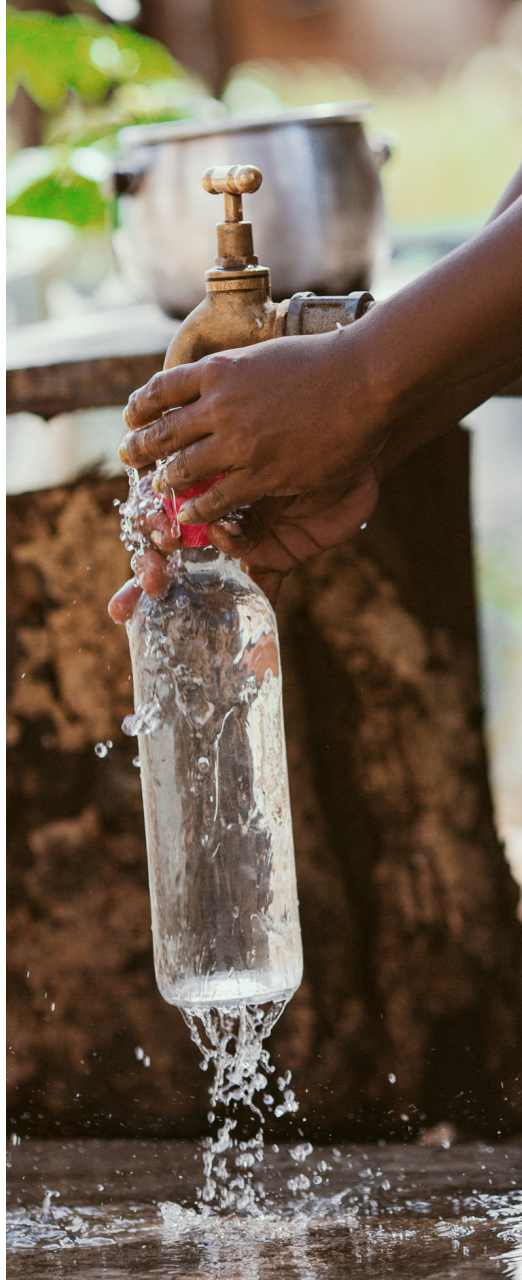




RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM IMPACT STORIES

SOLOMON ISLANDS, 2018

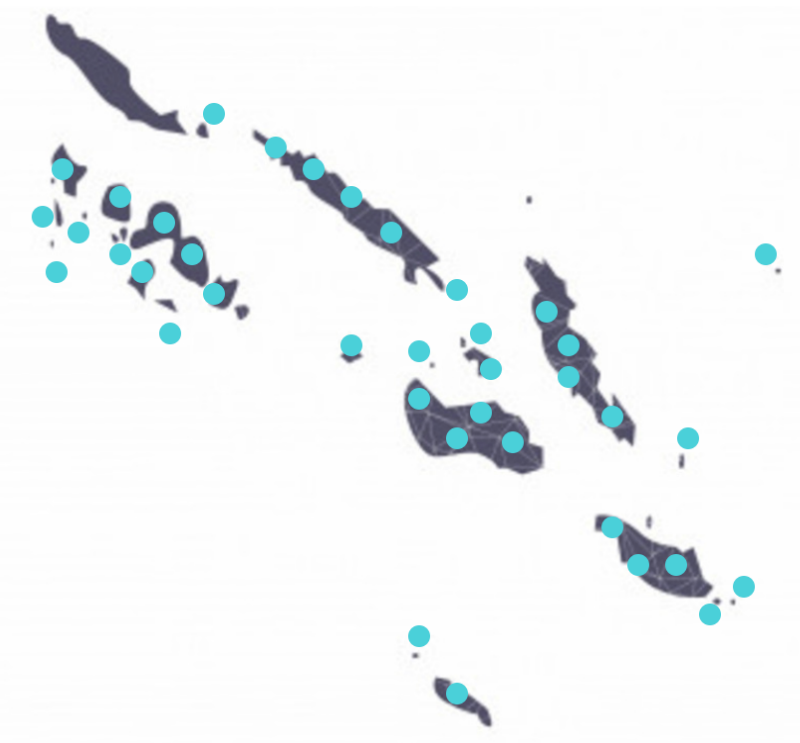




RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN SOLOMON ISLANDS

Solomon Islands consists of nearly 1,000 islands spread over nearly 1.34 million km² of ocean. Its remote and rugged geography and vulnerability to natural hazards such as floods, earthquakes, cyclones and rising sea levels, presents extreme development challenges for the people of Solomon Islands who live in rural areas (approximately 80% of the population).

In this difficult context, the Solomon Islands Rural Development Program (RDP) is the largest and farthest reaching program of its kind in the country. It has reached over 50% of Solomon Islands' population and operates in all 9 provinces and 172 wards of the country, from the atoll of Ontong Java to the north, Rennell and Bellona to the south, Anuta and Te Kopia to the East and Shortlands to the west.



The purpose of RDP is two-fold:

1. Community Infrastructure and Services: To improve basic infrastructure and services in rural areas through community-driven development.
2. Agricultural Partnerships: To strengthen the linkages between smallholder farming households and markets through agriculture partnerships and support.

Since it began in 2008, RDP has provided funding and technical support to implement more than 1636 projects, activities, and partnerships impacting more than 337,162 Solomon Islanders in rural communities across the country. The program is designed to ensure the inclusion and participation of all community members, with a specific emphasis on women, youth and people with disabilities. RDP is a government initiative co-funded by the World Bank, Australian Government, European Union, and the International Fund for Agricultural Development.



