

## How do we better address gender in Pacific water and sanitation initiatives?

Research project: Making the invisible visible- documenting successes, enablers and measures of engendering water and sanitation initiatives in the Pacific to inform policy and practice

# FIJI CASE STUDY

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Juliet Willetts, Naomi Carrard, Gabrielle Halcrow, Claire Rowland and Jo Crawford

## Summary

The case study presented in this document forms a part of a larger research project being undertaken by Institute for Sustainable Futures at the University of Technology, Sydney (UTS) in partnership with International Women's Development Agency, Live and Learn Environmental Education (Live & Learn) Fiji and World Vision Vanuatu. The research is supported by AusAID through the Australian Development Research Awards grants program. The research project concerns how gender equality can be supported and evaluated within the context of water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) programs in the Pacific. The research incorporates two case studies in Melanesian communities engaged with non-government organisations (NGOs) WASH programs in Fiji (July 2009) and Vanuatu (October 2009) that emphasise community engagement strategies.

Based on the findings the project will produce evidence-based practical tools to guide design, implementation and measurement of gender equality outcomes to support WASH practitioners. This case study report presents the research methods and empirical findings of the Fiji case study. At a later stage, this empirical evidence will be contextualised into the theory and practice of gender equality, and will also form the raw material for developing guidance for practitioners on improving their practice in this area.

Gender equality outcomes identified by participants in Fijian communities are summarised below. These particular outcomes were those on which women and men placed particular value and importance. They were repeatedly mentioned through the multiple research activities of story-telling, discussion, prioritisation and visioning and some were assessed through the participatory quantification activity.

### **1. There is an increased sense of community unity, through men and women working together**

*This outcome is about how women and men worked together to contribute to community-level activities such as waste management and community sanitation. Compared with in the past, the project was considered by the community to have led to increased levels of cooperation and collaboration between women and men, and particularly, men taking a stronger role in areas where they were previously absent. While community participants referred to this notion as 'working together', it should be noted that this usually meant that groups of women and groups of men worked towards a common community goal on specific and different tasks and in roles that were complementary to one another.*

### **2. Women's efforts to promote community sanitation and health are recognised**

*Women put into action the skills and activities suggested in Live & Learn training. They took the lead and as such have gained recognition for their efforts by men in the community, and in some cases inspired men to participate too. Recognition of women's increased role in development at the community level has been a strong contributor to increased respect for women and increased voice at community level (outcomes further discussed below).*

### **3. Women are working together and supporting each other**

*This outcome is about women's collaboration and solidarity. Through the project, it seems that women started to collaborate between themselves to a greater extent than previously, resulting both in concerted action and in improved relationships between women. There was a sense that by working collectively and by uniting their voices women were able to improve their situation.*

### **4. Women are more respected by men and feel more valued**

*This outcome relates to both the household and community levels. It is about women feeling they are more respected and valued by the men in their community, and also men's perceptions relating to respect and recognising the roles women play and their labour.*

### **5. Women have an increased voice at the community level**

*This outcome is about what space is made for women to speak, to be heard, and to influence discussion and decisions at the community level. It includes the notion of improving women's confidence to speak and what explicit opportunity is made for them to bring forward ideas and opinions in a community setting. It also includes the extent to which women's voices and views are 'heard' and any shifts in the outcomes of decisions through taking into account women's views. Overall, there was evidence of increased women's voice, however to varying extents between and within the two communities. Increased women's voice was generally seen as positive, within the cultural context that it supported traditional leadership by men.*

### **6. Communication between husband and wife has improved**

*This outcome focuses at the household level on perceived improvements in the relationship between women and men. Many referred to it as greater 'love and listening' in the household. However it also extends to cover how issues are resolved at the household level, how roles and tasks are negotiated and shared, how household decisions are made, and how women and their work are valued.*

### **7. Men are participating more in household sanitation and water management**

*This outcome concerns a shift in traditional roles in the household. As a result of the Live & Learn projects and subsequent implementation by women of household and community sanitation initiatives, men's participation in household level sanitation activities has increased.*

This case study report supports the view that gender is not only an important consideration in WASH programs but is a strong potential entry point for generating positive gender outcomes. The research methodology proved successful in allowing gender conceptions to be shaped by the community participants themselves, and also supported a constructive learning process for community members and for NGO staff involved. A subsequent case study will be conducted in Vanuatu, followed by further analysis of findings and preparations of resources to support incorporation and measurement of gender in Pacific WASH programs.

## Acknowledgements

The authors would like to extend our thanks and appreciation to community participants in the two participating communities, who generously offered their time and views. We would also like to acknowledge the efforts and insights of the Live & Learn Staff involved in the research, Dorris Susau -Simione Koto, Makereta Takalaivuna, Morena Rigamoto and Masikerei Vunicagi, who played an integral role in developing the approach, facilitating community processes and participating in the research analysis. We would also likely to acknowledge the Live & Learn team in Suva for their support in organising logistics and support to the field work. Jimmy Daniel of World Vision Vanuatu also made significant contribution.



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## Background

The case study presented in this document forms a part of a larger research project being undertaken by Institute for Sustainable Futures, UTS in partnership with International Women's Development Agency, Live and Learn Environmental Education (Live & Learn) Fiji and World Vision Vanuatu in 2009/10 supported by AusAID. The research project concerns how gender equality can be supported and evaluated within the context of water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) programs in the Pacific.

This research is based on the premise that gender equality is central to effective and sustainable water and sanitation initiatives, and an important outcome in and of itself, though rarely measured as such. It recognises the fundamental link between Millennium Development Goal (MDG) 3 to promote gender equality and empower women and the targets associated with MDG 7 to reduce by half the number of people without access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation by 2015.

The almost universal gap between commitment to gender equality and the outcomes of gender mainstreaming is amplified in the WASH sector. In the Pacific region there is limited published research exploring gender equality results. There is an absence of resources that consider the intersection between gender and WASH and the cultural and contextual factors influencing the implementation and effectiveness of programs.

The research incorporates two case studies in Melanesian communities engaged with non-government organisations (NGOs) WASH programs in Fiji (July 2009) and Vanuatu (October 2009) that emphasise community engagement strategies. With reference to these case studies the research will investigate three main areas:

1. What kinds of gender outcomes are being achieved?
2. What are the relative strengths of different approaches for integrating gender? What strategies, steps and activities work well to promote gender equality? What enabling contextual and cultural factors can help?
3. How can we measure the effectiveness of the strategies being use in terms of gender outcomes?

Based on the findings the project will produce evidence-based practical tools to guide design, implementation and measurement of gender equality outcomes to support WASH practitioners. In addition, the two case studies will identify implications with regard to strategic integration of gender into water and sanitation initiatives and implications for meaningful measurement of aid effectiveness in terms of gender outcomes in the Pacific and elsewhere. Finally, the outcomes of the research aim to influence the policy and practice of Australian, Pacific and Regional actors focused on improving access to water, sanitation and hygiene.

This case study report presents empirical findings of the Fiji case study. At a later stage, this empirical evidence will be contextualised into the theory and practice of gender equality, and will also form the raw material for developing guidance for practitioners on improving their practice in this area.

## Introduction

The purpose of this case study report is to present research findings of gender equality outcomes in two communities in Fiji. Both communities have been engaged in water governance projects facilitated by Live & Learn. The case study report describes the research methodology and then explains gender equality outcomes identified by communities.<sup>1</sup> The enabling factors that contributed to these outcomes are described, including both innate characteristics of the community as well as factors related to the approaches used by Live & Learn in their projects. The case study concludes with a discussion of the valued gender outcomes and clarifies how the findings in this case study will be used in the next stages of the research.

## Context

Live & Learn projects in the case study communities were facilitated between 2004 and 2007. The projects were i) Water Governance and ii) Developing Sustainable Communities. The Governing Water Project aimed to raise awareness about good governance and promote inter-ethnic dialogue using water as a community entry issue and “Learning Circles” as an implementation tool. In 2006 Live & learn continued its services in these two communities through the Developing Sustainable Communities (DSC) project. The DSC Project was facilitated within twelve months and its operation aimed to initiate practical actions that will enhance sustainable living in rural communities in Fiji through environmental education and community outreach. The main methodology employed in both projects was Community Learning Circles which has a strong focus on inclusion. The Community Learning Circle approach is about making space for genuine contribution from all participants, so explicitly supports participatory processes that include women and men.

