



Photo: Carita Appel/SPC



## Gender equality: Where do we stand? Solomon Islands

# Gender equality Where do we stand?

## Solomon Islands

Prepared by the  
Ministry of Women, Youth, Children and Family Affairs and the National Statistical Office  
Government of Solomon Islands

Pacific Community  
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## Foreword

In order for Solomon Islands to continue in its efforts to achieve gender equality, we must periodically take stock of the progress that has been made, recognise the obstacles and identify areas that require more attention. This booklet does just that. It provides an overview of the progress we have made, using official statistics to inform us.

When cabinet endorsed the 2010 Gender Equality and Women's Development Policy, we knew what our priority areas were but, for various reasons, we were unable to implement all the programmes, projects and activities to achieve our strategic objectives. In the five years since the policy was adopted, we have learned a lot and we have achieved a lot – but we have experienced failure as well. For example, our efforts to introduce temporary special measures to increase women's representation in government have not been successful. We have not given up, however, and are still working very hard to convince our people that special measures are needed to make sure that there is more representation of women in parliament and in other political levels of decision-making.

We are grateful for the assistance provided by our stakeholders in government, our development partners and civil society organisations in implementing the gender equality policy. It has not been easy to coordinate the wide range of programmes linked to the policy, but we have managed, and the progress we have made is a credit to the hardworking staff of the Ministry of Women, Youth, Children and Family Affairs, as well as the many partners and stakeholders who have helped us work towards the achievement of gender equality in Solomon Islands.

The statistics presented here are evidence that there is a lot of work to be done. May I call for your cooperation and support once more, as we journey together into the future – a future that is secure and just, where women have the same rights as men and are exercising those rights.

Tagio tumas



**Ethel Falu Sigimanu**

Permanent Secretary for Women, Youth, Children and Family Affairs  
Solomon Islands Government

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# Gender equality: Where do we stand?

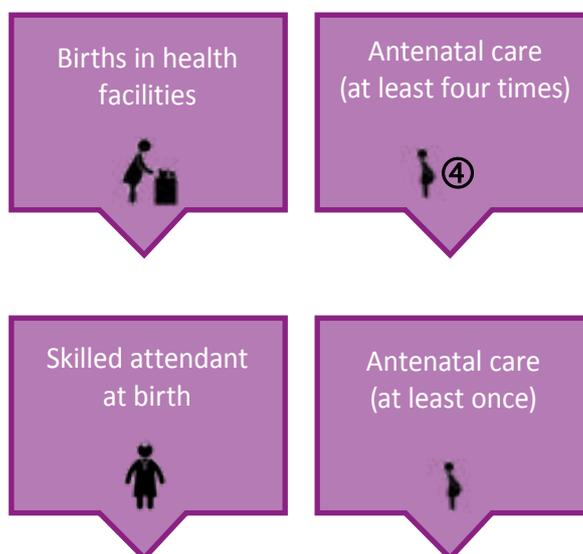
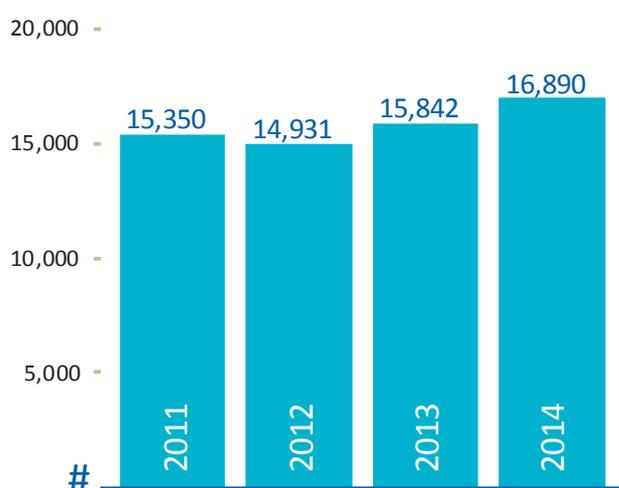
In 2010, the Government of Solomon Islands adopted the *Solomon Islands National Gender Equality and Women's Development Policy*, which aimed to end inequalities between men and women in five key priority areas: health and education, economic status, decision-making and leadership, violence against women, and gender mainstreaming. With the Ministry of Women, Youth and Children Affairs (MWYCFA) currently reviewing the policy, it is important to assess what has been achieved in promoting equality opportunities and responsibilities for women and men. What steps have been taken to accelerate progress towards achieving equality outcomes while sustaining the achievements already made? This summary of progress was prepared as part of gender analysis training of gender mainstreaming focal points in the Government of Solomon Islands.

## 1. Improved and equitable health and education for girls, boys, women and men

### A. Health of women before, during and after pregnancy

#### Annual number of births, 2011–2014

An average of 16,000 babies are born each year



Source: Number of births provided by Ministry of Health and Medical Services.

Source: Solomon Islands National Statistics Office (SINSO) Demographic and Health Survey 2007



Solomon Islands National Statistics Office (SINSO) Demographic and Health Survey 2007. Comparison is based on the five years before the survey.

B. Health of children and new born babies in the first 12 months

Death rates for children aged under 5 years, 1999 and 2009



U5MR is the under-5 mortality rate: the probability of dying between birth and 5 (per 1,000 aged 1-4 years). IMR is the infant mortality rate: the number of deaths of children under 1 year per 1,000 live births.

The light shading between the two lines ( ) is the child mortality rate (CMR): the probability of dying between age 1 and age 5.

For every 1,000 babies born alive ...

- 17 will die before they are 28 days old
- 5 will die before they are 12 months old
- 6 will die between the age of 1 and 5 years
- 28 will die between birth and 5 years

Source: SINSO Census of Population and Housing reports 1999 and 2009

More babies and young children are immunised against diseases.