HIGH LEVEL IMPACT OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM (RDP)

With Support from the Solomon Islands Government, World Bank, Australian Government, European Union, International Fund for Agricultural Development.



THE WORLD BANK



IN 10 YEARS OVER HALF OF SOLOMON ISLANDS' POPULATION HAS BENEFITED FROM RDP PROJECTS WHICH OPERATE IN ALL 9 PROVINCES AND 172 WARDS OF THE COUNTRY.

TOTAL BENEFICIARIES: 337,162^{*}

WOMEN
50%



MEN
50%

IMPACT TO DATE

COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE & SERVICES

NEARLY
500
COMMUNITY
PROJECTS
COMPLETED^{**}



33

HEALTH



86

EDUCATION



148

COMMUNITY
INFRASTRUCTURE



209

WATER

AGRICULTURE PARTNERSHIPS & SUPPORT

1160 PARTNERSHIPS,
TRAINING SESSIONS
& RESEARCH ACTIVITIES



7200 JOBS



2,046

COCONUT



4,064

COCOA



444

HONEY



614

NGALI NUTS



614

LIVESTOCK



115

FRUITS & VEGETABLES

* Between 2008-2018

** As of October 2018



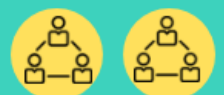
COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE & SERVICES

RDP supports rural communities to identify, design, and operate their own projects and services. The program builds on existing community resources and capacities and provides training, material, technical, and administrative support to enable communities to complete, operate, and ultimately maintain their chosen projects. Communities are supported in organizing representative village level committees to manage the project, which enhances community ownership and skill development. Additionally, communities contribute a minimum of 15% of the resources (often in the form of gravel, sand and timber) for a project. To date nearly 500 community projects have been completed across every province in Solomon Islands, with over 200 more projects to be completed by 2020.

COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE & SERVICES

NEARLY 500 PROJECTS COMPLETED TO DATE

WITH AN ADDITIONAL 200 MORE TO BE
COMPLETED BY 2020 *



TOTAL
BENEFICIARIES: 282,324 *

155,084 Men



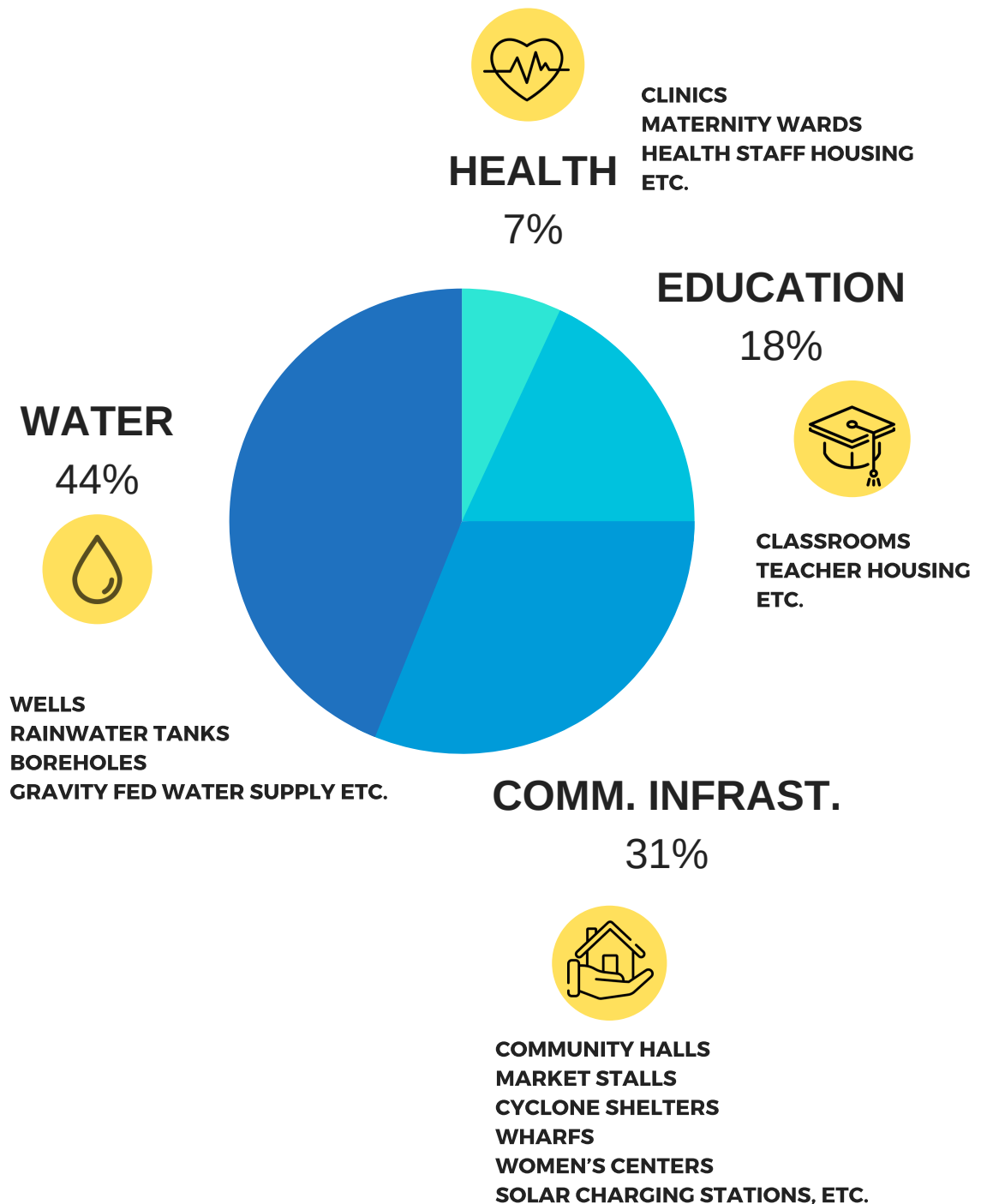
127,240 Women



* As of October 2018



COMMUNITY PROJECTS BY SECTOR



Examples of community projects are captured in the stories that follow, covering topics of clean water supplies for victims of the 2014 flash floods, market houses for women to sell fresh produce, and community halls to hold village meetings. These stories demonstrate the positive impact that RDP has had on rural livelihoods in Solomon Islands.

WATER SECURITY IN RADESIFOLAMAE

RADESIFOLAMAE VILLAGE, MALAITA, SOLOMON ISLANDS



IN 2016, Radesifolamae's water crisis finally came to an end when the Solomon Islands Rural Development Program (RDP) funded the construction of a new water supply.

In previous years, four children in the village had died. Two from falling into the village's ground well, and two more from diarrhea caused by unknowingly drinking from the well after it had been contaminated.

Today, every household enjoys easy access to clean water, as a rain catchment system now feeds twenty water tanks shared across the sixty homes in the community.

In addition to preventing further tragedies, the close proximity of a clean water source has dramatically improved day to day life for residents of Radesifolamae.



Water tank and rain catchment system in Radesifolamae

Mothers, or more often their children, previously traveled 45 minutes by canoe to collect water. The 90 minute roundtrip gave families a difficult choice to make. Either parents would have to take time away from crafting shell money—the primary source of income for Radesifolamae residents—or the kids would have to skip school to fetch water for the family.

Selimina, a mother of two, acknowledged the stark reality she was faced with.

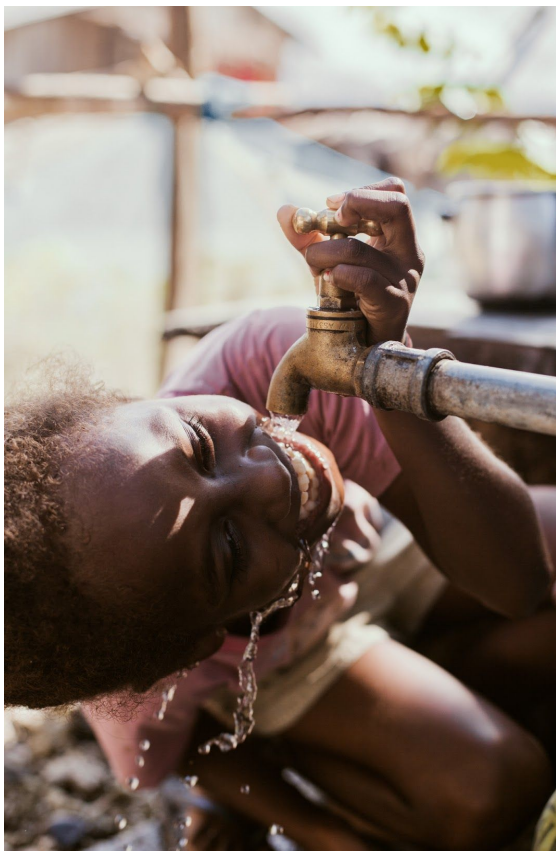
"If you don't have time to make shell money here, there's no way you can survive," she shared. Selimina's children frequently missed school, as they were tasked with fetching water while she made shell money to support the family. When Selimina instead fetched the water herself so her kids could attend school, her income dropped. It was a precarious position to be in, and one that she's relieved to no longer face.



Selimina and her son in Radesifolamae

The security that comes with access to clean water has improved the livelihoods of all 102 families in Radesifolamae. With more time to make shell money and less stress over water, mothers are earning more money for their families. Selimina revealed that her monthly income has increased from SI\$500 to SI\$1,000 per month. Crucially, her children now attend school every day, and village leaders reported that nearly every child attends school on a daily basis.

The new water supply has enhanced income and livelihood development, and has inspired hope amongst Radesifolamae residents for continued growth in the future.



Children enjoying the benefits of a clean water source in their village



NEW MARKET HOUSE EMPOWERS KEKEHE WOMEN

KEKEHE VILLAGE, WESTERN PROVINCE, SOLOMON ISLANDS

UNTIL recently, the women of Kekehe suffered from one of the most common challenges to overcoming poverty in Solomon Islands: limited access to markets.

The biggest town within walking distance of Kekehe is Munda, and until 2016, it was the only official venue for the women of Kekehe to sell their goods.

“The central market in Munda is too crowded with vendors, and it’s far away from our village,” said Everly Kaza, a mother of five and long-time resident of Kekehe. “When we tried to sell our products there we made very little money.”

“I use to sell my products underneath a tree,” shared Hazel, a young mother in Kekehe who sells coconuts and betelnut, “or I would walk house to house trying to sell.”



Everly sells coconuts and other local products at the Kekehe Market House



RDP-funded Market House in Kekehe Village

Hazel made about SI\$100 a day this way, which put her well below the average income for Solomon Islanders in Western Province. Most women in Kekehe saw how limited the opportunities were to make money and didn’t even bother trying.

This all changed, however, when a new market house opened in Kekehe in August 2016.

