

# SOLOMON ISLANDS RURAL WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT AND LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

WEST 'ARE 'ARE ROKOTANIKENI ASSOCIATION IN PARTNERSHIP WITH  
INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DEVELOPMENT AGENCY

2020-2024

Emele Duituturaga, Andrew Mathieson, and Elizabeth Palu

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The only means of transport along the West 'Are'Are coast is sea transport. In addition to good weather, we were grateful for the expert navigation skills of the motorised canoe drivers in the open sea between the Zones and the 3-hour boat ride to Auki, the town centre of Malaita.

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## **Evaluation Team**

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## **ACRONYMS**

AGM	Annual General Meeting
ANCP	Australian NGO Cooperation Program
AUD	Australian Dollars
CBSI	Central Bank of Solomon Islands
CRPD	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
DWEA	Disability Women's Empowerment Association
DRMC	Disaster Risk Management Committee
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
IWDA	International Women's Development Agency
KIIs	Key Informant Interviews
MEL	Monitoring, evaluation, and learning
MWYCFA	Ministry of Women, Youth, Children and Family Affairs
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
PPAC	Pacific People Advancing Change
PWD	People with Disability also Person with Disability
PWDSI	People with Disability Solomon Islands
SBD	Solomon Islands Dollar
SIBC	Solomon Island Broadcasting Cooperation
SPC	The Pacific Community
WARA	West 'Are'Are Rokotanikeni Association
WEE	Women's Economic Empowerment
WRAM	Women's Rights Action Movement
YWCA	Young Women's Christian Association

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

### **Program Background and Context**

The West 'Are'Are Rokotanikeni Association (WARA), was established in 1999 and have collaborated with the International Women's Development Agency (IWDA) since 2008, to empower rural women in the Solomon Islands. WARA operates as a rural women's voluntary association in the remote and infrastructure-limited southern part of Malaita province.

From 2016, WARA (in partnership) with IWDA implemented a 3-year program funded by the Australian NGO Cooperation Program (ANCP) which focused on increasing gender equality; women's increased access to and greater control over money and business development; and WARA's increased organisation strength and reach to serve and support its membership and meet the demand to share its model with multiple women's groups across Solomon Islands. This first phase of the Solomon Islands Rural Women's Economic Empowerment Leadership Program was evaluated in 2019.

The ANCP funded Program's second phase ran from July 2020 to June 2024, continuing the same focus as phase 1 but expanded the target group to specifically include young women and women with disability and included a new focus on resilience and adaptation to climate change.

This evaluation report of phase 2 covers the period from July 2020 to January 2024.

### **Evaluation Purpose and Methodology**

The evaluation examines WARA's ongoing activities to increase rural women's leadership and economic empowerment. It assesses the extent to which program outcomes were achieved, identifies successes and challenges, evaluates the impact on women's lives, and reviews the partnership between IWDA and WARA.

A mixed-method approach was employed, gathering qualitative and quantitative data from reports, key informant interviews (KIIs), and focus group discussions (FGD). Fieldwork was conducted over 10 days in West 'Are'Are and in Honiara during May 2024. A total of 130 individuals, including WARA leadership, staff, rural Zone members (including male community leaders), and Honiara based stakeholders, participated in the evaluation. The evaluation adhered to feminist and decolonial principles, ensuring the inclusion of local perspectives, local voices, and ethical collaboration. While all interviews were conducted in pidgin english, all notes have been translated in English and de-identified. Ethical approval was obtained from the IWDA Ethical Committee and was based on evaluation plan, risk assessment (to protect participants and guide the evaluator) and a series of agreed mitigation measures. A sense-making workshop was held in Honiara at the end of the fieldwork to share preliminary findings and test emerging recommendations with WARA leadership and stakeholders.

The evaluation was constrained by limited time for the field phase, the restriction of representative sampling (limited by availability of participants and willingness to take part in the evaluation), which affected the comprehensiveness of the field visit and data collection. Despite these limitations, the evaluation sets out key findings and actionable recommendations for future programming and WARA organisational strengthening.

## Program Outcomes

This summary reflects on the program outcomes and provides some evidence of what has been achieved:

**Outcome 1:** Women and young women in the Solomon Islands, including women with disability, have increased active participation in leadership and decision making in all spheres and at all levels, including decision-making on issues affecting livelihoods, such as land ownership and environmental issues.

