



THE UNIVERSITY OF
NEWCASTLE
AUSTRALIA



GENDER EQUALITY, DISABILITY AND SOCIAL INCLUSION (GEDSI) CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE CLIMATE INFORMATION SERVICES FOR RESILIENT DEVELOPMENT IN VANUATU (VAN-KIRAP) PROJECT

Final Report, October 2021

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INTRODUCTION

There is high confidence that anthropogenic global warming will reach 1.5°C between 2030 and 2052 if emissions continue to increase at their current rate (IPCC 2018), with dire consequences for our planet. Anthropogenic global warming, hereafter climate change, exacerbates the intensity, frequency and impacts of climate variability and its associated natural hazards, and Pacific Island countries and territories (PICTs) are disproportionately impacted (Averett 2016; Westerman 2019). This is largely due to the Pacific region's unique geographic, demographic, and socioeconomic characteristics, combined with its exposure to changing weather patterns associated with climate change, and the limited capacity of the countries to manage, adapt, and mitigate against climate risks and hazards (McIver et al., 2016; Woodward et al., 2014; SPC 2016). Climate change predictions for the Pacific include: an increase in extreme hot days and warm nights, extreme rainfall events, intensity of tropical cyclones in the South Pacific, sea level rise and ocean acidification (SPC 2016). PICTs are also highly exposed to a range of natural hazards including cyclones, volcanic eruptions, earthquakes, tsunamis, droughts, landslides, and floods. Climate change is increasing the risks of these weather-related disasters and posing new impacts to the region (SPC 2016). Climate change impacts also cause progressive long-term degradation to the natural environment, to critical ecosystems (e.g., coral reefs), and to social and economic systems, resulting in loss and damage to the system upon which Pacific Island communities depend for their subsistence and livelihoods (SPC 2016). These impacts of climate change will have damaging effects on agricultural productivity, biodiversity, and ecosystem services across the Pacific (Nelson et al., 2010), further undermining sustainable development efforts in the region (SPC 2016). Climate change is, therefore, widely acknowledged as one of the most pressing global threats to future human populations and international development (McIver et al., 2016; United Nations 2019), and as such investment in climate change adaptation (CCA) in the Pacific region is growing (Etkin and Ho 2007; Lata and Nunn 2012).

Vanuatu, an archipelago in the South Pacific Ocean comprising of 83 islands, is highly exposed to climate hazards. It consistently rates as the country with highest disaster risk in the world, according to the UN University World Risk Report. Climate change amplifies these risks and addressing these risks is of the highest priority for the Government of Vanuatu (GoV). As such, in Vanuatu, the Green Climate Fund (GCF) has made an investment of USD\$18,106,905 and partnered with Vanuatu's Meteorology and Geo-Hazards Department (VMGD) and sectors over four years to deliver the Climate Information Services for Resilient Development Project in Vanuatu, known locally as Vanuatu Klaemet Infomesen blong Redy, Adapt mo Protekt (Van-KIRAP), hereafter, Van-KIRAP. Vanuatu's tropical climate, geographical position within the southern Pacific Ocean, and population's reliance on natural resources such as forests and fish, makes it particularly vulnerable to natural hazards such as floods, droughts, tropical cyclones, earthquakes, tsunamis, and volcanic eruptions and, therefore, to the effects of climate change (IPCC 2017). Through tailored climate information services (or CIS) for five targeted sectors - agriculture, water management, infrastructure, fisheries and tourism, tools, and institutional strengthening, Van-KIRAP aims to better prepare policy makers and communities for a changing climate.

Specific project goals include:

- Building technical capacity to harness and manage climate data,

- Developing practical CIS tools,
- Fostering the use of CIS tools, and
- Disseminating tailored climate information.

The project will assist in providing:

- New instruments to augment the observation network,
- Technical skills training for Vanuatu Meteorology and Geo-Hazards Department (VMGD) staff,
- Developing customized CIS tools and products for sectors and communities, and
- Establishing effective delivery and communication mechanisms to increase awareness, dissemination, and uptake.

The project, therefore, addresses climate adaptation needs at the government, sector, and community level. It also standardises the use of science-based climate information for decision-making. This is seen as a necessary foundation to underpin awareness-raising and long-term policy planning around climate change (Leannem 2018).

To have meaningful impact and create transformative and sustainable change, however, the Van-KIRAP project needs to consider gender equality, disability, and social inclusion (GEDSI). Climate change has a greater impact on those sections of the population, in all countries, that are most reliant on natural resources for their livelihoods and/or who have the least capacity to respond to natural hazards, such as droughts, landslides, floods and cyclones. Women commonly face higher risks and greater burdens from the impacts of climate change in situations of poverty, and the majority of the world's poor are women. Women's unequal participation in decision-making processes and labour markets, compounds inequalities and often prevent women from fully contributing to climate-related planning, policymaking, and implementation (United Nations 2020).

Yet, women can (and do) play a critical role in response to climate change due to their local knowledge of and leadership in, for example, sustainable resource management and/or leading sustainable practices at the household and community level. Women's participation at the political level has resulted in greater responsiveness to citizen's needs, often increasing cooperation across party and ethnic lines and delivering more sustainable peace. At the local level, women's inclusion at the leadership level has led to improved outcomes of climate related projects and policies. On the contrary, if policies or projects are implemented without women's meaningful participation it can increase existing inequalities and decrease effectiveness (United Nations 2020).

Key GEDSI aims of the Van-KIRAP project are to

- avoid adverse impacts on vulnerable and marginalised groups, especially individuals who are affected or potentially affected by Van-KIRAP project activities.
- avoid prejudice and discrimination in providing access to development resources and benefits.
- ensure all Van-KIRAP project activities are designed and implemented in a manner that promotes, protects, and fulfils universal respect for, and observance of human rights for all as recognised by the United Nations.

- ensure GEDSI considerations are mainstreamed into the Van-KIRAP project cycle to enhance the efficacy of climate change mitigation and adaptation interventions and ensure that gender co-benefits are obtained.

To facilitate the GEDSI objectives of the Van-KIRAP project this report aims to present the findings of a GEDSI analysis to provide:

1. understandings of the differentiated impacts of climate change on members of the community.
2. understandings of key challenges faced by women, people living with disabilities (PLWD), youth and members of the LGBTQI+ community in meaningful participation, decision making and leadership activities in Vanuatu society.
3. key GEDSI recommendations for Van-KIRAP project implementers.
4. A GEDSI Action Plan for Van-KIRAP project activities.

METHODS

The methods used to produce this report include a literature review, seven semi-structured interviews with key stakeholder representatives from government departments in Vanuatu (Department of Climate Change; Department of Women’s Affairs, Department of Environment) and sector leads in the Van-KIRAP project (fisheries, tourism, and agriculture) conducted in November 2019, ethnographic observation, and twenty-two focus group discussions in five separate target communities from three islands (Efate, Tanna and Santo across four project sectors (Table 1.). These sites were chosen for their cultural diversity, rural/urban distinction, and logistical ease, with our gender focal point accompanying project staff on their own visits.

These sites are key project target areas for four Van-KIRAP sector plans - fisheries, tourism, agriculture, and water. An infrastructure project site was not included in this analysis.

Table 1: Field site location, sector target and dates of visits

Community	Island	Sectors	Trip Dates
Epau	Efate	Fisheries	11, 17-18 th May 2021
Port Resolution	Tanna	Tourism	Monday 24 – Saturday 29th May 2021
Greenhill	Tanna	Agriculture	Sunday 30 May - Tuesday 1 June 2021
Lonnoc	Santo	Tourism	Thursday 24 June 2021 - Monday 28 June 2021
Sarakata	Santo	Water	Tuesday 29 June 2021 - Friday 1 July 2021

A total of 7 government stakeholders and 166 community participants were consulted for this report. Focus group discussions were disaggregated by group - male, female, youth, disability, and LGBTQI+ (Tables 2 - 6). In total, participants in this study include 93 women, 72 men, 1 gender non-binary, 41 youth, 11 people living with disabilities, and five people from the LGBTQI community.

Table 2: Epau community, number of focus group participants disaggregated by group and sex

Epau Community (Efate)		
Focus group		Participants
Women		8
Young women		3
Men		6
Youth	Male	3
	Female	3
PLWD	Male	1
	Female	1
Total		25
Total Female		15
Total Male		10

Table 3: Port Resolution community, number of focus group participants disaggregated by group and sex

Port Resolution Community (Tanna)		
Focus group		Participants
Women		16
Men		11
Youth	Male	4
	Female	3
PLWD	Male	4
	Female	1
Total		39
Total Female		20
Total Male		19

Table 4: Greenhill community, number of focus group participants disaggregated by group and sex

Greenhill Community (North Tanna)		
Focus group		Participants
Women		17
Men		9
Youth	Male	4
	Female	2
PLWD	Male	0
	Female	2
Total		34
Total Female		21
Total Male		13

Table 5: Lonnoc community, number of focus group participants disaggregated by group and sex

Lonnoc Community (East Santo)		
Focus group		Participants
Women		11
Men		6
Youth	Male	6
	Female	8
PLWD	Male	0
	Female	0
Total		31
Total Female		19
Total Male		12

Table 6: Sarakata community, number of focus group

Sarakata Community (Luganville, Santo)		
Focus group		Participants
Women		10
Men		7
Youth	Male	3
	Female	5
PLWD	Male	5
	Female	2
LGBTQI+	Male	3
	Female	1
	Gender non-binary	1
Total Participants		37
Total Female		18
Total Male		18
Total Gender Non-Binary		1

INTERNATIONAL, REGIONAL, AND NATIONAL POLICY FRAMEWORKS

Table 7: Key global, regional, and national policies and strategies relevant to a GEDSI responsive project in Vanuatu

International	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) • United Nations Sustainable Development Goals • Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women • Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities • Beijing Platform for Action • Green Climate Fund Gender Policy • Green Climate Fund Revised Environmental and Social Policy
Regional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pacific Platform for Action on Gender Equality and Women’s Human Rights 2018-2030 • The Pacific Youth Development Framework 2014–2023 • Pacific Framework for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2016 - 2025 • The Framework for Resilient Development in the Pacific: An Integrated Approach to Address Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management (2017-2030)
National	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Constitution of Vanuatu • National Policy on Gender Equality (2015-19) • National Youth Development Policy (2012-22) • The National Sustainable development goals, the peoples plan 2013 (2016) • Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction Policy 2016-2030 (2015) • Vanuatu’s Agriculture Sector Policy 2015-2030 • Vanuatu’s National Water Policy 2018-2030 • National Disability Inclusive Development Policy 2018-2025

International

Parties to the **United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)** have recognised the importance of involving women and men equally in UNFCCC processes, and in the development and implementation of national climate policies that are gender-responsive by establishing a dedicated agenda item under the Convention addressing issues of gender and climate change, and by including overarching text in the **Paris Agreement** (United Nations, 2019, 2020).

The 1979 **Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)** provides a comprehensive framework to guide all rights-based action for gender equality. Under this treaty, gender inequality is understood to be the result of discrimination against women. CEDAW calls for equality in outcomes rather than simply equality in opportunities. Thus, it is not sufficient that anti-discrimination laws are put into place: The state has the obligation to take all necessary steps to ensure women enjoy equality in their daily lives. CEDAW defines discrimination and the range of steps that states must take to eliminate it, affirms women's rights in specific areas, and makes provisions for ratification, monitoring, reporting and other procedural matters.

The importance of gender equality, disability and social inclusion is recognised in the **United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**. Specific targets relevant to the Van-KIRAP project are

- Goal 3: Good Health and Well Being
- Goal 5: Gender Equality
- Goal 10: Reduced Inequalities
- Goal 13: Climate Action
- Goal 14: Life Below Water
- Goal 15: Life on Land

Vanuatu ratified the **Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)** in 2008. From that time onward the Vanuatu government has taken several crucial steps to implement its obligation under this international agreement. It has adopted several action plans, namely, the *National Disability Policy and Plan of Action 2008-2015*, the *Mental Health Policy and Plan 2009-2015*, and the *Inclusive Education Policy and Strategic Plan 2010-2020*. The Government has also created a 'Disability Desk' within the Ministry of Justice and Community Services to monitor the implementation of disability-related policies and to coordinate collaboration with government institutions, civil society, and development partners (Caleb 2015). While there are few Pacific nations to have established such extensive disability policies, and Vanuatu is paving the way here, disability inclusion is still not happening regularly in practice and disability data is hard to come by.

The **Beijing Platform for Action** is 'an agenda for women's empowerment' signed by all governments that is seen as a 'necessary and fundamental pre-requisite for equality, development and peace.' The Platform provides a blueprint for women's empowerment. The document includes gender analysis of problems and opportunities in 12 critical areas of concern, and clear and specific standards for actions to be

implemented by governments, the UN system and civil society, including, where appropriate, the private sector. Several of these areas of concern clarify the potential for each of the outcomes in UNDP's Strategic Plan 2014-2017 to contribute to women's empowerment. In addition, the Platform provides the first global commitment to gender mainstreaming as the methodology by which women's empowerment will be achieved. It states that in implementing the suggested actions, 'an active and visible policy of mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes should be promoted so that before decisions are taken an analysis is made of the effects on women and men, respectively.'

In the context of sustainable development, GCF will consistently mainstream gender issues in its implementation arrangements and frameworks for its projects. The **Green Climate Fund's Gender Policy** recognizes that gender relations, roles and responsibilities exercise important influences on women's and men's access to and control over decisions, assets and resources, information, and knowledge. This Gender Policy also recognizes that the impacts of climate change can exacerbate existing gender inequalities. The Gender Policy further acknowledges that climate change initiatives are more sustainable, equitable and more likely to achieve their objectives when gender equality and women's empowerment considerations are integrated into the design and implementation of projects. Further, this Gender Policy recognizes that women and vulnerable communities are also part of the solution to climate change and should, therefore, be effectively engaged in discussions and decisions that affect them.

The **Green Climate Fund's Revised Environmental and Social Policy** articulates how GCF integrates environmental and social considerations into its decision making and operations to effectively manage environmental and social risks and impacts and improve outcomes.

Regional

The **Pacific Platform for Action on Gender Equality and Women's Human Rights 2018-2030 (PPA)** provides a roadmap for accelerating achievement of gender equality and enhancing the well-being of women and girls; supports action on national, regional and international gender equality commitments made by Pacific Island countries and territories (PICTs), particularly under the Pacific Leaders' Gender Equality Declaration and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); and guides PICTs, regional agencies and development partners in prioritising strategic approaches to achieve gender equality. The Platform provides an instrument to support and encourage governments to fulfil their obligations through domestication of international and regional legislation into national policy.

The **Pacific Youth Development Framework 2014–2023** sets the groundwork for a coordinated approach to youth-centred development in the Pacific. Of relevance to the Van-KIRAP project are outcomes 3 and 4. Outcome 3 is concerned with having governance structures that empower young people to increase their influence in decision-making processes (p.32). Outcome 4 is concerned with more young people participating in environmental action. This includes a. More young people are engaged in innovative initiatives that address food and water security, b. More young people are involved in youth-led climate change monitoring and adaptation programs, and c. More young people are engaged in promoting sustainable environmental practices (p.35).

The **Pacific Framework for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2016 - 2025** is a regional framework to support national government actions on inclusive development for the rights of persons with disabilities. The framework links to SDGs 11 and 13 with specific targets related to disaster risk management – ‘Include persons with disabilities in climate change adaptation measures and disaster risk management plans and policies.

- a. Promote the development of regional guidelines for disability inclusive disaster risk management plans
- b. Promote awareness of disability inclusive climate change resilience programmes and disaster risk management plans (p.6).