The market was designed, developed, and continues to be maintained today, by the people of Kekehe. Funding, as well as technical and operational support, came from the Solomon Islands Rural Development Program (RDP), which endeavors to improve basic infrastructure and services in rural areas of Solomon Islands.

With the market house now in place, Hazel makes SI\$200 a day- double what she use to earn.

“The people here really respect the market,” shared Langy Sunga, who serves as chairman of the village committee responsible for managing the market house. “Everyone knows it has had a positive impact on our community.”



Hazel sells betelnut and coconuts in the Kekehe Market House

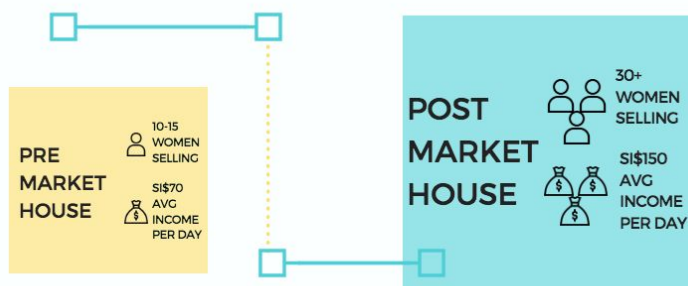
More than 30 women are registered vendors at the market house, and the women share responsibility for looking after it.

Every woman pays SI\$3 per day for the right to sell at the market, and the money goes towards maintenance, cleaning, and toiletries for the bathroom, which was also built as part of the project.



Langy Sunga, chairman of the local committee managing the Kekehe Market House

IMPACTS OF KEKEHE VILLAGE MARKET HOUSE



The market house has inspired more Kekehe residents to start home gardens, and women are getting creative with the products they sell. Today, customers can find everything from ready-cooked meals of fish and rice, to fresh produce like cucumbers, cabbage, and coconuts, to household necessities and clothing.

COMMUNITY HALL BRINGS TOGETHER MEN, WOMEN, YOUTH

BINA VILLAGE, MALAITA, SOLOMON ISLANDS

IN 2016, the Solomon Islands Rural Development Program (RDP) funded the construction of a Community Hall in Bina, a village of just over 1,000 people on the west coast of Malaita.

Community members in Bina agreed that a Community Hall was their top priority, and after designing the project and implementation plan themselves, their application for funding was approved by RDP.

"We had a very strong implementation committee," shared the chairman, Silas Fouanialo. "And even better, nearly everyone in the village contributed to the project in some way. Everyone was a worker- carrying timber, digging gravel, or cooking for the laborers. It was amazing."

Since its completion in early 2017, the hall, with its permanent roof providing protection from the weather, has played host to a wide variety of events and meetings.

The Community Hall is used regularly for village leader meetings, Bina's Women's Fellowship meetings, and Bina's Sunday School classes.

The National Council of Women and Ministry of Agriculture have also used the hall to conduct workshops on women's health and climate change.



Representatives from the Bina Community Hall implementation committee



Neverlyn Robo, member of the project implementation committee

There have also been several unforeseen positive impacts of the Community Hall. Nason, a 19 year old youth member of the implementation committee, was so inspired by the climate change workshop put on at the Community Hall that he now intends to attend university and study forestry.

Additionally, neighboring villages and other outside groups are able to rent out the Community Hall for events. Bina's community leaders plan to use the money generated from these events to further invest in the hall, and they've already identified solar panels and lighting as their first priority.

For Bina residents, the Community Hall has been a source of learning, togetherness, inspiration, and even revenue generation.



RDP is a Solomon Islands Government Program jointly funded by the World Bank, Australian Government, European Union, International Fund for Agricultural Development and the Solomon Islands Government.

IMPROVING LIVELIHOODS THROUGH ACCESS TO CLEAN WATER

KOMUBETI AND GILUTAE, GUADALCANAL, SOLOMON ISLANDS

KOMUBETI and Gilutae are two rural communities nestled in the plains of Guadalcanal. With fertile soil primed for fruit trees and vegetable gardens, village members subsist primarily on the food they grow on their land. Now with the support of the Solomon Islands Rural Development Program (RDP), they also enjoy an essential human right: access to clean water.

RDP facilitated the installation of boreholes and pumps to fill gravity water tanks in Komubeti and Gilutae in 2014, after flash floods had decimated the two villages. The floods washed away homes and gardens, and also contaminated the hand dug wells which previously provided the only source of water.

Many children suffered from dysentery and diarrhea in the aftermath of the floods, and the time spent caring for ailing children and bringing them to and from the clinic took parents away from repairing their homes and gardens.



Elizabeth, a mother of 4 and Treasurer of the Gilutae Water Project Implementation Committee



Community partners of the RDP-funded water project in Gilutae

Additionally, villagers faced the challenge of needing to walk as long as 45 minutes each way to fetch clean water. Such extensive time spent collecting water everyday limited the villages' economic productivity.

Today, nearly 50 families in the villages enjoy the benefits of the new water system, with water tanks perched high above ground and safe from contamination delivering clean water to every home.

The project's impact on the community has been immediately felt. In Gilutae, Elizabeth captured the profound freedom that a clean and consistent water source has provided for her village.



Clean water in Komubeti has prevented diseases and given residents more time to work

COMMUNITY PARTNERS OF RDP-FUNDED WATER SUPPLY

	KOMUBETI			GILUTAE		
	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL
AGE GROUP: 0-14 YEARS	22	19	41	21	13	34
AGE GROUP: 15-24 YEARS	10	10	20	15	16	31
AGE GROUP: 25-59 YEARS	19	18	37	22	20	42
AGE GROUP: 60+ YEARS	2	2	4	6	5	11
TOTAL	53	49	102	64	54	118

“Our schedules don’t have to revolve around water anymore. We can work in our gardens, take care of our children, even go fishing late at night, and we don’t have to worry about having water when we get home.”