Facilitator materials for the Water Governance project describe an activity on decision-making which explicitly asks about the role of women in community decision-making. Another activity on ‘water roles’ breaks groups into women, men and youth and highlights how each group is affected and areas for involvement of women in water decision-making. Guidance on Learning Circles notes ownership of ideas by women as one of its outcomes and benefits. Women, men and youth are often involved in separate learning circle groups.

The two communities have been re-named in this report to protect the anonymity of participants. They were both of Fijian cultural background and had populations of 300 and 500 people. The research took place over three afternoons in each community, with timing negotiated to suit the research participants. The processes were facilitated by Live & Learn staff utilising a facilitator guidebook developed by the research team during workshops in Suva held immediately prior to community research visits.

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<sup>1</sup> Whilst a significant portion of time was spent examining NGO staff perceptions of gender equality and their experiences and stories drawn from their work, this case study is confined to discussion of outcomes surfaced by the communities themselves.



## Methodology

### Research approach

The research used a strengths-based approach that is informed by principles of empowerment, appreciation and participation. The intention is for the research to build on existing strengths and be a learning process for all involved. For the participant organisations, this will lead to a stronger focus on gender, and increased capability to integrate gender into water and sanitation projects.



The following principles and ways of thinking about research influenced how the research was approached and the choice of research methods.

- 1. Context is critical and should shape conceptions of gender equality and equity.** While the research team had starting perspectives about the relationship between gender and WASH (for instance those described in the Background section), we valued the importance of enabling research participants to help define the frame of investigation. We therefore sought to *avoid assuming conceptions* of gender equality and equity and instead sought to generate dialogue about women and men's roles, relationships and specific experiences, in order to frame their meaning to NGO staff and the research communities.
- 2. Focus on strengths and appreciation.** The research process sought to empower both NGO staff and community participants to address gender equality. It therefore rested strongly on the philosophy and process of Appreciative Inquiry (Cooperrider and Whitney 1999) and the idea that people move in the direction in which they focus. Our approach explicitly sought to expose and build on the existing strengths in NGO staff and in community participants, to promote learning and action as a result of the inquiry process, and to maintain a constructive focus in the dialogues that took place.
- 3. Transdisciplinarity and a commitment to research that contributes to resolving societal issues.** The broad type of research that underlies the approach is transdisciplinarity, which is characterised by an explicit aim to contribute to resolving a societal issue or problem (Wickson et al, 2006). Such research supports an evolving process to development of the research methodology, allowing it to be shaped by the context, partners and participants. The researchers actively engage with these stakeholders as part of a mutual learning process.
- 4. Mixed method design.** The research included both qualitative and quantitative components, which reflects a pluralistic epistemological base, valuing each element for a different purpose. The qualitative component was based on an inductive, interpretive approach seeking conceptions from the perspective of research participants. The quantitative component involved translating emerging concepts into scales and categories such that empirical evidence of frequency of response within a given community could be assessed through participatory quantification (Mayoux and Chambers 2005).



## Research methods

Proceedings in each community began with formal welcomes and an explanation of the background to and purpose of the research and ethics issues related to privacy and confidentiality to community participants. The Live & Learn projects that had been conducted in the community were briefly discussed to position the research as investigating outcomes associated with those projects, before proceeding with the main research activities below. The first three activities were conducted in separate women's and men's groups.

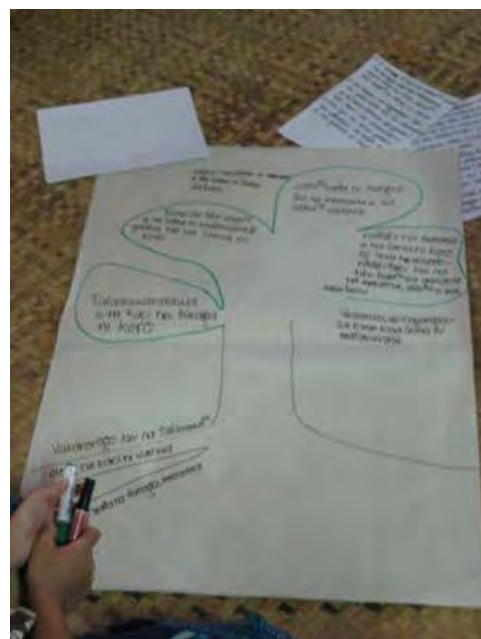
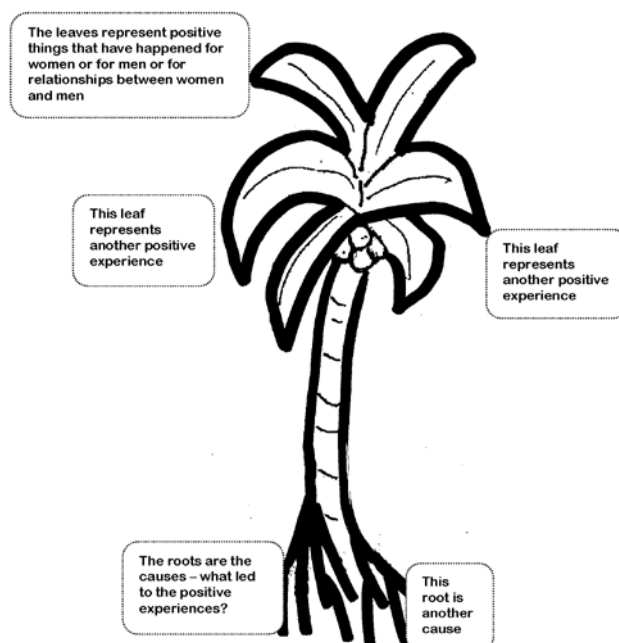
### Paired (or small group) interviews: Sharing stories about positive experiences

The first method is based on 'discovery' interviews commonly used in Appreciative Inquiry. Participants were informed that this process was about sharing positive experiences that have happened for women and for men and for relationships between men and women as a result of the Live & Learn projects and identifying the factors that made these positive experiences possible. They were asked to interview one another with the following prompt questions:

*Describe an example of something that happened during the period Live & Learn worked with your community that really made you feel good about yourself in your role (as a woman/as a man or in your relationships). What were some things that helped make this example possible?*

### Larger group report back and synthesis: Drawing a tree with leaves as outcomes and roots as causes

The second activity involved reporting stories back to a broader group (8-15 people), identifying from each of these stories the main positive experience being expressed (which was usually a change, or an 'outcome'), and the contributing factors that led to that positive experience. Not all outcomes identified by community participants were specifically gender outcomes. The outcomes and their causes were recorded on large sheets of paper as indicated below using a method proposed by Mayoux (2003).



### **Ranking exercise: Which outcomes are most important and why?**

The outcomes identified on the leaves were written onto separate pieces of paper and participants asked to rank them in order of importance to them. The discussion that took place in making the ranking was documented, as was the final rankings decided and the group's explanation as to their reasons.

### **Group visions: What would be even better outcomes?**

This activity varied from group to group and between the communities. Women's groups discussed a vision of how water and sanitation would be managed in their community, and included a role play of certain aspects. Men's groups discussed and noted down their vision.

### **Whole group presentation and discussion: Sharing women's and men's group contributions**

An activity to present and share the discussions that had been conducted up to this point between the women's and the men's groups then took place. Facilitators encouraged discussion about significant issues arising and particularly any points of difference between the group's perceptions.



### **Collaborative analysis by the research team: What gender outcomes are being valued?**

The research team analysed the data collected during the above five activities and discussions. Each member of the research team was asked to consider:

1. What three outcomes do you think the women/men are most valuing? Provide evidence to support your view from the stories, trees, ranking or visions.
2. In what areas was there a diversity of views amongst the women/men? (e.g. where some women held one view and other women held a different view)
3. What do you see as the main overlaps where women and men have similar views?
4. In what areas do women and men hold different views or perceive situations differently?