At the Pacific Island Forum Leaders meeting in 2013 it was decided that the development of a single integrated regional framework on climate change and disaster risk management would strengthen Pacific resilience to the impacts of climate change and disasters. The **Framework for Resilient Development in the Pacific: An Integrated Approach to Address Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management (FRDP)** is the umbrella framework for resilience in the Pacific and was endorsed Pacific Island Forum Leaders in 2016. It aims to provide different stakeholder groups in the Pacific with ‘high level strategic guidance...on how to enhance resilience to climate change and disasters, in ways that contribute to and are embedded in sustainable development’ (SPC 2016, 2). The FRDP has three goals:

1. Strengthened integrated adaptation and risk reduction to enhance resilience to climate change and disasters
2. Low carbon development
3. Strengthened disaster preparedness, response, and recovery.

Guiding principles of the FRDP that are central to its implementation include:

- ensuring that every person has equitable access to humanitarian and development assistance, according to his or her needs
- the effective participation of people living with disabilities, children, youth, and older persons must be facilitated in the planning and implementation of all activities, and these people must be engaged as key actors in designing plans, activities and solutions that are of relevance to them.

While the FRDP provides a set of priority actions for consideration at various development sector levels (national/ regional), it is a voluntary set of guidelines that should be implemented within the context, priorities and the needs of individual countries and territories.

National

Vanuatu has several national policies that take into consideration issues of gender equality and social inclusion (including youth and disability inclusion) based on the fundamental rights and duties enshrined in the **National Constitution of Vanuatu**. Chapter 2, Part I of the Constitution recognizes the rights and freedoms of all individuals without discrimination on the grounds of sex, race, place of origin, religious or traditional beliefs, political opinions, or language. It also has provisions for ‘special needs’, benefit, welfare, protection or advancement of females, children and young persons, members of under-privileged groups or inhabitants of less developed areas.

Vanuatu's National Sustainability Development Plan 2016 to 2030, also known as the People's Plan, contains a vision for a stable, sustainable, and prosperous Vanuatu based on national sustainable development goals under three pillars – society, environment, and economy. Society Pillar 4: Social Inclusion promotes 'An inclusive society which upholds human dignity and where the rights of all Ni-Vanuatu including women, youth, the elderly, and vulnerable groups are supported, protected and promoted in our legislation and institutions'. This includes the points 4.1 'Implement gender responsive planning and budgeting processes; 4.2 Prevent and eliminate all forms of violence and discrimination against women, children and vulnerable groups; and 4.3 Empower and support people with disabilities (p. 11).

The **National Policy on Gender Equality (2015-19)** affirms the government's commitment towards gender equality across all sectors and at all levels of society and the elimination of discrimination and violence against women and girls. It states, active participation and the meaningful contribution of all citizens will shape the future of Vanuatu. Men and women must be equal partners, leaders, decision-makers, contributors, and beneficiaries of the country's growth and development. As such, while empowering women and girls is essential, so too is the education and the engagement of men and boys in ensuring all people in Vanuatu stands on an equal platform and have fair opportunities (Vanuatu Government, 2018).

Vanuatu's population is predominantly young. The **National Youth Development Policy (2012-22)** is aimed at tapping the energy and resourcefulness of the youth and harnessing them for the vitality, growth, and development of the country. This resolve and commitment to the development of the youth has been reinforced by regional and international child/youth inclusion and protection frameworks.

Vanuatu's **Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction Policy 2016-2030** acknowledges climate change and disaster risks significantly impact the lives of women and their social and economic wellbeing. In disaster preparedness, as well as response and recovery, women make enormous contributions to the welfare of their communities, yet historically women have been excluded from participating in committees and other decision-making forums. This policy states, women must have full opportunities to participate in policy development, decision-making, and implementation at all levels. and their full representation needs to be assured. The interests of other social groups, particularly vulnerable community members, also need to be represented in climate change and disaster risk reduction policy implementation. People with disabilities, the elderly, youth, those in remote locations, and from diverse cultural groups need to be able to participate and receive the unique services being provided to meet their needs.

Vanuatu's Agriculture Sector Policy 2015-2030 encourages the participation of women, youth, and vulnerable groups in all agriculture practices (DWA, NGOs, DARD, CSO, Provinces, and Development Partners). It also recognises the contribution of women, youths, and vulnerable groups in development initiatives (e.g., economic empowerment and providing equal opportunities in the agriculture workforce) and ensures sufficient funds for agriculture activities undertaken by women, youth and vulnerable groups.

Vanuatu's National Water Policy 2018-2030 seeks to deliver the policy objectives established by the National Sustainable Development Plan 2016-2030 at:

- ECO 2.2 to ensure safe water services for all
- ENV 4.2 to protect community water sources
- ENV 4.7 to build community natural resource management capacity
- SOC 3.2 to reduce communicable diseases
- SOC 6.5 to strengthen local authorities to enable decentralised service delivery
- SOC 6.6 to strengthen physical planning to meets the need for a growing population

The water policy aims to achieve the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) targets for water that include:

- 6.1: Achieve universal and equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water for all by 2030
- 6.3: Improve water quality by halving untreated wastewater and increasing safe reuse globally by 2030
- 6.4: Increase water-use efficiency and ensure sustainable withdrawals to address water scarcity by 2030
- 6.5: Implement integrated water resources management at all levels by 2030
- 6.6: Protect and restore water-related ecosystems, including wetlands, rivers, aquifers, and lakes by 2020
- 6.7A: Expand international cooperation in water-related activities and programs by 2030
- 6.7B: Strengthen the participation of local communities in improving water management

Vanuatu's **National Disability Inclusive Development Policy 2018-2025** enables equitable participation in disability-inclusive development processes and outcomes for women and girls with disabilities of all ages. All persons with disabilities, including men, women, boys, and girls with disabilities, have an equal right to full and active access to the community. Enabling meaningful participation and inclusion in society for all people, regardless of the type of impairment, nature of the disability, gender, or age, may require access to reasonable accommodations such as assistive products, environmental modifications, and other supports.

The **Vanuatu Recovery Strategy 2020 - 2023** was developed in response to the 'compound disasters' of severe Tropical Cyclone (TC) Harold and Covid-19. A compound disaster Severe Tropical Cyclone (TC) Harold tore across the northern islands of Vanuatu with torrential rain and sustained winds up to 270km per hour. TC Harold, 'took lives, destroyed houses, food gardens, businesses and infrastructure, leaving enduring scars on families, communities and the nation' (p. 1). Covid-19 intensified, and broadened the scope of the human, social, economic and environmental impacts of Harold has hampered humanitarian response. The recovery strategy's guiding principles include, promoting 'the active inclusion and protection of our vulnerable people and groups with gender, justice and social protection' (p. 5).

National Organisational Structure to Address GEDSI in Climate Change

GENDER

The formation of the **Gender and Protection Cluster** in Vanuatu on 13 March 2014 coincided with the Tropical Cyclone (TC) Lusi hitting Vanuatu. The response was the first time that gender and protection was

considered as part of the assessment and response phases. In light of this experience, and the frequency and severe impact of natural disasters in Vanuatu, it was decided that the work of the cluster should be ongoing. Thus, as part of the **National Disaster Management Office's (NDMO's)** coordination structure, the Gender and Protection Cluster contributes to improving preparedness for responding to natural disasters in a gender-and protection-sensitive manner and ensuring that timely, effective, and coordinated assistance is provided to persons affected by natural disasters in Vanuatu during emergency operations. The Gender and Protection Cluster comprises representatives of National Ministries, UN Agencies, International and National NGOs, National Women's Organization, the International Federation of the Red Cross, the Vanuatu Red Cross Society, and other organisations with a focus on protection. The Department of Women's Affairs (DWA), of the Vanuatu Ministry of Justice and Community Services, is the designated Lead Agency of the Vanuatu Gender & Protection Cluster (Government of the Republic of Vanuatu, 2018). The Gender & Protection Cluster in Vanuatu aims to:

- Develop knowledge and understanding of gender and protection issues in Vanuatu through advocacy, raising awareness, capacity building, and technical advice for relevant stakeholders.
- Actively encourage other Clusters/Sectors of the humanitarian community to mainstream gender and protection into their planning and activities, and to provide technical support for this process.
- Identify protection issues and gaps (in times of preparation for and response to emergencies) and advocate relevant authorities and other actors for action to address them.
- Play the lead role in the coordination of agencies involved in gender and protection activities to share information and respond to identified gaps.

DISABILITY

The government Disability Desk was established in 2009 and has been functional since April 2011. The Disability Desk provides leadership in the promotion and protection of the rights of People Living with Disabilities (PLWD). Its mission statement is to coordinate a collaborative effort towards recognizing the rights of People Living with Disabilities (PLWD). The primary function of the Desk is to coordinate, consult, develop, and implement government disability-related policies and as well as implement international commitment, which the government is obliged to implement. This is a collaboration with governmental institutions and all disability stakeholders, including NGOs and Civil Society organisations. Currently, there is only one permanent officer and one contract-officer, and therefore constitute the only two staff members within the Disability Desk (Vanuatu's Ministry of Justice & Community Services, 2014).

There are also two main organizations in Vanuatu that focus solely on people with disabilities, these include the Vanuatu Disability Promotion & Advocacy Association (VDPA) and Vanuatu Society for people with Disabilities (VSPD).

Vanuatu Disability Promotion and Advocacy Association (VDPA) is the national Disabled People's Organization (DPO) of Vanuatu, established in 1999 with the mandate to advocate for rights and promote abilities of people with disabilities in Vanuatu. VDPA's vision works towards an inclusive, barrier-free, and rights-based society in which human rights, citizen participation, and the capabilities and diversity of all persons with disabilities are identified, developed, and respected. VDPA's objective are to:

- ensure strong and coordinated awareness-raising and advocacy to stakeholders at the community, provincial, national, and international level on the rights of people with disabilities in line with the CRPD Utilize DPO's (Disabled person's organizations) and representatives to engage people with disabilities, with in communities.
- strengthen the capacities of government, CSOs and NGOs to involve and address the rights and needs of people with disabilities in programs, policies, and plans.
- ensure communities understand the rights and abilities of people with disabilities and that people with disabilities have support groups and can advocate for their rights.
- be an effective, reliable, and well-known organization that can fulfill its mandate as the national organization of and for people with disabilities in Vanuatu.

VDPA has contributed significantly to advancing the rights of people with disabilities through the development of 28 affiliate groups, which work to raise awareness and advocate for disability inclusion at the community level around Vanuatu. It has eighteen community based DPO affiliates throughout Vanuatu. It also has units working on specific issues:

- Women with Disability Committee
- Parents and Caregivers Committee
- Youth with Disability Committee
- United Blind Persons Committee

Regionally, VDPA is a member of the Pacific Disability Forum. Between 2013 and 2017 VDPA has partnered with several organizations to implement disability inclusive development activities in the country, most notably working nationally with the Government of Vanuatu towards the signing and ratification of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Person with Disability (CRPD) in 2008. VDPA's advocacy has led to more significant employment of people with disabilities and ramps and wheelchair-accessible toilets at all public buildings.

The Vanuatu Society for People with Disabilities (VSPD) hosts a national database for people living with disabilities, however this is not always updated. They provide an early education intervention program for young children living in Efate and they may provide mobility aids when required.

YOUTH

There are several organisations supporting youth development in Vanuatu. One example is the Olafou Youth Program, run through the Ministry of Youth, Sports and Development. The program targets young people who have dropped out of school and are in their community doing youth work as youth leaders or community work as young people helping in their communities. It also targets vulnerable young people who are making a change in their lives and their community. The aim of the program is to give young people hope and a chance to contribute to the development of their welfare, wellbeing, and their livelihood through targeted training and capacity building (Vanuatu's Ministry of Youth and Sports Development, 2016). With these qualifications, they can further their studies through the University of the South Pacific (USP) at the Emalus Vanuatu campus.

As part of the Olafou program there is a youth group *Soul Society*, a group of young people or youth workers who have finished their course at certain levels but are part of the Olafou family working with young people (Vanuatu's Ministry of Youth and Sports Development, 2016). *The Soul Society* undertakes community work and youth work and run training in the community and promote youth development. They can also apply for any job under any NGO's or Government departments that has provision for community and youth development and disaster preparedness. Some former students are implementing their projects in the communities with a focus on resilience and community preparation towards natural disasters (Vanuatu's Ministry of Youth and Sports Development, 2016).

From this list it is clear to see that Vanuatu has a broad suit of policy documents and structures in place to be able to address gender equality, disability, and social inclusion. The issue is that these measures are not being implemented in practice. For Ni-Van communities, limited progress has been made on the ground.

INEQUALITY AND SOCIAL EXCLUSION IN VANUATU

Vanuatu consists of six provinces: Torba, Sanma, Penama, Malampa, Shefa and Tafea, and has a population of approximately 281,000 (DFAT 2017), the majority of who still reside in rural areas (Vanuatu National Statistics Office & Ministry of Finance and Economic Management, 2017). Most of these rural households still rely on subsistence production for income, as well as the sale of agricultural and other 'homemade products' (Naupa 2017, 307). Eighty-eight per cent of households participate in vegetable crop production, fifty-seven per cent participate in the production of cash crops such as kava, and forty-nine per cent of households participate in fishing (Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, n.d.; Vanuatu National Statistics Office & Ministry of Finance and Economic Management, 2017). Agriculture, forestry, fishing, tourism, and construction all contribute to Vanuatu's gross domestic product (GDP) (Costa & Sharp, 2011; Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, n.d.; Vanuatu National Statistics Office 2017). The capital of Vanuatu is Port Vila, located on the island of Efate. The official languages of Vanuatu include Bislama, French and English (Vanuatu Customs & Inland Revenue Department, 2020).



Figure 1: Map of Vanuatu

To understand the status of women, people with disabilities, youth and LGBTQI+ people in Vanuatu and the inequality that prevails despite national policy directed towards equality, a discussion of Vanuatu kastom is required.

Kastom (Custom)

Traditional systems of governance and cultural norms are exclusionary and do not always represent Indigenous communities' diverse interests (Lata & Nunn, 2012). In the Pacific Islands women often have limited access to information and income-earning opportunities as a result of patriarchy in traditional governance systems and low mobility because of their domestic and child-rearing roles (Lane & McNaught, 2009).

Kastom is a cognate term for culture in Bislama, yet it used to refer to the knowledge and practice that ni-Vanuatu understand to be authentically their own, deriving from their pre-colonial past and from their place (Bolton 2003, 6).

Simply put, kastom is the word in Bislama (Vanuatu's lingua franca) for cultural tradition, or indigenous knowledge and practices, particularly those that differentiate ni-Vanuatu (Indigenous citizens) from foreigners and expatriates. Kastom is often invoked in nationalist imaginings of Vanuatu as the common sense, static, and timeless cultural bedrock upon which national sovereignty is built. However, simple definitions and notions of timelessness do not

adequately convey the complexity, hybridity, and unevenness of kastom as it is embodied, negotiated, and experienced in the everyday lives of ni-Vanuatu. (Cummings 2008, p. 133)

It is similar to the English word custom as rather than to the whole interlocking network of knowledge and practice denoted by “culture”, kastom has implicit reference to specific practices, or a group of specific practices that distinguish ni-Vanuatu, rather than to the whole of life (Bolton, 2003,11). There is no doubt that kastom does dominate discourse in Ni-Van everyday life and much of this has implications for gendered ways of being. Mitchell (2000, 190) states, ‘kastom is a powerful discourse and an intensely gendered and contested set of practices. Several kastoms are particularly pertinent to consider when implementing a GEDSI responsive project.