More infants and children are taken to a health facility for treatment and medicine as soon as they get sick or have a fever.

Reducing maternal mortality was the priority in the SIG Millennium Development Goal 'plus' framework with the target of reducing the maternity mortality ratio from 550 in 1992 to less than 100 by 2015. The rate was estimated to be 125 in 2014, a significant decrease.

Solomon Islands National Statistics Office (SINSO) Demographic and Health Survey 2007. Comparison is based on the five years before the survey.

## What the statistics tell us

There has been increased access to health facilities and to trained medical staff such as nurses and mid-wives. Strengthening the national health system with the active participation of community organisations and support from donor partners has led to improvements in both maternal and child health. This has involved addressing human resource constraints, building new infrastructure, upgrading and improving supply systems and improving governance and stewardship.

Immunising children against certain diseases and ensuring that they receive prompt and appropriate treatment when they are ill can prevent many unnecessary childhood deaths. Infant and child vaccination regimes are ensuring better coverage of diseases, and the vaccination programme for human papillomavirus (HPV) began in April 2015. In the past decade, the death rate of children under five years has decreased and the number of children receiving immunisation has increased, but challenges remain to reduce child mortality. Child mortality is often associated and compounded by respiratory diseases and diarrhoea, which are often fatal; skin diseases, which are prevalent; and vaccine-preventable diseases, which tend to appear very frequently in the early stages of life.

There have been improvements in access to sexual and reproductive health services, including pre- and postnatal care; more than 80% of deliveries are in health facilities with the services of skilled health personnel. The ongoing awareness and advocacy campaigns for pregnant women to attend antenatal clinics and give birth in facilities have resulted in high rates of attendance. This has resulted in referral of high risk pregnancies and successful deliveries, thereby reducing the number of maternal and infant deaths.

While the rate of teenage pregnancy is decreasing, it is still high, with associated higher rates of pregnancy-related complications for young mothers.

Basic knowledge of the HIV/AIDS virus is widespread but not universal, and comprehensive knowledge of the virus is low, especially among young women.

Malaria is the leading cause of death in Solomon Islands and poses a significant burden on social and economic development associated with reduced productivity and absenteeism from work and school. However, malaria rates have declined dramatically since 2003, a result of scaled-up prevention and control interventions, such as distribution of insecticide treated nets, awareness about the importance of seeking medical screening within 42 hours, and greater availability of treatment drugs.

## More information

The Ministry of Health and Medical Services produces an annual statistical report that is available from the Chief Medical Statistician. Email: [BKamoriki@moh.gov.sb](mailto:BKamoriki@moh.gov.sb) or telephone +(677) 25 443.

SINSO will be releasing the results of the 2015 Demographic and Health Survey in 2016.

WHO provides information on the Solomon Islands health system and services at [www.wpro.int](http://www.wpro.int).

## Source of statistics

Annual number of births: Ministry of Health and Medical Services, Policy and Planning Unit.

Antenatal care, skilled birth attendance: Solomon Islands National Statistics Office – 2007 Demographic and Health Survey. Available at [www.spc.int/prism/solomons/index.php/sinso-documents](http://www.spc.int/prism/solomons/index.php/sinso-documents).

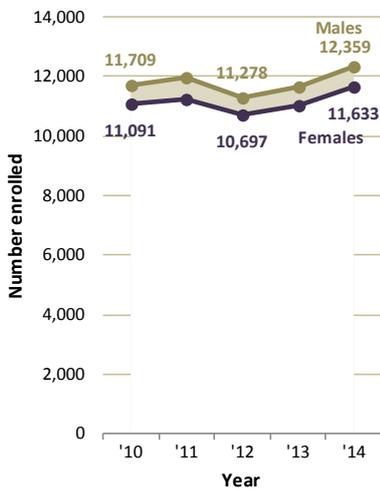
Under-5 mortality rate, infant mortality rate: Solomon Islands National Statistics Office – 2009 Census of Population and Housing. Solomon Islands National Statistics Office – 1999 Census of Population and Housing. Available at [www.spc.int/prism/solomons/index.php/sinso-documents](http://www.spc.int/prism/solomons/index.php/sinso-documents).

C. More young people can read and write because more children are attending school, but they start school late (aged over six years)

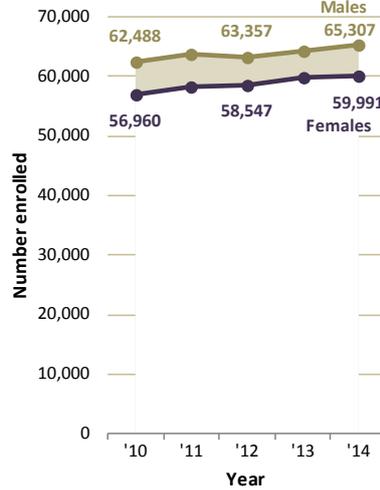
In 2014 there were almost 200,000 students enrolled in the education system.

Enrollment of girls and boys by level of education, 2010–2014

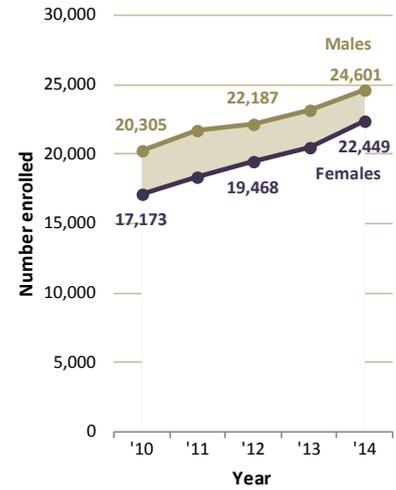
Early childhood



Primary (Prep–Year 6)



Secondary (Form 1–7)



Note: Scale on vertical axis differs. Source: Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development Performance Assessment Report 2010-2014.