A group discussion based on the research team's answers to these questions resulted in agreement on a set of core gender outcomes that the group believed community participants were valuing. Based on these outcomes, questions for the following activity were designed.

### **Quantification activity: How much change has there been for you?**

The quantification activity was designed to reveal how widespread the identified gender outcomes were amongst women and men. Two sets of questions were developed, one for women, and one for men, with many questions common to both groups. A participatory activity similar to pocket-voting was utilised, with each question on a separate large card on the wall, and a scale of answers as follows:

- Same as before
- Small change
- Big change
- Very big change

Participants were given different coloured paper depending on age (youth, middle, elder) and whether they had participated strongly in Live & Learn’s projects or not. Participants were encouraged to respond honestly and based on their own personal views and experiences. After all participants had ‘voted’, tallies were made and represented visually so that participants could directly consider the results. A final dialogue based on interesting findings arising from the activity was facilitated, particularly pointing out where women’s and men’s perceptions about the same issue differed.

### Participants (Sample)

The numbers of participants in each community are noted in the table below. Ranges reflect the minimum and maximum number of participants in each community at different stages of the research.

	Number of participants	
	Senikau Village	Senitua Village
Women	10-20	15-20
Men	3-10	10-20



### Limitations and challenges

The research was conducted within the usual constraints of fieldwork at the community level, in which the level of control over the number and type of participants is low. In Senikau Village this presented the largest issue, where the men’s group was small on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> days.

Another challenge was leading community participants to discuss issues of gender, and yet doing so without providing them with a working definition of what we were looking for, due to the need to avoid assumptions about what gender outcomes should be included or considered. The use of multiple methods building on from the first activity of open questioning and storytelling worked well in eliciting community views, and wherever possible, facilitators avoided asking leading questions.

Conversations took place in Fijian, and therefore there is inevitable loss in translation. This was overcome to the greatest extent possible by assigning note-takers for each activity and a daily debrief was used to capture notes in English of the proceedings. Questions were

translated from English into Fijian and then back into English by a different member of the research to check how well the intended meaning was conveyed.

The research approach, with its intentional focus on appreciation, did not seek to uncover negative gender outcomes. This approach is justified due to the recognition that by focusing on the positive outcomes, the research will assist in moving the situation in a positive direction. Focusing on positive outcomes also prevented the study from becoming or being perceived as an assessment or evaluation of Live & Learn projects. It is acknowledged however, that negative gender outcomes which might have been surfaced by a more evaluative approach could also provide useful information about how best to approach gender equality in the program context.

The gender analysis of the outcomes was facilitated with the NGO staff due to time limitations. Ideally, the analysis would have been done with participants from the two communities so that practical and strategic gender needs could be defined from the perspective of the women and men involved.

### **Methods of analysis**

The first method of analysis, collaborative analysis, was described above. In addition, a more systematic analysis of detailed notes taken during the research was conducted using Nvivo software following the fieldwork. The notes were coded according to the identified gender outcomes and enabling factors, and any additional points of interest noted. It should be noted that stories and quotes that have been extracted from the notes are paraphrased in English and not necessarily the exact language used by participants. The quantitative component findings were entered into excel, however due to lack of significant patterns amongst participants of different ages or of different level of involvement in Live & Learn's projects, only aggregate data has been included. Finally, the qualitative and quantitative findings were considered against one another, and have been presented in this report in combination.

## **Findings**

### **Gender outcomes valued by women and men in the communities**

The following gender equity outcomes were identified through the research activities:

- There is an increased sense of community unity, through women and men working together
- Women's efforts to promote community sanitation and health are recognised
- Women are working together and supporting each other
- Women are more respected by men and feel more valued
- Women have an increased voice at the community level --there are more spaces in which they can contribute, and they are able to use these opportunities to express their views
- Communication between husband and wife has improved
- Men are participating more in household sanitation

These particular outcomes are chosen for discussion as they were interpreted as the outcomes on which women and men placed particular value and importance. They were

repeatedly mentioned through the multiple research activities of story-telling, discussion, prioritisation and visioning and some were assessed through the participatory quantification activity.

### **There is an increased sense of community unity, through men and women working together**

*This outcome is about how women and men worked together to contribute to community-level activities such as waste management and community sanitation. Compared with in the past, the project was considered to have led to increased levels of cooperation and collaboration between women and men, and particularly, men taking a stronger role in areas where they were previously absent. While community participants referred to this notion as 'working together', it should be noted that this usually meant that groups of women and groups of men worked towards a common community goal on specific and different tasks and in roles that were complementary to one another.*

This outcome was identified in both communities, with 98.5% of participants noting an increase in how they value community unity and women and men working together. In Senikau Village the outcome was focused on men and women working collaboratively on sanitation and waste management activities. As described by a man in the community:

We conducted a community clean up as part of "healthy community". Before the women always did the majority of the clean up of the compound. After the process the men realized they needed to play their part to and they started doing things together. Clean up was shared but men and women took separate roles. For example women collected the rubbish with the children in the bin and now the men took the rubbish away. This builds community unity and sharing. We do different jobs but together. Now men do their part. Before it was left to the women. (Senikau Village older man)

Similar stories emerged from Senitoa Village, for example "The project has improved the way people live in the village and the way in which women and men work together" (Senitoa Village, older man). It was noted by several women in Senitoa Village that men and women now both participate in maintaining community cleanliness. As for Senikau Village, this means women and men participate on different days and with different roles. One Senitoa Village woman also clarified that the activities started with the women who then negotiated with the men for their assistance and involvement.

Visions identified by men in Senikau Village express a desire for even closer collaboration and cooperation on waste management activities in the future:

People here in Senikau Village have decided that there should be only one specific day that men, women and youth work together in keeping the community clean. Usually there are two different days for cleaning the community – one day for women and one for men. Now they would like to combine the day when everyone works together in a village cleanup. (Senikau Village older man)

and

We want more unity and to be playful together. Doing things together makes work more fun and helps build relationships so we can accomplish things and it makes the work lighter. (Senikau Village man)



Visions from Senitoa Village also identified a desire that men participate more in community waste management activities, implying that changes to date have been beneficial and also noting that there is significant scope for further participation by men in community activities:

We want to strengthen discussion of waste management at the community level. Waste management is usually women's role. Our dream in the future is to involve women and men. Both should be involved and aware in a combined community clean-up. (Senitoa Village man)

We want to strengthen relationships between women and men and their children at community level and ensure high quality of life. One dream is to involve in a lot of activities that require both skills and strengths of women *and* men. We need more training and community activities to keep women and men working together. (Senitoa Village man)

Men in both communities often referred to community unity as being about collaboration between men, women, youth and children. Women more often discussed their own role and contribution to community unity, and did not specifically identify the involvement of youth. One story that emerged from men in Senitoa Village was specifically about male youths and cooperation between male and female youths:

There are many unemployed youths in the community. Most of them stay in the village. Getting involved in project activities gave them a sense of direction and satisfaction. They feel acknowledged and valued by elders and were happy to have roles given to them. They feel pride and happiness. They now have a farm. Female and male youths work together on this. (Senitoa Village young man)



### **Women's efforts to promote community sanitation and health are recognised**

*Women put into action the skills and activities suggested in Live & Learn training. They took the lead and as such have gained recognition for their efforts by men in the community, and in some cases inspired men to participate too. Recognition of women's increased role in development at the community level has been a strong contributor to increased respect for women and increased voice at community level (outcomes further discussed below).*

In both Senitoa Village and Senikau Village, women had attended training sessions offered by Live & Learn and become highly active in the community on either community or household level activities. Men in Senikau Village noted an increase in recognition of the role women play in sanitation:

Men acknowledge the amount of work the women have done and their role. Men always talk. Women always do the work and are more committed to get things done. They take more responsibility. The change is the recognition and that they see they need to share the labour and recognize the work and contribution. (Senikau Village man)

Whereas previously it would have been men who attended activities and training related to community development, the involvement of women was perceived as a positive change resulting from men encouraging women to participate: “Men felt proud because they were directing and being role models to encourage their wives to participate” (Senikau Village man). Whilst this quote reflects a continuation of a male’s perceived role to ‘direct’ the actions of their wife, it was nevertheless valued that women were being encouraged to participate.