No cases of diarrhea or dysentery have been reported since the completion of the project, and community members also benefit from the time saved by no longer walking far distances to fetch water.

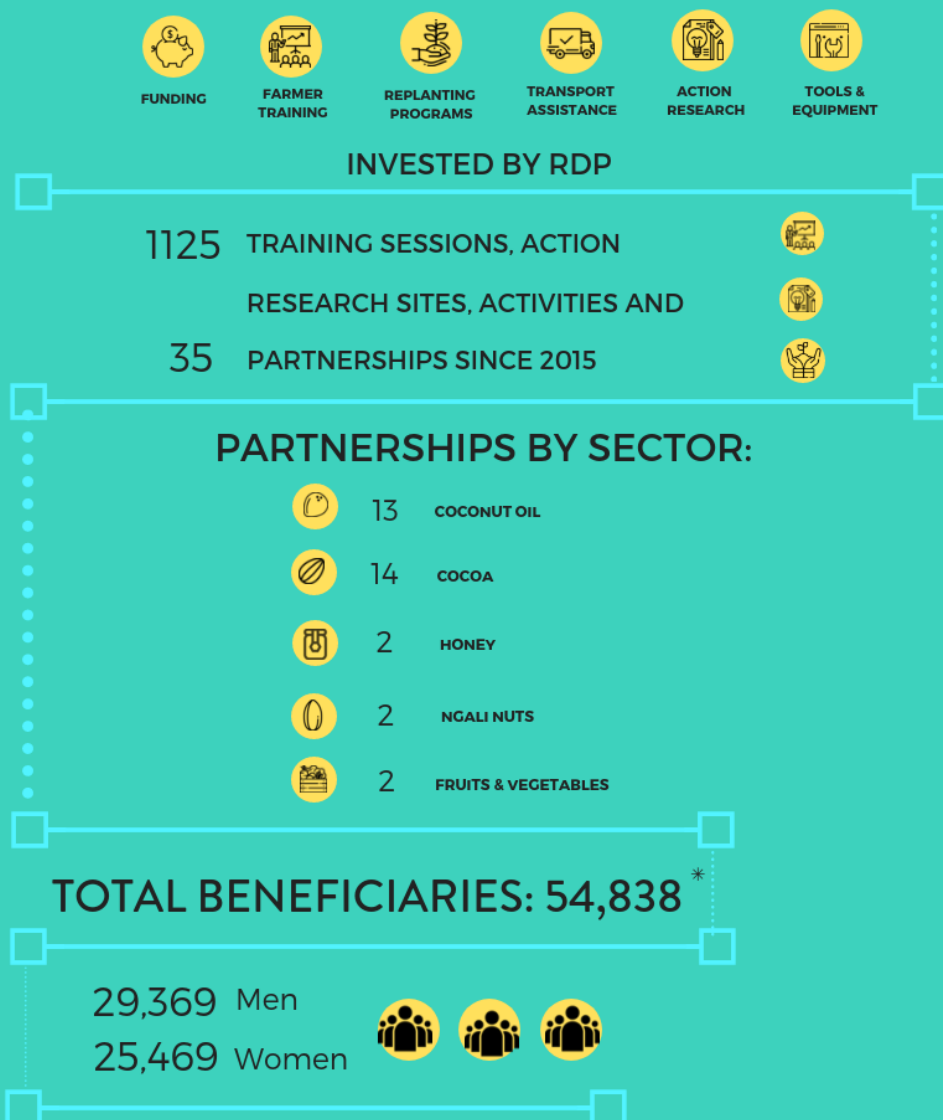
The Rural Development Program has brought potable water to over 200 communities across Solomon Islands since 2008.

AGRICULTURE PARTNERSHIPS & SUPPORT

RDP aims to increase agricultural production and enhance the livelihoods of rural farmers through training, improved farming practices, diversification, commercial activities, and agricultural partnerships. Since 2015, RDP has facilitated partnerships between private sector agribusinesses and smallholder farmers, facilitating increased productivity and market access for products such as coconut oil, copra, honey, ngali nuts, cocoa, food crops, and small livestock.

The five stories that follow in this report capture the effects of RDP's projects on agricultural productivity and rural livelihoods.

AGRICULTURE PARTNERSHIPS & SUPPORT OVERVIEW



*As of October 2018

COASTAL OIL BRINGS JOBS TO HAUHUI VILLAGE

HAUHUI VILLAGE, MALAITA, SOLOMON ISLANDS

IN 2009, Raoisi Mica purchased his first Direct Micro Expelling Unit (DME), a small-scale mill for producing virgin coconut oil, from Kokonut Pacific Solomon Islands. Mica lives in Hauhui, a rural community of roughly 800 people in southern Malaita.

The purchase of the DME was Mica's first step to starting his business Coastal Oil, and it also marked a new beginning for Hauhui village.



Raoisi Mica, founder of Coastal Oil, stands outside his virgin coconut oil production plant



Before the emergence of Mica's Coastal Oil, opportunities for stable full-time work in Hauhui were hard to come by. A handful of men earned small incomes selling copra, while some of the women occasionally sold produce in Auki, a three hour drive away.