*In 2014 for every 10 children aged six years old ...*



*... only 3 children were enrolled in preparatory level.*

'Prep' is the first year of primary: at least 5,000 children should have been enrolled but many were not.

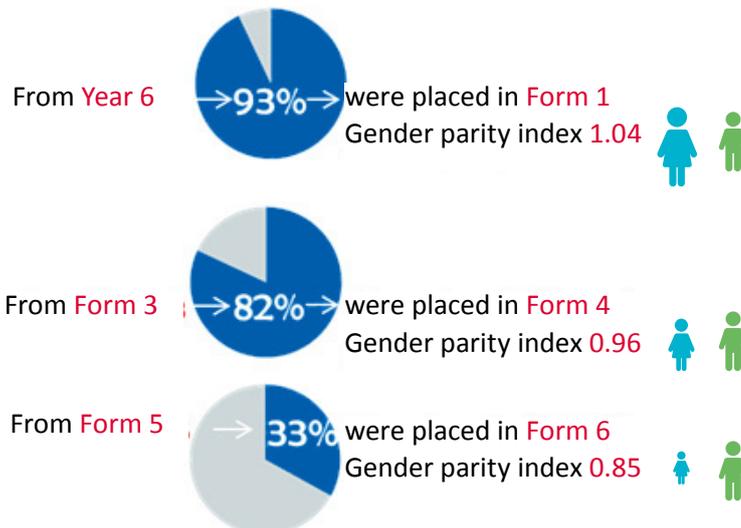


*...Out of 10 girls in Year 6, only 6 reached that year without repeating or dropping out*



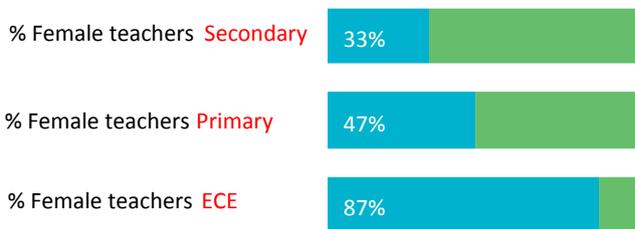
*...Out of 10 boys in Year 6, only 7 reached that year without repeating or dropping out*

**In 2013 this is how students advanced in their schooling**



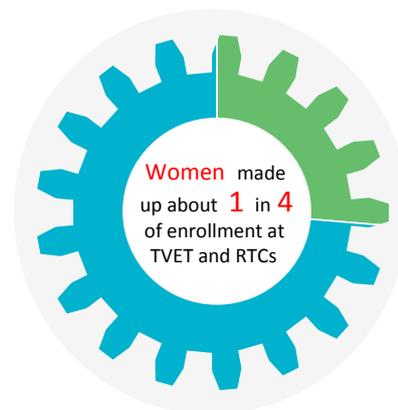
Half of all teachers are women, and nearly 90% of all early childhood education (ECE) teachers are women.

In 2014 just over half of women teachers taught at primary level.



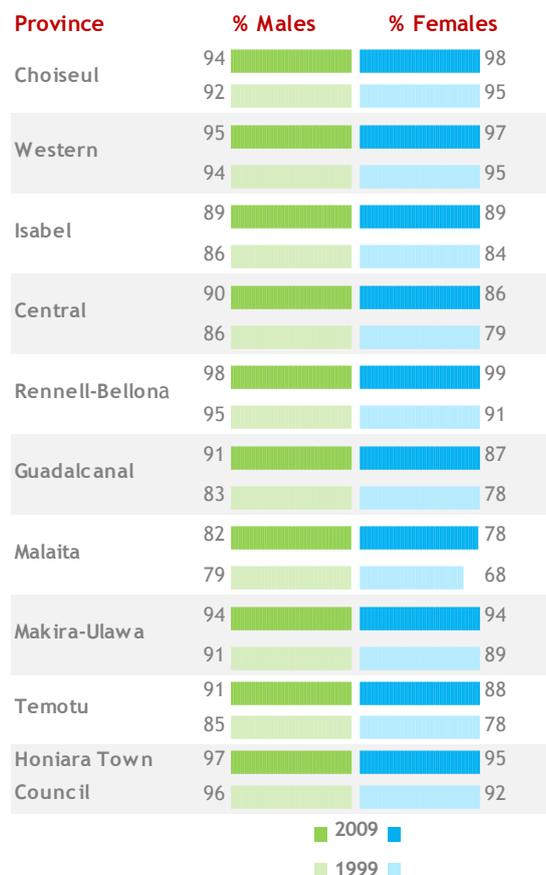
Women are under-represented in technical and vocational education and training (TVET) and rural training centres (RTC) courses.

In 2014 there were 2,345 people enrolled in TVET and RTCs.