In Senikau Village, a highly visible outcome of flies disappearing from the community resulted in recognition of the contribution women had played in improving village amenity and motivating others to take part in maintaining village cleanliness.

Senikau Village used to be a village full of flies. We were worried about the flies when they took the fish home – we worried about this because of health and also in case of attracting more flies. There has been a big change since the project – much fewer flies. This was an unexpected outcome that the community values. Actions taken by women especially, and also men and youth, to clear the village of waste led to this result. Women now encourage children to use the toilet whereas people used to use the ‘shore’ for the toilet. Now more people use toilets. (Senikau Village woman)

Examples from Senitoa Village focus on some personal achievements of women that became recognised in the community. One woman in Senitoa Village described how she took initiative following the Live & Learn training to establish composting in her home, the success of which inspired her husband to assist. The woman noted that “if I’m going to tell my husband that this is what I learnt then I need to use it” (Senitoa Village, woman). Her and her husband both used the compost – her husband took it for his garden, the woman used it for her flowers. From her actions, her husband could see the benefits and became active in helping her to continue the composting activity.

Another woman, a widow, described income generation resulting from waste management, and the recognition this received from others in the community:

I attended the training then when I returned home I started composting. I used the compost on flowers and they grew more plentiful. This increased my produce for the market. The other women all noticed what I had achieved and they supported and encouraged me with praise. The other women, who didn’t attend, then followed my model and started composting. My business grew bigger and I planted more. Everyone was very impressed. (Senitoa Village woman)





### **Women are working together and supporting each other**

*This outcome is about women's collaboration and solidarity. Through the projects, it seems that women started to collaborate between themselves to a greater extent than previously, resulting both in concerted action and in improved relationships between women. There was a sense that by working collectively and by uniting their voices women were able to improve their situation.*

This outcome was articulated and highly valued in Senitua Village but not mentioned specifically by women in Senikau Village. Women in Senitua Village emphasised that since the Live & Learn projects women have been working together collectively and supporting each other:

Women are working together and are very supportive of each other. We enjoyed the training as it brought us together, normally we stay at our homes but the training brings us together. The learning circles encourage participation and sharing. It's an advantage of coming together despite all of our differences. We learn new things and collaborate. After the training we started sitting together and discussed what we could do together as a women's groups. This is where the idea of the cleaning groups came up to do a one day a week community clean up, planting, flowering, composting as women together. It was a direct outcome. We see the advantage of working together as women. Its more interesting also, we learn from each other. We now also get together and sew together, if someone learns something new we gather and share. Our husbands are really liking the work we do. Its also influenced other women who didn't attend the training to join in. We have pride in the work we have done, we feel proud of what we have done. (Senitua Village woman)

Of all outcomes identified by women in Senitua Village, an increase in women working together was identified as the one most valued with respect to changes at the community level. Although the men's group in Senitua Village did not identify women working collectively as an outcome in and of itself, their recognition of women's efforts to improve sanitation at the community level reflect acknowledgement of this change. Women in Senitua Village also identified that by working together as a group the voices of women can be more easily heard at the community level (discussed further below).

### **Women are more respected by men and feel more valued**

*This outcome relates to both the household and community levels. It is about women feeling they are more respected and valued by the men in their community, and also men's perceptions relating to respect and recognising the roles women play and their labour.*

This outcome was considered important in both Senitua Village and Senikau Village, with the increased respect and recognition of their labour most often originating with the women's diligent practical application of what they learned in Live & Learn's training. As one woman in Senikau Village mentioned:

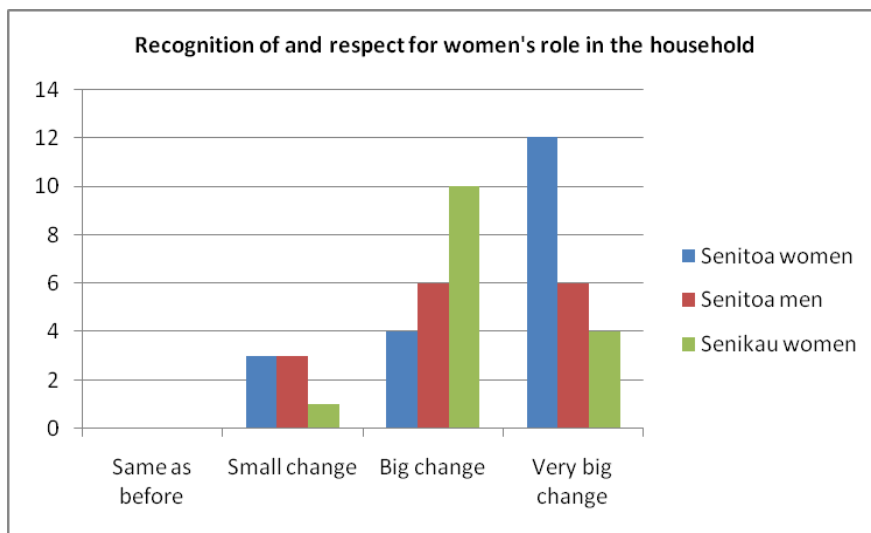
The head of the household (usually men) were able to recognise the benefits of the women's initiatives in eg cleaning the toilets. The men were able to also see the benefit of maintaining better waste management practices. Men also appreciated the amount of work women do particularly in the upkeep of the household (Senikau Village, woman).

Another proposed:

The response to women has changed, they are more listened to, there is more trust of women. Whatever project women take a lead in, it is a success. For example in health issues, drainage, compost. Women have gained respect (Senikau Village, woman).

In Senitua Village, two groups of men (younger and elders) independently ranked outcomes of changing their ideas and increased respect for women as the first and second priority. Their explanation was that there had been a strong recognition of the imperative to change their ideas from their traditional ones, and to adapt and change. They linked how husband and wife listen, communicate and respect one another to the ability to be able to work together.

The quantitative findings in Figures Figure 1 Figure 2 support these views, as illustrated in the charts below indicating voting results for women in both communities and men in Senitua Village.<sup>2</sup>



**Figure 1 Recognition of and respect for women's role in the household**

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<sup>2</sup> Due to the small number of male participants in V present on the third day when voting took place, the male votes in V cannot be considered indicative of the range of potential views of male community members so have been excluded from the presentation of quantitative results.



**Figure 2 Increase in respect for and valuing of women by men**

### **Women have an increased voice at the community level**

*This outcome is about what space is made for women to speak, to be heard, and to influence discussion and decisions at the community level. It includes the notion of improving women’s confidence to speak and what explicit opportunity is made for them to bring forward ideas and opinions in a community setting. It also includes the extent to which women’s voices and views are ‘heard’ and any shifts in the outcomes of decisions through taking into account women’s views. Overall, there was evidence of increased women’s voice, however to varying extents between and within the two communities. Increased women’s voice was generally seen as positive, within the cultural context that it supported traditional leadership by men.*

This outcome was identified in both communities, but was framed in different ways and elicited a variety of views and responses in terms of the extent of change and as to what constitutes desirable change. Below, this outcome is discussed first in terms of changes in the overall community decision-making context and a shift towards more deliberative, participatory decision-making processes. A description is then provided of the changes that were evident in Senikau Village and changes that were evident in Senitoa Village. Finally, differences evident between the two communities are highlighted, and the findings are contextualised into the local cultural and leadership setting. Overall, it is important to note that while the question of *which* women were able to have an increased voice was not

specifically discussed, higher status women tended to contribute most to discussions during research activities involving sharing perspectives with men.