- **Rispek:** The showing of honour and respect to others. This is a firmly Indigenous concept with at least one word meaning ‘respect’ in every language spoken in the archipelago. Ni-Vanuatu often identify the ‘way of respect’ as a defining characteristic of kastom (Bolton, 2003, 4).
- **Braed praes:** The customary practice of bride price places a commercial value on women (Jolly 2015, p.64). Despite a local ban placed on using cash in bride price payments in some areas, the practice continues often with a mix of the use of traditional goods, store bought commodities, and money, and the state has not legislated against it (Jolly 2015, p. 63-64). It has been used by men to justify domestic violence and to claim custody of children after separation or divorce because both the woman and the child are considered the property of the man (Jolly 2015, p. 64). Wife beating is considered far worse on islands where bride price is high, and a wife leaves her own place to belong exclusively to her husband, meaning her own family ‘has no rights’ over her (Douglas 2002,12).
- **Land rights/ land tenure:** Land rights in Vanuatu are ‘governed by a pluralist system made up of both formal law and customary law’ (Nagarajan and MacDermott 2013, 471). Formal law is found in the constitution and legislations and is committed to the principles of gender equality, however, customary law is integrated into these formal laws and is given greater power when it comes to land rights (Nagarajan and MacDermott 2013, 472). Under customary law land ownership is largely determined by the patrilineal rule inheritance (Nagarajan and MacDermott 2013, 475), where women’s rights to land are not independent of male relatives and are instead merely ‘an extension of their socially constructed gendered roles as daughters, sisters, wives or mothers’ (Naupa 2017, p. 307). Land decisions are, therefore dominated by women’s absence and exclusionary practices directed towards women – women are ‘largely invisible in state-managed land decisions’ (Naupa 2017, 306); men control access to land. This presents the major obstacle for women’s economic empowerment in Vanuatu.

Insecure access to land and uncertain property rights have been identified as major obstacles to achieving ni-Vanuatu women’s economic empowerment. They pose a threat to valuable sources of food and livelihood as well as limiting the extent to which women can enjoy the financial benefits derived from renting and selling land. This inhibits women’s capacity to use land as collateral to gain access to credit, which restricts their ability to participate in entrepreneurial activities and private sector development. (Nagarajan and MacDermott 2013, 471-472)

- **Christianity:** Christianity dominates religious beliefs in Vanuatu, with 65 345 individuals of a total 234 023 individuals, identifying as Presbyterian and 35 256 individuals identifying as Anglican

(Vanuatu National Statistics Office, 2011). Christianity and Christian morals are perceived today as part of Ni-Van *kastom*, particularly regarding gendered ideals. Most Ni-Van ‘profess a Christian familial ideal whereby men and women are different, but complementary rather than opposed’ (Douglas 2002, 2).

Gender equality, disability, and social inclusion ideology is alleged as coming from outside Vanuatu through foreign influence, and in this way, can be perceived as being a threat to *kastom*. As such, there is some backlash in the move towards addressing gender inequality in Vanuatu. For example, in the northern Vanuatu town of Luganville a small group of men have responded to profound social and legal changes by forming a male support group called the ‘Violence Against Men and Family Protection Centre’ (VAM). This is a department of an umbrella organisation that they have called the ‘Ni-Vanuatu Grassroots Association’, which is itself linked to the ‘Ni-Vanuatu Grassroots Company Ltd’. Members of this initiative are contesting what they see as the insidious promotion of Western-style ‘women’s rights’ by donor-funded women’s organisations and NGOs, and by other mainly female and well-educated ni-Vanuatu activists, especially those residing in the nation’s capital, Port Vila. They are insisting that the imposition of such ‘rights’ (or in Bislama, *met*) is leading to the reverse discrimination of men, particularly in divorce proceedings, child custody battles, and in domestic violence and rape cases. Such legal interventions, they argue, undermine Vanuatu’s ‘natural’ *kastom* and Christian patriarchal gender order and, in doing so, pose a serious threat to the socio-economic productivity of the nation-state. Hence the empowerment of women in Vanuatu is interpreted as enacting a form of ‘Violence against Men’ (as the group is more commonly, and simply known). VAM members also accuse local women’s rights activists of being harbingers of neo-colonialism and betrayers of *kastom*, particularly insofar as they maintain linkages to overseas funding sources and international allies as a crucial yet problematic component of their hopes for success (Biersack, Jolly and Macintyre, 2016; Taylor, 2008). Our findings suggest that this type of rhetoric exists more broadly in Vanuatu also.

Gender Inequality

The *Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development 2012-2022* report notes that there remains significant gender inequality across the Pacific, though the extent differs significantly in different contexts. Overall, there are substantial barriers to women’s equality, evident in current social norms, values, and practices, influenced by the colonial past and the impact of modernisation. There are political and power dimensions to gender inequality which intersect with current underlying beliefs (Crook, Farran & Roëll, 2016). For example, in independent Pacific countries, women make up just 4.6 per cent of parliamentarians. They are therefore significantly under-represented in parliamentary politics with the region recording the lowest level of women’s representation in the world. (DFAT 2012). A lack of consistent and sufficient policy commitment and program investment by national governments and donors toward gender equity goals and support services for women has contributed to the inferior status of women (DFAT 2012).

In Vanuatu, women and girls are disadvantaged in significant ways. Despite women making up almost 50 per cent of the population (49.1%) they are not represented equally in educational attainment, employment, or political representation. While girls have caught up to boys in school enrolment and girls’

secondary enrolment rates now exceed those of boys, women remain underrepresented in vocational, technical, and tertiary education (CARE Australia, 2019; UN Women, Asia and The Pacific, 2019).

In 2011, women represented just 33 per cent of workers in the formal sector; they are mostly self-employed in microenterprises or in agriculture. Women's work and the gender norms around this also put women at a disadvantage. For example, women undertake more responsibilities than men for water collection for their families. Access to water supply also makes them more and less vulnerable. A gender analysis in Torba and Sanma revealed that eighty to ninety per cent of drinking water was not available on the premises and women undertook 4 to 5 times more of the water collection than men. By contrast, in Malampa and Shefa, around fifty per cent of drinking water was not available on the premises, and the responsibility was almost equally shared between men and women in 2007 (Government of the Republic of Vanuatu, 2018).

The women of Vanuatu are also grossly under-represented in the political arena. Since independence, only five women have been elected to Parliament. The last general elections were held in Vanuatu on 22 January 2016, following the dissolution of the Parliament by the President of Vanuatu, H.E. Baldwin Lonsdale, in November 2015 (Pacific Women in Politics 2019). A total of 261 candidates contested the elections, with 68 independents and 193 candidates from 36 political parties (Pacific Women in Politics, 2019). Ten women contested in the 2016 election representing 3.8% of all candidates. Unfortunately, no women have been elected into the current Parliament (Pacific Women in Politics, 2019).

Cultural marriage norms and the custom of bride price mean women are seen as the husband's property upon marriage after the bride price is paid. In Vanuatu rates of domestic violence against women are high with around 60 per cent of women experiencing physical or sexual violence (Vanuatu Women's Cultural Centre 2011.). In Vanuatu today three in five women (60%) agree with at least one justification for a man to beat his wife. More than one in three (34%) believe that violence is justified if a wife is disobedient to her husband (UN Women, Asia and The Pacific, 2019). About 28 per cent of women think it is ok for their husband to beat them as a form of discipline. Approximately 81 percent of men and 79 percent of women believe that women sometimes deserve to be beaten, while 91 percent of men and 84 percent of women believe that domestic violence is a private matter and should be handled within the family (UN Women, Asia and The Pacific, 2019). Addressing gender-based violence is now the number one priority of the national government's gender policy.

McCormack, Jennings and Kenni's (2020) research report reveals that while the introduction of the introduction of Vanuatu's National Gender Equality Policy is a significant achievement and there have been some positive developments, challenges remain, including a limited capacity in a number of key institutions to be able to effectively implement the policy in practice, and resistance to progress caused by prevailing conservative and patriarchal values and beliefs in Vanuatu (p. 1). One of the biggest gaps of the current policy is the total absence of provisions for LGBTQI+/ SOGI equality and it is unclear whether this aspect of gender equality should be included in the proposed 2020-2024 revised policy (McCormack, Jennings and Kenni 2020).

LGBTQI+

Sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI) is used interchangeably with LGBTQI+ in Vanuatu. A framework of invisibility exists and is maintained for LGBTQI+ individuals in Vanuatu society today. LGBTQI+ people are not explicitly measured in government census data, and diverse genders and information about sexuality is rarely captured in sex-disaggregated data by government organisations or non-government organisations (NGOs) (McCormack, Jennings and Kenni 2020, 11).

Some indicative numbers from VPride, a charitable organization working with SOGI communities in Vanuatu, show that across three of Vanuatu's islands—Efate, Malakua, and Santo—there are at least 400 transgender individuals, 100 gay and 100 lesbian individuals, and 200 gender-nonconforming individuals (McCormack, Jennings and Kenni 2020, 11). However, these figures should be considered an under-representation of prevalence in Vanuatu as numbers are not available for the remaining islands, and many LGBTQI+ individuals are likely to be reluctant to identify themselves as such due to prevailing patriarchal cultural norms (McCormack, Jennings and Kenni 2020, 11).

Kastom and the church (Christianity) play a continue influential role in maintaining prevailing gender stereotypes and limiting progress on gender equality. For LGBTQI+ individuals this results in continued discrimination and exclusion (McCormack, Jennings and Kenni 2020, 11).

Disability Exclusion

The Vanuatu Demographic and Health Survey 2013 states close to 11% of the population aged 5 years and older were people with a disability (Vanuatu Ministry of Health, Vanuatu National Statistics Office, & The Secretariat of the Pacific Community, 2014). Sight and hearing impairment are noted as the most common disability (Vanuatu Demographic and Health Survey 2013 (2014); 2009 National Population and Housing Census (2011)). However, there are strong reasons to believe that these surveys undercount people with mild and moderate disabilities and so the figure should be much higher.

The 2015 UNICEF report provides indicative findings on the problems faced by persons with disabilities in Vanuatu. Children with disabilities are significantly less likely to attend school than their non-disabled peers; people with disabilities are much more likely to live in poverty; nearly 31 percent of people with severe disabilities are living in the lowest wealth quintile, compared with 16 percent of people without reported disabilities. The causal connection between disability and poverty is complex and multi-directional. While people with disabilities are equally likely to take part in productive activities as non-disabled people, they are less likely to be employed outside the home and more likely to be either self-employed or working in a family business. Thus, despite the willingness and capability of people with disabilities to undertake productive activities, social barriers are preventing them from obtaining employment. Data suggests too, that parents of children with disabilities are more likely to use the disciplinary practice of psychological aggression and less likely to use severe physical punishment than parents without children with disabilities. The husbands of women with disabilities are less inclined to justify wife-beating under certain circumstances (UNICEF, 2015).

Attitudinal barriers constitute the most significant obstacle faced by persons with disabilities in Vanuatu. Persons with disabilities are considered to have different rights from those of others and are labelled by their impairments. Even disaster relief workers may not follow up and implement government initiatives for persons with disabilities. There was neither a rechecking nor follow-up on listed people who failed to receive their relief goods after cyclone Pam, for example. Thus, persons with disabilities and senior citizens missed out on receiving relief goods as their impairments did not allow them to reach the distribution point on time (UNICEF 2015).

After Cyclone Pam struck Vanuatu, there were reports about the exclusion of persons with disabilities and senior citizens from receiving relief goods. It found that a person using a wheelchair had to resort to using crutches during food distribution because the distribution area was not accessible to wheelchairs. Moreover, some persons with disabilities and senior citizens did not receive their food supplies because they were not able to reach the distribution centre on time due to their impairments.

Vanuatu ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) in 2008. From that time onward, the Vanuatu government took several crucial steps to implement its obligation under this international agreement. It adopted several action plans, namely, the National Disability Policy and Plan of Action 2008-2015, the Mental Health Policy and Plan 2009-2015, and the Inclusive Education Policy and Strategic Plan 2010-2020. Vanuatu established a Disability Desk within the Ministry of Justice and Community Services to monitor the implementation of disability-related policies and to coordinate collaboration with government institutions, civil society, and development partners (Caleb, 2015).

Youth Exclusion

Vanuatu's National Youth Development Policy defines youth as those between the ages of 12 and 30 years old. (p.4). Youth personal and general (sustainable) development is linked to the promotion of cultural values, education, training, wealth, health, environment, and climate change. The key issues impinging Vanuatu youth are:

- Un-met needs and aspirations
- Poverty of opportunity or access to basic services and facilities
- Hardships relating to financial difficulties, alienation from customary land and or traditional safety net of the family.
- Traditional stigma and discrimination attached to being young or being a girl
- Lack of or ineffective mechanisms for claim holders to demand duty bearers to respect or promote their rights to survival and development.

ADDRESSING GENDER INEQUALITY THROUGH GENDER EQUALITY, DISABILITY, AND SOCIAL INCLUSION (GEDSI) MAINSTREAMING

There is undisputable evidence that inequality persists in Vanuatu. Within each marginalized group, including disabled people, youth, LGBTQI+, and the poor, women are the most vulnerable and at greatest risk to suffer the negative effects of climate change. Addressing gender and social inequality needs to occur through a process of gender mainstreaming (Alston 2014). There are three recognised stages that relate to the introduction of gender equality principles into national and local policy and practices.

1. Equal treatment for women through, for example, legal statutes that deliver rights to women.
2. Positive actions for women such as leadership training.
3. Gender mainstreaming – a commitment to a comprehensive assessment of organizational structures, policies and practices for gender bias.

While most countries are content to undertake stage 1 and 2, it is the third stage that results in long-lasting positive gender equitable change. For this reason, the United Nations introduced gender mainstreaming in their development of global policies and practise. In this context, gender mainstreaming is defined as:

the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality. (ECOSOC 1997)

However, there is a diversity of understanding between transnational conceptualization, state policies and practices, and local implementation, particularly in the climate change space (Alston 2013). This is relevant to the Van-KIRAP project as there is a need to give a much greater focus to gender equality in practice in the project, that is, in the implementation of information flows for climate information services to enable sectors and communities to better respond to climate change impacts and provide early warning systems. Barriers to local implementation that must be addressed include: a lack of political will at state and local levels; institutional structures that foster male norms and processes; a lack of understanding of gender and, therefore, of the goals of gender mainstreaming; a lack of understanding of the radical intent of gender mainstreaming; gender mainstreaming being reduced to technocratic processes; a reduction in women focused machinery and personnel thereby reducing gender knowledge and expertise; poor treatment of gender personnel in organisations; and an overall lack of progress towards gender equality (Alston 2014).

KEY QUALITATIVE FINDINGS

We are women of resilience ... try to push us down but we try to come back up and stand our ground ... we come to sit and listen and contribute to global wide issues ... we will be here. We will wait for your return so we can move forward as to how to address these issues that affect our future. (Port Resolution woman)

SOCIAL, CULTURAL, ENVIRONMENTAL, AND CLIMATE CHANGE

In 2020-2021 the participants in this study are grappling with the Covid-19 pandemic, causing disruptions to travel and supply chains, and the after effects of Cyclone Harold, which struck northern Vanuatu in April, 2020. It is little wonder that these disasters feature in accounts of everyday life and change in Vanuatu. All focus groups were asked to comment on the changes that are occurring in their communities. These discussions covered a range of areas including cultural changes, social changes, climate change, and the impact of Covid-19 on tourism and livelihoods.

Cultural Change

There was much discussion in all groups about the cultural changes occurring in their communities, that is, a change to, or disrespect for, kastom shown by young people - 'there is no respect' (Port Resolution woman), young people's failure to adopt traditional customs and be community oriented - women note that previously young people 'cooperated and were committed', but now they are turning away from the church – a change in marriage practices, and the influence of a 'Western' lifestyle.

Port Resolution PLWD note that pikaninis 'smoke marijuana, drink wine and kava'. They note a breakdown of culture. This sentiment was widespread across focus groups. Sarakata men state 'children – it's hard to control them'.

Young people have no respect anymore, they make noise every weekend ... they grow up and get drunk and make noises at night disturbing others who want to sleep, throw stones at someone else's house or trespass in someone else's yard. There is no respect...They don't care.

