of Vanua Levu, Labasa market is run by the Labasa Town Council, which employs a market master and four staff members.

**Infrastructure:** The market comprises several buildings, including a large produce hall, a second smaller produce hall, a fish co-op and a free-standing toilet block. A wooden jetty provides access from the river. There is a paved area west of the market that serves as customer parking and a taxi rank.

**Vendors:** Traders at Labasa market include wholesalers and producers from outlying rural areas and islands. Vendors coming from the interior of Vanua Levu arrive on Thursday or Friday and stay in the town for several days; some of them choose to stay at the market. Women account for around 70% of fresh produce vendors, while men dominate the kava sales.

**Challenges:** There are a number of areas of concern when it comes to health and hygiene. There are no taps in the men's toilets; hand-washing is done at outdoor taps that are near to where fresh food produce is also cleaned. There is also concern that untreated effluent from the toilet block is being discharged directly into Labasa River. The market is situated on flood-prone land and was inundated to a depth of 30cm during a cyclone in 2009.

## LAUTOKA MARKET

Management of Lautoka market is Lautoka City Council's responsibility. It is open to the public from 7am-5.30pm Monday to Friday, and from 5am-4pm on Saturdays.

**Infrastructure:** Lautoka's market has two principal buildings,

the smaller of which has concrete walls and a corrugated asbestos roof. The fresh produce market is housed in an adjoining open-plan octagonal building. Lautoka market is a major intra-island bus terminus and the bus bay is largely unsealed or is coated with loose gravel, causing dust problems for vendors and customers. Rats and vermin are a particular problem.

**Vendors:** The majority of vendors at Lautoka market are from the western districts and around 70% of the fresh produce vendors are women; men dominate the kava and live poultry sales as well as the Indo-Fijian sweets carts. Women staying overnight at the market sleep in a group, accompanied by male relatives for added security.

**Challenges:** Market management has identified several areas where change is needed, the majority of which are related to physical infrastructure. The asbestos roofing materials need to be replaced and the release of hydrocarbons by the buses needs to be minimised. Roof ventilation needs to be improved and the amount of natural light filtering into the market needs to be increased. Pedestrian safety on the market site needs to be improved, the fish market needs refurbishing and ideally the area of the market under permanent shelter needs to be increased.

## NADI MARKET

The market in Nadi is run by the Nadi Town Council, which employs the market master and three staff members. Just over 400 vendors work at the market and, as a tourist town, Nadi attracts vendors from as far away as Suva and Nausori.

**Infrastructure:** The current Nadi market building was constructed in 1999, and the market was refurbished in 2006. The market fills the site it occupies, making any extension to accommodate demand difficult. Revenue from the user-pays toilet facilities pays to maintain the block.

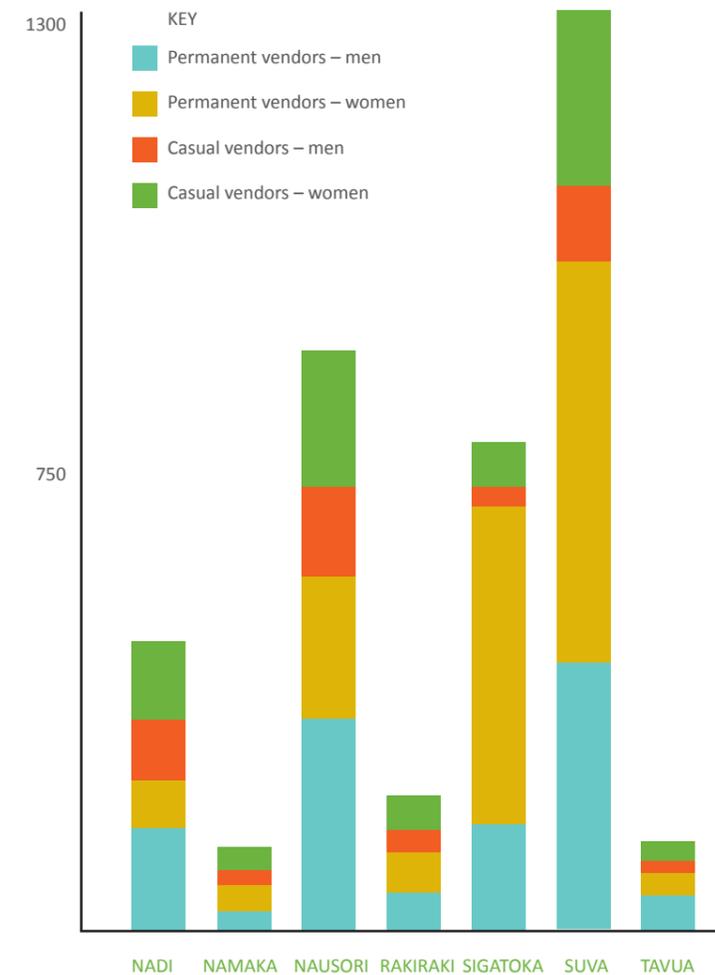
**Vendors:** Permanent vendors at Nadi market pay their fees on a weekly basis to reserve space, while casual vendors pay on a daily basis for unreserved space. Grievances are lodged on a one-on-one basis with market management and the market master addresses the issues daily. Vendors unhappy with the outcome can take their case to the president of the market vendors' association, and if necessary to the council management's monthly meeting.