*There is strong evidence (from KIIs), that women have increased active participation in leadership and decision-making across various levels, some evidence on young women and limited evidence on women with disability.*

**Outcome 2:** Women and young women in the Solomon Islands, including women with disability, have increased access to and control of money and strengthened livelihoods.

*There is strong evidence (from KIIs), that women have improved access to and control of money and strengthened livelihoods, some evidence on young women and limited evidence on women with disability.*

**Outcome 3:** Rural communities in the Solomon Islands, especially women and girls, have increased resilience to adapt and respond to climate change impacts and disasters.

*There is some evidence (from KIIs), that women and girls have enhanced resilience to climate change impacts and disasters.*

**Outcome 4:** WARA is strengthened to serve its membership and provide models and support to benefit other indigenous women's groups in the Solomon Islands.

*There is strong evidence (from KIIs), on the positive impact of WARA's organisational capacity and that WARA has provided support for other indigenous women's groups in the Solomon Islands.*

## Successes stories and Enabling Factors for sustainability

- **Access to Finance and Economic independence:** There was consistent evidence from KIIs, that the savings scheme, loans scheme and Haiamasiha fund have improved access to financial resources, increased participation in income-generating activities, diversified livelihood with some degree of economic independence. These have been enabled by the quarterly savings collection and trainings conducted by WARA staff.
- **Increased Confidence and Self Worth:** There was consistent evidence from KIIs, of increased confidence and self-worth that was directly attributed to being a member of WARA through attendance at workshops, training, and the Annual General Meetings (AGM).
- **Higher Education for Children:** The majority of KIIs reported receiving limited or no formal education. However, many KIIs reported that through their regular savings with WARA and contributions to the Haiamasiha Fund, their children have been able to attain university level education and rewarding careers.
  - It would be useful for WARA to carry out additional analysis on this point to determine the number (men, women and those with disabilities) who have achieved formal education – at different levels, as a flow on impact of increased access to income, savings and loans

- **Strengthened Organisational capacity:** WARA’s leadership, staff and volunteers confirm that WARA’s organisational capacity has been strengthened through this program by effectively implementing a new governance and management structure, revision of its constitution, development of policies, recruitment of eight full-time staff and move to a new furnished office. Enabling factors have been the implementation of the 2021 WARA Succession plan, additional funding through the new Oxfam partnership and continued capacity building support by IWDA.
- **Young WARA Leadership Pipeline:** WARA’s leadership, staff and volunteers confirm that WARA has successfully recruited young women as staff and graduate volunteers in the WARA office serving as a leadership pipeline. The recruitment of young women volunteers who have gained full employment in WARA and elsewhere has had a great impact on the young women and for WARA. The provision of volunteer allowances was an enabling factor.
- **Staff Leadership:** WARA staff have been able to demonstrate leadership in areas previously led by WARA Founder, e. g. establishing a new savings group in Makira Ulawa Province and running the 2023 AGM – the annual WARA flagship event. WARA recognised the valuable experience of staff who had previously served as volunteers, which enabled those staff to take on more responsibilities from the founder.
- **Continuation of Savings by WARA zones:** Despite challenges faced during COVID and the limited infrastructure and market barriers, rural members have continued their savings due to the fact that there is no penalty even when members are inactive. A motivating factor shared by several KIIs is the eligibility for Haiamasiha fund 30% top up for university fees which is dependent on maintaining a good savings record.

### Challenges, Barriers, and Risks

- **COVID-19 disruption:** KIIs provided evidence that the pandemic significantly disrupted activities and affected staff health which led to delays and program underspending. The WARA office closed its operations for six months from February to August 2020. KIIs noted that it took a long time for WARA to restart all its activities, re-establish community links and reengage with local women.
- **Engaging Young Members:** KIIs confirmed that attracting and retaining young women in leadership roles remains challenging despite the introduction of the volunteer scheme.
- **Competing Priorities:** An interesting outcome from the KIIs was the challenge WARA were facing trying to balance the demands from multiple donors. WARA report resources are stretched, and they need to revisit and refocus, otherwise they risk future sustainability.
- **Governance and Management:** WARA recognised the need for a clear separation of powers and improved accountability between governance and management roles (within the organisation).
- **Technological and Market Barriers:** Several KIIs commented that the installation and maintenance of hardware and technologies such as solar panels and freezers remains challenging. Further WARA commented that they experienced limited access to suppliers, so acquisition and maintenance costs can also be higher than expected.
- **Loan Scheme:** Both WARA and KIIs commented that the difficulties with loan repayments in some zones have hindered the effectiveness of the revolving loan scheme, affected financial sustainability, and thus risked the viability of WARA. Despite these concerns, WARAs flagship savings scheme, revolving loan fund, and Haiamasiha Fund for scholarships and welfare support have significantly improved access to finance, control of money, improved livelihoods and developed women’s leadership and agency despite traditional patriarchal constraints.