**Broader context of change in decision-making approaches:** The change in women's participation in decision making sits within a broader context of change which was evident in relation to decision-making approaches. Both communities reported that since the Live & Learn projects, with their focus on community learning circles and concepts of inclusion, there has been an increase in communication and listening, including taking into account multiple and different views in decision making:

There has been more collaboration amongst people, [the Live & Learn project has helped] men and women to talk properly together and listen. Men are able to listen to the women more compared to past. There was a lot of training over the six years, lots of group work and discussions and learning circles, with people sharing their views. The concept helped us to come up with better ideas. The norm is in a village meeting the men / leaders would speak and tell people what to do – it was one way communication and decision making. The Learning circles helped us to listen together and we started to value the discussion and sharing of ideas before arriving at a decision. (Senikau Village man)

This shift toward more deliberative decision-making approaches is a contributing factor assisting men to see the legitimacy of women's voices as valuable inputs to decision-making.

**Evidence of increased voice of women in Senikau Village:** In Senikau Village, the outcome of increased voice of women was a matter of some contention, with differing views among women and between women and men. There were mixed views about whether there was progress in increasing women's voice, and about whether this was appropriate or desirable. Two-thirds of women expressed that there had been no change or only a small change in how much women were listened to at the community level, while one third perceived a big or very big change. The following quotes provide some insight into the different views held on this matter by women:



Before the projects, when women raised views in community meetings they weren't taken seriously (Senikau Village woman)

Women's voices are heard through different channels. Women take their concerns to the head of the women's committee, then she takes them to the village headman (Senikau Village, woman)

The first quote suggests that women's ideas are now being taken more seriously than before the Live & Learn projects. The second refers to women being able to utilise existing indirect channels to have their views raised at community level. In addition, in a discussion between groups of women and the men, one woman expressed that "Men sometimes don't listen to us, and we feel that". The men responded that "If they want to say something they have a forum to say something. If they don't have the confidence they can come to the headman before or after [the meeting] and he will represent them". This indicates some differences of opinion about the availability of communication channels for women, and differences in the valuing of direct versus indirect channels. There was a sense that it was less usual and perhaps perceived as less appropriate for women to directly express views during a community meeting. Where women valued opportunities to speak for themselves, the

presence of indirect channels was not perceived as providing sufficient opportunity to contribute their views.

This issue of confidence is important in Senikau Village. Lack of confidence constituted an effective barrier to women contributing their views. This is reflected in an older woman's view that although many of the younger women were placing importance on an increased voice and being heard, in fact when they had the chance to participate, they didn't and instead passed views through the village headman:

“But when we are asked to speak in community meetings we don't speak” (Senikau Village older woman)

The quantification activity showed that 80% of women had experienced some kind of increase in confidence to speak in community meetings since the Live & Learn projects commenced, with a small change more common than a big or very big change. Figure 3 demonstrates the breadth of individual views of women on whether there had been a change in how much they were listened to at the community level, demonstrating that many thought there had only been a small or negligible change.

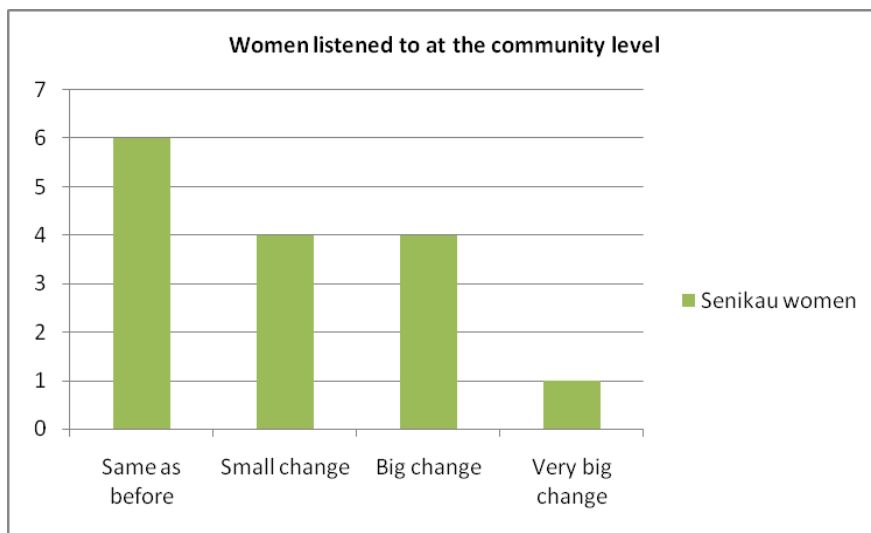


Figure 3 Women listened to at the community level

The vision expressed by the women's group in Senikau Village made clear that they continue to aspire to being able to raise their voice and be heard within community decision-making contexts, and would like the positive changes experienced to date to go further. They enacted a role-play in which at a meeting called by the headman, both men and women are represented, share their views and participate in the decision-making. In this role-play, when the woman was asked to speak, she speaks and others listen. The key aspects of this vision are a call for equal representation and participation of women, and women speaking *and* being listened to.

According to men in Senikau Village, they too have seen changes in dynamics at community level:

There has been more collaboration amongst people, this helps men and women to talk properly together and listen. Men are able to listen to the women more compared to the past. (Senikau Village man)

**Evidence of increased voice of women in Senitua Village:** In Senitua Village, there was widespread evidence of change in women's participation in decision making through the views expressed by both women and men. One woman's positive experience in putting

forward and idea and the idea being supported is provided here by way of example. She is a community health worker in Senittoa Village:

Recently a big change has been women being allowed to talk during the village meeting. I raised the idea of inviting the division doctor to come and visit the community and do checkups. I'm a member of the health committee which is only women. The idea was raised at the community meeting and it was agreed to at the meeting by the men. The men received the idea and accepted and allowed the women to proceed. The health committee then went ahead and organized the health day. It was a big success and big day. They felt proud that they organized something so big and challenging. It was a first time and it involved everyone, men and women. I was very proud that the first time I raised an opinion it was listened to and it was positive outcome. (Senittoa Village woman health worker)

From a women's perspective, women in Senittoa Village highly valued the opportunity to speak in community meetings and said that "in Fijian culture is the *most* important thing". There was a sense that once that space was provided, they were listened to:

Once they allow us to speak they usually listen to what we say. So being heard isn't the issue so much. Women before were never given space in meetings, this is a big change. (Senittoa Village, woman)

It appeared that men recognising women's labour and role in promoting sanitation had then enabled them to see and value women's other contributions, and so make more space for women to contribute to community decision-making:

In the past they weren't able to speak in meetings. But then men started noticing that women were very punctual to meetings and regularly attended. So the men decided to give women a larger role in the meetings. Men could also see that women were really hard workers and so felt they had something to contribute to decision making. (Senittoa Village, man)

According to women, there has been a 'very big change' in how much opportunity women are given to speak at community meetings (see Figure 4), and 95% of women noted a change in their level of confidence to do so. Men by contrast, also noted a change in this area, but dominantly a 'small change' in how much women are speaking at community meetings (Figure 5).