**Challenges:** Nadi market has experienced several instances of serious flooding over the past three years, including two in January and March 2012 that destroyed all produce stored at the market facility. Vendor fees were waived while the market was closed for cleaning and casual fees were charged for the three months that followed to help vendors get back on their feet. The market vendors' association has been operating for more than 20 years and the executive committee is split 70/30 between men and women. Only about a quarter of vendors are association members.

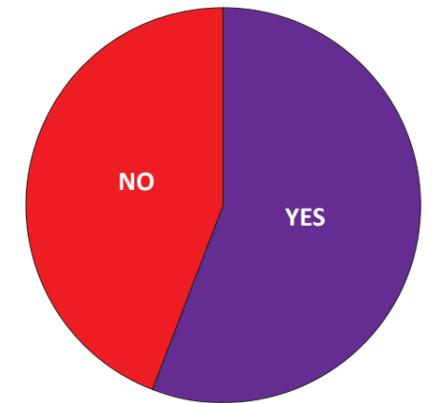
## NAMAKA MARKET

The Namaka market falls within the purview of the Nadi Town Council and therefore is managed by the same staff as the Nadi market. The market operates 12 hours a day, seven days a week.

GRAPH 1: MARKET VENDORS PROFILE



GRAPH 2: EXISTING MARKET VENDOR ASSOCIATIONS



*NOTE: Graph 1 is based on information gathered from seven of the 10 Councils for Change works with as part of a UN Women baseline survey conducted in 2013. Graph 2 also includes information from Labasa, Lautoka and Ba, which was gathered during a UN Women baseline study in 2011 and re-validated in 2014.*

## IN MY OWN WORDS: DIANA VAKAREWA, FIJI

"My name is Diana Vakarewa and I am 65 years old.

I work for myself, spending 12 hours a day, six days a week selling banana, pawpaw and cabbage at Nausori Market, which is a 20 -minute bus ride from my home in Makoi, Nasinu.

I took part in the workshops here at the Nausori Market because I wanted to know more about the Markets for Change "Getting Started" Toolkit.

The workshop taught me how to build good relationships and, more importantly, how to work with the Nausori Town Council.

I really enjoyed the interaction with other vendors and the workshop was really good for building relationships with other vendors that we would normally hardly associate with. It has broadened my knowledge about the market bylaws and the existence of an association."

*Diana participated in the Getting Started workshops at Nausori Market in June 2014.*



**Physical environment:** Namaka market is relatively new but has already been extended due to demand for space, which continues to be an issue. The building is an open structure with a capacity of around 100 stalls, allocated on a first come, first serve basis. A security guard is employed by Nadi Town Council to guard the facility at night and ensure no produce is stolen. Plans for expansion have been drawn up, including facilities to improve disabled access.

**Social environment:** Market management estimate that around 60 to 70 vendors – 68% of whom are women – use the markets during the week, with an extra 20 on Saturdays. There is no existing market vendors’ association, however, an interim committee was established in 2013.

**Challenges:** The grievance mechanisms at Namaka market need to be strengthened so that vendors, especially women, can voice their concerns freely through effective channels. Vendors currently do not have access to training that would help increase family incomes and contribute to the local economic development.

## NAUSORI MARKET

Nausori market is run by the Nausori Town Council and was originally built in 1935.

**Infrastructure:** The current market site has become congested, with stalls blocking footpaths, parking bays, loading zones and entrances, causing incidents between pedestrians and vehicles. Construction has begun on a new market at a different site which will hold up to 1800 stalls. It is expected to be completed in 2015.

**Vendors:** Approximately 60% of the 820 market vendors working at Nausori market are women, and the majority of them grow their own fruit and vegetables for sale. Most vendors use buses or trucks to reach the market and

individual journeys can exceed three hours. Vendors have participated in training organised by Westpac Banking Corporation, UN Women and the council.

**Challenges:** Around 90% of the executive committee positions at the Nausori Farmers Market Vendors Association are held by men, which was part of the reason for the creation of the Women’s Club in 2012. Membership of both organisations is low as many vendors are not clear on the benefits they offer.

## RAKIRAKI MARKET

Management of Rakiraki market is the responsibility of Rakiraki Town Council. The market operates six days a week.

**Infrastructure:** The current market was built before Rakiraki was declared a town and the facility is now being extended to provide additional space. This includes an extension to the existing ablution block, co-financed by UN Women, as well as an overnight accommodation facility for women vendors. Permanent vendors pay fees on a weekly basis to reserve space, while casual vendors pay a daily fee for unreserved space.

**Vendors:** Overall, about 54% of market vendors at Rakiraki market are women and most of them buy their produce wholesale, either at the market or directly from the farm. A resource learning centre has been added, funded by UNDP, providing a location for regular communication and education, as well as capacity building programmes. The Ministry of Health has used the facility for free medical screening for women vendors and the police have used it to talk to women about safety.