- **Partnership success:** KIIs comment that the long-term partnership between IWDA and WARA (nearly two decades) has been catalytic in enabling WARA to achieve any of its program outcomes. Further the partnership has been instrumental to enable WARA to attract other partners and opportunities for co-financing WARA's core costs. This has significantly contributed to WARA's organisational development. IWDA funding support has enabled WARA to increase its reach and increase its partnerships with other Solomon Island NGOs. While WARA has attracted funding partners other than IWDA, it needs to be strategic in selecting future partners to maintain the focus and impact of its activities.
- **Recruitment and retention:** One of the successes reported during the KIIs was the recruitment and engagement of young women as volunteers and graduate internship some of whom were able to take on paid staffing roles within the organisation. While the young women have gained work experience and some found full-time employment within the WARA office or elsewhere, there remains a need to foster future leadership within WARA to increase WARA's organisational capacity and maintain its sustainability.

## Conclusions

The evaluation concludes that whilst WARA has significantly strengthened its institutional capacity with IWDA's support and new partnerships and positioned itself as a model for other Indigenous women's groups, significant concerns remain regarding its financial sustainability, the ongoing need for a robust leadership structure and the need for an organisational 'reset' in line with its revised constitution.

The Savings Scheme, Revolving Loans Scheme, and Haiamasiha Fund have demonstrated a degree of sustainability (some zones more so than others and some less so than others), significant positive impact on women's economic empowerment and a real opportunity for WARA leadership to implement change.

The Governance and Management roles and responsibilities need to be strengthened in line with the revised constitution. The succession plan sets out new duties and accountabilities of the Governance Committee, the Management Team under the leadership of the Executive Director, phases out of the Technical Advisor roles and creates a Patron role for Dr Alice.

The WARA office has been strengthened, however the rural Zones need more consistent engagement to remain active and vibrant. There is an expressed need<sup>1</sup> for clarification and a shared understanding of the positions and roles of Zone Executive members.

Young WARA needs to engage directly in developing the next-generation leadership plan to realise the leadership pipeline more effectively.

WARA needs to further engage with disabled women and build climate change actions and impact into future activities.

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<sup>1</sup> From KIIs, FGDs and narrative reports



## Summary of Recommendations

- 1. Strengthen WARA Governance and Management:** Clearly delineate the roles and responsibilities of those involved in governance and management of WARA. Implement succession planning by phasing out the founder's central role and appoint her as a patron by the end of 2024.
- 2. Enhance Rural Operations:** Focus on revitalising regular meetings and increase activity levels in the rural Zones, and ensure they remain the beating heart of WARA. Building climate change resilience may be a useful new activity to reengage rural zones, attract new partners/ donors, and provide a focus for young women. Appoint a Zone development officer, as recommended by the Succession Plan.
- 3. Develop Young Leadership:** Structure the volunteer scheme to include leadership development and training to not only create employment but a sustainable pipeline of future leaders with links to rural zones.
- 4. Partner with Disability Organizations to strengthen the inclusion of Women with Disability in WARA program and activities.** Partner with PWDSI and engage with Disability Women's Empowerment Association (DWEA) to collect data, conduct access audit, community awareness, education, design a life skills programme for girls and women with disability in the rural Zones. Develop a Plan of Action with activities that support and focus on the abilities of women with disability.
- 5. Establish a Business Arm:** Conduct a feasibility study to establish a self-sustaining business arm to support WARA's financial independence and long-term sustainability. This could be a social enterprise model.
- 6. Embrace Digital Finance: Adopt Technology and implement digital finance solutions to enhance operational efficiency and financial management, ensuring WARA remains at the forefront of technological advancements.**

## INTRODUCTION

Established in 1999, WARA is a 25-year-old rural based volunteer women’s association which promotes self-reliance, economic empowerment and leadership for rural women and girls through access to savings and loan schemes. WARA also seeks to develop skills and knowledge development initiatives across various subjects pivotal to women’s transformation.