Port Resolution men comment on the level of disrespect from young people, 'pikanini they no longer obey their parents. They don't care about the law.... The chief controls the law yet pikanini act as if they control the law.' They also note that 'yangfala involved in marijuana, kava, alcohol and end up in prison.' There is general agreement by men's groups that there is a turning away from customary authority, young people no longer respect the church or the chief, in general, 'people don't listen to the chief'. One elderly disabled woman from Greenhill notes,

The goodness of this place is lost. The children growing up [in] another fashion ... the customs that were once here are no longer adopted. The good customs of the past are no longer alive. The livelihood of the generation has changed immensely – at first it was good but now it's different. ... they do not listen or respect the chiefs.

As with all other groups, young people themselves pinpoint cultural changes relating to the declining respect young people have for their elders. Port Resolution youth noted that 'yangfala [think they] know everything' and therefore the respect for elders and lifestyles has changed 'in bad ways.' There is 'no respect'. Yet, Lonnoc young women noted that 'today I see life is harder compared to the past'.

Epau youth note that 'custom[ary] values have dropped and western lifestyle is being adopted by a lot of yangfala. Lonnoc young women note that 'now we have western culture and many people have adapted to it.' This includes changes in the types of clothing being worn and the additional scrutiny given to girls in this regard. Men commented that women and girls now wear trousers and drink kava and wine,

‘changes [that are] spoiling our customs’. Epau men note that women’s clothing is policed, often by the chiefs, ‘the chiefs are speaking strong to the mamas saying they must cover their bodies properly’, and ‘because of culture we believe a woman should wear a dress’. This then means that victims are blamed if they were dressed differently.

Changes in customary ceremonies are also attributed to Western culture. Greenhill PLWD note people do them often but use western paint and do the kowor (customary dance) more often, anytime they want to, and use Western paint to do it. Greenhill youth also noted changes in language practices, ‘people speak more Bislama than our own language.’

Youth groups and men’s groups highlight the change in marriage practices, from parents selecting a partner to today, young people choosing their partner. This may mean the boy ‘brought a lion into the community’ (a partner with different values and not one chosen to cement tribal or kinship relations). Both groups are quite critical of this as these relationships are viewed as not as solid. The incoming partners are not nurtured by parents in the same way as in the past.

It is best if you follow what your apus are saying so that you may have a good life in the future.

If you try to follow your own ways you will not have a good future ahead of you.

It is also noted that if you marry against parents’ will, you may not have access to land and inheritance. Young people also discussed gradually realising their own responsibilities as they got older.

For some, however, not enough change has occurred. **Tanna women** refer to ongoing cultural expectations that restrict women. For example, in their community women can’t pass men while they are drinking kava and they can’t touch or look at the implements used to make kava.

Social and Environmental Change

Focus group participants note significant social change including population increase, rising education levels, and the trend towards out-migration.

Population increase is observed by all groups as a critical issue, ‘population is increasing, and the area is growing smaller in space’. For some this means that you must go further to get firewood and the gardens become further away, placing pressure on gardens and food production. In Greenhill, gardens are being built on the side of the river and this has led to a drop in the water level leaving residents worried about their access to water if the river gets dry. Youth note that it can be hard to access resources as they once would, ‘you could easily find firewood or coconuts around the corner wherever you went – as for now you will have to walk as far as the sea or plantation to look for these things’. This means that resources for houses, such as wood are scarcer. Port Resolution men note, ‘we don’t have enough land to make gardens anymore.’ Sarakata men state ‘every year there is population growth ... they come from different islands.’ They note problems related to looting and they are worried about people stealing their things if they are evacuated during a disaster. ‘If I move out then people will break into our house.’

Environmental degradation is noted by many as the cost of population growth and modernisation. Port Resolution men state that young people go fishing and may spoil the habitats with plastic. Epau men state

it is more difficult to access fresh clean water as their water system is old. Participants also note that 'Dynamite and tourists dumping rubbish in the salt water has caused fish to die and the reefs [to die]'. Despite this there is a reliance on tourism and the lack of tourists because of Covid-19 is creating significant hardship. Participants from Port Resolution, Greenhills and Epau note that as the human population has increased, there has been a decline in livestock numbers, 'people don't have pigs or cows anymore', and the subsequent impact of this on customs and ceremonies. Some ceremonies associated with slaughtering animals no longer happen, and livestock for marriage ceremonies now must be bought.

However, both women's and men's groups and youth groups note developments which have had a positive impact on their workload. Young women from Lonnoc state they now seldom need to do washing in the sea because now there are water supplies to wash at home. Lonnoc young men note the changes in technology including even basic things like moving from axes to chainsaws. 'We don't depend on the axe anymore, life has changed.' 'The bad side is we have to pay for fuel, the good side is we don't work as hard because it makes life easier.' Lonnoc men note that previously they had run short of water but that they now have water supply and that they used to use kerosene but now have generators and solar power. Sarakata youth talk of having electricity and lights and so 'we can sit and watch a video eating an ice block on our doorstep'. They can also 'have 20vt on our doorstep.' However, this has come at a cost, Sarakata youth comment, before 'life was easy ... now things are expensive'.

The introduction of tarred roads was noted by the Greenhill, Lonnoc and Sarakata communities. Sarakata youth note that previously it was very muddy in their community but now with improved roads they can drive trucks in. Greenhill and Lonnoc men note the introduction of tarred and or cement roads which allow trucks to get into all parts of the island makes it easier to travel. This has broken down the isolation of many regions. For people living with disabilities in Sarakata the improvement in roads meant that trucks can pick them up so they are more mobile.

Teenage pregnancies, having children out of wedlock, and early marriages were noted as significant social changes. Lonnoc young women note the rise in teen pregnancies, 'some of our teenage girls already have children and a spouse instead of completing their studies.' 'Many of us get married quickly at an early age'. Some put this down to a lack of meaningful opportunities and inclusion 'maybe if we have projects like this [that involve young people] we will be interested in it and not get married quickly.' Men's youth groups also lament the lack of opportunity. Sarakata youth note that there is a lack of work, it is hard to find employment, and without income, it is hard to fix up their houses.

Increased substance use among youth was discussed by all focus group participants as a major social change. Lonnoc young men noted that 'plenty of youths in our area smoke too much marijuana. They don't work in the gardens anymore or join youth programs...they wander around doing nothing.' Sarakata youth note that young people 'consume marijuana and kava', 'youths get drunk – too much on the streets' and create noise. Domestic violence 'now domestic violence happens when alcohol comes in, especially with families'. They disclose that some people grow and sell marijuana. 'they sold it, people paid for it and took it and they became cranky' (as a result of the effects of drugs).

Mobile phones and social media have also had an impact on society in the communities we studied. Social media is described by young people as ‘nogud’ particularly as very young children now have access to phones. Nonetheless, focus group participants note that phones can be both good and bad. On the one hand, they can open the community to the outside world and are very useful for information exchange. On the other hand, they enable inappropriate information to reach young people. Greenhill women and men note that mobile phones have undermined traditional culture. Many of the concerns raised are directed at the changing behaviour of girls. Port Resolution PLWD note that mobile phones are a problem for young people, ‘girls at school have changed in a lot of ways, especially using mobile phones’. Lonnoc young women note that even very, very young children have access to phones. Some young people noted that this can lead to students dropping out of education but also suggest that respect is better than knowledge.

However, social media has had significant positive development for LGBTQI+ including V-PRIDE coming into Vanuatu. Increased social media presence has led to a decrease in discrimination – ‘we feel we have the power’. The LGBTQI+ participants we spoke to are running ‘trainings’, running drama classes, showcasing films and have a presence on Facebook where the VPRIDE chat group is popular.

Food Insecurity

The importance of gardens is noted by everyone regardless of gender, age and level of disability. For women, they work in the gardens regularly, as well as weaving mats and baskets. Gardens are a source of both food and market produce, resulting in income but also in satisfaction and empowerment. While the men are responsible for planting kava, in relation to the gardens ‘responsibilities of mama and papa is equal’ (PRES women).

Sarakata women note that they produce island cabbage, banana, bok choy, flowers. ‘Everyday is just home, garden and back ... I have freedom. I am my own boss’ (Sarakata woman). However, there is general agreement that climate changes are having a detrimental impact on the gardens and that there are changes in what they can produce in their gardens (Sarakata women). Lonnoc women note that damage to crops affects food security, ‘we don’t have large food crops like before, so we don’t have good food to sell and earn income.’

Others attribute food insecurity to population growth. The reduced space available for gardens because of population growth creates conflict and food insecurity. Epau men note it has led to ‘people stealing from the gardens.’ ‘You wait for the bananas to be ready, but you go there, and someone has already cut them’. Greenhill women note that population increases putting pressure on land size available for gardens is impacting on women’s capacity to produce food for sale. They note that there is an increasing trend for rice and tinned meat to replace traditional foods and this is impacting on theirs and their children’s health. Port Resolution men state that because of food insecurity, people’s diet has changed from natural and homegrown to sweeter and imported things, causing health problems. There has been significant change from ‘traditional diets’ to a greater dependence on store bought foods and new tastes. Rice and tinned meats were introduced/ distributed post-disaster. Women are now being advised to revert to traditional foods but question, ‘where should I get food to feed my children?’ Implicit in women’s

comments on their daily routines is the difficulty some face in providing food for their children, ‘they see the same food again and again with just coconut milk’, ‘they need meat’.

Some married women note that if their husband spends all their money on kava ‘this makes the children face a hard time to eat and find food.’ Others note that ‘sometimes there is no money to buy bread’ and ‘sometimes the food is not enough’ and that ‘it’s like a cyclone everyday – we get up and face challenges regularly.’ Those who are on their own - where our daddies left us’ - speak of hardship, ‘and highlight how they struggle to feed children (Sarakata women)

For women in Port Resolution, water insecurity is the ‘main problem’ they face. Here, there is one pump for the whole village, and it is women’s responsibility to fetch water. Greenhill women also note, ‘sometimes politicians come in and stop women using the water.’ This is because voting in Vanuatu is often attached to certain political parties that control and access to projects and resources. If you did not vote for a particular candidate they might retaliate by stopping access to resources such as water.

In Sarakata, to overcome food insecurity, there are several women who cooperate to help each other with market interactions. Having attracted microfinance, they work together in business selling in the roadside food market. ‘We work together in one team’, ‘we cooperate together as one group – all of us are from 6 houses – we come and build up to help our lives together.’ One woman notes that after the cyclone the produce grew ‘big and good.’ Another notes that their ‘living has improved’ since they formed the group. They find solidarity together particularly after the cyclone and the need to rebuild.

Climate Change

‘Climate change is the main global issue affecting us today’ (Port Resolution woman).

‘Climate change is our big issue nowadays’ (Port Resolution men).

All areas included in this report have suffered the effects of climate change. These effects vary from place to place but the impact and the outcomes of climate change are being felt across Vanuatu. All focus group participants provide serious evidence of climate change – sea level rise, increased flooding and intensity of rain, increased pests and disease in food crops, lower and degraded food yields caused by drought, and seasonal changes.

Women, largely because of the work they do in food production and preparation have close observation of the natural world and perspectives on climate change and on development. Women spoke of issues of climate change sea level rise, logging, the impact of cyclones on mangroves, and loss of biodiversity and impact on resources e.g., declining fish stocks, shellfish clams and flying foxes, sedimentation causing damage to coral, increased population of humans and snakes, and importantly the challenges to their food crops. An after effect of cyclone Pam, for example, was that their gardens and food crops attacked by wild pigs - this leaves no produce for markets.

I think many changes are in our gardens (food crops) after cyclone Pam many wild pigs moved into the garden and were eating our crops, I think we don’t make gardens like we did before.

Sarakata women note temperature changes including that it is getting colder earlier, in April/May. The river level is rising in their area and creating erosion. This damages trees along the bank this is significant as some have houses near the river. One woman recalls how her house fell into the river. Sarakata men also discuss the increased recurring flooding. The road has become unstable, and mud is now an ongoing problem, 'if there was only a little rain falling, the mud will reach the level of your knees'. Flooding also impacts health and hygiene. Now there are few trees because of river rise and this means no wind breaks from cyclones. 'Our river was very small but now it has grown much larger in size.' 'You have to swim' to cross the river because it's deep enough so that 'a small ship can cruise in the waters.' 'When the rain comes this palace was flooded with water ... we try to find ways to drain this flood of water but there was nothing [we could do].' 'We need drainage to secure our health and hygiene because when there is no drainage the dirty water from other yards passes down to us and down the river.'

Whenever there is a big rain we stop the children from walking around because we don't know where the water is coming from. [We have] bush toilets so when water flows down here we're concerned that our children might drink this water.

Lonnoc women note the mango trees are largely gone. In describing temperature rises they note that the sun is 'too strong' and crops dry and die. The beaches are eroded away and 'the beautiful place we once saw in the past has disappeared'. They note that cyclones 'affect us so badly.' Lonnoc young women describe sea level rise, 'it destroys our beaches', and drought, 'there was a dry time – and one of the most affected areas is our gardens, it destroys our crops from growing healthy and there is no water since it is too hot and dry.' This means they must fetch water from the springs for household use and they note that when younger, after school they would collect water for the household. The Cyclone has had a devastating impact - 'after cyclone (Harold) we found that all our crops were destroyed so we have spent our money to buy goods from the shop.' Lonnoc young men discuss sea level rises. 'the sea has changed so fast in the last ten years – climate change has happened so fast ... everything has changed including nature.' They note that food crops are not the same as before. 'Years ago, yams were big then they got smaller as the years have gone by.' 'Everything was affected by climate change'. They discuss correct planting period for yams and how the weather changes have changed that. 'Climate change causes people to lose track of the right seasons for planting yams.' 'Climate change has made a lot of bad things and life is harder.' Lonnoc men also commented on changes. 'Today things are very different. ... the weather is not the same today'. They note fewer birds.

In discussing climate changes, Epau women note fish, trees, coral, mangroves, crabs, clam shells, and flying foxes are in decline. They state that sea levels are rising, the fishing is poor, and that their gardens and food crops are attacked by wild pigs leaving little or no produce for markets. They also note an increase in snakes! Epau Men note that saltwater clams are dead, that there is algae in the water blocking fish from feeding on the coral reef, that there is a lot of seaweed, 'when it comes too much it can damage the coral and blocks the sunlight from reaching the coral'.

The fish food that was in the reef is not there anymore as the seaweed is now growing there and the seaweed prevents the reef from growing and sometimes now the seaweed goes in the deep water.

Octopus numbers are affected 'there are no more octopus like before, now the octopus have been chased to the deep water due to the seaweed.' Yam crops are also affected by changing weather patterns – 'the yam we would have planted and harvested now and hang it to dry – but the rain and the sun make the yam stink'. They note changing weather patterns, 'we expect sun and it's now rain, sun, rain, sun'. This 'disturbs work in the garden ... we want to plant yam – it stinks. It affects the way of life in our culture – the way we plant yam.'

Port Resolution women note that sea levels are rising and affecting the beaches, 'the sea will dig it up'. They note that big trees have fallen and that the crossing to Cook is harder to navigate because there are deeper and higher tides. They note that because of sea level rises, the school will need to be relocated within 20 years. They suggest that landslides have changed the landscape, 'this was paradise' and now it's not. They note that the size of yams is smaller – one woman stating she was 'ashamed' to offer these at her sister's ceremony. 'Taro rots easily' and fire ants are eating yams, taro and cabbage. Cabbageworm is also destroying cabbage. Bananas, watermelon, cucumber, and corn are now scarce and edible shells are gone. The coral is all white and fish are moving out of the coral to deeper waters. They note that the hot springs are affected as they are now covered by sea level rises and the path to sea is harder to navigate.

Port Resolution youth also note the 'sea level rise causes landslides and it causes our island to grow smaller in size'. They note that the Nabanga trees (large trees) are falling into the sea and they are at great risk of suffering the impacts of climate change and related disasters.

We are at red alert ... we have no hills to run to because we are too close to the ocean ... we have no hiding places to run to.