**Challenges:** The grievance mechanisms need to be strengthened so that vendors, especially women, can voice their concerns freely through effective channels. While women have a good level of representation in the existing

market vendors’ association, the key positions are held by men and the committee has not been very active in addressing issues women have at the market.

## SIGATOKA MARKET

Sigatoka’s market is run by the Sigatoka Town Council and was established in 1970.

**Infrastructure:** The current building was constructed in 2005 and a new wing has since been added. The on-site toilet and bathroom facilities are on a user-pays system and a female attendant is employed.

**Vendors:** Around 74% of fresh produce vendors as well as the majority of seafood sellers are women. The main customers are town residents, but as a major settlement of Fiji’s “Coral Coast”, many resorts, hotels and restaurants also source their fresh produce from the market. Vendors can take any grievances to the market master on a one-on-one basis. There is currently no market vendors’ association.

**Challenges:** Complaints and problems raised by vendors range from concerns about the distribution of stalls and unclean toilets, to violence, stealing and abusive language, the majority of which can be dealt with at market management level. The council is also concerned about women vendors who sleep at the market overnight. The council provides security but there are no sleeping facilities or showers.

## SUVA MARKET

The Suva market is maintained and controlled by Suva City Council. The market is regarded as the second highest revenue earner for the council after city rates.

**Infrastructure:** The market has a two-storey building with an open central core that allows natural light into both

levels. Vendors have set up stalls on the footpaths around the market building in the hopes of drawing customers from passing foot-traffic. There is an overnight accommodation facility for women vendors, which is also used as a resource and training centre.

**Vendors:** Around 63% of the vendors working at Suva market are women, and they make up 70% of the casual vendors, who are often selling outside the main market building.

**Challenges:** The vendors’ association only has a membership of 145 out of 1300 vendors, and while the split of executive committee members is 50/50 between men and women, men still dominate key positions. There is a lack of awareness among vendors of the benefits association membership offers.

## TAVUA MARKET

Since 1992, Tavua market has been under the control of Tavua Town Council.

**Infrastructure:** The market has a capacity of 326 stalls, with 270 currently in use. There are seven separate toilet facilities for males and females, however, there is no special facility for people living with disabilities. Funding has been received for a market extension and the council has plans to relocate the market to a site just behind its existing location.

**Vendors:** Just under half of the vendors at Tavua market are women, but they make up the majority of casual vendors. There is currently no vendors’ association at Tavua, all issues can be lodged directly with the market master on a personal basis.

**Challenges:** The capacity of both the council and market management needs to be enhanced so that they engage with each other on market governance. The grievance process needs to be strengthened so that vendors, especially women, can voice their concerns freely through effective channels.

## IN MY OWN WORDS: CHRISTINE KUMAR, NAUSORI

“My husband and I manage a stall at Nausori market selling onions, potatoes, garlic and chicken feed. We are there from 6.30am-6pm, six days a week.

I came to the workshop to learn more about market bylaws and where to take my grievances if there are any problems at the market.

I really enjoyed the mapping exercise, which helped me get to know some of the other market vendors. The workshop has definitely improved my communications skills, which will also help to improve my relationship with fellow market vendors.

Until today, I only saw myself as a vendor; I didn’t know that the Nausori Market Vendors Association or the Women’s Club existed. Now that I know, I will inform my fellow market vendors of the benefits of assisting each other and why it is important to join the association.”

*Christine participated in the Getting Started workshops at Nausori Market in June 2014.*





## SOLOMON ISLANDS

Solomon Islands remains relatively poor and faces some serious economic challenges. It currently sits at 157 out of 187 on the United Nations' Human Development Index<sup>9</sup> and is categorised as a "least developed country".

A "small island developing state", Solomon Islands includes six main islands and numerous other small islands scattered across more than 1300 square metres of the Pacific Ocean<sup>10</sup>. Rural areas and outer island economies are semi-subsistence, which is part of the reason that markets play such a large part in providing for the income and nutritional needs of the country's population of just over 560,000<sup>11</sup>.

Women are responsible for the production of the majority of subsistence foods; just over 75% of the women who are in employment in Solomon Islands (around 60% of the female population) are participating in subsistence work<sup>12</sup>. Men, on the other hand, tend to be more involved in the production, sale and marketing of more financially lucrative cash crops.

Women play a critical role in the Solomon Islands' economy, as both producers and sellers of produce at the market. They are responsible for the majority of fresh fruit and vegetable marketing, both as bulk buyers and retailers. The markets of Honiara and Auki, therefore, play a significant role in Solomon Islands' socioeconomic development.

While the Markets for Change Project has four outcome areas across all three countries, there are several areas of particular focus for the two Solomon Islands sites, including:

- Support in improving market infrastructure and facilities
- Support in the creation of market vendors' associations.
- Lack of access for people living with disabilities.
- Lack of access to organised savings schemes.
- Improving food handling and hygiene standards, as well as proper food storage and protection of foodstuffs.
- Technical support in reviewing outdated bylaws or creating new ones.
- Security and theft.