Today, with support from the Solomon Islands Rural Development Program (RDP), Mica's Coastal Oil is changing the local economic landscape and addressing some of Hauhui's most pressing challenges, including creating stable jobs.

Coastal Oil operates two mills producing 200 liters of virgin coconut oil per week, and a third unit is arriving early next year thanks to funding from RDP. Mica employs 20 people—75% of them women—from Hauhui to operate these mills, and he buys coconuts from 25 farmers in the area to support production.

All 20 employees at the mill had no income prior to joining Coastal Oil, and out of the 25 farmers, only 5 previously enjoyed a stable income.



In addition to financing the new mill, which will arrive next year and create 10 more jobs, RDP has made a number of contributions aimed at supporting farming households in Hauhui, including the provision of tools, transport assistance, workshops on farm management and personal finance, and subsidies for planting thousands of new coconut trees on unused land.

"I hope to work at the mill for a long time," said Onex, a 22 year old mother of two who has worked at Coastal Oil for 3 years.

Onex uses the income she receives from Coastal Oil to pay for food, clothing, and household items like soap for her family. When her kids reach school age, she will also use the money to pay for their education.



Onex, Coastal Oil employee, saves SI\$100 of her monthly income from the mill

At Mica's encouragement, all Coastal Oil employees and farmers use a mobile banking system called Go Save, and everyone puts a portion of their monthly earnings into personal You Save accounts. Onex saves SI\$100 of her income every month, a prospect she never dreamt of prior to joining Coastal Oil.

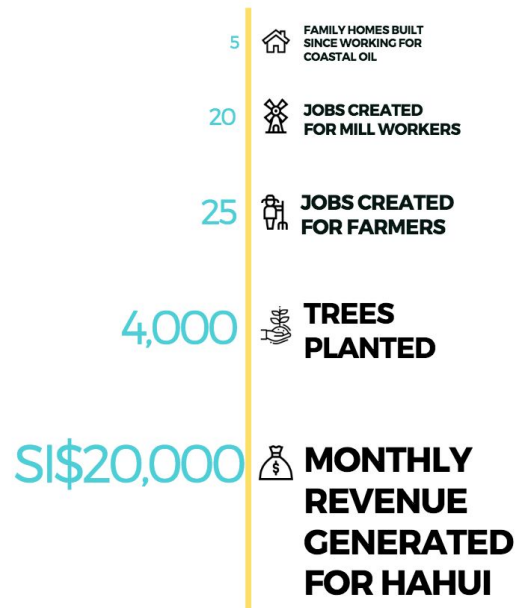
Coastal Oil has also given some of its employees a chance to quite literally change the way they live.

Joycelyn and Joe Kaiahui live down the road from Coastal Oil in Hauhui, and have worked for Mica for the last two years.

The money they earn at Coastal Oil enables them to pay their children's school fees with ease, and it also provided the funds to move from a thatch hut into a permanent wooden home.

"I feel very proud," revealed Mica, reflecting on the impact Coastal Oil has had on Hauhui. "I'm especially grateful for the funding and technical support from RDP, which has enabled Coastal Oil to help families like the Kaiahu's. The rural people of Solomon Islands need support."

IMPACTS OF COASTAL OIL - RDP PARTNERSHIP



Joycelyn and her children outside of the new home she built with money saved from working at Coastal Oil

CREATING A NEW MARKET FOR NGALI NUTS

BANIATA, WESTERN PROVINCE, SOLOMON ISLANDS



BANIATA is a rural village of around 100 households on the coast of Rendova, in Solomon Islands' Western Province. The hills overlooking the village are filled with trees bearing ngali nuts, an indigenous and protein-rich nut with a taste similar to almonds.

Until 2016, anyone in Baniata who wanted to harvest and sell ngali nuts could do so, but it came at a cost. The only option was to ship the nuts to Honiara, where informal buyers agreed to do business on the condition that farmers pay the high price of transport. In most cases, farmers also had to follow the ship to ensure safe arrival. Having to pay for shipping and sea fares cut deeply into farmers' pockets, and for many, it rendered selling unviable.

For the last two years, Zai Na Tina—a Solomon Islands business that promotes organic agriculture—has been working to change the

game for Baniata's ngali nut farmers. With backing from the Solomon Islands Rural Development Program (RDP), Zai Na Tina has partnered with Baniata's farmers to provide a range of programs to increase their capacity for selling ngali nuts.

Under the partnership with Zai Na Tina, farmers are responsible for the full process of production, from picking the nuts to baking.

Zai Na Tina handles the rest after that, picking up the nuts directly from the village and covering the cost of transport. Zai Na Tina packages the nuts in Honiara, and then sells them both domestically and abroad.

"We love the project because it brings the market straight to us," explained Christina, a mother of 4 and one of 60 registered ngali nut farmers in Baniata.

Christina sold 36 kilos of ngali nuts to Zai Na Tina last year, and she's on pace to sell more in 2018. Previously, Christina's only income came from occasional trips to Munda, where she'd earn about SI\$150 selling betelnut and cassava.



