

VANUATU

# Leftemap Sista

Annual Project Impact Report

Reporting Period:  
July 2019 - June 2020



care

It starts with equal

## Thank you for your support

In Vanuatu, three quarters of the population lives in rural areas and on remote islands — many lack access to clean water, education and essential healthcare. Women and girls are most disadvantaged by poverty as cultural norms and high rates of violence limit their opportunity to attend school, earn an income or share in community decision-making.

With your support, CARE's Leftemap Sista II project is helping thousands of vulnerable women and girls to break the cycle of poverty and live free from violence and abuse. During the past year, CARE was able to reach 748 people (477 women, 271 men) with life-saving community services and support, as well as networks that give women better access to finance, education and essential healthcare. As a result, these women will have the skills and confidence to step into leadership positions and participate meaningfully in decision-making at all levels, with the support of the men in their communities.

CARE has partnered with local organisations in Fiji, Tonga and the Solomon Islands to advance their work in gender equality and replicate Leftemap Sista II within local contexts. It has also worked with Pacific Island government to ensure a consistent and sustainable change going forward.

Together, we are giving these women and girls a powerful means of overcoming poverty and abuse, so they can lead healthy, happy lives.



## Quick facts



**60% of all women in Vanuatu are the survivors of physical and/or sexual violence.**



**31% of women nationally reported being sexually abused under the age of 15 years.**



**Vanuatu has the highest rate of child marriage in the Pacific. 9% of girls are married before the age of 15 and 27% are married before they turn 18.**



# What you've helped achieve this reporting period

## July 2019 – June 2020

### Supporting people in Vanuatu during a declared State of Emergency

CARE Australia is monitoring and responding to COVID-19 around the world — pivoting projects to include teaching vulnerable people the best ways to protect themselves from disease, and taking extra precautions to reduce the risk of spreading infection for, and from, our own staff and partners.

In March 2020, the Government of Vanuatu declared a State of Emergency due to COVID-19, but with your support, CARE was able to assist 305 people (166 women, 139 men). This included travel restrictions, curfews, school closures and social distancing measures. Although delayed, most project activities were successfully rescheduled, with the exception of visits to the Village Savings and Loans Associations (VSLA).

CARE adapted, using virtual meetings and regular updates to continue where possible, and regional areas have been provided with remote support since March.

COVID-19 awareness and hand washing demonstrations were incorporated into all community-based activities between March and June 2020.

CARE also supported Women's Economic Livelihood (WEL) groups with mobile markets so Lenakel residents could buy crops and continue saving; and assisted VSLAs to amend the rules around meetings so that they could continue to meet in smaller groups.

In April 2020, increased volcanic activity at Mt Yasur in Tanna required another emergency response. Communities around Whitesands were greatly affected by ash fall which damaged gardens and contaminated water sources. CARE assisted with food distributions to these communities.

Local markets (and therefore income) were also affected by both COVID-19 and the volcanic activity.



## Providing training to improve respect and equality in relationships

The two States of Emergency posed a higher risk of domestic violence. Thanks to your support, CARE delivered four Good Relationships Free from Violence workshops to 126 people (including 70 women). The content for this workshop was also updated, ready for community sensitisations in the coming year.

10 male CARE staff and 10 male partners of female CARE staff also received training about violence against women and girls.

With your support, CARE conducted Family Financial Management workshops with 114 WEL group members and their partners (including 52 men) to promote shared responsibilities and joint decision-making within families to manage household incomes. Participants reported an improvement in women's financial management skills and fewer conflicts between partners. Police also reported fewer calls for domestic violence.

## Working with women to increase their confidence, income and leadership skills

CARE supports WEL groups to increase their income, savings and participation in making decisions within their family. This gives them increased economic opportunities, and improved access to, and control over, resources.

With your support, 248 WEL groups were given technical support in handcrafts, including fabric painting and weaving. These groups all reported having more income and have been able to spend it on education and health.

CARE's VSLA were adapted for Vanuatu and established in four communities, enabling 93 members to save VUV 850,000.

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, CARE was unable to conduct the scheduled VSLA visits, meaning none of them reached their final payout after a full cycle. This will be achieved early in the new financial year.

Planning began with local organisations and staff in the Solomon Islands, Fiji and Tonga to adapt project activities and roll them out in their communities. These focused on gender equality, protecting children and preventing violence and abuse, as well as safely working with adolescent girls.



## CASE STUDY

# Lifting women to new heights

By giving women and girls in Vanutu powerful means to overcome poverty and abuse, you are helping to change their lives on so many levels.

CARE's Foundational Leadership Course 'Findem Vois Blong Yu' is just one of the courses that is helping the women and girls of Vanuatu to build their self-esteem and self-confidence, equipping them with every day skills which will open worlds of possibility for them like never before.

Almost all 2018 participants in the tiny outer island of Aniwa reported that their self-confidence increased after taking part in this course. When CARE staff checked in with them again, we discovered that changes both big and small were meaningful and powerful.

For Daisy, the confidence to speak in public has enabled her to show leadership in her community — something she never dreamt she would be capable of doing.

"I was nominated to take up the responsibility of Master of Ceremonies for the 2019 Kindy Day. I'd never done anything like this and I was nervous. I kept thinking back to what I'd learnt in the workshop and it gave me the confidence to step up and do it!" she proudly explained.

Another attendee, Linda was known for being painfully shy before participating in the workshop. Even family events were daunting, so Linda struggled to speak up and give her opinion.

"After the workshop, I was able to contribute to family discussions on how we could solve some complex issues. I never would have been able to do that before," she shared.

Prior to the workshops, Delisa had low self-esteem. Having dropped out of school in Class 4, she has a low literacy level which made participating in community events incredibly challenging.

The workshops, in addition to personal support from a woman in her community who had been a mentor in CARE's Young Women's Leadership Program, helped her to build her self-confidence so much that she was thrilled to read from the bible to her church community.

"This gave me so much joy because it was the first time I read in front of other people since I left school in Class 4. The workshop was a breakthrough in my life — helping me to build up my self-esteem and be able to read confidently. I don't feel like I have low self-esteem anymore," she said proudly.

Even changes that seem small are making a big difference for individual women who will continue to make great changes for entire communities.





If you would like more information about this project and how you can be involved, please contact:

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[care.org.au](https://care.org.au)



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