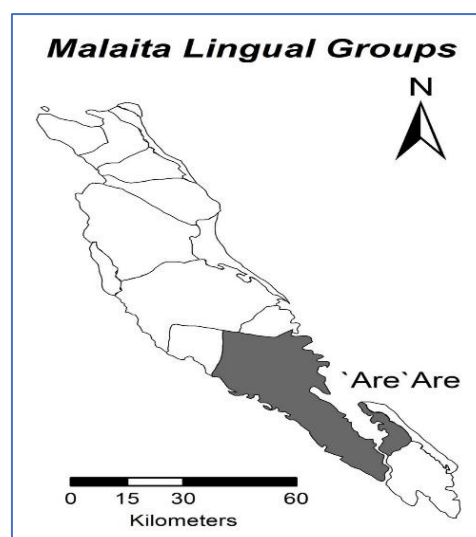
WARA manages the savings group network of 12 rural and 1 urban zone, allowing members to manage their finances, learn to budget for household items, and save for their family’s futures. Once savings clubs are established with sufficient funds from members, some of these savings clubs offer loans to members; this is called the revolving loans scheme. WARA not only serves its members but also responds to other women’s groups and associations in the Solomon Islands requesting assistance in establishing start-up savings.

WARA and IWDA have developed a long-term relationship spanning over two decades to empower rural women in the Solomon Islands. The partnership commenced with the Women’s Financial Literacy and Livelihoods Project 2010-2015 and continued with the Solomon Islands Rural Women’s Economic Empowerment and Leadership Program (the program), implemented over two phases, with the first between 2016 and 2019 with a second phase between 2020 and 2024.

This report evaluates the second phase of the program from June 2020 to January 2024, implemented by WARA in partnership with IWDA and funded through ANCP with a program budget of AUD 350,876.<sup>2</sup>

## BACKGROUND

WARA’s program covers the southern part of Malaita Province in the Solomon Islands with 12 rural Zones along the coast of West ‘Are’Are operating in an environment with no access to road infrastructure, irregular shipping, and motorised canoes as its primary mode of transport. There is no formal banking system; however, through IWDA support, WARA has developed and established its flagship savings scheme with over 1,000 members through a quarterly collection system which reached over 2 million SBD in 2018. The region covers a female population of approximately 4,000 while WARA membership is just over 1,000. WARA office staff travel from Honiara to West ‘Are’Are to collect savings from the 12 rural Zones three times a year. WARA has expanded its support to include a revolving loan scheme for business set-ups and the Haiamasiha Fund, which offers financial support with educational fees, medical care, and old age care. Against the backdrop of traditional patriarchal culture, WARA has been able to address barriers to women’s education, access to finance, leadership, and improvements in standards of living.



The first phase of the program (2016-2019) was evaluated in 2019, and recommendations were given for the program’s second phase. The second phase (2020-2024) continues to work to achieve targeted outcomes under the original four-year program. This evaluation focuses on the extensions from June 2020 to January 2024. With continued support from IWDA through ANCP annual extensions, except for a new outcome, three of the original program outcomes remain unchanged. The program outcomes are:

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<sup>2</sup> Rounded to the nearest dollar of AUD 350,875.96 confirmed by IWDA

**Outcome 1:** Women and young women in the Solomon Islands, including women with disability, have increased active participation in leadership and decision-making in all spheres and at all levels, including decision-making on issues affecting livelihoods, such as land ownership and environmental issues.

**Outcome 2:** Women and young women in the Solomon Islands, including women with disability, have increased access to and control of money and strengthened livelihoods.

**Outcome 3:** Rural communities in the Solomon Islands, especially women and girls, have increased resilience to adapt and respond to climate change impacts and disasters. (new)

**Outcomes 4:** WARA is strengthened to serve its membership and provide models and support to benefit other Indigenous women's groups in the Solomon Islands.

## **PURPOSE OF STUDY**

This evaluation aims to build on learning to strengthen and support WARA in its work to increase rural women's leadership and economic empowerment. It assesses the extent to which program outcomes were achieved, identifies successes and challenges, evaluates the impact on women's lives, and examines the partnership between IWDA and WARA. The outcome and recommendations from the evaluation are expected to support WARA in planning and delivering its program and future focus areas for organisational strengthening. WARA has developed other partnerships that are co-financing and have complemented WARA's implementation of the Program and its organisational development; however, this evaluation focuses specifically on IWDA's support to WARA.

