

THIS INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY, LET'S CELEBRATE AND SUPPORT WOMEN LEADERS

#womenlead



"There is no greater force for change, for peace, for justice and democracy, for inclusive economic growth than a world of empowered women."

– PHUMZILE MLAMBO-NGCUKA, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, UN WOMEN

The COVID-19 crisis has highlighted the disproportionate burdens that women carry and the centrality of women's contributions to decision making.

Across the globe, women are leading nations, organisations and institutions carrying out effective and inclusive COVID-19 responses, from the highest levels of decision-making through to frontline service delivery. Women bring different experiences, perspectives and skills to the table, and make invaluable contributions to decisions, policies and laws that work better for all.

Advancing women in leadership is central to creating more profitable and productive economies, flourishing businesses and a healthier and more peaceful planet. There is a growing understanding and expectation that leadership in all facets of economic, political and social life must reflect communities; organisations miss out if 50% of the talent pool – women in all their diversity -- is not around decision-making tables.

DID YOU KNOW?



99.5 years

At the current rate of change, it is estimated to take 99.5 years to achieve gender equality.¹



Only 1

Just one of the 25 CEOs appointed to lead ASX 200 organisations in the past year has been female.²



14% pay gap

While women comprise around 47% of all employees in Australia³, they take home on average \$253.60 less than men every week (full-time ordinary earnings), making the national gender pay gap 14% - a figure that has remained similar for the past twenty years.⁴



15 years

When women are at the negotiating table, peace agreements are more likely to last 15 years or longer.⁵

HOW YOUR GENEROUS SUPPORT NURTURES PACIFIC WOMEN AS LEADERS, ENTREPRENEURS AND AGENTS OF CHANGE



\$65 could support a woman to attend financial literacy training and open bank accounts.



\$148 could supply sanitation and COVID-19 prevention materials to fourteen women market vendors to enable safe trading and play a vital role in food security.



\$365 could deliver leadership training to prepare women to lead and manage market vendor associations, which improve working conditions and give women a voice in decision-making.



\$516 could provide four market vendors with farming tools and seeds following a natural disaster.



\$775 could provide a market vendor with business training to support existing and kick-start new businesses, to sustain and protect their livelihoods addressing the economic hardship caused by COVID 19, over the course of the year.



HOW YOUR DONATION SUPPORTS WOMEN LEADING MARKETS ACROSS THE PACIFIC

**IN THE WORDS OF VARANISESE MAISAMOA:
“WE WANT TO EMPOWER OUR MARKET VENDORS
TO BE CLIMATE RESILIENT”**

In February 2016, Tropical Cyclone Winston devastated Fiji, showing the heightened vulnerability of people living in the Pacific Islands, where climate change has led to a series of increasingly severe cyclones in recent years. Farms were decimated and markets, like the Rakiraki Market and accommodation centre for rural women, were destroyed, leaving many market vendors (three quarters of whom are women) without an income.

Varanise Maisamoa was one of these women.

Today, with the help of UN Women's Markets for Change project, Varanise has not only got back on her feet, she has also become a strong leader in her community. This is her story.

“For most of us women market vendors, we focus only on coming to the market to make money. But what if there is a cyclone or flooding that makes it impossible for us to be in the market?”

When I joined the Rakiraki Market back in 2007, I noticed the struggle that women market vendors were enduring day to day. Their security was not protected, there was a continuous disruption of the water supply, and there was no proper lighting. I realised that they had been in this situation for 15, 20 years or more, and nobody had ever listened to their plea.

I decided to form a women's group to help us raise our issues as one voice. From then, I started knocking on doors and raising the issues that these women had been trying to resolve for years. That's how, in 2015, I met two women in the market from UN Women's Markets for Change project.

After attending the leadership and financial literacy workshops, forums and trainings organised by UN Women, I took up the initiative to form the Rakiraki Market Vendors Association in 2016. After Cyclone Winston, it was important to include everybody in market decision-making. We want to empower our market vendors to be climate resilient.

Since then, we have worked with UN Women on the market's very first "Action Plan to Build Resilience to Climate Change and Disasters". We know that to be resilient we need to diversify [our sources of income], so we are training our women vendors on how to make handicrafts and in other small businesses such as money lending and catering.

My husband challenged me and said, "Talking on behalf of these women, will it help your business grow?"

I said, if I am not speaking up for these women, I am not speaking up for myself, my daughters, my mother, or my grandmother.

Through UN Women's leadership training, I learned to be confident when speaking out about the issues affecting the market vendors and to negotiate with the market council management.

Today I am proud of what the association has achieved in terms of improving the safety of the women vendors' working place. I'm looking forward to a market that is safer, better ventilated, with facilities such as changing areas for babies, improved toilets and a female market attendant. Our vendors also know what to do before, during and after a disaster.

We have been empowered by UN Women's Markets for Change project. Now it is our time, as women market vendors, to support economic growth for our villages, community and country."



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As Founder and President of the Rakiraki Market Vendors Association (RMVA), Varanise's insights have been critical in helping UN Women adapt the Markets for Change project to provide humanitarian support to market vendors impacted by the cyclone.

RMVA were also consulted throughout the reconstruction of the Rakiraki Market, which reopened in June 2020. The market now has enhanced amenities, improved water and sanitation, and better lighting, resulting in a safer, more secure venue for rural women vendors.



Photo: UN Women/Ariana Yett Varanise with Anna Parini, Project Manager for Markets for Change Fiji at the official groundbreaking ceremony for the new cyclone resistant market in Rakiraki.

HOW YOUR DONATION TO UN WOMEN'S MARKETS FOR CHANGE PROGRAM MAKES A DIFFERENCE:



Between 75-90% of Pacific market vendors are women.

Their earnings help support themselves and their families, and their businesses play a vital role in food security. UN Women delivers training and collaborates with local governments to ensure women market vendors have a seat around decision-making tables. Markets for Change nurtures women leaders, contributing to better working conditions, increased financial security, making for safer, more inclusive marketplaces.



TOGETHER WE CAN ACCELERATE CHANGE TOWARDS A BETTER WORLD

We have 99.5 years of work to do in the next decade if we want to fulfil the UN's Sustainable Development Goals by the deadline of 2030. Achieving gender equality is not only one of these goals (#5), but it is also central to the entire agenda. Women bear the brunt of problems ranging from poverty to climate change, but they also possess assets and talents to solve them. Development will only be sustainable if its benefits accrue equally to both women and men; and women's rights will only become a reality if they are part of broader efforts to protect the planet and ensure that all people can live with dignity and respect.

PLAY YOUR PART BY SUPPORTING UN WOMEN'S VITAL WORK THIS INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY



*"We know that gender equality and the true equal empowerment of women and girls can underpin success in all domains. So, whether that's access to education, access to good jobs, access to capital and money, access to leadership roles – greater gender equality, we know, solves so many of the world's greatest problems."*⁶

– SAM MOSTYN, PRESIDENT, CHIEF EXECUTIVE WOMEN



Australian Government
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade



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