## ON THE GROUND

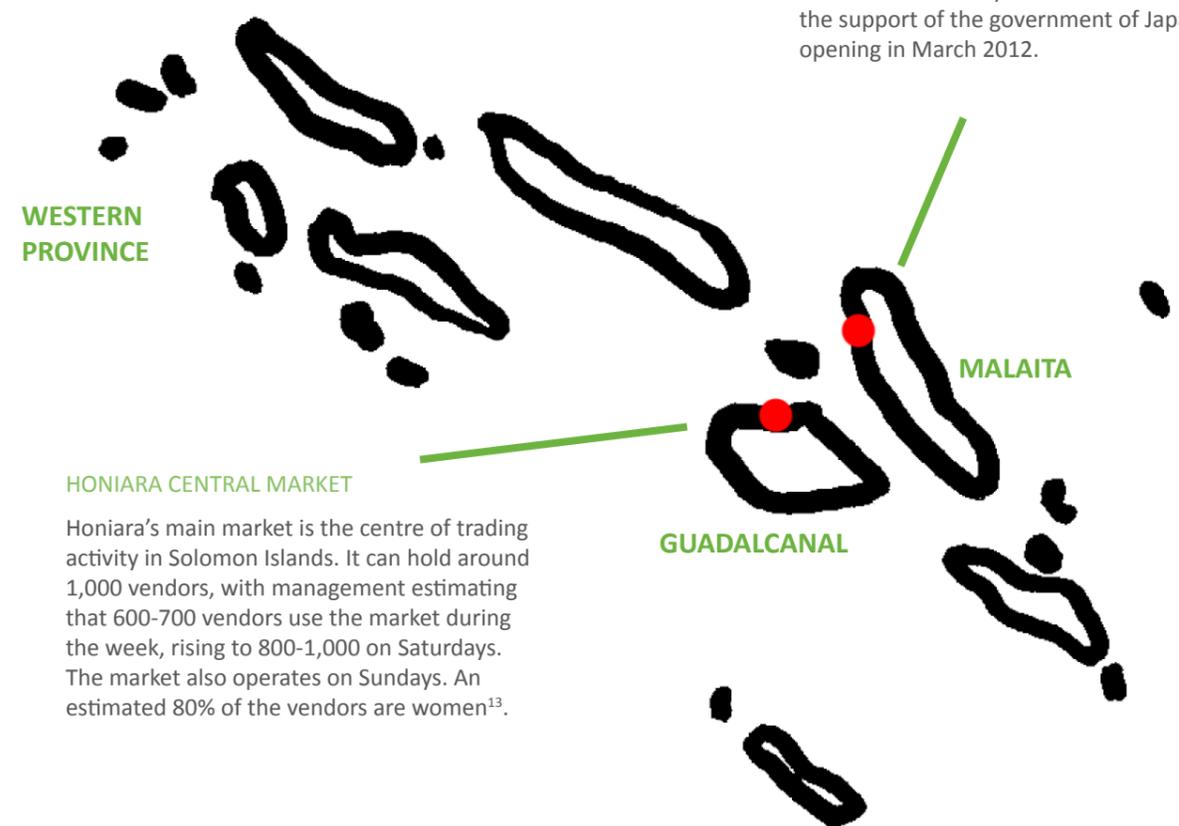
Through the Markets for Change project, UN Women works with two markets in Solomon Islands – Auki in Malaita Province and Honiara Central Market – which involves working closely with the Honiara City Council and the Malaita Provincial Government.

The project is working with female vendors, with a focus on strengthening women's economic empowerment. Support is also required to establish a market vendors' association through which market vendors can work together to collectively influence improvements in the marketplace as well as take advantage of opportunities usually afforded to registered organisations.

The Markets for Change Project Management Committee for Solomon Islands convened its first meeting in August 2014, bringing together key stakeholder representatives. This committee will play an instrumental part in shaping the project in Solomon Islands and ensuring it is implemented effectively. It will meet every quarterly, with members providing updates on what is happening at market project sites.

### AUKI MARKET

Auki and its market serve as the main economic link between Honiara and the rural villages of the Malaitan highlands. The market was recently moved and rebuilt with the support of the government of Japan, opening in March 2012.



### HONIARA CENTRAL MARKET

Honiara's main market is the centre of trading activity in Solomon Islands. It can hold around 1,000 vendors, with management estimating that 600-700 vendors use the market during the week, rising to 800-1,000 on Saturdays. The market also operates on Sundays. An estimated 80% of the vendors are women<sup>13</sup>.

## AUKI MARKET

Auki is situated on the northern end of Langalanga Lagoon on the north-west coast of Malaita Province. The market is managed by the Malaita Provincial Government. The market employs a total of 19 people, including a market manager, as well as four cleaners.

The town's population is small so a major challenge is expanding the customer base and diversifying the products for sale. At the moment, many Auki vendors travel to Honiara Central Market to sell their excess produce. This involves travelling by truck and boat, which can be a long and expensive journey.