## **KEY EVALUATION QUESTIONS**

There are six key evaluation questions based on the evaluation objectives:

- 1. To what extent have the program outcomes/objectives been met?**
- 2. What were successes and enabling factors?**
- 3. What were the challenges, barriers, and risks?**
- 4. To what extent has the program impacted on the lives of West AreAre women in empowering and creating pathways to leadership as a result of the savings club and revolving loan and Haiamasiha (WARA Cares) funds?**
- 5. How has the partnership between IWDA and WARA and IWDA's support to WARA supported the program outcomes and contributed to WARA's organisational development?**
- 6. What has been the impact of WARA's support for young women leaders in terms of enabling young women's leadership within the organisation and more broadly and the impact of WARA's organisational capacity and sustainability?**

## **METHODOLOGY**

A mixed-method approach was employed, incorporating qualitative and quantitative data from reports, key informant interviews, and focus group discussions. Fieldwork was conducted over 10 days in May 2024, in West 'Are'Are and in Honiara. A sample size of 130 participants was achieved, including WARA

leadership, staff, rural Zone members, male community leaders, and Honiara-based stakeholders, participated in the data collection.

## **SECONDARY DATA SOURCES**

Secondary data was sourced from program data in project-related reports and desk review documents provided by IWDA and WARA. The desk review documents include key organisational documents such as the constitution, strategic plan, succession plan, 2019 evaluation report, ANCP proposals, WARA's narrative and financial reports, field trip reports, revolving loan audit report, market analysis reports and stories of 26 WARA women in business. All twenty-three documents are listed in **Annex 1**.

## **SAMPLING**

WARA works across 13 Zones in West 'Are 'Are, Honiara, and other provinces. For this evaluation, WARA staff selected a field sample of 4 Zones in West 'Are 'Are on Malaita - Zones 3, 6, 10, and 12, which were not reached in the 2020 evaluation<sup>3</sup>. Rural WARA consists of 2 wards<sup>4</sup>, Tai and Mareho and the four Zones are evenly spread across these two wards, consisting of two major Zones and two smaller Zones. Other Zones are further inland with accessibility challenges. It was decided that whilst this might present potential sampling bias, the sampling was purposive, and WARA considered both resource and time constraints against the value of the resulting evaluation outcomes, particularly in any future iterations.

Sub-questions were developed below as the basis for the interview and a focus group discussion guide; however, not all questions apply. The questions provided a basis or pool of potential questions to guide the discussions.

A written consent form (**Annex 4**) was provided before the interview. Depending on the interviewees' preference, especially Zone-based participants, if written consent was unavailable, verbal consent was collected following an explanation of the evaluation. The verbal consent scripts are provided in English (**Annex 5A**) and pidgin English (**Annex 5B**).

## **PRIMARY DATA SOURCES**

The primary data collection was from 61 key informant interviews (KIIs) and 5 focus group discussions (FGD). A total of 121 individuals participated in the evaluation. The rural WARAs FGDs included those who were followed up with KIIs. The eighteen participants who attended the sense-making workshop represented WARA leadership, staff, volunteers, and zone 8 (urban). The workshop was held in Honiara at the end of the primary data collection. The summary of participants is displayed in **Table 1**.

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<sup>3</sup> Zones 1,2, 9 and 8(Honiara) were covered in the 2020 evaluation

<sup>4</sup> Provinces and Wards are administrative divisions in the Solomon Islands and the basis of population census and provincial and general elections.

**Table 1: Summary of evaluation participants**

Methodology	Total Participants	Female	Male	Total
KII	WARA leadership / staff	10		10
	Rural WARA- Zone 12	8	2	10
	Rural WARA- Zone 6	6	1	7
	Rural WARA - Zone 10	8		8
	Rural WARA - Zone 3	10	4	14
	Urban WARA -Zone 8	3		3
	Stakeholders	4	2	6
	IWDA	3		3
FGD <sup>5</sup>	Uhu: Zone 12	14		(-8) <sup>6</sup> 6
	Pipisu: Zone 6 -	24		(-6) 18
	Rohinari: Zone 10	28		(-10) 18
	Waisisi: Zone 3	22		(-10) 12
	Staff Volunteers -6	6		6
Sensemaking workshop <sup>7</sup>	18	17	1	
Total Evaluation Participants				121

There were four groupings for primary data collection –

(i) WARA leadership, staff, and volunteers, Young WARA based in Honiara.

(ii) WARA Zone members based in West AreAre.