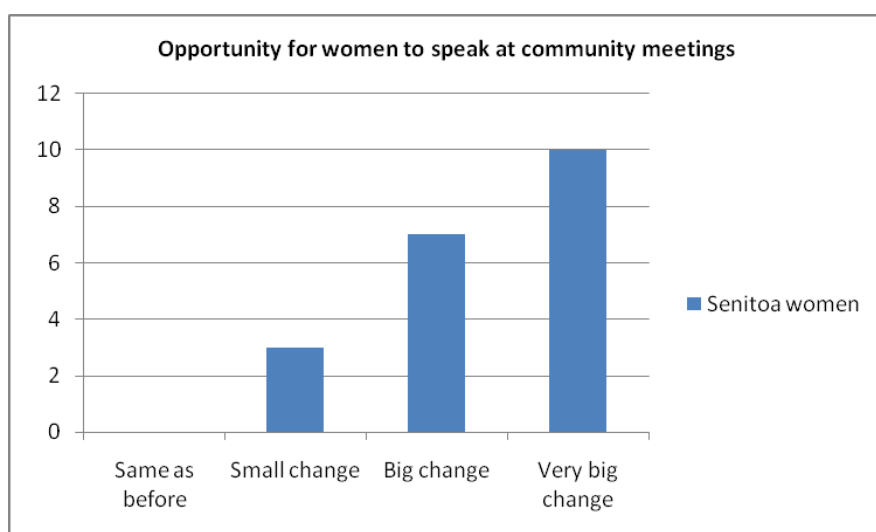
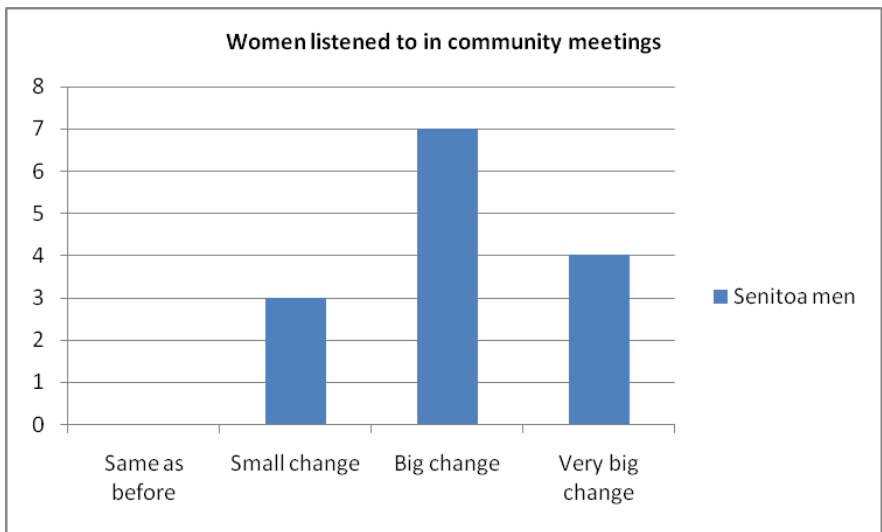


Figure 4 Opportunity for women to speak at community meetings



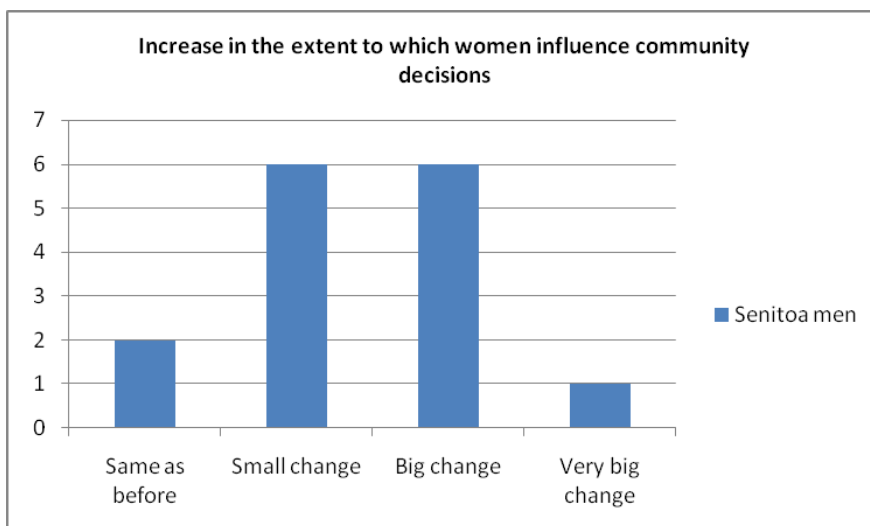
**Figure 5 Women speaking more often at community meetings**

The question arises as to whether women’s views, if listened to, actually influence or change decisions made by men. According to men, there appeared to be a greater change in relation to *listening* to women’s views at community level, than in relation to the *influence* those views had on community decisions, as portrayed in Figure 6 Figure 7.



**Figure 6 Women listened to in community meetings**





**Figure 7 Increase in extent to which women influence community decisions**

Women’s and men’s visions of managing water in the future demonstrated a tendency to follow traditional authority patterns, suggesting that positive changes in participation and perceptions of participation have had a limited impact to date on expectations about the structuring of decision making bodies. The women’s view of water governance in the future included creating a committee comprised of the headman, two men, two women and two youth. By contrast the view put forward by a group of elderly men was that a water committee was needed, but made up only of men due to a perception that what was needed was care for the water source and solutions to technical maintenance issues such as fixing taps and pipes, in which men are skilled.

**The role of culture and tradition in decision-making:** It is important to factor in the role of culture and tradition when assessing and interpreting changes in the dynamics of decision-making and power dynamics. In both communities, there was clearly no question that final decisions should always be taken by the men, however men in both communities made it clear that they valued women’s input to decisions, since the women put forward their views in constructive ways and because this input made for a richer conversation preceding decision-making:

... if more people attend the meeting then there will be more ideas- it will improve the discussion. We give women time and opportunity to speak because we know not only men make good decisions – women also have good ideas about building communities. We give the head of women’s group time and also let other women participate and provide ideas. (Senitoo Village man)

When asked whether participation of women in decision-making was positive or if it disturbed traditional leadership, the Senikau Village headman responded that:

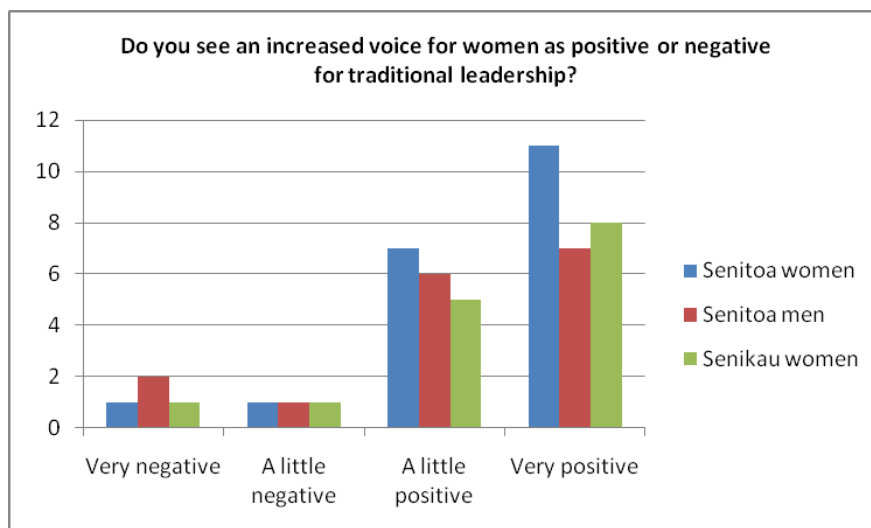
We like the roles women play and we acknowledge them. It doesn’t disturb the traditional leadership as it’s our responsibility as men to listen to our women. For us not to would be unfair. We see that things are changing slowly, in the past we didn’t listen so much. We see it as positive and appreciate it. We see that things are changing and that the women put their views forward and it is not done in a challenging way, it’s seen as supportive and an improvement. (Senikau Village headman)

Another man responded that

It strengthens [traditional leadership], women are the backbone. They do the work so it's only fair we listen to them. (Senikau Village man)

Both responses suggest that men are able to locate an increased voice for women within traditional authority structures, enabling them to accommodate change that does not disrupt the primary locus of power. The structure of the committees reflected both traditional gender roles but also the men's cultural role in terms of representation of their tribes.

Through quantitative analysis it was apparent amongst both women and men in Senikau Village and Senittoa Village that the majority believed that increased voice for women was positive for traditional leadership (see Figure 8). Increased voice for women was conceived primarily as positive within the context of maintaining men's role as community leaders and decision makers. Comments from one woman and one man (in separate situations) about the potential for women to take part in leadership revealed that this was unacceptable to both of them.