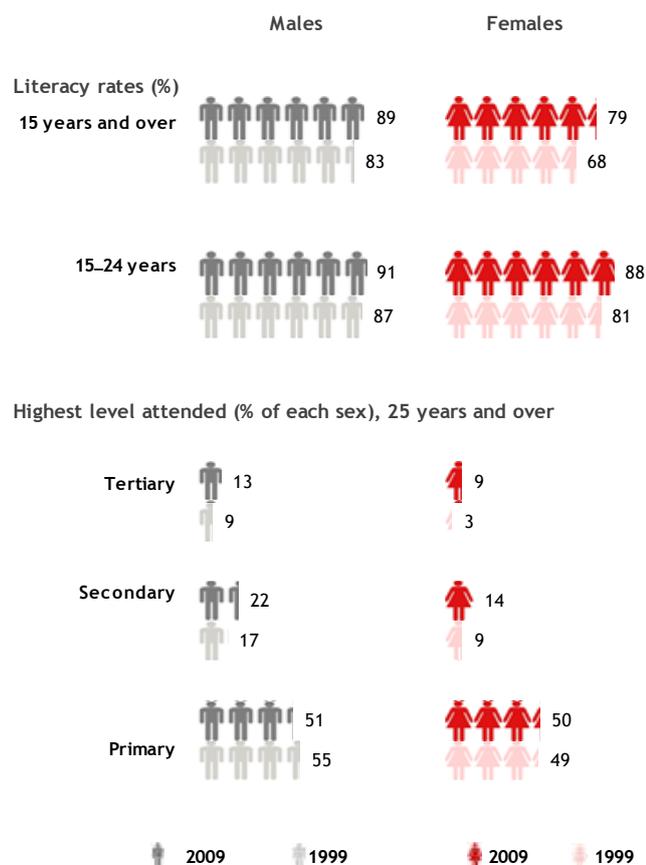


Source: Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development, Performance Assessment Report 2010–2014

Self-reported literacy rates for persons aged 15–24 years, sex and province, 1999 and 2009



Self-reported literacy rates and highest level of schooling, 1999 and 2009



Source: SINSO Census of Population and Housing reports 1999 and 2009

## What the statistics tell us

The Solomon Islands Government is promoting early childhood education (ECE) to encourage parents to begin their children's education at age three or four years. ECE equips children with the physical, emotional, cognitive, social, language, emergent literacy and creativity skills they need to be 'school ready' for Year 1 at six years of age. There is very low participation in education for both boys and girls aged three to five years so the government is increasing access to ECE, as well as improving ECE facilities and resources (staffing, learning aids, etc.). However, many parents are not aware of the importance of ECE as the foundation for a life of learning, and many are unable to pay the costs of ECE, which is typically operated by community groups and others concerned that the quality of ECE should be higher. There are no significant gender differences between boys and girls at ECE level and the major challenge is to increase enrolment in ECE.

At primary level there are no significant gender differences between girls and boys, but both are likely to start the first year of schooling older than the official age of six years. Slightly more boys than girls will complete their six years of primary education, with boys having a survival rate of 67% compared to 60% for girls. It seems that the 'fee free' policy for primary education has resulted in more girls and boys attending primary school, but with student places limited at secondary level, challenges remain for government to meet the higher education and learning aspirations of primary school graduates.

In 2014, there were ten fewer girls for every 100 boys participating in secondary education, although girls were more likely to be in the official age group than boys, suggesting that boys tend to repeat more years than girls. There were fewer females placed in Form 4 and Form 6 than boys. One of the major challenges in secondary education is the limited number of places available in Form 6, with only 33% of Form 5 pupils placed in Form 6 in 2014. Fewer girls than boys were placed in Form 6.

Research is needed to identify the gender norms that are disadvantaging girls participating secondary education. About the same number of girls and boys sit the national examination in Year 6 to go into Form 1, with girls having a slightly higher pass rate than boys; but a lower proportion of girls then enrol in Form 1. This is also seen in the census results from 1999 and 2009, when there was little change (an increase from 49% to 50%) in the proportion of women aged 25 years and over with the highest level of schooling being primary level. Gender norms include the perceived safety risks of girls attending secondary schools that are some distance from the family home so that students either board or stay with extended family members, and the belief held by some that education is not as important as domestic duties and care responsibilities.

The Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development strategy to address these issues has been to increase access to a wider range of secondary school learning 'pathways'. In 2014 there were 223 community secondary schools offering students opportunities to continue their formal education closer to home. In addition, there were 15 provincial secondary schools and 12 national secondary schools. There is some concern that more community secondary schools are needed in the capital, Honiara, for the large number of young people who do not attend school. Likewise a range of institutions run technical and vocational education and training courses, but young high school drop-outs do not meet the entry requirements and there are few courses for young women.

Without basic literacy and numeracy, women feel they are less able to stand up for themselves, stand up to their husbands, take a leading role in meeting community needs such as improved hygiene and water access, or fulfil their traditional role as community peacemakers. In both the 1999 and 2009 census, adult women had lower self-reported literacy rates than men, although the rate of increase in literacy levels was higher for women than men (self-reported literacy rates for women aged 15 years and over increased by 16% compared with 7% for men). NGOs such as the Adventist Development and Relief Agency, World Vision and Church of Melanesia run literacy schools across the country to give those who have missed out a second chance. The schools are mostly run by unpaid volunteers trained in workshops by the Literacy Association of Solomon Islands (LASI). LASI provides learning materials in English, Pijin, and ten local languages. With no set entry or exit points, it takes about 6–12 months to learn basic literacy and numeracy, but many drop out early.

Access to sex disaggregated education statistics has increased significantly, thanks to the Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development publishing its performance assessment framework statistics at <http://www.mehrd.gov.sb/documents>

The government is working to update the education legislation to provide the governance structures for increased access to education and skills development. The proposed amendments currently undergoing public consultation for the Education Act make provisions for managing and administering the education sector, and ensure wider community participation in the governance and operation of schools run by all education authorities. The proposed amendments expand the responsibilities of the Ministry of Education to include tertiary as well as TVET education, establishing the regulatory and governance framework through the Tertiary Education Commission and the Solomon Islands Qualification Authority. The amendments also include establishing education and learning pathways for young women with children. There will be public consultations on the proposed amendments.