(iii) WARA stakeholders based mainly in Honiara and

(iv) IWDA based in Australia.

A KII Guide for in-depth interviews is provided in **Annex 3**, with a summary in **Table 2**. The questions in the guide provided the basis for the semi-structured FGDs. However, in conducting the FGDs, a storytelling method was also used, which allowed informal conversations with participants to share their stories and experiences. Where possible, case studies of impact stories will be captured.

<sup>5</sup> The FGD includes those who were followed up with KIIs

<sup>6</sup> The bracketed numbers represent the women who have been counted into the KIIs

<sup>7</sup> They are already counted in the KIIs and FGD

**Table 2: Summary of the key informant interview discussion guide**

<b>Key Aspects</b>	<b>Sub Questions</b>	<b>Source/Tools</b>
<b>Implementation</b>	1) How was the Program implemented, and how were activities conducted? 2) To what extent were the members and participants, especially women with disability, reached as intended?	Reports – Desk research Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) - WARA, IWDA, Stakeholders
<b>Outcome</b>	3) To what extent were the outcomes met? 4) What if any unintended positive or negative outcomes were observed? 5) What were the Program's successes and enabling factors? 6) What were the challenges, barriers, and risks?	Reports – desk review KII – WARA, IWDA, Stakeholders FGD – Zone members
<b>Impact</b>	7) To what extent has the Program improved women's leadership, decision-making, and economic empowerment? 8) To what extent has the Program strengthened women and girls' resilience and adaptation to climate change impacts and disasters? 9) What has been the impact on the lives of women with disability?	<b>Rural WARA</b> Case-study storytelling – woman leader, a woman with disability, climate impact, successful business/enterprise
<b>IWDA-WARA Partnership</b>	10) How has the partnership between IWDA and WARA worked? 11) To what extent has the IWDA support contributed to WARA's organisational development?	<b>WARA and IWDA</b> KII - WARA leaders, staff, IWDA staff, stakeholders Reports -desk review
<b>Sustainability</b>	12) To what extent has the succession plan been effectively implemented? 13) What has been the extent and impact of WARA's support for young women leaders on WARA's organisational capacity and sustainability?	KII - WARA leaders, staff FGD - Young WARA Reports - desk review

**ALIGNMENT WITH IWDA'S FEMINIST RESEARCH FRAMEWORK**

The evaluation is cognisant of the IWDA Feminist Research Framework and aligned to the values of the Framework - feminist, accountable, collaborative, and transformative. The decolonial approach led to the purposeful selection of an evaluator conducting data collection who is female of Melanesian origin, grew up in the Solomon Islands (including Auki), speaks fluent pidgin English and has worked in the Solomon Islands as a gender specialist. Interviews were conducted in pidgin English, relieving the rural women who expressed anxiety in communicating in English.

Committed to doing no harm, the evaluation research methodology captures women's lived experiences through storytelling while simultaneously interrogating the dynamics and application of gender norms that influence women's leadership pathways and economic empowerment. Recognising the Melanesian

cultural context of West 'Are'Are, the evaluation embraced a decolonial perspective by not going in with preconceived ideas but attentively listening to stories of lived experiences and expert local knowledge.

Through storytelling, the women spoke of their experiences and the cultural barriers of traditional culture; an interviewee said, "*...in traditional 'Are'Are culture, men are to be served.*"

With a methodology grounded in ethics and values, the evaluation embraces accountability for data collection and commitment to ethical collaboration, working closely with WARA in the field data collection.

A sense-making workshop was held with WARA leadership, staff, and volunteers at the end of the fieldwork to share preliminary findings and test emerging recommendations.

## **ETHICS**

Approval by the IWDA Ethical Review Committee was provided before commencement of the field data collection. This required submission of a form for obtaining prior and informed consent (**Annex 3**), a written evaluation team introduction, and the completed IWDA research risk assessment matrix. Records of the evaluation's primary data are being kept confidential and Interview recordings de-identified. All data gathered through the study will be kept until the final report is submitted to IWDA. The primary data, notes and interviews will be handed over to IWDA for safeguarding upon acceptance of the final report and in discussion with IWDA and WARA.