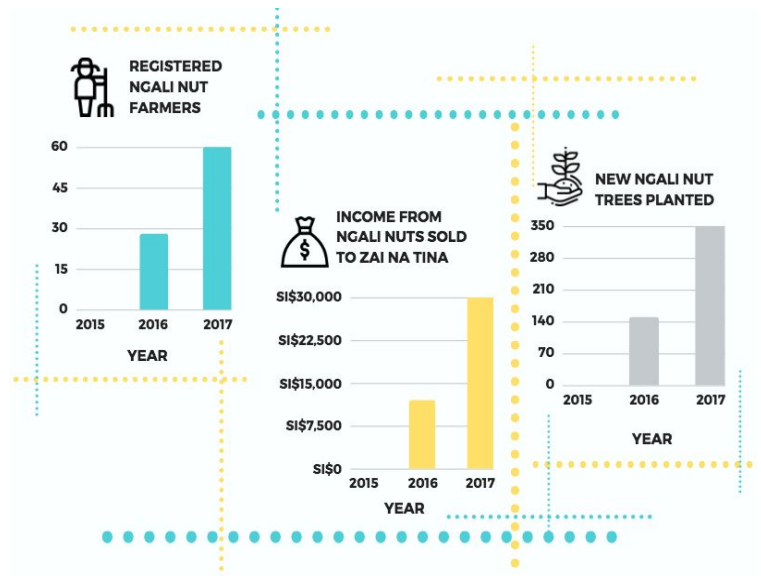
Christina gathers ngali nuts in Baniata to be sold to Zai Na Tina

Now she has the potential to earn exponentially more by selling ngali nuts to Zai Na Tina, and without the burden of traveling to Munda.

The ngali nut farmers—a third of whom are women—are in the process of receiving their organic certification through a participatory guarantee system, and Zai Na Tina is also in the final stages of receiving its international food safety (HACCP) certification. Once these certifications are in hand, Zai Na Tina will sell ngali nuts to health food stores in New Caledonia and Fiji.

IMPACTS OF ZAI NA TINA-RDP

PARTNERSHIP



With sales expected to grow, Zai Na Tina and RDP are working closely with Baniata's farmers to ensure they can meet the demand. RDP has funded the planting of 500 new ngali nut trees, and it has also financed the construction of a baking house and storage unit in Baniata to increase the village's production capacity.



In addition to providing a stable source of income for farmers, Zai Na Tina invests 10% of its profits into a community development fund which is earmarked for education and health projects in Baniata. Knowing that their labor is contributing to the fund gives farmers promise for the future, and they have already agreed that a new primary school will be their first priority once they've raised enough funds.

WOMEN LEAD A REVIVED HONEY INDUSTRY

SIMBO, WESTERN PROVINCE, SOLOMON ISLANDS



IN the late 1990s and early 2000s, Solomon Islands honey was well positioned to begin exporting, as the industry was starting to thrive with an expanding membership and local investment.

However, this took an unexpected turn with the introduction of the Asian bee which began decimating hives and by 2005, the industry had almost disappeared entirely.

Some 13 years later, honey production in Solomon Islands is experiencing a resurgence. The Solomon Islands Small Business Enterprise Center (SISBEC) has brought together hundreds of honey farmers across four provinces, and with support from the Solomon Islands Rural Development Program (RDP), is organizing the distribution of resources, infrastructure, and training to reignite the honey industry.

On the island of Simbo in Solomon Islands' Western Province, a local nonprofit called Gizo Women in Business is working in coordination with SISBEC to encourage women to enter the honey business.

"I made SI\$300 my first harvest," shared Giuvindo Tione, a mother of six. "I just finished my third harvest last month, and this time I sold almost SI\$1,000 worth of honey. I used the money to pay for my kids' school fees, and I'm also saving to build a sanitation system for my home."

Giuvindo is part of a female savings club coordinated by the SISBEC, Gizo Women in Business, and RDP Partnership. Collectively, the women have saved more than SI\$24,000 in 2018.



Members of Gizo Women in Business pose for a photo on Simbo Island

Honey production is growing across Simbo, and 15 new farmers have joined the effort since the start of the year. RDP has provided funding for 45 hive boxes, as well as wax, tools, suits, and training on beekeeping and financial management.

Thanks to the joint effort by RDP, SISBEC, and Gizo Women in Business, women in Simbo and other rural areas across the country are reviving the honey industry and reaping the benefits of increased job opportunities. SISBEC has overseen the training of 140 new honey farmers, introducing over 700 bee hives nationwide and generating an average annual income of SI\$13,000 per farmer.

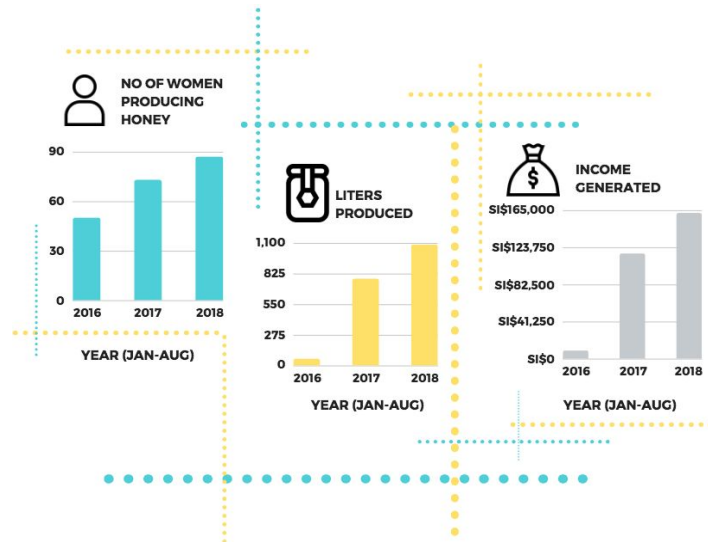
By the end of 2019, women in Simbo are projected to be annually producing more than SI\$500,000 worth of honey.