## More information

The Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development produces an annual performance assessment report from the Solomon Islands Education Management Information System. This report contains detailed information about ECE, primary, secondary and tertiary/technical enrolment; examination results; student placements, education authorities; facilities; teachers and so on. The statistics used in the report are available at [www.mehrd.gov.sb/documents](http://www.mehrd.gov.sb/documents).

UNESCO provides information on the Solomon Islands education system and services at [www.uis.unesco.org/DataCentre/Pages/country-profile.aspx?code=SLB](http://www.uis.unesco.org/DataCentre/Pages/country-profile.aspx?code=SLB).

## Source of statistics

Enrolment, survival rates, transition rates, teachers: Ministry of Education and Human Resources – 2015, Performance Assessment Report 2010-2014, Policy and Planning Unit.

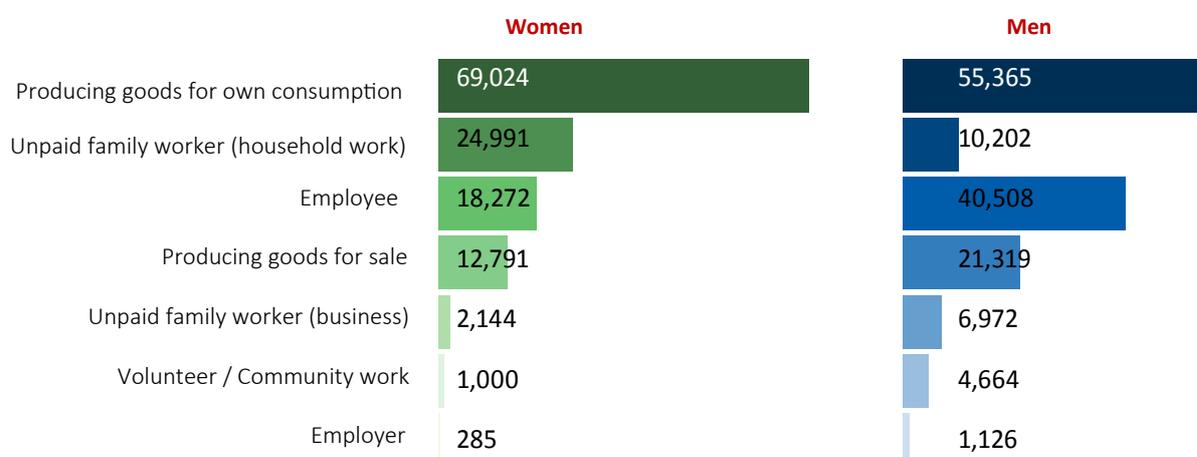
Literacy rates and highest level of schooling: Solomon Islands National Statistics Office – 2009 Census of Population and Housing. Solomon Islands National Statistics Office – 1999 Census of Population and Housing. Available at [www.spc.int/prism/solomons/index.php/sinso-documents](http://www.spc.int/prism/solomons/index.php/sinso-documents)

## 2. Improved economic status of women

### A. The type of work women and men do, 2012–2013

There is a large gender gap between paid and unpaid work.

Women make up just over half (56%) of all unpaid workers, and only one third (33%) of paid workers.

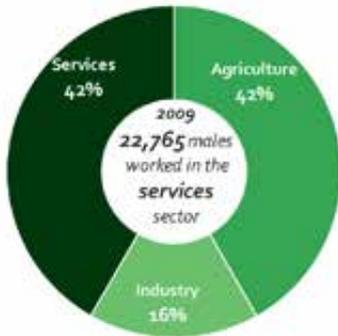


Source: SINSO Household Income and Expenditure Survey 2012–2013

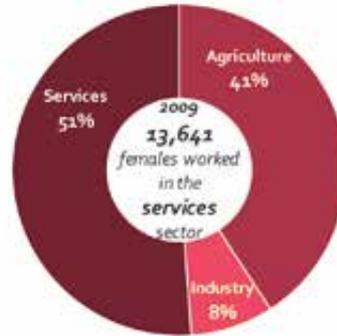
B. Services and primary sector paid employment for both women and men

Sectoral distribution of paid employment, by sex, 2009

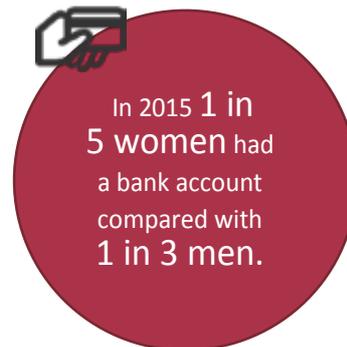
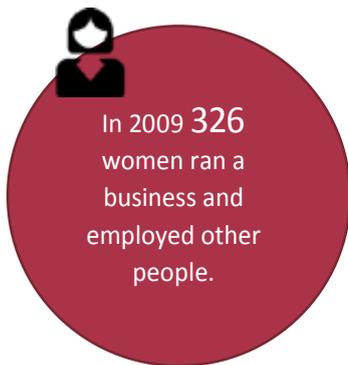
Males working aged 12 years and over, 2009