Partnerships with local businesses or the tourism board that could help promote steady sourcing of local produce from women vendors – and therefore help diversify income streams – could be improved.

For many vendors, getting to Auki in time to start selling their produce involves taking crowded trucks at night that travel along roads that are in poor condition. Some of their male travelling companions are also likely to be drunk.

There is no lighting at Auki Market, which is a big issue for market vendors, who often arrive at the market in the early hours of the morning. This poses a particular security risk for women vendors.

There are currently no bylaws in place for Auki Market, something vendors indicated during early consultations was a priority. The bylaws are seen as a starting point for improved infrastructure development.

While the new market vendors' association has not yet formally been established, the newly elected executive committee is in the process of completing the necessary tasks to do so. The committee has also received the draft constitution. It is hoped that the association will help strengthen communication between the different groups involved in running the market, helping ensure it is responsive to the needs of all vendors.

## HONIARA CENTRAL MARKET

The centre of trading activity for Solomon Islands, Honiara Central Market is an economic anchor for the community and the country. It is located along the main street of Honiara, at the centre of the city's commercial area. The market's stallholders sell everything from fruits and vegetables to fish, curios and handicrafts. It is open 6am-6pm from Mondays to Sundays.

The market building is open-walled and many vendors sell their wares from outside the structure. Some have no shade from the sun or shelter from inclement weather, while others have no seats or benches.

The fish and meat vendors are based at the back of the market building; poor drainage and a lack of hygiene practices means the area smells. An inconsistent supply of piped water means fishermen must often wash their fish in sea water, posing potential health risks as liquid waste from both the hospital and the market is discharged into the sea close to the market areas.

Many vendors, especially those from the Provinces, sleep overnight at the market. While security guards are employed and a police post is located close to the market, criminal activity, including sexual harassment, continues to occur.

Vendors' views have largely not been incorporated into planning and management at the market, however, it is hoped that the newly established market vendors' association will help address this.

Accessing financial services is particularly difficult for market vendors due to the fact they do not have formal employers and may be intimidated by the long and sometimes complex processes. In August 2013, UN Women facilitated a partnership between Bank South Pacific (BSP) and Honiara City Council that saw BSP take its services into the market. The council facilitated the issuing of papers allowing the bank to waive identification and other requirements. This resulted in more than 150 vendors opening bank counts.



## VANUATU

Vanuatu has emerged as one of the fastest growing economies in the Pacific region. Before the global financial crisis growth was averaging 6%<sup>14</sup> and between 2012 and 2013 gross domestic product (GDP) growth moved from 1.2% to 3.5%<sup>15</sup>. This growth is mainly driven by foreign investment in tourism and land development.

However, Vanuatu is currently ranked 131 out of 187<sup>16</sup> countries on the United Nations' Human Development Index and is classed as a "least developed country", although a resolution adopted by the General Assembly in December 2013 states that Vanuatu will graduate from this status in four years' time<sup>17</sup>. Around 12.7%<sup>18</sup> of the country's population of 252,800<sup>19</sup> is said to live below the poverty line.

Women account for around 36% of those in the formal employment sector, 39% of the non-agricultural workforce, and 28% of unpaid subsistence workers<sup>20</sup>. A national survey on women's lives carried out in 2011 showed that 80% of women earned money and of those also living with a man (either married or de facto), over half earned about

the same or more than their husband/partner<sup>21</sup>. Despite this, less than one in five have savings in the bank and few women own any major assets on their own<sup>22</sup>.

While the Markets for Change project has four outcome areas across all three countries, there are several areas of particular focus for Vanuatu, including:

- Apart from Port Vila Market, there are no bylaws covering the markets that M4C works with, and where there are bylaws there is little awareness or understanding of them.
- Facilities that need upgrading, or, as in the case of several of the SHEFA ring-road markets, unfinished or a complete lack of permanent infrastructure.
- Vulnerability of existing infrastructure to adverse weather conditions and disasters.
- Lack of grievance mechanisms for vendors.
- Lack of disabled access to the markets.
- Lack of awareness of gender-responsive budgeting.



# ON THE GROUND

In Vanuatu, Markets for Change works with three city markets – Luganville City Market, Port Vila City Market and Marobe Market – as well as five ring-road markets in SHEFA Province – Mangaliliu, Epau, Mele-Matt, Emua, Paunagisu. This involves working in partnership with the Luganville Municipal Council, Port Vila Municipal Council and the SHEFA Provincial Government.

Luganville and Port Vila markets each have a market manager responsible for the day-to-day operations. The SHEFA ring-road markets are located on community-owned land, the vendors create their stalls and the markets are run by the communities. Area councillors have a committee responsible for putting together the budget for each of the ring-road markets.

Women make up the majority of vendors at all the markets UN Women works with, although they may be assisted by their partners or other male family members.