As a result of sea level rise, salt is affecting their gardens and they have problems with insects. The 'little yellow pigeons' that used to eat the insects are gone and insect invasions are destroying crops.

Port Resolution PLWD discuss sea level rise noting that saltwater is 'moving up to the mainland, the ground is collapsing and there are less fish'. The 'climate is changing'. Sea level rise has moved salt water up the land and into the bush causing trees to fall, 'in a few years' time the saltwater will cover Port Resolution and [it will] disappear.' (Port Resolution men). Port Resolution used to be surrounded by bush but – 'a lot of big trees have disappeared.' With sea level rises there is even less space for gardens. There is poorer food production because of the changes. 'The foods are not really good compared to the past. Too much rain with less sunlight has damaged the food in the garden.' They note that fruit trees bear fruit in the wrong season and that there are less coconuts, fruits, and less birds 'these small birds help to pollinate trees then later we harvest them. But now the number of these birds has dropped.' Fire ants are everywhere, and African snails are eating the crops. They used to export watermelons – but these are now eaten by pests. This means there is less food. Port Resolution men also note the reef has been destroyed, 'the reefs were destroyed by cyclones, the reefs died and fish had no place to hide.' Cyclones have also destroyed villages and the Crown of thorns starfish.

Greenhill women note that wild cane that used to be fundamental building material is now limited or gone. This impacts the building of homes and shelters. They note that there is now too much rain, and the

food crops are rotten after a very short time. The taro and yams are smaller and the edible shells are gone. They further note that volcanic ash destroys leaves and island cabbages. Once fish could easily be caught – now they must ‘spend longer hours than before trying to catch something.’ Greenhill youth also note that their crops are not healthy anymore, ‘here we plant only taro but with the effects of the volcano crops are not good’. They also note that ‘the grounds absorb much water and that makes the crops stink’. This has impacted their food security.

I live near the sea, living there we [used to] eat bananas, yam, kumala, taro but now we depend mainly on yams. Other crops, they plant them and they die.

Also ‘if there is too much sunlight the crops will die ... and if it rains too much it will destroy our yams.’ They note that they depend on their garden crops and ‘if the crops keep getting rotten in the garden then it will affect us youths.’ If they don’t have a job they are reliant on the garden. They also note that ‘they don’t have backups like older people [house, business]. This means they are much more dependent on their gardens for survival. Greenhill men discuss sea level rise, and note that eels and freshwater prawns have disappeared or are smaller in size. Food they are harvesting such as taro is much smaller. They refer to rough seas and very low tides. Greenhill men noted that they need more advice on these changes - We should get more advice from those in the agricultural department for us to use and adapt to the changing climate. ‘Climate change is a fact’.

Covid-19, Tourism, and Livelihoods

‘Covid has come and made many things [happen] – like all the stores and market are too expensive ... we are surviving ... many people now are troubled. (Sarakata woman)

The coronavirus pandemic has had a big impact on livelihoods and businesses in Vanuatu communities as tourists no longer come. All participant groups – men, women, youth, disabled people and LGBTQI+ individuals have been impacted by Covid-19. This has also impacted household food insecurity, so now ‘many homes don’t have food’. Lonnoc women grow food and used to sell produce in markets for several days at a time, sleeping there until their produce was sold. As a result of Covid-19, they now only have one day to sell their food at market and if not sold then, ‘foods are wasted.’

Members of the Lonnoc community were particularly vocal on the impact of Covid-19. This may be because they are more reliant on the tourism economy more than the other community participants. Lonnoc is located near the popular tourist destination Champagne Bay in Northeast Santo, approximately a 40-minute drive from Luganville Town. Lonnoc beach, also known as Hog Bay, has many traditional style bungalows, a restaurant, and local handicrafts. The main attraction for tourists is the natural environment and white sandy beaches of an ‘untouched paradise’, a place to get away from the noise of town life. Lonnoc Locals would work in hospitality, as tour guides, and selling local handicrafts, with local gardens also supplying tourist meals. Lonnoc women note that Covid-19 has a huge impact on their own capacity to earn livelihoods because of the lack of tourists.

The tourists no longer come – as a result people have no money [yet still have] lots of commitments, and people have begun to beg for money. In the past offalas and mothers make good money from tourists, the resorts make good income [so they can] help the church,

women's leaders etc., Today it is different – people find it difficult to earn income and parents have difficulty paying their children's school fees.'

This means that 'life is harder.'

Lonnoc young women also discuss issues relating to the loss of tourism as a result of Covid.

Before there are cruise ships and tourists coming. This helps our mothers sell their local products to earn their income. But now we no longer have tourists because of Covid – so therefore our mothers must do local markets or cook local food and sell them to earn their income so they can support their family.

Lonnoc young men note that because of Covid, 'a lot of people have lost their jobs. If we want to travel and work on RSE we have to follow a lot of processes.' RSE is the Recognised Seasonal Employment program. Without this, it is so much more difficult for young people to earn remittance income overseas. Lonnoc men refer to Covid as 'the sickness infecting the whole world'. It is causing an economic crisis and tourism jobs have been lost. Sarakata youth note that they have had two disasters in 2020 – the cyclone and the Covid lockdown.

There is no doubt Covid-19 has had a significant impact on Ni-Van communities. The rapid gender analysis in the wake of Covid-19 undertaken by Care makes the following key recommendations which the Van-KIRAP project should be mindful of (Williams and Laboukly 2020, p. 2-3):

1. Research and data collection: Continually update the Rapid Gender Analysis as the crisis continues. Ensure availability of sex, age, and disability disaggregated data
2. Clear targeted messaging: Commence COVID-19 awareness immediately, ensure women, children and people with a disability are engaged in development, design and delivery of awareness materials and messages mainstream GBV, child protection and disability inclusion
3. Inclusion in planning, decision making and implementation: Ensure meaningful engagement of women, children, and people with a disability in COVID-19 decision making on preparedness, response, and implementation at all levels.
4. Food security and women's economic empowerment: Develop mitigation strategies specifically targeting food security and the economic impact of the outbreak on women and build women's resilience.

GENDER

Gender refers to the socially constructed roles and responsibilities of women and men. Specifically, it refers to power relationships and the practices through which man or woman get defined in different environmental contexts. Gender is a crucial factor driving climate vulnerability and opportunities to respond (Sultana, 2014).

All focus group participants were asked to respond to what gender (jenda) means. For most gender simply means being either male or female, 'Gender means the differences between men and women.' (SARAKATA women). It is interpreted as equal rights but within current gender relations as the papas having more power.

I think this word gender, it means that man and women have right, everyone has rights, all handicap, all pikinini (children), everyone has got equal rights.

When we talk about gender all mammas are glad because many times all papas they think highly of themselves and that they have more power than all the mammas. (Epau women)

Strikingly similar across all focus group discussions was the idea the gender is a relationship between men and women where they work together, that is, gender is a complimentary relationship.

- *When two groups of people work together. That is when men and women share their ideas and work together... Working together, men doing hard physical labour and women cook for them. But 'they're equal'. (Lonnoc women)*
- *Gender is about mama and papa sharing responsibilities and cooperating on projects.' (Port Resolution youth)*
- *The good side of gender is that man and woman understand their individual responsibilities. They share responsibilities between them. (Port Resolution Youth)*
- *Gender means taking women and men's level equally to work together. (Epau men)*
- *Gender means both men and women have equal rights. We thought men are the heads of the homes, but it's all lies. Mothers are the heads if the home because the mother does all the jobs. Men build while women cook and prepare children for school, then they wash our clothes and go to the garden. (Greenhill men)*
- *Gender is about equal rights where both men and women share ideas to carry out any works in the community.' (Lonnoc youth)*

The reality for women in these communities is that the roles and responsibilities are not equal. Women and men are affected by disasters and climate change differently due to the variance in their roles and responsibilities. With limited evidence from developing countries, climate change affects women's and men's assets and well-being differently in six impact areas (Goh, 2012):

1. Impacts related to agricultural production
2. Food security
3. Health
4. Water and energy resources
5. Climate-induced migration and conflict
6. Climate-related natural disasters

Policymakers and natural resource managers are increasingly recognizing the importance of gender participation in assessing climate vulnerability and developing effective adaptation policies (Goh, 2012). The perspectives of Pacific Island women are not included in the extensive literature on climate change, which may lead to incomplete and inequitable climate change programs and policies. As a result, these programmes and policies may miss the significant contributions of women (McLeod et al., 2018). In Vanuatu, women carry much of the household and community burden. This is evident in the gendered division of labour.

The Gendered Division of Labour

There are many cultural kastoms where women need to defer to men, where they can't pass men or touch men, where they are excluded from meetings during time of menstruation, etc., that prevents women from actively participating and contributing in project decision making and implementation. Here, we're concerned with women's roles and responsibilities. The absolute 'busyness' of women's lives cannot be exaggerated and is highlighted here by one woman in the Epau women's focus group.

So okay, me as a mother, on Monday it's the chief's day, the chief will call on the men to work. So I have to prepare food at home and at lunch take the food to the Nakamal . If it's a public meeting me as a mamma (woman) must cook in the morning and then sit down at the Nakamal and stay until lunch. That's on Monday but on Tuesday there are activities for the women at each church, there will be devotion and some activities. On Wednesday I think I stay at the house and sometimes go to the garden or wash clothes. Thursday is the day that I put all my weave (traditional mats) at the market. So, I put my market on Thursday, (community bell ringing loudly) On Friday I either go to the market or stay at home, if not I work at my garden. Sometimes I will get an order for Natangura, I will bring the Natangura and sew it up, that all my normal work every day. Maybe one of the other women can tell you about their days.

Women's time is often dictated by work for the family, the chief or church, plus market. The quote below shows that although they have so many responsibilities in terms of food production, they are still not decision makers in the household or in the community.

I think most of our days are similar, the only thing that is really different is, we all come from different churches so we do different church activities. Also the week for the market for group which the chief delegated then you go on your day for the market then others will wait. We do what he (chief) tells us to do. (Epau woman)

Women discuss the gender role stereotyping that occurs in their communities and households creating unequal power relations. Comments from women's group participants include:

- *'Sometimes men don't consider women's choices seriously'*
- *'My partner - he knows his role and I know mine!'*
- *'Sometimes we get angry at men because they have more time to relax than women.'*
- *'Men and women share responsibilities although women have different challenges as well.'*
- *'I am a busy mother, I do all the chores myself while the father wakes up in the morning and walks around doing nothing until afternoon when he drinks kava.'*
- *'Mothers have a lot of work to carry out unlike fathers who waste time sitting around waiting for two or three in the afternoon to drink kava.'*

Women's daily routine revolves around children, church, community work, bible study, fellowship, washing clothes, cleaning and income earning - 'We don't waste a single day.' Women across the various communities noted they are very busy doing cleaning, cooking, working in gardens, washing, looking after children, and collecting firewood. 'The workload is very huge for me' (Greenhill women), 'We're the managers.' (LONNOC women). In addition to their own household work, women's time is often dictated

by their work for the chief or the church, and their market work - 'we do what the chief tells us to do' (Epau women). When women are not in marital roles, however, these roles are exposed as artificial, 'if I am a divorced woman I can pick up a chainsaw then there is no problem' (Port Resolution woman). The key issue here is that women have limited time. Women prioritise their work in the home and the community, but will plan to come to meetings if given adequate warning.

Men in all groups follow a similar pattern of daily activities - they work, garden, fish, and collect firewood.

Those who have a job know their source of income comes every payday, but those of us who don't have jobs, we depend on our gardens and make small twenty vatu.

For men in the morning they wake up, drink tea and go to the garden. But every Monday they work at the Nakamal – doing community work. But the mamas stay at home to cook and wash.

There appears to be an unthinking acceptance of gender stereotypical roles by men's groups. Port Resolution men note women weave, and men build houses. Men's work means,

Papa must make sure there is food at home, must work in the garden every day, must make sure there is firewood at home Then it becomes mamas' responsibility ... if there is something to do in Vila papa will go and do that.

Port Resolution men note that they work in the gardens and look after livestock in morning and most spend the afternoon in Nakamal drinking kava.

Men might also have leadership duties, 'some papas some of their responsibilities is leadership in the church, some are chiefs' and some may hold outside jobs, 'men also may have work as gardeners, fishermen etc., (Epau Men).

Women's work is perceived quite differently by men.

The mama has to speak with her children to guide her children, she must do everything at the house, clean up, whether she is with her man outside the house or inside it's the same. The mother has to be mature. (Epau men)

The woman is viewed predominantly in the role of mama – she will cook, wash clothes, weave mats, take care of the yard, look after the children, take them to school and make sure they have food, 'Mamas they work too much' (Epau men).

Epau men discuss how they will help the mamas when their work is arduous, but also note that some men don't help because of cultural kastom. 'The thought of culture continues from our papa to us – that once we marry a woman we are the boss of her!' One notes how the children would laugh if they do women's work. However, some men do acknowledge the value of women's work. Women selling their produce in the market has allowed them to purchase solar lights and ventilated improved toilets. Meanwhile, 'the papas all they do is drink kava and return only ask for money to consume more kava.'

Youth participants also reveal very gendered and traditional role differentiation. One young man from the Epau youth group states, 'I clean up when I need to but most time I tell my sister its' her job!' Young women state, 'all the work at home is on you, not anyone else.' Nevertheless, several of the participants have jobs that also structure their days. Epau youth note boys will work in the community and in the garden, cutting firewood, picking up rubbish, helping friends. They also respond when the chief directs labour tasks. Girls note their involvement in home tasks, washing, cleaning, and cooking. They 'do small things in the house and cook dinner'. Lonnoc young women note that there is a cultural expectation that girls will be close to their mothers and will take on household jobs if their mother is busy,

boys they don't do anything. They have plenty of time to rest. Some boys are good but some of them depend on us to do everything. All they do is eat and sleep.

Young women note the specific gendered hierarchy that exists in their households and communities, *Our daddy [partner], when he's here he is the boss every time. If he says we go to the garden, then we must go. If he says we will stay and only he will go, then he will go himself. (Greenhill youth)*

In a home, daddies are the head of the family while the chief is the head of the community – so we have no choice but to follow their orders.

Some young people do express concern with gendered relationships 'our mamas work hard, yet the men are kings.' They note men lay in bed while women get children to school, men go to nakamal and drink kava. 'When the kids go hungry it is only the mama who is the one working in the garden.' (Port Resolution Youth)

Epau young women are calling for their position and gendered challenges to be better understood within the larger community.

If we can tell you about our challenges at home, they will come and hear what we said and understand that we have challenges as well so that they will understand.

They suggest this could be through the workshop presenter understanding their position and then presenting this to a larger group.

Both young women and young men's group lament the 'boredom' of their everyday, reporting a lack of motivation and 'not enough energy'.

The same gendered division of labour exists among people living with disabilities and the LGBTQI+ community. One elderly woman with a disability notes that men 'do not respect women'.

Women and men in the LGBTQI+ group spoke of undertaking conventional female roles including childcare, household management and work as part of their lives. Paid work for some in the LGBTQI group is viewed as a problem because of the discrimination and abuse they are subject to, 'people will swear at us and say unkind words' 'people will stare at us', although they note, 'behaviours are changing'. Nonetheless, they note that 'the community calls on us a lot' to help out at community events.

Stereotypical Gender Norms in Education: The Education Gap

Young women do not have the same opportunities as young men for tertiary education, largely due to cultural norms around gender roles, marriage and education and the value of educating young women.

Preferential treatment for boys to continue with school, and girls... they'll be pulled out from school by families to do household chores and that sort of things. In their adult age, women have confidence issues, and that also impacts on being able to participate. (Sector lead)

As a result of differing access to education, men are more qualified than women to hold decision making positions. Families are reluctant to educate girls because they believe it is a waste of money as girls leave their parents after marriage. This lack of education means *ni-Van* women do not have the same access to further studies in science and technology.