Females working aged 12 years and over, 2009

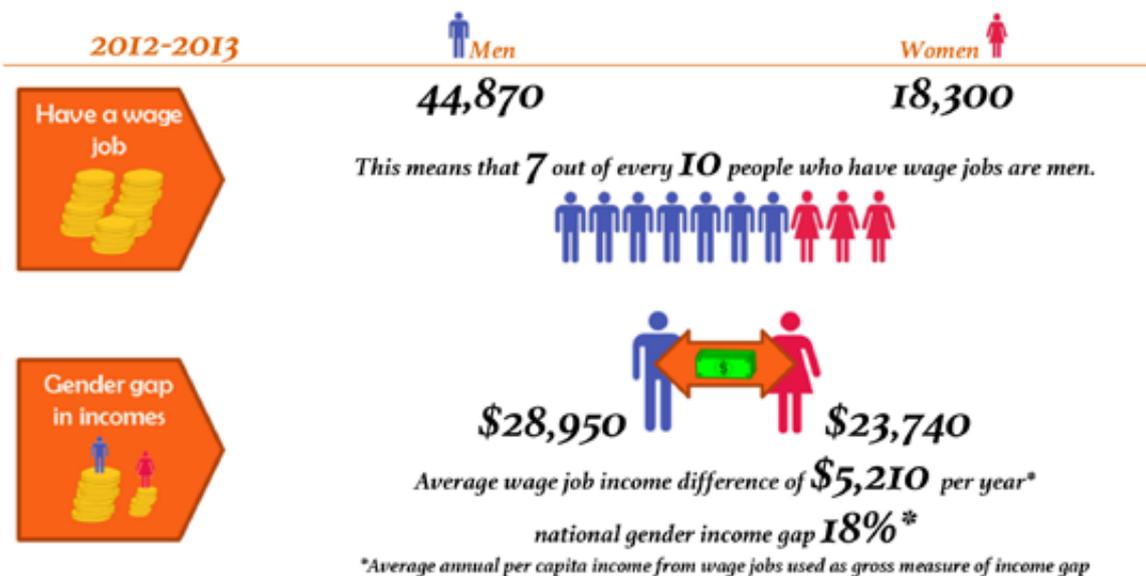


Source: SINSO Census of Population and Housing 2009



Source: SINSO Census of Population and Housing 2009. Central Bank of Solomon Islands– 2015 Solomon Islands Financial Services Demand Side Survey, Honiara, Solomon Islands

C. Gender gap in wage job incomes





Wage jobs income gap per year = \$10,850 or 38%



Men's average wage job income = \$28,450  
 Women's average wage job income = \$17,600



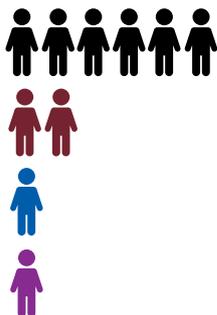
Wage jobs income gap per year = \$3,620 or 10%



Men's average wage jobs income = \$34,670  
 Women's average wage jobs income = \$31,050

Source: SINSO Household Income and Expenditure Survey 2012–2013

### Married men aged 15-49 and who they think should make the decision about what to do with the money his wife earns:



For every 10 married men:

- 6 would make the decision jointly with his wife.
- 2 would let his wife mainly decide.
- 1 would make the decision mainly by himself.
- 1 did not know or said that it depends.

Source: SINSO Demographic and Health Survey 2007

### What the statistics tell us

More women than men tend to be in vulnerable types of employment, more women are contributing family members (help in small family businesses and production work for own use, so called 'subsistence'). Women are more likely to work and be economically active but not be paid for this work. This can be seen in the annual wage income gender gap: women on average earn 37% less in wages a year than men. The unpaid work that the majority of women do, including those women producing goods for sale, has very few protection mechanisms in terms of making sure labour regulations are followed. These workers have no protection or compensation in the event that their work is affected by accidents, injury or long-term illness. Nor, in the case of contributing family workers, is there a 'decent work' agenda, regulation of hours worked, compensation and so on.

The Markets for Change (M4C) project has empowered women market vendors in Honiara and Auki (Malaita province) to increase their incomes through a range of activities, including training workshops, improving market facilities and services, and forming market vendors associations. The Auki Market Vendors' Association is working to achieve its vision for a 'healthy, safe, friendly, inclusive and organised market that supports economic empowerment for everyone'.

There is evidence that some women do not have autonomy over their earnings, nor are they able to contribute to some household decisions. This affects their level of economic empowerment. The 2007 Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) found that men who have a working wife but who are themselves not employed are less likely to support their wife’s participation in decisions about what to do with the money she earns than men who are employed. This implies that women have relatively low economic empowerment, even when they are the bread winner for the family, bearing in mind the small proportion of women who are working for pay or profit. The 2007 DHS found that most household decisions are made jointly by married couples, but that between 16% and 29% of women do not participate in some household decisions. Urban married women are more likely to participate in household decision-making than rural married women. Only 20% of adult females have a commercial bank account, compared with 32% of males.

### More information

The Solomon Islands National Statistics Office (SINSO) collects statistics on economic activities in all household surveys with varying degrees of detail, depending on the survey. The most comprehensive source is the Census of Population and Housing, conducted in 2009, scheduled to be carried out again in 2019. The Household Income and Expenditure Survey provides information about economic activities and incomes. The Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) provides information on couples’ decision making and women’s perceptions about empowerment. A DHS was conducted in 2007 and another in 2015, the results of which will be released by SINSO in 2016.

The Central Bank of Solomon Islands is conducting a national financial literacy programme with support from the Pacific Financial Inclusion Programme. More information is available at [www.pfip.org/about/where-we-work-1/solomon-islands/](http://www.pfip.org/about/where-we-work-1/solomon-islands/) and [www.cbsi.com.sb/index.php?id=75](http://www.cbsi.com.sb/index.php?id=75).

### Source of statistics

Type of work, sector of employment, enrolment, survival rates, transition rates, teachers: Solomon Islands National Statistics Office – 2009 Census of Population and Housing. Solomon Islands National Statistics Office – 1999 Census of Population and Housing. Available at [www.spc.int/prism/solomons/index.php/sinso-documents](http://www.spc.int/prism/solomons/index.php/sinso-documents).