Bee hives on Simbo Island

IMPACTS OF SISBEC -RDP

PARTNERSHIP



Honey farmer demonstrates how to check for honey

USING COCONUTS TO IMPROVE RURAL LIVELIHOODS

RELA VILLAGE, MALAITA, SOLOMON ISLANDS

UNTIL a few years ago, Charles never bothered to pick up the thousands of coconuts scattered across his land in Relā. The reason was simple. There was nowhere he could sell them.

Situations like Charles' are common in Solomon Islands, where coconut trees abound, but due to limited access to markets, and lack of training and basic equipment, much of it goes unused.

For years the coconuts on Charles' land went to waste, and he didn't work. He had no source of income, and his family subsisted on the small vegetable garden they maintained near their home. Charles' youngest son, Johnson, was in and out of school as the family struggled to afford the fees for his education.

Two years ago, however, Charles' fortunes started to change when he began working for Augustine, the owner of two small-scale coconut oil production mills in Relā.



Charles has been able to send his son Johnson to school thanks to stable income from selling coconuts and producing virgin coconut oil

Augustine's oil mills are from Kokonut Pacific Solomon Islands (KPSI), a social enterprise supported by the Solomon Islands Rural Development Program (RDP). KPSI distributes its patented oil mills—called Direct Micro Expelling Units (DMEs)—to farmers like Augustine, and then promises to buy 100% of the oil produced.



Charles sells his coconuts and also works at the mill converting them into virgin oil

The DMEs are small, affordable, and energy efficient, which enables quick and high-quality production of virgin coconut oil that can be done by anyone, anywhere- even in rural villages like Rela.



KPSI's small and energy-efficient mills enable high quality production of virgin coconut oil in rural areas

KPSI provides more than just the mills. With support from RDP, KPSI funds organic certification for coconut farmers, administers workshops on personal finance, and facilitates replanting projects to ensure the long-term sustainability of oil production.

After he received his organic certification through KPSI, Charles began selling Augustine over 1,000 coconuts per week, and he also took a job at the mill converting his coconuts into virgin oil.

From no job and no income, Charles now has a stable income to send his son Johnson to school and plan for the future.

Augustine buys 28,000 coconuts per month from more than 30 farmers like Charles, and he employs 12 men and women at the mill. The influx of jobs in Rela has increased family incomes, enabled more children to attend school, and inspired others to start businesses of their own.



Mill owner Augustine and farmer Charles enjoy a successful partnership producing virgin coconut oil

IMPACTS OF KOKONUT PACIFIC - RDP PARTNERSHIP

189

 **JOBS CREATED
FOR MILL WORKERS**

600

 **JOBS CREATED
FOR FARMERS**



LOCAL COCOA MARKET GIVES RISE TO INCREASED FARMER PRODUCTIVITY

VELLA LAVELLA, WESTERN PROVINCE, SOLOMON ISLANDS

IN May 2018, Jesca Theokheranga won the Central Bank of Solomon Islands Women in Micro Business Award.

The field of nominees was impressive, but Jesca stood out above the rest for the positive impact her business, Jesca Theo Commodities Enterprise, has had on cocoa farmers in Vella Lavella. Before the emergence of Jesca's business, cocoa production in Vella was in rapid decline.



Award-winning entrepreneur Jesca Theokheranga

"The buyers were inconsistent," explained long-time cocoa farmer Phillip Nogolo, recounting his days of selling cocoa to traders from Honiara. "Sometimes they wouldn't come to Vella, and if they did, I was lucky if they would pay me in less than a month."

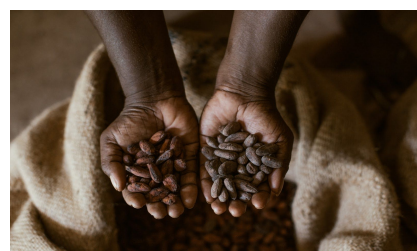


Cocoa farmer processing dry beans in Vella Lavella

The unreliability of the market undermined production. Cocoa farmers lacked the capital—and trust in the market—to grow at a wide scale, and as cocoa trees grew old and bore fewer pods, overall production dropped.

Jesca saw the challenges facing the farmers, and decided to do something about it.

In 2008, she opened a small store and began buying wet beans from local farmers. In 2012, she started buying dry beans as well.



Then in 2016, Jesca started receiving support from the Solomon Islands Rural Development Program (RDP) to partner with the Barakoma Cocoa Farmer's Association to scale up production. With a guarantee from Jesca that she would buy the beans, RDP provided the funding for her to distribute equipment for drying, processing, and storing cocoa beans to six farmers on the island. RDP also provided tools and training to over 100 farmers to increase their capacity to produce cocoa.

Today, Jesca buys cocoa from an association of 150 farming households. Membership has grown by 50% in the last year, as more and more farmers are seeing that they can benefit from what is now, thanks to Jesca's business and RDP's support, a consistent market for cocoa.

"Life is so much better now," voiced Mendana Mola, a cocoa farmer and owner of one of the six dry bean production units distributed via the RDP partnership.

Mendana previously earned about SI\$1,000 per month as a fisherman. Now selling cocoa to Jesca, his income has more than doubled.

"The trainings put on by the RDP partnership were very helpful," he recalled. "Overall the partnership has been very good for my family. I can pay my children's school fees, and we are all happy."

Jesca expects the farmer association to continue growing, and with it, she expects production to increase as well.

"I want to help as many farmers as possible, both men and women" she shared. "Eventually, my goal is to produce enough to export internationally."



Farmer prepares cocoa tree seedling for planting

IMPACTS OF JESCA THEO COMMODITIES ENTERPRISE - RDP PARTNERSHIP