## SHEFA RING ROAD MARKETS

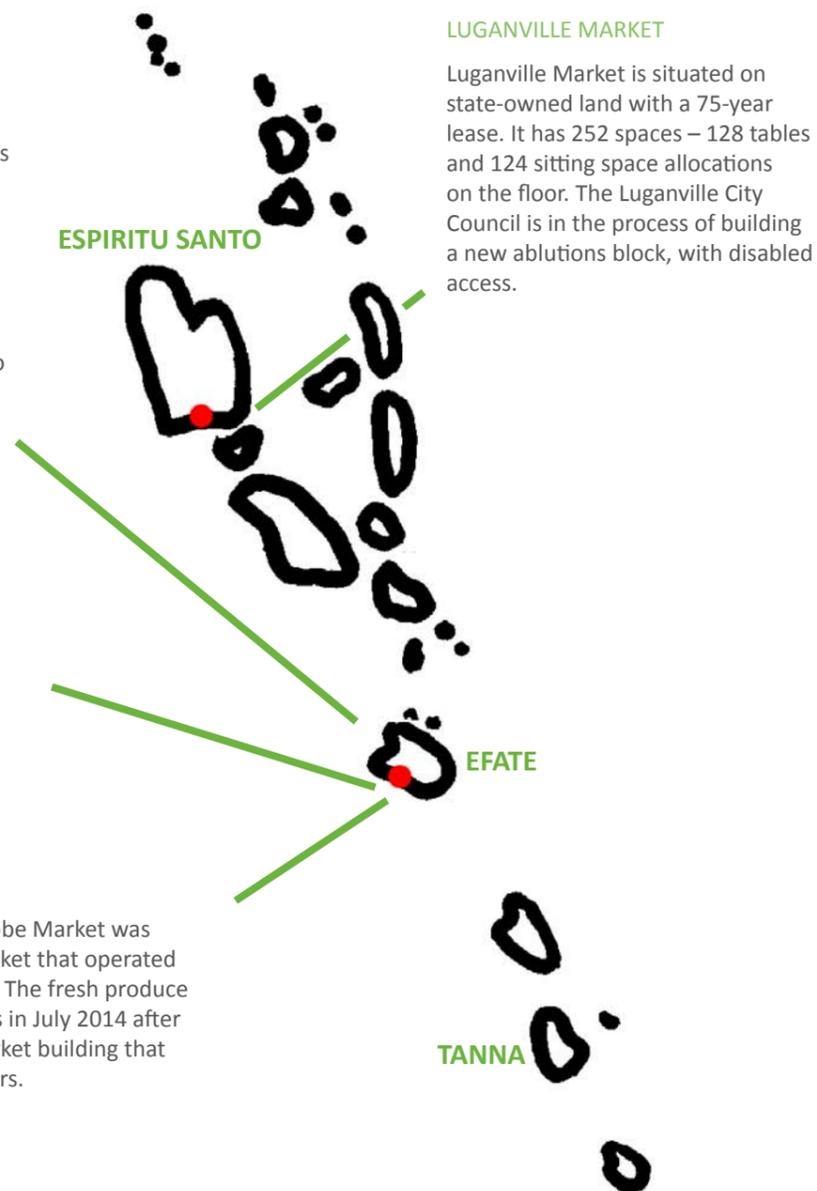
UN Women works with five ring road markets around the island of Efate: Mangaliliu, Epau, Mele-Matt, Emua and Paunagisu. The goods for sale vary according to what each village produces and each market has around 20-30 stalls depending on crops and weather conditions. The markets are open from Monday to midday on Saturday, but may also open on a Sunday if a cruise ship is in town.

## PORT VILA MARKET

Situated on the capital city's waterfront, the Port Vila City Market was built in the 1970s. There are about 100 stalls at the market on any given day, allocated on a first come, first serve basis, with the flower vendors sitting out in the open. Vendors mostly come from Tanna and Efate islands.

## MAROBE MARKET

Located in Port Vila, Marobe Market was previously a livestock market that operated once a week each month. The fresh produce market started operations in July 2014 after the opening of a new market building that can house 100-150 vendors.



## LUGANVILLE MARKET

Luganville Market is situated on state-owned land with a 75-year lease. It has 252 spaces – 128 tables and 124 sitting space allocations on the floor. The Luganville City Council is in the process of building a new ablutions block, with disabled access.

## PORT VILA MARKET

Port Vila Market is located on land that is subject to a 75-year lease agreement between the Government of the Republic of Vanuatu and the Port Vila Municipal Council. The council employs 14 staff including a market manager, three cleaners and four security guards.

There are around 100 stalls at the Port Vila market on any given day and it is open from Monday to midday Saturday. Vendors come mostly from the islands of Tanna and Efate, while the taro sellers come from other islands such as Pentecost.

None of the stalls are “owned”, they are instead allocated on a first come, first serve basis and vendors pay a daily fee. Consideration is given to separate spaces for vendors who prefer to sit with other vendors from their own communities. Vendors supply their own seating. Flower vendors sit outside at Port Vila market and have no shelter.

The market's budget is drawn up in consultation between the market manager and the produce section heads before being submitted to the council for approval. The market is also funded through Telecom Vanuatu Ltd and Digicel Vanuatu, which each pay rent for their small kiosks. Musicians pay fees for showcasing their work on-site, and the council charges landing and loading fees to the passenger boat MV Big Sista that docks by the market.