Adults with a bank account: Central Bank of Solomon Islands – 2015 Solomon Islands Financial Services Demand Side Survey, Honiara, Solomon Islands. Available at <http://www.pfip.org/resources/uploads/attachments/documents/Financial%20Services%20Demand%20Side%20Survey%20Solomon%20Islands.pdf>.

## 3. Equal participation in decision making and leadership

### A. Women in the highest level of occupations

Distribution of employment in ISCO Group 1\*, by sex, 1999 and 2009

Year and sex	Legislators, senior officials	Managers
1999 Males	451	1,634
1999 Females	49	368
2009 Males	822	1,057
2009 Females	166	261

The International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO) Major Group 1 occupations are managers, senior officials and legislators

*In 2009 for every 10 legislators, senior officials and managers, 2 were women:*



Source: SINSO Census of Population and Housing reports 1999 and 2009

## B. Women members of parliament

### Members of parliament, 1993–2014



Source: SIG CEDAW Report 2012; Election Commission for 2014 election results

### What the statistics tell us

There has been little progress in increasing the participation of women in decision making and leadership. The number of women working in occupations grouped as senior officials (basically the highest levels of government) has increased, but at the same time the number of women employed as managers has decreased. Representation of women in parliament remains very low.

A proposal to introduce temporary special measures (TSMs) with reserved seats for women in the national parliament was rejected by Government caucus in 2009, and since then the MWYCFA and partners in the Women in Shared Decision Making coalition have been active nationwide, promoting the need for TSMs to be introduced at the national and provincial government level. The 2013 People's Survey found that 90% of people supported having reserved seats for women, so there is wide public support for women as leaders, but the challenge is the lack of understanding about why this should be fast-tracked. Translating this support into reality is a big challenge in a minority-led coalition parliament, with the Prime Minister pessimistic that parliamentarians would support legislating reserved seats for women in parliament. There has, however, been some success, with the 2014 Political Parties Integrity Act requiring a 10% quota of women in all political parties' total number of candidates endorsed to contest elections.

### More information

The Solomon Islands National Statistics Office collects statistics on occupations for all working persons in all household surveys with varying degrees of detail, depending on the survey. The most comprehensive source is the Census of Population and Housing, conducted in 2009 and due to be carried out again in 2019. The Household Income and Expenditure Survey provides information about occupations and incomes.

In 2012 the Government of Solomon Islands submitted its combined initial, second and third periodic report to the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, reporting on measures taken for progressive compliance with the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). In 2014 the Solomon Islands delegation discussed the report with the 54<sup>th</sup> session of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, responding to questions and queries from the committee about the report. Subsequently, the CEDAW committee has made a number of concluding observations and recommendations for the Government of Solomon Islands to follow up on for compliance with CEDAW.

There were 26 women candidates in the 2014 national election, unchanged from the number contesting the 2010 election. Women represented 6% of all candidates. The Commonwealth Observer Group recommended that 'temporary special measures be adopted to guarantee seats for women in parliament, with one option being the creation of 10 provincial seats reserved for women.'

The Solomon Islands Electoral Commission is an independent electoral management body established by the national constitution of Solomon Islands to conduct elections and by-elections. Its composition is prescribed under Section 57 (1) of the national constitution. More information is available at <http://www.siec.gov.sb>.

### Source of statistics

Occupation: Solomon Islands National Statistics Office – 2009 Census of Population and Housing. Solomon Islands National Statistics Office – 1999 Census of Population and Housing. Available at [www.spc.int/prism/solomons/index.php/sinso-documents](http://www.spc.int/prism/solomons/index.php/sinso-documents).

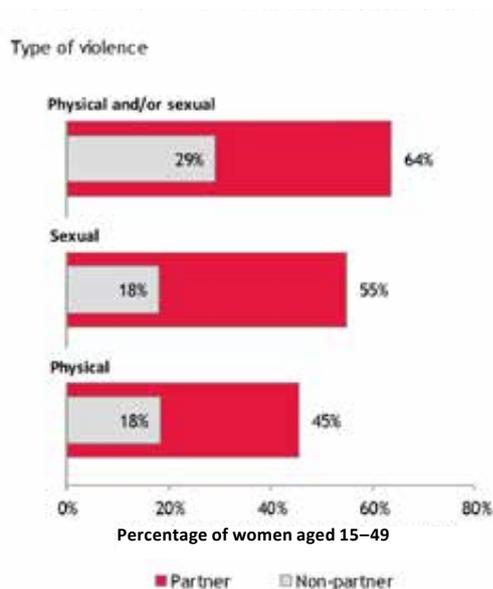
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People’s Survey: ANUedge in collaboration with the University of the South Pacific, 2013, People’s Survey 2013. The People’s Survey reports for 2006–2013 are available at <http://www.ramsi.org/media/peoples-survey/>.

## 4. Eliminate violence against women

Women aged 15–49 who have ever been in a relationship, reporting different types of violence



  
In **2014** parliament passed the Family Protection Act.

In **2015** women made up 14% of the RSIPF\*, of which 122 were constables. 

The **Vois Blong Mere Solomon (VBMS) drama group** provides communities with an interactive theatre and forum for discussing gender based violence. The drama group shares information and stories from communities on the VBMS weekly radio programme and newsletter.

Source: MWYCA, Solomon Islands Family Health and Safety Survey, 2008  
\* Royal Solomon Islands Police Force, information provided by Office of the Commissioner of Police, dated 1 April 2015 (personal communication MWYCA)

### What the statistics tell us

Despite the severity and extent of the violence, services for survivors are limited, especially in the provinces. Women often do not have equal access to resources and opportunities, and those who look to challenge the status quo by speaking out against violence face cultural norms that encourage them to return to abusive partners. They also face

formal, often legal, barriers. The Government of Solomon Islands has established a formal referral system called the Referral SAFENET, made up of both government and non-government agencies to provide coordinated, frontline services and support to survivors/victims of gender-based violence.