**Figure 8 Increased voice for women and traditional leadership**

### Communication between husband and wife has improved

*This outcome focuses at the household level on perceived improvements in the relationship between women and men. Many referred to it as greater 'love and listening' in the household. However it also extends to cover how issues are resolved at the household level, how roles and tasks are negotiated and shared, how household decisions are made, and how women and their work are valued.*

Across the women in both communities, *all* women and almost all men noted a positive change with respect to the level of communication and mutual listening at the household level. In addition, more than half of the women identified this change as a 'big' or 'very big' change, and women in Senittoa Village prioritised this outcome as the most or second most important gender outcome within the family context. Both women and men connected improved communication with greater love of self and others, and sometimes connected the notion with spirituality. As one woman commented:

Love yourself and then you can love your spouse and then you can love your children. Love brings about listening to each other (Senitoa Village, woman)

Improvements in the ability to communicate and negotiate extended into the realm of household decision-making. It was found through the quantification activity that all women and men felt that husband's decisions at the household level were more influenced by their wife's views than in the past. This appeared to be part of a shift in men's views of their role and their leadership in the family. An elder man from Senitoa Village said:

Men should 'come down' and do things as part of the family. Traditionally, the man is leader and head of the house. I think that men should 'come down' and be able to do things as part of the family. Even when men 'come down', this doesn't make them less a man or less a leader, but listening to wife strengthens them as leader.

A younger one spoke along similar lines:

The project has opened my eyes. I have changed how I manage my family, for example how to manage health. I am chief of the family. I encourage the family to go to church and to go to school and achieve more things. I have changed how I attend to family affairs. Now I play more and different roles – I weed grass in front of house, help manage waste, and support my wife.

The vision of a group of elders in Senitoa Village identified that although men are the head of the family and responsible for household decisions, in the future men should take into greater account the views of their wives and should not "ignore women's decisions or over-rule the decision of women, instead they should talk about it together and man should respect her decision".

Similarly, the younger men in Senitoa Village identified a vision where men spend more quality time with their families and collaborate with their wives in the family context:

We would like quality family time, with the family sitting together, discussing things. Men should spend a lot of time together with their family and children. If men go and drink kava every afternoon, there is less quality family time. (younger man, Senitoa Village)

and

To improve cleanliness and health awareness in the family, men should make sure that these are given focus in the family. It requires good collaboration between women and men in the house to make this happen.

### **Men are participating more in household sanitation and water management**

*This outcome concerns a shift in traditional roles in the household. As a result of the Live & Learn projects and subsequent implementation by women of household and community sanitation initiatives, men's participation in household level sanitation activities has increased.*

As a consequence of the Live & Learn projects and improvement in communication between women and men at the household level, participants in both Senikau and Senitoa Village noted an increase in men participating in sanitation and cleanliness activities. Women and men in both communities told stories of men assisting in activities ranging from maintaining

general household cleanliness and waste management through to participation in village clean-up days. A younger man in Senitoa Village explained how Live & Learn activities had shifted his perspective with respect to his role and responsibilities in the household:

The project has opened my eyes. I have changed how I manage the family, for example how I manage health. As chief of the family, I encourage the family to go to church and to go to school and achieve more things. I have changed how I attend to family affairs. Now I play more and different roles, for example weeding grass in front of the house, helping to manage waste, and supporting my wife. (Senitoa Village young man)

As with other outcomes discussed earlier, this quote reflects that changes in male and female roles and activities are understood to have occurred within the context of traditional male leadership, rather than challenging or changing it.

Similar stories emerged from the women's group in Senikau Village. One woman noted an increase in collaboration between women and men with respect to household sanitation:

Before, cleanliness of the compound inside and outside the house, including the toilet which is outside, was mainly left to the women. Recently, the women have experienced changes in relationships. There is now more collaboration. (Senikau Village, woman)

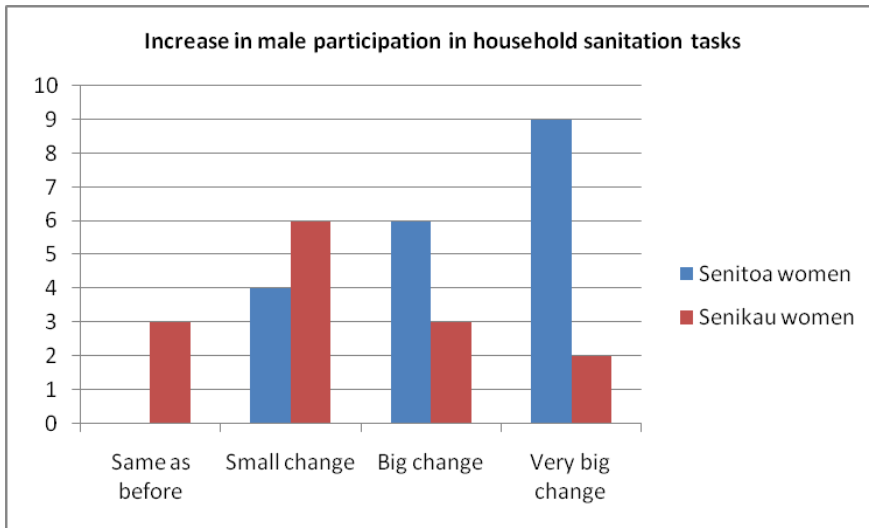
Another woman in Senikau Village reported that since the Live & Learn projects, men in her household have assisted in maintaining the cleanliness of the toilet, and that this was linked to a broader change in how male and female roles are viewed within the community. The change was seen to be significant by some participants, with one man noting "it's very hard to see couples in Fiji doing things together, this is new" (Senikau Village, man).

While participants in both villages noted an increase in men's participation in household sanitation, quantitative results reveal that the scale of the change was variously interpreted, and generally thought to be greater in Senitoa than in Senikau, as shown in Figure 9. Quantitative data also indicated that in Senitoa, the increase in men's participation in household sanitation has not reduced the overall workload of women, and that women's work had actually increased since the Live & Learn projects.<sup>3</sup> However during discussions following voting it emerged that there was some confusion regarding the translation of the question relating to an increase in women's workload, so this finding should be interpreted with caution



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<sup>3</sup> The question relating to an increase in women's work was not asked in Senikau as the issue had not emerged in discussions (from which questions were built). This point is therefore only discussed with reference to Senitoa.



**Figure 9 Increase in male participation in household sanitation tasks**

While an increase in men’s participation in household activities was mainly discussed with reference to sanitation and cleanliness, participants in Senikau village also noted a shift in gender roles relating to management of water. One story revealed a re-negotiation of male and female roles when responding to water shortages:

Men are responsible for cleaning the water source, the head man orders them to go and clean it after raining. Women do not participate in that. But when it comes to water shortage, women and men are sharing the cartage of water from the alternate source at the river. The men cart and the women boil it. During the [Live & Learn] training on water management they understood their individual roles in terms of men also needing to play a role. Before the women used to do all of the carrying of the water from the river, the training showed them the idea that men needed to play a role. The women then negotiated at the household level that the men should carry the water also – they share the labour now. The women are more conscious of the need to boil it. (Senittoa Village, woman)

Although this story identifies a change that has already happened as a result of the Live & Learn project, there remain aspirations to greater change in this area. Women in Senittoa Village acted out a role play as part of their vision in which a woman was pressuring her husband to act and play a role in providing water during the water storage. Meanwhile her husband was drinking kava and not paying attention to the issue of the water shortage. Her husband eventually responded and approached the government to request a rain water tank. The key message of this vision was that women and men need to continue to improve communication at the family level to resolve issues such as water management.

## Enabling factors identified by the community

### Enabling factors identified by community relating to community strengths

A wide range of community strengths were identified as factors that assisted achievement of gender outcomes. Common themes proposed by the women in both communities included a commitment to spirituality, and respect for household and community leadership. In Senikau Village this included the concept of obedience and cooperation when requests are made by the village headman. Other prominent enabling factors related to women working hard and ‘from the heart’ when putting into practice what they learnt during Live & Learn projects, and men seeing with their own eyes and appreciating the positive benefits resulting from

women's labour and initiative. Women in Senitoa Village proposed that it was because they were "true to the task they were undertaking...taking their work seriously and leading by example" that many of the outcomes eventuated. For one woman, it was the imperative to earn money for her family that inspired her to make compost and sell flowers, thereby becoming a role model. Women's desire to reduce illness in the family was also proposed forward as a contributing factor motivating them to participate and take a leadership role in sanitation activities.