Stereotypical Gender Norms in Employment

There remain stereotypical views among project sector leads that women are not capable of doing the same jobs as men within each sector. This is particularly true when it comes to fieldwork.

DECISION MAKING, LEADERSHIP, AND POWER

Kastom has dictated that men are the decision makers and women play a supportive or submissive role. This is often cited as the reason why women are not only involved in decision-making but also do not have a significant voice in the governance of their society. (Tor and Toka 2004, 9)

In Vanuatu culture, women do not speak before traditional chiefs; we certainly do not speak publicly in traditional meeting spaces. (Naupa 2017, 313)

All communities included in this study have a CDCCC (Community Disaster and Climate Change Committees) or CDC (Community Disaster Committee). All communities outside of Luganville town have an area council and area committee, all have a chief, a church and a pastor, and in all communities, these leadership positions are filled by men.

In each community decision making centres around the Chief. The chief usually has an advisory committee known as the village council or the chief's council, working with him. Decision making occurs through these higher levels of governance and the chief's decision determines the work that will be done – 'the big man [makes decisions]'. The church, and the church pastor (always a man) also holds significant power and is responsible for maintaining order.

Women are largely excluded from the decision-making process. In most communities, meetings are held in Nakamals of which women may be excluded from due to kastom, this is especially true for Tanna. Greenhill women note,

men will not allow women to come inside the nakamal because only men have the right to talk inside the Nakamal but not women – so I see this as a challenge.'

For these women, the 'Nakamal is like a church where men slap their chest and are bossy'. For women this means, 'sometimes during meetings in Nakamals where there's a lot of men, we're scared of giving our thoughts.' Lonnoc women state, 'women will obey whatever instruction men give.' Commenting on previous project with INGOs, Greenhill women note,

They never choose a woman to be chair lady. Women can be members of the committee. Men talk and talk, giving directions about what must be done, then later, you will not see men come to carry out the work, only the women.

There is agreement across all participants that while both men and women are on local committees, the decision-making positions are filled by a male, whereas women are there to 'make things happen' despite the fact they are 'the busiest ones'. Port Resolution youth note that the papas decide things, but the mamas operationalise the changes. Women tend to be given finance roles on local committees, due to 'being more trustworthy' and 'better at managing in general'. In Port Resolution men state, 'men are chairman's of committees but we prioritise mamma to keep our packages safe and to manage as we know that growing up in a home mamas were the managers.' Thus, maintaining long-held gender stereotypes. One Epau woman is frustrated by women's lack of power on committees and states, 'they forget that all mamas (women) have a little knowledge that they can share (contribute)'.

Men in Epau state that they don't listen to women in meetings. Decisions are made 'based on men's ideas', 'sometimes we involve women but only for finances'. They state clearly that women, 'can't talk much in front of the chief because it is a culture ... culture is a barrier (for women)'.

It is not surprising that women feel that they have little power at this level. There is, however, a degree of resistance to this local power structure by women.

I'm tired of men being bossy and wanting to take the lead every time. I want them to give me a chance too and take part in the community. (Greenhill woman)

This comment was followed by clapping from the other women).

It's time for change where women will stand up for their rights in order for work to be successful. (Greenhill woman)

In general, young people are excluded from decision-making process. Although youth groups do exist, such as in Greenhill (where a young man leads this group), the chief and church remain in charge. This is similar in other areas where it is the chief and chief's council who form women's and youth committees. Inside the group women and youth can make decisions, a representative of each is often on the local committee and feeds back information to the group. Here, the chief is responsible for passing on information and delegating responsibilities. While chiefs believe information is shared around in this way, one youth group notes there are some gaps in knowledge transfer, 'if information is passed in the nakamal only, then this is mostly for men, and it will be hard to inform other groups.'

People living with disabilities also feel excluded from the decision-making process and feel that they have ‘no representative’ inside village councils. In Port Resolution the PLWD group notes, there are men’s and women’s leaders but ‘when we try to participate by giving our opinions, they don’t consider what we said because they think we are not good and nothing we said is true’.

INFORMATION DISSEMINATION

Information is a tool. (Group of women)

Information and communication technologies (ICTs) as an invisible driver of socio-economic change has long captured the imagination of politicians, policymakers, and aid professionals alike. The internet, mobile devices and e-commerce have already penetrated the Pacific, configured to the political, economic and sociocultural context of the various island nations. In 2020, all major islands in the region are connected through one or more domestic and international fibre-optic cables, but there’s still a lot to be unlocked (Hogeveen, 2020).

All participants in this study were asked to comment on the best way to get climate information to people. All agreed the information needs to be in Bislama and that it should also be translated into the native local language for those people who do not speak Bislama. Greenhill youth note ‘many of our mothers and fathers, they don’t speak Bislama.’

As mentioned above climate change and disaster information is received by word of mouth, radio, text messages, NGO’s such as Red Cross and Oxfam, Facebook or the church.

However, because there are major mobile network issues in most communities that reduce access to mobile information, it is not sufficient to distribute information only via text messages. Mobile and internet reception can be patchy. One group from Port Resolution note that to get service, ‘we go to the point at the sea to get a signal from Vodaphone.’ Epau young women note that in addition to a poor Vodaphone network, the cost and access to wifi is a prohibitive factor. Participants also note that their phones don’t work in a cyclone. Some communities are reliant on solar power so if weather is bad it can take a while to charge phones, others rely on generators which leaves them vulnerable in disaster to having no power.

Participants across all groups agree word of mouth and community posters are still the best way for information transfer.

Participant 1: Okay, I think information that comes out of the mobile phone, I think it’s good but (ah), the network is no good.

Participant 2: With Digicel it is good, but TVL [Vodaphone] we cannot get it here.

Participant 1: And one something, I think all posters are good, that you can put on the notice board, it means that when you pass...even all the pikinini have a chance to read it, supposing it is in Bislama. (Greenhill community)

Informal networks, therefore, remain the most important and inclusive means of distributing information in communities. However, Sarakata men note the need for good maps of communities to be able to do this. Currently, different organisations have different maps and these are not updated.

Our findings suggest that each group has specific needs regarding information dissemination. For example, Women are less likely to have access to, or own their own mobile phone, compared to men. They also note that there may only be one phone in a household so there should be no assumption made that text message alerts will reach everyone. Young people are more likely to access and receive information via the social media platform, Facebook. Sarakata women assert that the meteorological department, 'Meteo', has a significant role in disseminating information but that the information it provides is complex and difficult to understand. Information needs to be tailored to community audiences, given in simple form (for example, terms such as high and low pressure are not clear). Women state they need to, 'use the right language because at the end of the day we are the victims not them'. (Lonnoc women). 'It is better this information is clear to mamas because many mamas don't read. Some of them read but don't understand'.

Lonnoc and Epau young women prefer to have information disseminated in sex disaggregated groups (girls only boys only), 'sometimes when we gather together with boys, girls find it hard to speak ... and even boys do too.' They want information to come directly to them because sometimes 'you can't trust information that other people give.'

People living with disabilities in all communities made it clear that for them receiving information in their native language is best.

Some of us didn't go to school so we can't read and understand. It's much better if you give out information on radio or television or phone.

Furthermore, this information must be given to them directly in their own homes by word of mouth. Greenhill PLWD note that information needs to be given to them in their own houses, 'if they come [share climate info] in a different place, for us it is like crossing the sea,' referring to the difficulties they face in accessing community meetings. Information for PLWD is also best received by radio or TV where available and appropriate.

A central point person within each community is suggested to distribute information. Currently this person is the chief or the CDC, but communities have made it clear that these systems are not working – people are still 'left out'. In short, the efficiency of each form of communication - printed materials, face-to-face consultations, radio programs, mobile text message sms - varies depending on location and technical support. For example, radio programs could be the only way to reach visually impaired people. Where there are places where the network does not reach, face-to-face consultations are the best mode of communication in those areas.

DISASTER RISK REDUCTION (DRR)/ DISASTER PREPAREDNESS

When the cyclone came, I went to hide and hide all the children. When we came out of hiding after the cyclone, I found that my house wasn't there anymore. ... our daddy is not with us. The cyclone damaged me as a mamma. (Sarakata woman)

All focus group participants recall their experiences in Cyclone Pam and Cyclone Harold, with some still reeling from the long-term impacts, such as the destruction of their housing. Building cyclone proof housing is a key disaster risk reduction measure for these communities. In Greenhill, Cyclone Harold devastated the community, with many homes lost. It took a month before everyone had shelter again. The LGBTQI+ group notes the role of Save the Children in helping after disaster and giving out rice and canned meat after disasters.

Sarakata women note that their houses are unstable and susceptible to weather events. Some 'live in houses that aren't straight – they are rotten.' They note the difficulties associated with fixing their houses when they are on their own – 'we don't have anyone to help us.' This is a particular hardship after cyclones. One daughter discussing her mother notes, 'she had to pay for transport to go to the garden to replant all the food so that she can sell it in order to rebuild back the house that we lost during the cyclone.' 'I have to seek shelter ...while I build back my house again.' Another woman commenting on the aftermath of cyclone Pam notes 'I couldn't find my house. I tried hard to locate it ... then I saw there was a hole and that my entire house had fallen into the hole.' Several note the difficulty related to feeding and looking after children in these circumstances. One woman states, 'we ran to the school, we saved ourselves there.' Her house was destroyed, 'I was just crying like a crazy person.' Many experience hardship in these circumstances, particularly if they have no husband. Some rely on extended family.

Greenhill women also note that cyclones come at random times in contrast to previous times, so 'some people are unprepared.'

The cyclone comes almost every year and destroys plant crops in the garden – then after the cyclone there is rain and people don't have a chance to plant again or rebuild houses.

They also note that 'the cyclone causes the water to become dirty and then children get diarrhoea ... sickness comes so quickly every time after a disaster' and it affects women's menstrual cycles. They note that violence against women can escalate after cyclones when houses collapse, and they might have to sleep in church building. In this environment there can be violence and arguments.

In Sarakata, a group of men are planning a site for an evacuation centre and note that during times of evacuation, 'men have a short list and women have a long list' of things to do.

In discussions on climate change and disasters, the LGBTQI+ group noted that the cyclone had destroyed their houses but when there are cyclones these group members don't go to conventional shelters because they fear they will be hurt. During Cyclone Harold, they went to the school so they could stay together, 'we feel safe'. As humanitarian aid is only given to conventional families, this group often misses out on aid in post-disaster response.

In Greenhill one attendee notes an issue of access to shelter. His disabled mother was not able to get to a shelter which meant they ended up looking after her in the household toilet. Sarakata PLWD state that for ‘people with disabilities, disaster is doubled’. They note the need for an evacuation centre for people with disabilities. Churches are used as an evacuation centre when there is a disaster. Land is a problem and there appears to be no space for a proper evacuation centre. They also note that ‘a lot of discrimination occurs during disaster times.’ PLWD can also be shamed at this time - ‘those who wear diapers feel it is too public’. Disabled people note that people need to be trained to work with those with those who have disabilities in a disaster.

We need to create a safe zone for disabled ... if a disabled person is deaf and you shout at them but they don't like noises this will cause stress to them – so train people who are willing to coordinate disabilities in a disaster.’

Given the experience of most participants during cyclones, it is no surprise that the priority for most is to build cyclone proof housing. Sarakata men state, ‘the structures must change even though it is expensive, you have to build a strong house.’ Here, a direct link between out-migration, remittance funds and climate change/ disaster preparedness is evident. The Epau men’s group comment, ‘All the boys go to RSE – they come back and build permanent cyclone proof houses.’ They used to use local resources but now ‘the young people go overseas to work and we are building good strong brick houses that protect people during cyclones’.

Who is Most Vulnerable in a Disaster?

Across all focus groups, participants agreed that the people who are most vulnerable in a disaster are people living with a disability (PLWD), widows, single mothers, older people, and the uneducated and/ or marginalised. That is, those people who cannot live off the subsistence produce from their own gardens are most vulnerable.

People who don't plant a garden – that is, people who don't grow their own food - they are most vulnerable – they don't have food and they can't make money at the garden.

LOCAL/ TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE OF WEATHER EVENTS

Traditional knowledge may also be known as Indigenous, folk, or local knowledge, and refers to place-based knowledge rooted in the culture, observations, and traditions of a community. It is the collective knowledges, practices, and beliefs, which evolve through adaptive processes and are handed down through generations by cultural transmission, about the relationship of living beings with one another and their environment (Berkes 1999). In the context of disasters, researchers increasingly appreciate the importance of traditional knowledge and associated situated practices in preparedness and response (Aswani & Lauer, 2014; Ellen, 2011). Many of the traditional mechanisms for managing cyclones and other natural hazards in Vanuatu and other Pacific Islands exist as everyday life within communities. They are often rooted in social or livelihood practices that incidentally address hazards (Campbell 1985).

Some researchers have criticized the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) for prioritizing western science and technological solutions (Alston, 2014). Similarly, gender and traditional knowledge are rarely explored in detail in climate research (Leonard, Parsons, Olawsky, & Kofod, 2013). The lack of

attention to the voices of Pacific Island women in climate research reflects a broader pattern of underrepresenting the importance of Indigenous people, gender, and traditional knowledge (Arora-Jonsson, 2014). Thus, there is an urgent need to explore the intersections between traditional knowledge and gender as it relates to climate vulnerability and adaptation (Arora-Jonsson, 2014). Examining social practices, and the wider sociocultural and political contexts is imperative to fully grasp traditional knowledge and strategies for managing climate variability and change (Granderson 2017).

Women hold valuable traditional knowledge gained from their individual experiences adapting to environmental changes over generations (Díaz-Reviriego et al., 2016). Women also face equity and justice obstacles that prevent them from expressing, sharing and applying their knowledge (Goh, 2012). Climate programs and policies, therefore, must consider and address such power relationships to support sustainable and resilient communities and ecosystems and to avoid exacerbating gender inequalities (McLeod et al., 2018).

In addition to the local knowledge of cultural, social, and climate change, all focus group participants provide examples of traditional/ local knowledge that signifies a weather event is imminent. Women's knowledge includes:

- strong wind indicates a cyclone is coming (Sarakata women)
- birds give signals that bad weather or a tidal wave is coming (Port Resolution women)
- earthquakes will be followed by a tsunami
- navel or nut trees may save people if they cling onto it (an olfala belief)
- wind and the movement of birds suggests a cyclone is coming, 'birds give us a sign'
- when the fruit trees' branches break there will be a cyclone (Lonnoc women)
 - ...and all the fruit trees ah, all the fruit trees the time when the garden is too hot, all the branches break...they say that there will be a cyclone'.*
- the colour and shape of clouds indicates weather change
- if the top of banana leaves bend, a cyclone is coming (Greenhill women)
 - Some of us we look at the banana the top of the leaf of the banana, when it goes like this, it hooks, we know, there must be a hurricane, or one something.*
- Hornets make their nests low down.
 - And all the hornets, hornets, when they make their nests (house) down low, then we say there must be a hurricane, and suppose the nests are on top (high up) then the wind will blow, they must make the nests low down.*

Women are preserving traditional knowledge related to food production, food storage, water collection, weather events and environmental and climate change.

Other focus groups discuss similar local/traditional disaster early warning signals. Greenhill youth note that when birds are flying around, or there is too much wind, or the clouds are red, then weather events are imminent. Lonnoc young men note that 'when we see the pigeons flying we know that a cyclone is approaching', and 'when the navel trees bear a lot of fruit and the branches start breaking, old people believe that a cyclone is approaching.' Sarakata youth note that when they see cockroaches running around, rain is coming. Hurricanes are imminent when birds fly around, and when the moon lays over

they note that rain is coming. When pigeons and chickens are talking at night (unsettled) this also indicates bad weather is coming.