## **LIMITATIONS /CONSTRAINTS**

This evaluation takes a predominantly qualitative approach with primary data collection taking place during the two-week field visit which was focused on WARA leadership, staff and members in Honiara and West 'Are'Are in the Malaita province. Due to time constraints, only 4 out of the 12 rural Zones were visited, so the findings may not apply to all the zones and pertinent issues from other Zones may not be reflected in this report. There was insufficient time spent in the Zones visited to be able to cross-check and verify the information obtained from the KIIs and FGDs which have been the sole source of primary data collected. Where possible, the primary data has been triangulated with the secondary sources to confirm the key findings. Three of the identified stakeholders were unavailable despite repeated attempts including the other major co-financing partner in implementing this program.

## **COMPILATION OF TEAM**

A three-person evaluation team conducted the evaluation. The team consisted of a team leader, a Gender and development specialist and a regional specialist. Due to language barriers and gender sensitivities (the team leader was male), the Gender Specialist, who grew up in the Solomon Islands including living in Auki and speaks pidgin English, conducted all field research, including engagement with the communities and the women.

## FINDINGS

### Programme Outcomes

**Outcome 1: Women and young women in the Solomon Islands, including women with disability, have increased active participation in leadership and decision-making in all spheres and at all levels, including decision-making on issues affecting livelihoods, such as land ownership and environmental issues.**

**Finding 1.1:** There was consistent evidence that women have increased active participation in leadership and decision-making at the household, zone leadership, and at the community. Women reported influencing household decisions related to finance especially education of children and self, access to productive resources, consumables, and home improvement levels. Women report increased influence in household financial decision-making. In the focus group discussions, women recognize a change since joining the WARA Savings scheme: previously their engagement in household financial decision-making was limited, whereas now they are involved and consulted about financial matters because they are recognised for their money management skills. From the KIIs and FGD, the majority of women report of increased confidence in exercising leadership, public speaking, expressing opinions and confidence in decision-making despite receiving little or no formal education. Male spouses corroborate this. Quotes include:

*“WARA has increased my skills and knowledge. My education only went as far as class one, but I am more knowledgeable from attending WARA skills training – sewing, cooking, gardening, selling food to ships, fishing and I have even built a house for my family.” [48-year-old female member]*

*“Rokotanikeni helped me to educate my children. I never had that chance.” [50 years, female member]*

*“Matron (wife) was not educated but WARA workshops have increased her knowledge and her leadership. She and other WARA women have taken leadership in church activities, community programmes and become member of School Boards. WARA has really helped women into leadership.” [Husband of zone leader]*

*“I have benefited, my family sees the benefit, my kids go to school, I have been able to pay school fees, buy plates and pots, and this has made others respect me more. Roko has made me able to speak up and be heard...” [FGD female participant]*

**Case study:** Forty-nine-year-old zone leader joined WARA in 2006 when she was a young woman. She has been a member for nearly 20 years. She joined WARA because she saw lots of women were members. She only reached Standard 6 in school and did not feel she knew anything. Before joining WARA she felt isolated and had low self-esteem *“mi feel down lo mi seleva...”* The training built up her knowledge, gave her confidence in public speaking and to lead. She feels like she has been to university *“mi lukim mi skul lo university lo information and knowledge mi garem nau...”* Through the Haiamasiha fund in 2022, her son was able to graduate from the Solomon Islands National University (SINU) with a bachelor’s in marine Fisheries. In a separate KII, the zone leader’s husband confirmed his wife had gained good knowledge from Roko with increased confidence in public speaking. *“in fact she is quite outspoken, unlike before...”* He shared that they now share household decisions, they help and support each other but she manages most things, and he seeks her advice.



**Finding 1.2:** WARA has enabled women to address the power imbalances from gendered roles and social norms. In one FGD, a few women complained about carrying the burden of doing everything – gardening, fishing, child rearing, cooking, household chores, and income generation. One woman exclaimed “*AreAre tradition is for men to be served; in our custom, we do not ask men to do work. But WARA has trained us women to speak up, otherwise women will not be heard.*” Another woman described how WARA helped her to navigate cultural traditional expectations. “*Rokotanikeni has made a big change in my life especially coming from another province and fitting into AreAre traditions and meeting cultural expectations where men are to be served...*”

Modest changes were reported on the wider community impact of voice and leadership. This is in contrast to KIIs where individual women report on the significant changes to them within family unit and when they assume leadership positions within the zone. However, it was reported that where women were appointed within the church or school structures, their roles are limited to traditional female roles such as secretaries or leading women groups. KIIs and FGDs report that for community wide changes to be effective, WARA needs to form partnerships with others in the gender equality space to continue working with men and local powerholders to transform traditional mindsets towards women as leaders.