Another enabling factor identified in Senitoa Village was related to decision making processes at the community level. Improved communication and recognition of multiple views and perspectives, while outcomes in and of themselves, were identified as enabling women's participation in decision making processes. Women reported that they were becoming more highly represented at meetings (arriving punctually and regularly in large numbers), were presenting more relevant ideas than they had done so previously, and were willing to learn from and listen to discussions at village meetings. Also in Senitoa Village, women identified a willingness to share skills with each other and work together as contributing to positive gender experiences. They noted that sharing knowledge and skills resulted in increased confidence when negotiating with men (for instance when requesting that men assist in transporting water).



Enabling factors identified by men focused strongly on the introduction of new ideas into the community, which rests upon an openness to change the way they think. For example, one elder in Senitoa Village pointed out that 'training is important, but changing the way we think is something different'. Other factors mentioned overlapped with those put forward by the women, including the importance of spiritual thinking, believing in others and the role of leaders in the family and community.

### **Enabling factors identified by community relating to Live & Learn's work**

In both communities, Live & Learn's approach to delivering 'training' was identified as providing the foundation for positive gender outcomes. This was emphasised in particular by the men's groups. In Senitoa, men commented that training from Live & Learn had changed their ideas and motivated them. The fact that Live & Learn training was offered to all community members with a focus on inclusivity was identified as important, with one man noting that this "made [the community] think about their divisions and question them, then come together as a community", and that when discussing a wish to change "many voices are better than one".

Participants in Senitoa also commented that Live & Learn projects met real needs and responded to what community members wanted. They noted that Live & Learn staff engaged community participants in discussions of *why* activities were important, which contributed to pride and satisfaction in resultant outcomes. One man in Senitoa commented that whereas



in the past people viewed things in terms of particular roles for men and women, Live & Learn projects introduced new ideas:

Through training and education we were able to see things differently. Because the women and men in the community both received the training, it meant that the women were more able to take on new roles, as the men had heard the training and knew what was going to happen and the roles women would play. So men understood why things are happening then respected women's part in this. (Senitoa Village man)

### Enabling factors identified by the Live & Learn team

The Live & Learn team suggested that the following aspects of their approach enabled gender outcomes identified in the research. They pointed out that they use water as an entry point to talk about governance, leadership and inclusion. The learning circles approach they adopt has a strong emphasis on inclusion and was based on strong educational resources. Their approach was also built strongly on research conducted at the outset of the project on attitudes and perceptions of communities relating to water governance. Live and Learn's overall ways of working, including building on past projects and long term relationships, trialling and testing of different approaches, drawing on a network of stakeholders and regular follow up and encouragement were all contributor to the gender outcomes observed.

### Gender analysis of outcomes identified

Gender outcomes valued by research participants were analysed with the Live & Learn Research Team in terms of their contribution to meeting practical gender needs and strategic gender interests (or their potential to be strategic). Results are shown in the table below. The Gender Analysis Matrix (as described by Parker, 1993), a simple tool for identifying and analysing the different impacts of a project or other initiative on women and men, was used to stimulate discussion around what the outcomes mean in terms of labour, time, access and control of resources and changes in cultural and social factors including gender roles.

Outcome	Practical	Potential to be Strategic	Strategic
Increased sense of community unity, through men and women working together	x		
Women's efforts to promote community sanitation and health are recognised	x	x	
Women are working together and supporting each other	x	x	
Women have an increased voice at the community level			x
Women are more respected by men and feel more valued			x
Communication between husband and wife has improved	x	x	
Men are participating more in household sanitation	x	x	



### **Practical needs and strategic interests**

Practical gender needs are the concrete and practical needs women and men have for survival and economic advancement, which do not challenge the existing sexual division of labour, legal inequalities, or other aspects of discrimination due to cultural and social practices (AusAID, 2007). WASH programs commonly focus on meeting practical gender needs such as clean water or (as was the case with the projects studied) income generation opportunities. Involving women in decision making and training in non-traditional gender roles means strategic interests may also be addressed through practical projects. Practical needs and strategic interests are complementary, indeed programs that only target practical needs may not be sustainable unless strategic interests are also taken into account (AusAID, 2007). Strategic gender interests refer to the relative status of women to men. Progress towards strategic gender needs support women to achieve greater equality and enable change in existing roles, thereby challenging women's subordinate position (Moser, 1993). Addressing structural and cultural barriers to women's equal participation in all aspects of life – that is, changes that address underlying causes as well as the consequences of inequality – help to bring about fundamental changes in gender relations.

The table above indicates that progress towards addressing strategic needs was achieved and valued in relation to women's participation in public decision making and increased respect. The opportunity for women to talk together with other women engaged at the committee level was also valued and was considered to have potential strategic benefit in building solidarity and the potential for joint action, and in changing perceptions about the capacities required to participate in committee work. While women are absent from formal decision-making roles, the rules and processes are hidden; this impacts women's confidence to seek such roles, and perceptions about whether they have the required capacities to participate. Engaging with other women who are involved in committees not only provides access to privileged information, it also breaks down ignorance and stereotyped views of what participation involves.

The status of the women who spoke during research activities involving both women and men is indicative of the extent of change to date. It was those with higher status that dominated discussions during the research and it is likely that the same women are accessing the increasing space for women in public decision making. However for both communities, the fact that women were given space to contribute their views in decision making was considered a first and was highly valued.

While the project supported income generating activities and women were actively engaged, the co-operatives were operating to varying degrees. Positive stories were shared regarding increased income generation for women through improved crop production as a result of their composting efforts. Women also reported self-esteem and confidence benefits from community responses to their success in increasing production. The potential strategic outcomes of this increased access to income-generating activities for women in terms of economic empowerment were not ranked as valued outcomes by either men's or women's groups.

### **Increased access to decision making**

In terms of meaningful decision making for women, the outcomes were focused on the increased space provided for women to access decision making discussions taking place in community meetings, the increase in women being heard, and the increase in value

accorded women's contributions and overall respect for women. Outcomes did not extend to control over decision making; men still retained the power to determine the space accorded to women through traditional leadership structures. There was recognition of women's contribution from the men in terms of appreciating and valuing women's perspectives and inclusivity modelled through the learning circle approach. This points to change in the way that leadership and power is conceived, so that enabling more inclusive decision-making is regarded as improving decision-making processes and consistent with traditional authority structures.

Women's participation was viewed by women and men (and NGO staff) in terms of their attendance in training sessions and visible efforts in community waste management activities. Genuine participation in the form of women increasingly making their views known in committee and community meetings was valued but participation did not extend to control of decisions in relation to the project or about other things which affect their lives.



### **Recognition of women's labour and changing gender roles**

Value was placed on the increased recognition of women's labour and their contributions to the community although women's labour and time burden has increased overall as a result of their participation in project-related activities. While clear segregation of tasks remains and the research suggested that women's labour had increased as a result of their engagement in the projects, there is evidence that gender roles are more fluid, with men engaging more in household sanitation activities and engaging in community waste management. The stories offered in the two communities included examples of women successfully negotiating for men's involvement, such as carrying the water during water shortages in Senitoa Village. This was supported by the valued changes in gender relations in terms of increased communication and listening at the household and community level, both of which were highly valued by women and men. Changes in roles and time use provide an indication of women's negotiation power at the household level, which is an important element of women's empowerment and gender equality (Ivens, 2008) and a domain where change can be difficult to achieve (Hunt et al., 2009).

## Conclusion

This case study report supports the view that gender is not only an important consideration in WASH programs but is a strong potential entry point for generating positive gender outcomes. The combination of both practical and strategic gender outcomes that were generated demonstrate that WASH approaches, if designed with aspects of inclusion and participation, have the potential to generate significant positive change for women and their relationships with men. Such change was found to be incremental based on the prior situation, and in the case of Fiji, still rested within the confines of an assumed male leadership in the communities.

The research methodology proved successful in allowing gender conceptions to be shaped by the community participants themselves, and also supported a constructive learning process for community members and for NGO staff involved. Some of the methodological limitations may be addressed in the next case study in Vanuatu, including ensuring sufficient time is set-aside after the field work to conduct a detailed gender analysis with NGO staff.



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