The council recently extended the market building to provide space for the cooked food vendors, however, the toilet facilities are in need of repair and refurbishment. While the council is aware of this, the market's location makes it difficult to come up with a solution. The market sits on reclaimed seafront land, which means the toilets are

affected by tidal surges.

A rubbish tip is located at the back of the market site, which is used by vendors and the general public. Further work is needed to deal with the smell.

There is no storage at the market, so vendors often sleep at the market to guard their produce. While there are paid security guards on duty, female vendors have expressed safety concerns.

Port Vila Market has market bylaws but they are not displayed and there is little awareness among vendors that they exist. There are two vendors' associations, one for the cooked food vendors, the other for raw produce.

There are no grievance mechanisms in place and vendors have indicated that they would like to see some kind of formal policies implemented so they know what to do when they would like to raise an issue.

## MAROBE MARKET

The Marobe market building only opened for business in July 2014. It was previously a livestock market that operated once a week each month.

The new building houses between 100 and 150 fresh produce vendors, many of who used to operate from illegal, makeshift structures along the roadsides, often spilling over on the footpaths and walkways of Port Vila Market. Vendors come mainly from the outlying islands of Tanna, Ambae, Maewa and Pentecost.

The building was a result of a partnership between the SHEFA Provincial Government and UN Women, with the support of UN Women's Australian National Committee.



## SHEFA RING ROAD MARKETS

Ring-road markets are located within or close to villages and vary in size and structure. They are all open Monday through to midday Saturdays, and may open on Sunday if a cruise ship is in town. Each market has between 20 and 30 stalls depending on crops and weather conditions.

The fact that these markets are run in and by local communities has advantages and disadvantages – security is not much of an issue as vendors take their produce home each night and they are close to their support groups, however, they also have no sanitation or water facilities available to vendors or customers.

SHEFA Provincial Council, in partnership with private funders, members of parliament and councillors, provided Mele-Matt and Epau with building materials to create permanent market structures. They are the only two ring-road markets in the Markets for Change project that have such facilities, although Epau's sanitation and water facilities remain unfinished. The infrastructure at Paunagisu and Emua is made from local materials and is only semi-permanent.

Mangaliliu market was demolished in an accident in 2013 and has not been re-established. The women vendors are hesitant to sit in the same location to sell their produce as they are concerned for their safety.

Repairs to all structures are carried out by the relevant community using local materials.

None of the SHEFA ring-road markets employ staff members as they are operated by the vendors themselves.

Market vendors have not received any training, but have indicated they would be interested in any training that would help them improve their earning potential.

## LUGANVILLE MARKET

Located on the main street of Luganville on the island of Spiritu Santo, Luganville Market is situated at the western end of the commercial centre on the banks of the Sarakata River. It is open from 7am-7pm Monday to Friday and until 2pm on Saturday.

The market is the responsibility of the Luganville Municipal Council, and is on land that is subject to a 75-year lease between the council and the national government. The market employs two staff, two part-time cleaners and security.

The administration arm of the council draws up the budget in consultation with the market manager; income from the market is in a separate account and accounts are regularly given to the committee for their information.

In 2012 the New Zealand government provided funding to lay a concrete pavement at the front of the market, but maintenance is required for the current roof structure. The council is in the process of building new toilets and showers, including disability access.

Vendors at Luganville come from Big Bay, West Coast and East Santo. While security is employed at the market, there is no storage space so many vendors sleep at the market to guard their produce. As such, the council has acknowledged that an accommodation block for vendors to sleep in overnight.

Stalls are allocated on a first come, first serve basis, although allowances are made for vendors who prefer to sit with others from their community. There is an admitted need for more table space to allow for the increasing number of vendors.

While there are no specific grievance mechanisms in place, the committee at Luganville market looks at issues raised in an informal way and has asked for support in developing a more formal grievance process.



PHOTOS (Clockwise from above): Jeremy Brueur (Australian High Commissioner to Vanuatu), Preeya Ieli (UN Women), Alfred Carlot (Minister of Justice and Community Services, Vanuatu) at the Vanuatu M4C launch; Fresh produce for sale at Port Vila Market, Vanuatu; a market vendor in Vanuatu; Market vendors, invited guests and the M4C team at the Solomon Islands launch.

## CREATING CHANGE THROUGH PARTNERSHIPS

The success of the Markets for Change project in each country depends on the active involvement of all stakeholders and partners. To this end, each country has its own project management committee and Vanuatu's committee convened its first meeting on July 31.

Attended by representatives from all six of the project's prime stakeholders – Department of Local Authority, Department of Women's Affairs, Port Vila Municipal Council, Luganville Municipal Council, SHEFA Provincial Government Council, Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade – the meeting covered the implementation of project activities, progress on outputs and outcomes and reporting to the Regional Project Board.

Cherol Ala, director of the Local Authority Association of Vanuatu, attended the meeting and says she expects to see funds generated by the markets re-invested into the services they provide.