In 2015 there were 1,097 trained police officers in the Royal Solomon Islands Police Force (RSIPF) from the rank of constable to commissioner; 155 were females and almost 80% of these were constables. RSIPF has a policy to recruit females for police training, and over time there should be an increase of women in the higher ranks.

The Family Protection Act of 2014 prohibits violence, or threats of violence, committed by a person against another person. This includes physical, sexual, psychological, and economic abuse. It criminalises behaviour relating to domestic violence and provides civil remedies to protect victims and ensure their safety. The penalty for committing domestic violence is SBD 30,000 penalty units or a three-year term of imprisonment or both.

There have been considerable efforts by the law and justice sector to enhance women's access to justice through the establishment of a public solicitor's office in some provincial centres and awareness campaigns to disseminate basic legal information. It is acknowledged, however, that access is limited and this, combined with financial constraints, means that access to justice remains an issue for most Solomon Island women.

In Solomon Islands, a National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security is being developed by the Ministry of Women, Youth, Children and Family Affairs. It is the country's response to the UN Security Council's call to implement Resolutions 1325, 1820, 1888, 1889 and 1960 in Solomon Islands. These resolutions deal with the promotion of women's peace and security issues.

## More information

Solomon Islands was one of the first countries in the Pacific region to carry out a national, systematic statistical survey to derive statistics on the prevalence of gender-based violence. The results of this 2009 Family Health and Safety Survey have been used to develop the priority areas in government's policy to eliminate violence against women, which is being implemented with support from development partners.

## Source of statistics

Violence against women: Secretariat of the Pacific Community – 2009 Solomon Islands Family Health and Safety Study: a study on violence against women, and children. Noumea, New Caledonia. Available at <http://www.pacificwomen.org/resources/research/solomon-islands-family-health-and-safety-study/>.

## 5. Gender mainstreaming across government

### A. Capacity for gender mainstreaming



Source: MWYCFA and SPC, 2015

## B. Progressive compliance with CEDAW as a component of gender mainstreaming

In 2013, Solomon Islands submitted its first official 'state party' report for the human rights treaty, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). To comply with the requirements of CEDAW, countries typically need to make a series of progressive constitutional and legal reforms, and Solomon Islands is no exception. In late 2014, a seven member delegation engaged in a constructive dialogue with the CEDAW committee on the report and progress made to comply with CEDAW.

The CEDAW committee's report contains the principle areas of concern and a large number of recommendations in specific areas for CEDAW compliance. The committee specifically tasked the government to report back in two years' time on progress made and measures taken to ensure that:

- provisions on equality between women with men are included in the new federal constitution;
- the police respond to and investigate complaints regarding violence against women, perpetrators are prosecuted and punished, and data are collected on the number of prosecutions and convictions, including at the provincial level;
- efforts to retain girls, including pregnant girls, in school are strengthened; the return to school of young mothers after giving birth is facilitated by adopting the "Second Chance Education" policy currently under consideration and by providing adequate childcare facilities; ensuring that girls are not expelled from school on grounds of being pregnant; and imposing appropriate sanctions on those responsible for such dismissals; and
- age-appropriate education on sexual and reproductive health to address early pregnancies continues to be developed and promoted.

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

### What the statistics tell us

The Ministry of Women, Youth, Children and Family Affairs (MWYCFA) is moving forward on gender mainstreaming in government. A major achievement in 2012 was the inclusion of gender mainstreaming requirements in the key performance indicators of the employment contracts of Permanent Secretaries (heads of government ministries). The gender-specific indicators in their performance appraisals include: having a gender implementation strategy in ministry corporate plans, appointing a gender focal point, gender sensitising the recruitment processes, developing gender profiles of the sector, collecting and disseminating sex disaggregated data, and developing a zero tolerance policy towards sexual harassment in the public service. Progress across government has been variable; all ministries have gender focal points but only a small proportion are collecting and disseminating sex disaggregated data. Only four of the 24 ministries provided copies of ministry gender mainstreaming reports to MWYCFA in 2014.

The Ministry of Public Service (MPS), as the agency responsible for implementing decisions made by the Public Service Commission, has limited capacity to monitor the performance indicators in terms of the human resources needed and changes required to standards, policies, operations and procedures. Likewise, MWYCFA has limited capacity to effectively monitor and advise MPS on gender mainstreaming – this would require a full time senior-level position. MWYCFA is currently identifying the priority ministries to begin implementing its gender mainstreaming strategy, which will include working with MPS on government's obligation to be an equal opportunity employer and implement policies that ensure there is a gender balance in senior positions in government, statutory bodies and boards, and state-owned enterprises.

## More information

The work of the Ministry of Women, Youth, Children and Family Affairs on gender mainstreaming increased momentum in 2012 with the stocktake of gender mainstreaming capacity. The stocktake report provides a summary of the extent to which capacity for effective gender mainstreaming exists in government ministries, and identifies areas of potential strategic intervention to strengthen such capacity. The stocktake report is available at <http://www.mwycfa.gov.sb/policy-a-planning/our-five-strategic-goals/gender-equality-and-women-s-development>.

Secretariat of the Pacific Community. 2012. Stocktake of the gender mainstreaming capacity of Pacific Island governments – Solomon Islands. Noumea, New Caledonia.

In 2012 the Government of Solomon Islands submitted its combined initial, second and third periodic report to the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, reporting on measures taken for progressive compliance with the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).