Port Resolution PLWD note that ‘the animals give us the signs’. ‘The birds cry, and pigs and cows cry and leave their fences, that’s when we know there is a tsunami, so we run up to the mountaintop’. Greenhill PLWD note that cyclones are heralded by red sky, dark clouds, mountain tops covered in fog ‘birds fly everywhere when cyclone is coming.’ Port Resolution men note when birds fly over ‘we know that there will be a hurricane.’. Laden fruit trees mean a cyclone is coming and when the sun is hot and earth worms come out a big rain is coming.

Greenhill men know that if the Narara trees bloom and the birds are flying there will be a cyclone. If sea birds fly to the mainland there will be a hurricane. If the top of banana leaves bend to one side, there will be a cyclone. If cloud is covering the mountains there will be rain. Sarakata men note strong winds herald a weather event and that ‘pigeons give signs of rain or sun or hurricane – nature helps us to know what is going to happen.’ However, they are concerned that these indicators have changed ‘the way old people used to predict about climate change has changed’. Greenhill men also note that ‘people no longer trust the old signs.

EARLY WARNING SYSTEMS (EWS)

Currently early warning systems in the communities involved in this study are dominated by word-of-mouth networks that include the area secretary, chiefs, the community disaster committee (CDC) (where available), and through family/community members who work at the Department of meteorology. Bell ringing or drum ringing is common throughout each community.

If you are here doing your work, if you hear the chiefs bell (bell blong chief) on one of the days, you must question, why is the bell ringing and you need to go and check unless you are at the market.

Early warnings also come from people within the community ‘googling’ the wind direction.

So sometimes, there are some people too that go inside google, and after they find out the direction of wind and then they have a chance to tell it to others.

In Port Resolution early warning systems already in existence include the school bell being rung numerous (20 times for a tsunami), followed by the chief making an announcement, and community leaders visiting each household. In the event of a Hurricane there is a mobile phone alert. Early warning also comes via radio alerts that also tell people to prepare for disaster (collect and store firewood and stabilise housing). Early warning systems are very important for women to ensure they don’t go to the gardens or to fish.

In Sarakata early warning alerts come via radio and word of mouth. There is an alarm at the Luganville town police station that is set off for tidal waves and tsunami warnings, and an sms phone alert from the meteorology department for tsunami’s also. The Sarakata community holds a negative view of CDCs, claiming that they don’t work in times of disaster. Others in Sarakata comment they don’t have a CDC, making clear the CDC, if it does exist, is totally ineffective. One Sarakata man notes his experience in trying

to move a woman with a disability from her house, but she refused to go because she thought water wouldn't rise any further than previous floods. They moved her children and grandchildren but couldn't move her 'people need more explanation about climate change.'

In Lonnoc, again, people rely on word-of-mouth from villagers in person and via phone. Early warnings for tsunamis come via phones and from friends but there is a worrying suggestion that this information may be slow getting out. When people hear of the tsunami warning they move up the hill to sleep.

The Greenhill community receive their early warning alerts from the meteorology department and the National disaster management office (NDMO) via text message alert, radio news, and via the Community Disaster Committee (CDC). The CDC might use microphones, go house to house and send sms alerts to mobile phones, however 'sometimes information doesn't reach the right people.' They note that banging the tamtam will bring the community to the Nakamal to hear disaster information and that disaster information passes quickly from house to house. When people do receive alerts on time it allows them to prepare.

In Epau, disaster information is received via radio, internet, and Facebook. When a hurricane is coming the geohazards department will send text messages to phones. The Chief might send police to speak to the community if the matter is urgent. The community notes that it is difficult to disseminate information if people have gone to their gardens.

VAN-KIRAP PROJECT BARRIERS TO IMPLEMENTATION

Across all groups there is an expressed desire to be included in Van-KIRAP project activities, an agreement that women must be consulted, and that the project be sensitive to their time schedules and childcare arrangements.

Epau women state that women's advice needs to be included in the Van-KIRAP project and that the project needs to explicitly state that women be included. Because of the 'busyness' of women – they note that they need advanced warning (days at least) if there are to be meetings so they can plan their work around this. Women need to be invited to attend and this invitation needs to go through the women's organisations to let women know

Women are very keen to be involved in the project and note that 'there should be a woman inside [the project] as it will be easy for us mammas to talk to that woman. She can get the information and get it to us quick.' They also note a widow, and disabled person or persons, should be part of the project.

Greenhill youth note that they feel ignored when projects are undertaken. They state that 'maybe projects have come but they do not inform youth.' They also note that some projects are limited to those who read and write. Some young people with jobs may be too busy. They suggested that land disputes can threaten projects and that politicians can turn projects into personal party politics. Lonnoc women agree that the project may be stopped if there is land dispute, and this may impact project implementation.

Lonnoc young women provide lessons learned from a previous water project in their community where gender stereotypical roles were maintained.

The water supply project – when fathers help with the project, we mothers and young girls are responsible for cooking for them...It is better to involve everybody. If everybody in the community works together, the project will be successful. But if we work separately then it will disturb the project.

They note, 'it is better for us to join this project to build up our skills and to help us in the future.'

Sarakata PLWD note the need for consultation and awareness events. They point to the need for a person with disability working within the project. Accessible ramps and toilets are required, and if any building is two storeys or more, it should contain a lift. They note that climate centre buildings could be used as evacuation centres but pointed out that 'politics is a big barrier and issue'.

Participants noted obstacles that need to be overcome for effective and sustainable project implementation. The most common challenge noted was corruption or 'political interference', where 'politicians divert projects to their personal interest' or where, 'one man will want the project for himself, so others aren't made aware of it.' Greenhill PLWD note that after donors leave the projects, projects don't last 'people don't look after the projects.'

Disputes over land and conflicts over positions within project implementation present another challenge that may undermine the project.

Another major challenge is that project implementation will not meaningfully consider the gendered division of labour and the local rhythms of communities (seasonal work responsibilities). For example, Port Resolution men state that in May they are responsible for preparing new gardens so wouldn't be able to be involved in the project.

Lack of Awareness of Gender, Disability, and Social Inclusion

In general, there is a lack of awareness of gender, disability, and social inclusion issues with the Van- KIRAP project including staff in the Project Management Unit (PMU), sector leads and field staff. This may mean a GEDSI approach cannot be effectively designed into workplans and case studies, nor effectively implemented. There are currently no GEDSI focal points (or people who have undergone gender sensitivity and social inclusion training) in government departments.

Terminology

Climate Information Services (CIS) is a technical term. The Van-KIRAP project risks excluding members of the community through scientific project terminology and scientific climate information services. For example, 'Mitigation Adaptation' is hard for some members of the community to understand, particularly if they have not been given an appropriate level of education. Vanuatu communities are more open to climate change projects if they are framed in terms of disaster prevention and preparedness than on climate change.

Lack of community consultation in design of project activities

Community groups including women's groups, men's groups, young people and people with disabilities and members of the LGBTQI+ community were not consulted during the design of the project. The project's design has therefore not taken a considered approach to gender, disability, and social inclusion and risks maintaining prevailing inequality.

In terms of our own GEDSI consultations, many women, people with disabilities, and youth noted that this was the first time that they had been asked about their needs.

Without a solid gender and social inclusion basis for sector specific CIS tools and workplans (i.e., considering the recommendations from this report), there is a risk that the gender objectives to, a) increase understanding (across the 5 target sectors of how climate change can impact both men and women differently, and b). to address the climate vulnerabilities of both men and women in each of the 5 sectors, through the delivery of tailored CIS, will not be met.

Gender-based violence

It is an everyday reality that women may be on the receiving end of violence for either their participation in, or lack of participation in Van-KIRAP project activities. As women increase their employment and financial independence their risk of violence increases. This is something that needs careful consideration. The issue of male violence against women crosses all age groups. Women note that men can be jealous and prone to violence. They might check on women and yet if women are slow returning home they might 'receive a black eye'. Lonnoc men state violence as a response by men to women not being at home or fulfilling their perceived role at home. Young men from Lonnoc note that when, 'women talk too much men must walk away somewhere else ... because if men stayed women would have to run (from the beating).' Thus 'Women have many challenges ... a lot more than men ... it piles up.'

In these communities violence and conflict is addressed at the local level. One woman notes,

if me and my husband have an issue, then I will talk to his (Chief's) police, they pass on information to the Chief, then they call a meeting to solve the issue. (Lonnoc women)

In Port Resolution, one man states, 'violence is just a family matter.'

Women are at greater risk of violence than members of LGBTQI+ community who state they feel safer now that they have the backing of laws and say they will report perpetrators – they have the right to be protected from violence.

Gender Inclusion

Women in all focus groups were asked why they came to the Van-KIRAP GEDSI consultations. One woman states,

I came because many times I go to the sea but don't catch fish. [Here], I have a chance to speak and say something so they can help us to grow back the coral and help us to plant all Natong tong to make small work to help the future of our pikinini.

Another woman from Epau states,

I share my thoughts and suppose there is something that will come out of it that will help us we will be glad ... we sat down to achieve something today.

The desire to be included in the Van-KIRAP project was strongly endorsed by all groups of women who note they are normally excluded from such projects. Greenhill women state, 'when projects like this come into our area, I think only the fathers are involved ... some of us mothers, we are not prioritised to do this work.' They note that they (women) are expected to prepare food, yet they are not included even though they want to be. 'Sometimes in projects like this women think down on themselves or are afraid of speaking out and standing against men to tell them that they can also do this job.'

Women are forthright in discussing the significance of their lives and work to their communities.

We are women of resilience ... try to push us down but we try to come back up and stand our ground ... we come to sit and listen and contribute to global wide issues ... we will be here. We will wait for your return so we can move forward as to how to address these issues that affect our future.' (Port Resolution Woman)

To enable women's participation and contribution, personnel from the Department of Women's Affairs will be a valuable resource. The Department of Women's Affairs (DWA) has a desk office in most of the islands. The sectors also have officers on each island. However, there is no gender equality among the staff recruitments - only two out of nine managers are women. Therefore, the national gender policy, which is in the developing process, is focusing on women's participation.

Women's Passive Participation

Passive involvement of women is the primary concern for this project. Women may be attending meetings or consultations, but they are not actively involved in discussions or decision-making processes.

In terms of women's participation, I think the common mistake is simply saying that X number of x percentage of women will be included in certain meetings...that doesn't really indicate any transformational change or meaningful participation...This project can look more at how information is managed and owned at the community and household level...Do women even have time to be looking at the internet... they (may) be too busy with their workload.

Although women can participate on provincial advisory councils, their participation is weak due to their lack of formal education.

Social norms and kastom are also stopping women from getting involved in these project activities. Many rural areas still hold strong social traditions, where women are not allowed to make any decision or to be

involved in any decision-making phases. Social norms mean that there are still areas in Vanuatu where women are banned from speaking in *nakamals* (traditional meeting houses). Chiefs continue to have a lot of influence in decision making at the community level. Chiefs also head local area councils (which may include women and people with disabilities). Women's involvement depends on the role of Chiefs in the councils because only Chiefs can influence community to include women in the meetings.

Women do have some decision-making power in financial areas at the household level.

Women are probably the most breadwinners in the communities in the household. And increasingly, they are making financial decisions within the home. And you probably repeatedly hear as well that women are better at managing money than men.

Vanuatu's Gender Equality Policy

Vanuatu's gender equality policy is currently being reviewed by the Department of Women's Affairs. The gender equality policy review has four strategic areas - Reducing Domestic and Gender Based Violence, Enhancing Women's Economic Empowerment, Promoting Women's Leadership and Equal Political Participation, and Building a Foundation for Gender Mainstreaming. This policy document should be utilised as a guide for improved implementation of the Van-KIRAP project.

Disability Inclusion

A strong thread through discussions with people living with disabilities (PLWD) was the need for greater social inclusion. In the past PLWD have been ignored in projects,

They forget people like us but ... we want a project to come here to help people like us with disabilities because we also have families, wife, husband and pikininis. (Port Resolution)

When projects come here, they don't count people like us, only normal people'. Disabled are always forgotten, 'people think we are not capable'. (Greenhill)

It will take the chief sick and falling down with a disability for him to understand.

People with disabilities are often not included in project activities for the following reasons:

- A culture of infantilizing people with disabilities
- Not knowing how to actively include people with disabilities
- A mentality of out of sight, out of minds, where people forgot about including people with disabilities
- Not understanding the capacities of people with disabilities
- Not having a representative active in the community to represent the needs of people living with disabilities.
- Inaccessibility of project sites and project meeting places for people living with disabilities.

There is great opportunity for the Van-KIRAP project to strengthen disability inclusion. People living with disabilities want a centre in the community where they can meet etc. They note the church is not an inclusive space as it is not accessible to them.

Lack of Gender, Disability, and Social Inclusion in Workplan Activities

The initial Van-KIRAP project work plan has a worrying lack of discussion of gender, disability, and social inclusion. This is likely due to inexperience and lack of direction around gender and social inclusion at initial site assessments. Despite the project rhetoric stating it aims to understand the needs of men and women in each sector, these needs have not been addressed in workplan activities. Van-KIRAP Workplans do not adequately address gender differences or vulnerabilities when it comes to science, technology, mobile phone use, information dissemination and sharing. This information is crucial to being able to design a project that minimises the risk of perpetuating any gender inequality in these areas. As it is currently presented the workplan for Van-KIRAP overstates and overgeneralises gender and social inclusion outcomes, particularly around women's empowerment and gender mainstreaming. This gender and social inclusion analysis goes some way to addressing this.

Maintaining Prevailing Stereotypes

Despite gender objective 3, to 'promote women's empowerment and contribute to efforts which overcome prevailing stereotypes which entrench gender-based inequalities' the Van-KIRAP project risks maintaining prevailing stereotypes in workplace gender roles and leadership positions.

Lack of Opportunities for Women for Upward Mobility: Community Capacity Building Needs

Women are under-represented in decision-making and in all levels of politics and education. Women currently do not have the same opportunities to take part in the Van-KIRAP project as men, including in decision-making phases, adaptive planning, and climate information services activities because of their lack of knowledge, confidence, lack of education and social norms.

A certain level of education is required to use and digest scientific information, to increase resilience to climate change, food security, water security and livelihoods. Communities should be granted appropriate opportunities for education of this kind.

Capacity Building Needs in Government Departments and Van-KIRAP Sectors

Capacity building training and equal opportunity employment (EEO) can be life changing for women. For example, the Department of Environment (DoE) sits in the Ministry of Climate Change and has strong female leadership with four out of five of the divisions headed by women. These women, including the Director of Environment, have been supported in these leadership positions through capacity building and leadership training, highlighting the significance of such training for women as an enabler for promotion and as pathways to leadership positions.

There is currently no government department, outside the Department of Women's Affairs, that has a gender equality and social inclusion policy (or similar), or gender focal point or field person equipped to implement the gender equality and inclusion aspects at the field level. The gender equality and social

inclusion policy of the Department of Women's Affairs should be considered a whole of government policy.

The concept of equal participation of men and women as CIS champions is good in theory, however, current cultural norms mean that in these roles may not be respected within their communities.

Community Engagement

Engagement of the sectors with communities occurs through provincial (extension) officers. These officer positions are male dominated.

The Role of the Church and Religion

The Church is powerful in Vanuatu and can influence decision making. Although churches are a good way to reach the community, working through Pastors and church groups can maintain existing hierarchies and prevailing stereotypes of gender roles. Furthermore, some churches in Vanuatu are against the idea of climate change because implicit in their teachings is a conflict between science and religion. There have been instances recorded where pastors have influenced community views of climate change as an act of God – that God punishes sinners through natural disaster.

There is quite a bit of resistance in some areas and climate change. So the whole science versus religion. So that happened to me. So, in some areas when VMGD went down and the clusters and we're talking to the communities..... before they spoke about the evidence, the scientific evidence he had a prayer asking for forgiveness for these people from government.

Existing NGOs and Community Networks

In Vanuatu there exists an extensive network of local community organisations dedicated to issues of gender and social inclusion, including women's groups, youth groups and disability groups. The Department of Women's Affairs, the National Youth Council, and the Disability and Advocacy Association (DPA) Vanuatu, are integral organisation for Van-KIRAP project implementation.