She pointed in particular to financial literacy, which UN Women research had shown was a challenge for vendors.



# FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup> [http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/policy/cdp/ldc/ldc\\_list.pdf](http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/policy/cdp/ldc/ldc_list.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> United Nations (2012) World Millennium Development Goals Report

<sup>3</sup> [http://www.forumsec.org/resources/uploads/attachments/documents/2013\\_Pac\\_Regional\\_MDGs\\_Tracking\\_Report\\_FINAL.pdf](http://www.forumsec.org/resources/uploads/attachments/documents/2013_Pac_Regional_MDGs_Tracking_Report_FINAL.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> <http://data.worldbank.org/country/fiji>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.statsfiji.gov.fj/>

<sup>6</sup> <http://data.worldbank.org/country/fiji>

<sup>7</sup> [http://www.forumsec.org/resources/uploads/attachments/documents/2011%20Pacific%20Regional%20MDGs%20Tracking%20Report\\_FINAL.pdf](http://www.forumsec.org/resources/uploads/attachments/documents/2011%20Pacific%20Regional%20MDGs%20Tracking%20Report_FINAL.pdf)

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.unwomenpacific.org/resources/uploads/attachments/documents/Rural%20Pacific%20Island%20Women%20and%20Agriculture%20-%20A%20Literature%20Review%20and%20Annotated%20Bibliography%20HR.pdf>

<sup>9</sup> <http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/table-1-human-development-index-and-its-components>

<sup>10</sup> UNDAF country assessment

<sup>11</sup> <http://data.worldbank.org/country/solomon-islands>

<sup>12</sup> <http://www.spc.int/images/publications/en/Divisions/Hdp/solomon-islands-gender-stocktake.pdf>

<sup>13</sup> Stanley, J. A Survey of the Economic Performance of Selected Markets in the Solomon Islands and Papua New Guinea, UN Women 2009, unpublished.

<sup>14</sup> UNDAF country assessment

<sup>15</sup> <http://www.adb.org/countries/vanuatu/economy>

<sup>16</sup> <http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/table-1-human-development-index-and-its-components>

<sup>17</sup> [http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/policy/cdp/ldc/ldc\\_list.pdf](http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/policy/cdp/ldc/ldc_list.pdf)

<sup>18</sup> <http://www.adb.org/countries/vanuatu/main>

<sup>19</sup> <http://data.worldbank.org/country/vanuatu>

<sup>20</sup> 2009 National Population and Housing Census, Gender Monograph

<sup>21</sup> <http://aid.dfat.gov.au/countries/pacific/vanuatu/Documents/womens-centre-survey-womens-lives.pdf>

<sup>22</sup> *ibid.*

# IMAGES

Cover: Top: Market vendor at Suva market, Fiji, 2013. Credit: UN Women/Olivia Owen. Middle: Market vendor at M4C “Getting Started” workshop at Auki market, Solomon Islands, 2014. Credit: UN Women/Marni Gilbert. Bottom: Market vendor at ring road market, Vanuatu, 2013. Credit: UN Women/Patricia Kalpokas.

Page 4: Market vendors at Suva Market, Fiji, 2013. Credit: UN Women/Olivia Owen.

Page 5: Anisa Marama at the Suva Markets for Change workshop, Fiji, 2014. Credit: UN Women/Saleshni Chaudhary.

Page 6: Leisong and other market vendors at the Epau Ring Road Market, Efate, Vanuatu. Credit: UN Women/Olivia Owen.

Page 7: Fruit and vegetable vendors at Suva Market, Fiji, 2013. Credit: UN Women/Olivia Owen.

Page 8: Market vendor at Suva Market, Fiji, 2013. Credit: UN Women/Olivia Owen.

Page 11: Diana Vakarewa at the Nausori workshops, Fiji, 2014. Credit: UN Women/Saleshni Chaudhary.

Page 12: Christine Kumar at Nausori workshops, Fiji, 2014. Credit: UN Women/Saleshni Chaudhary.

Page 13: Vendor at Suva Market, Fiji, 2013. Credit: UN Women/Olivia Owen.

Page 14 and 16: Vendors participating in workshops at Auki Market, Solomon Islands, 2014. Credit: UN Women/Marni Gilbert.

Page 17: Market vendors at the Vanuatu launch of Markets for Change, Vanuatu, 2014. Credit: UN Women/Rachael Kong.

Page 19: Market vendors in Vanuatu, 2014. Credit: UN Women/Olivia Owen.

Page 20: Participants at the first Project Management Committee meeting in Port Vila, Vanuatu, 2014. Credit: Vanuatu Daily Post.

UN Women’s Fiji Multi-Country Office covers 14 Pacific Island Countries and Territories (PICTs): Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Republic of Marshall Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu.

It works with four key programmes: Women’s Economic Empowerment; Ending Violence Against Women; Advancing Gender Justice in the Pacific; and Increasing Community Resilience through Empowerment of Women to Address Climate Change and Natural Hazards Programme to progress with gender equality and women’s empowerment in the Pacific.

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