Sixty per cent of the population are youth in Vanuatu yet the Vanuatu National Youth Council (VNYC) and Vanuatu Youth and Sports do not have enough resources to support young people. There is an active Women and Girls in ICT (Information communication technology) group in Vanuatu who should be consulted as part of this project.

Case Study Field Sites

The island of Santo should not be seen as representative of the population unless diverse groups have been included for assessment, such as communities from rural and remote areas and those displaced from Ambai disaster. If communities who do not have regular access to services (internet, phones etc) are involved in the project there is real potential to understand the climate change impacts for marginalised groups.

Tanna is one of the more vulnerable islands in Vanuatu. In places like this, post disaster, women are adversely affected. For example, after cyclone Pam women had to go further to collect drinking water. The extra burden meant girls were taken out of school to take on this task. There is a great opportunity for the Van-KIRAP project to make positive impacts and transformational change for women and girls in Tanna.

Van-KIRAP Case Studies

The way the case studies have been conceptualized has not incorporated gender, disability nor social inclusion. This is a challenge in terms of implementation but points to the greater problem – how to build the capacity of sector coordinators and others in this area to improve planning and implementation. Planning an implementation must incorporate an understanding of all stakeholders, all citizens, and a comprehensive overview of local knowledge and practices. This necessarily requires an overarching gender analysis, and a comprehensive analysis of supply chains, food security, vulnerability and adaptations. The gender mainstreaming of policies, actions and practices must infuse each case study. Therefore, all case studies should incorporate gender equality measures including the equal inclusion of women's groups, the incorporation of women's knowledge, the training of women in the use of CIS material, the appointment of gender focal points with equal status in each case study, the collection of gender-disaggregated statistics including a clear analysis of women's role in supply chains and the barriers and enablers to women's inclusion.

Three brief examples of case study specific recommendations are provided to illustrate potential gender mainstreaming methods.

TOURISM SECTOR

Santo (North) and Tanna (South) are two areas chosen for the pilot project. These are popular sub-destinations and semi urban-rural areas. Tourism is the only sector where a maximum number of women are involved comparing to other industry. Almost 60-70% of women are working in the Department of Tourism, the leading position is occupied by a man, but the makeup of project officers is one man and two women.

Our discussions with stakeholders revealed that women's communication skills are viewed highly by those in this industry. Women are seen as patient and functional managers and good tourist operators. Men are moving to this industry slowly, but women still dominate the industry.

Women are... they are patient...their communication skills, they can speak good English compared to men. That's why women chose to get involved in managing the business and engaging in the stuff like that.

While there is discussion of a focal point, there is no gender focal point working at the same level distributing information to community groups, workers, and their families. While there is discussion of the tourism-based facilities, there is no focus on the homes and buildings of those associated with tourism.

There is a well-developed information distribution plan focusing on mobile phones - but no suggestion that these would be made available beyond the tourist industry to include family and community members, workers' representatives, and gender focal points.

AGRICULTURE SECTOR

Santo, Banks, Torres, Mach, Pentecost, Efate, Aramasa, and Tanna are the selected agricultural sites for this project. The project focus is on eight crops – yam, cassava, sweet potato, Fiji taro, dryland taro, coconut, coffee, and kava.

In the Department of Agriculture, only 10% of positions are filled by women. Women are viewed as having less interest in studying agriculture due to the nature of the courses.

I think I just met a few. I think we mean...or people in agriculture... It's like walking on the field touching ... soil. That's why maybe they dislike studying agriculture.

Men dominate positions in the field offices. The nature of the job could be a concern for women because this job requires a lot of field work, and there are limited bike services for these field officers. Field assistance agricultural officers make contact at the field level and provide farmers with the latest information, seeds, and farming requirements by going door to door.

I think in the provincial offices, everyone is a man. I think, there's only two females throughout the country ... you know, because I think that it should be men because they can go up and down the hill.

The objective of the agriculture case study is to demonstrate the use of climate information services (CIS) and traditional knowledge in the field. It has been observed that some female farmers in those areas are farming vegetables. Female farmers are viewed by some stakeholders as being more capable than men in planting seedlings and weeding and are viewed as good managers. Female farmers also speak up in the farmers' meetings. All the farmers (both men and women) prefer oral instruction than reading materials.

Suppose you are a farmer. I'll give it to you (reading materials) today. Today, you look at it, tomorrow you leave it there, and you go. And you forget about the information. And if I teach you about this, I show you earlier about those type of information, how you will use it. You will remember today, after a few days, for better work, but if I involve you in the field, that field and you see the results with me..... So that's one strategy that means, in the agriculture department we usually use with our farmers.

In terms of the decision-making process, unfortunately, in these areas, women are not allowed in the *nakamal*. Thus, if there is any meeting inside the *nakamal*, women cannot get involved. However, some communities have village development committees, and women hold a few leading positions in those committees. These village development committees could provide a platform for Van-KIRAP. There are also Local Area Council Administrators (government) where some women are involved in decision-making phases. There are no specific facilities for disabled persons in these areas; some of the infrastructures are

not accessible by disabled persons. Ensuring the inclusion of women in case study activities, gender sensitivity in meeting venues and the collection of gender-disaggregated data is critical for the Van-KIRAP study.

FISHERIES SECTOR

The aim of the fisheries case study is to: 'Improve food security and the livelihoods of the communities by using climate information to prepare for and respond to marine heatwaves'.

Faslau, Epi Island, Taman Island (Makula), Naouni (Mayeno) and Tanna (which has now been changed to Aneityum) are the selected fisheries sites for the Van-KIRAP project. Among these sites, Tanna was considered the most advanced but has now been removed as a site. All the sites are male dominated. Four male fishery officers undertook the site location assessment. The outcomes of these case studies were indicating – low literacy rate, lack of awareness, teenage pregnancy issues and lack of food security where climate information can be used to improve the situation.

Most of the fishermen are men in these areas, but women are preparing fish for eating and selling them in the market. Women can also monitor men's fish-catch and use tablets to input data in fish monitoring sites. There are 19 fish monitors in that sites. Among them, there are two women who are actively inputting data. The local custom stops women to be active outside the household work.

It's a volatile culture where women are already mostly quiet in terms of decision making...[This] becomes a habit... It's a challenge for us in terms of getting them out from their small box and exposing them.

Gender is deeply implicit in fisheries supply chain management, production, food security and livelihoods. To ensure gender is central to this case study we would advise that the proposed methods incorporate gender mainstreaming through the following additional activities.

- Posters to be located across the community in common areas including where women gather
- Undertake an analysis of the fisheries supply chain to ascertain gender roles, barriers, and enablers
- That power be distributed to women's group leaders and community activists
- That women's knowledge of fisheries and food security be incorporated into the project
- That women be encouraged to take ownership of the project
- That gender focal points share supervision on site

We urge women to be given equal access and training in CIS tools and with developing knowledge and skills in this sector.

Community people are not receiving any payment for their involvement due to the limited budget of this project, and so, the village chief becomes the crucial person to reach the community because they have an influence in the community to involve women in the project.

There is no record of women groups in these project areas. The project officers are not advising on the opportunities for transformational change, which seems to be a broader problem. Awareness programs for both men and women can bring changes. The aquaculture is new in the Fisheries department. Therefore, there is a scope to engage women in this industry.

Aquaculture is something new in the fishery department. So we see a possibility for engaging women in this area.

CONCLUSION AND KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

The greatest risk presented by the Van-KIRAP project is that it will not consider the gender differentiated impacts of the project and will, therefore, maintain, reinforce, and potentially exacerbate prevailing gender, disability, youth, and LGBTQI+ stereotypes. Globally climate change is represented by climate science, with a prevailing stereotype that women and other marginalised groups have little to offer in the adaptation and mitigation of climate change. This stereotype is currently reflected in Van-KIRAP project documentation and, to date, its implementation of the project on the ground. At one sector meeting in Epau, for example, women arrived and began to set up tables and prepare food for lunch as they were of the assumption the meeting was only for men. This is because when ‘community’ consultations are called, unless specified, these consultations will only include men. Women and other groups need to be included in all project consultations and activities. Women grow food, they go to the saltwater and forage in the reefs and rivers for crabs and shells for food stuffs for their families – they have a great knowledge of their changing environment and a great need for climate information services. Women, young people, disabled people, and LGBTQI+ individuals do have the capacity to participate in the Van-KIRAP project. They need to be involved in discussions of the problem or actively included as part of the solution.

Ensuring women’s, people living with disabilities, young people’s and LGBTQI+ people’s active participation in the Van-KIRAP project can be facilitated through the following recommendations.

Ensuring GEDSI mainstreaming of all policies and practices

- Van-KIRAP sector workplans and case study activities should be reworked based on the findings of the gender, disability, and social inclusion analysis. GEDSI mainstreaming of the Van-KIRAP project’s workplans, activities, and organisation structure (operations) is crucial.
- Gender-disaggregated data should be collected in all phases of the project
- Technical outreach resources must include a ‘How to’ on gender mainstreaming.
- Ensuring women are included in knowledge management and knowledge dissemination networks is critical to facilitating gender mainstreaming strategies and actions.
- A gender and social inclusion policy guideline should be drafted for government departments involved in the Van-KIRAP project. This is necessary for them to provide support to the community during the implementation of their case studies and for future disaster and mitigation plans.
- Men and youth need to be involved in confirming equal gender opportunity and therefore men and young people involved in program implementation activities need to be involved in gender awareness training.

Fostering women's education, leadership, and political representation

- A critical feature of the project is its capacity to influence beyond its immediate scope. The project provides a platform to advocate for women's leadership and involvement in climate information services. Modelling patterns of behaviour is crucial to normalising leadership roles for women. The Van-KIRAP project team should ensure that women have active leadership roles in the project and during site visits.

Inclusion of women, people with disabilities, and youth

- **Consultation and coordination with the Department of Women's Affairs (DWA) and the Gender and Protection Cluster in Vanuatu should be integral to the inclusion of women and girls in all aspects of the Van-KIRAP project.**
- The project should be more focused on women as co-beneficiaries.
- Sector case studies should be much more specific about which women, and at which level they are engaging – at the government or community level, for example. It is recommended that sector case studies include existing women's, youth, and disability groups and implement the project in close consultation with these groups.
- The Women and Girls in ICT Vanuatu group is a critical NGO for this project and should be engaged as soon as possible to understand both how they can contribute to the project and how the group can be strengthened. There is opportunity to strengthen, expand and build the capacity of this group through specialty training. The needs of women in this sector must be included in the design of workplan activities.
- If women are not allowed in the *nakamal* in specific field sites, then the *nakama* should not be used as a gathering place for an entire community consultation. If the *nakama* is to be used other mechanisms need to be put in place to ensure women are engaged in project decisions and activities.
- Given the attitudes and beliefs about women and their roles that dominate in Vanuatu, the CIS project will need to take care not to exclude women in important areas of decision making, nor to perpetuate these existing inequalities and power relations, and through its activities, to aim to change existing attitudes and beliefs, e.g., highlight women's important role in both traditional knowledge and climate science, and their roles as community leaders.
- Women should be invited to participate in all project activities, ensuring their participation is voluntary. Project activities should not add further burdens on women in terms of their workload.
- Team training to facilitate and support women as leaders and decision makers in the community is necessary if they are to become CIS champions.
- Teams must not assume that meetings automatically include women, youth and people living with disabilities. Generally, if these groups of people are not specified, mostly men will be told and attend. Therefore, when planning community consultations, the participation of women, youth, and people with disabilities must be explicitly requested.
- Women's active participation can be ensured through separate meetings with women, and through considered facilitation of meetings and consultations. Location and timing of these consultations are key considerations. Women should be given advanced notice of meetings due to their additional household and family responsibilities.

- Facilitators of women’s consultations should be women who have had GEDSI training.
- The project must budget for separate women’s meetings in all proposed field sites in all sectors and at community climate centres field sites.
- People with disabilities may need additional support to be included in project activities, for example, home visits, an alternative meeting place that is not so public, transport to and from meeting/ activity venues.

Women As Change Makers

Women need to be given the opportunity to participate at all phases of the project cycle. They have excellent knowledge of the problem and the solution, and they themselves feel they have a valuable contribution to make; women are eager to participate in the change process.

Strengthen and utilise existing local networks for social inclusion

- **The Van-KIRAP project should work closely with youth networks to ensure youth inclusion in its implementation. It is also recommended that the Van-KIRAP project work closely with the Disability Promotion and Advocacy Association in Vanuatu on disability inclusion within its project activities.**
- There is opportunity to strengthen and build the capacity of the Vanuatu National Youth Council (VNYC), Vanuatu Soul Society, Vanuatu Youth and Sports, the Disability Promotion and Advocacy Association, and the Women and Girls in ICT group. These groups can support the design of inclusive activities and can be used as vehicles for project implementation where it is appropriate and relevant.
- There is a Department of Women’s Affairs (DWA) office in each province. This department is crucial to the implementation of gender and social inclusion activities in project field sites and should be consulted and utilised in each instance.
- Other organisations that could be included for project implementation and review include
 - Action Aid
 - Vanuatu Red Cross society
 - Wan Smol Bag
 - Vanuatu Christian Council youth network.
 - V-Pride Association
 - Women’s Weather Watch

Broader analysis of the case studies and action framework to include a GEDSI analysis

- The GEDSI Action plan should be integrated into the project’s community engagement strategy and communications strategy through specific community engagement and communications protocols.
- Sector extension officers (field based) should receive gender equality, disability, and social inclusion training.
- A GEDSI approach taken in all sector-specific plans and policies; Training/ workshops on implementing a GEDSI approach in all sector planning and policy documents.

- It has been shown in projects across the world that fostering women's involvement in projects leads to women becoming critical community Champions. Women must be included in this level of decision-making activity in the Van-KIRAP project. If women are lacking the leadership skills to be involved, then they should be provided with leadership training to enhance their skills.
- The climate observation network must include women, disabled people, and youth.

Communication and Dissemination

- The Van-KIRAP team should adopt easy and understandable local and traditional knowledge terms when communicating at the community level.
- A more inclusive project name at the community level may get more community buy-in. It is recommended that the project be highlighted as one of disaster risk reduction.
- Bislama is the preferred language overall, for written and spoken correspondence. All project documentation should be translated into Bislama.
- People with disabilities, the elderly and those who had not received much formal education require translation to local language.
- Visual materials requested e.g., animation that demonstrates how the project works at the community level – with inclusion of women, young people, people with disabilities etc participating in the project.
- Information must go through the correct and multiple channels including the CDCCC, chief and village council, women's representative, youth representative, disability representative, area secretary or area council, however, the project needs to be careful not to maintain existing hierarchies and knowledge system. The GEDSI response of the Area Secretary as a key Focal Point needs to be strengthened, and the current information networks systems need to be strengthened or replaced.

Capacity Building Training

- GEDSI capacity training to be provided for all project sector staff, PMU and climate centre GEDSI champions.

Gender Based Violence

- While it is not the remit of the project to address GBV, it is an ethical requirement that a protocol be followed if project staff witness GBV or are confided in by victims of GBV. The Department of Women's Affairs has a Gender Based Violence (GBV) referral process that all Van-Kirap project staff need to be made aware of and should adhere to in the field.

Employment

- Where possible the Van-KIRAP project should ensure the ongoing employment of women in CIS roles and provide women capacity development to be able to meet the job requirements of these roles.

- The Van-KIRAP project can make transformational change and break down stereotypical gender roles by including women in employment in each sector, including field-based roles.

Funding

- Activities aimed at gender and social inclusion are notoriously underfunded. If the Van-KIRAP project wants to achieve meaningful participation of women and social inclusion, appropriate funding needs to be allocated. Extra time for consultations should be allocated for women and people with disabilities to enable them to engage in a meaningful way.

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