**Impact of transformative change in male dominated chiefly system:** From program data<sup>8</sup>, WARA reports, that it has been strategically working with ‘Are’Are House of Chiefs, the traditional Governance system, to increase the participation of women and youth in the traditional governance system. IWDA had supported previous activities from 2017-2018 which enabled women leaders to sit in the House of Chiefs. Having achieved this change, WARA further collaborated with SPC to stage a land summit attended by 300 people to influence the chiefs of ‘Are’Are to not only strengthen the chiefly structure, and make wise resource management decisions to improve the livelihoods of ‘Are’Are people but also to further increase the participation of women and youths at all levels of decision-making in the traditional governance structure of AreAre. While PPAC funded the summit activities, IWDA funded core costs such as staffing. This is transformative in that the male dominated traditional chiefly system is being changed through embedding women and youth. WARA and IWDA support have enabled this significant development.

This was corroborated in a KII source. “*WARA has impacted the Council of Chiefs, who want to work closely with WARA and include women. The Council represents 120 tribal lands, 6 House of Chiefs and between 15,000-20,000 population.*” [President, West AreAre Arahanemane Council of Chiefs]

**Finding 1.3:** There was consistent evidence from program reports that Young WARA have significantly impacted WARA’s organisational development. Young WARA are now an integral part of the office team and KIIs and FGDs provided evidence of the impact this change made on the management and administration of WARA office and program delivery.

**Significant impact of young WARA leadership on organisational change:** From program data<sup>9</sup> (confirmed during FGDs) it was reported that at the beginning of 2020, WARA leadership team recruited three young WARAs to help out as volunteers. These volunteers were fresh graduates with tertiary qualifications in

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<sup>8</sup> WARA Narrative report Jan-June 2021

<sup>9</sup> WARA Narrative Report 1 August – 31 December 2020

business finance and law. The young women volunteers were recruited to alleviate the heavy workloads and impacts of COVID-19 in order to implement project activities within a reasonable time frame. Training was provided to young WARAs to also take on leadership roles in wherever activity they undertook; and to provide valuable work experience. The recruitment of the young WARA volunteers led to more program activities being implemented and completed within a shorter time frame; WARA being well represented in a wider range of meetings and workshops; and improvements to the general management and administration of the Honiara based office.

These new activities served to attract additional younger WARAs to come forward to be involved. Several of the young WARAs have been recruited into fulltime salary positions in the office. IWDA funding support has been an enabler with the salaries of 3 staff - Finance officer, Program Officer, Business development officer and allowances for 2 volunteers.

From Program data<sup>10</sup>: It was reported that Young WARAs participated in the National Women and women's Young Dialogues in September 2020, organised by the Women's Rights Action Movement (WRAM) another IWDA partner and National Women's Dialogue Convenors. This activity was funded by IWDA through WRAM. While no data was available on the percentage of young women's participation, the forum aimed to bring adult and young women from the 21 wards of the Guadalcanal province together to voice out their concerns and issues affecting women's lives in both urban and rural settings.

**Finding 1.4:** There was limited evidence to demonstrate that women with disability either directly benefited or had been engaged directly in WARA program activities. Only one woman with disability based in Honiara was identified by WARA to participate in this evaluation. The evaluation found that WARA does not have a specific database of women with disability either who are members or those in the zone communities. While there were verbal references made during both KIIs and FGDs, to women with disability, no specific arrangement was made to engage with or visit women with disability during the field phase of the evaluation. Information shared in a KII confirmed that there were 3-4 women with disability in that particular Zone area who were being cared for by family members: *"...WARA should help people with disability with sanitation, showers, toilet and follow up service. At the moment, there is nothing for women with disability. There is no concern for them, and no special care given to them."* (Zone 12 Member)

**Outcome 2: Women and young women in the Solomon Islands, including women with disability, have increased access to and control of money and strengthened livelihoods.**

**Finding 2.1** There was evidence from several sources (literature, KIIs and FGDs) that women and young women have improved access to and control of money and strengthened livelihoods. There was consistent evidence that women had improved access to financial resources. Women also reported increased participation in income generating activities, access to productive resources and livelihood diversification which also helps them with saving.

Through the KIIs and FGDs, women reported that the WARA savings scheme gave them access to finance which they did not have previously.

*"I was secretly saving and did not tell my husband. That is how I control money because he smokes and always uses any money for that. Only the money counter and I knew about my savings. Later, my husband and I received a*

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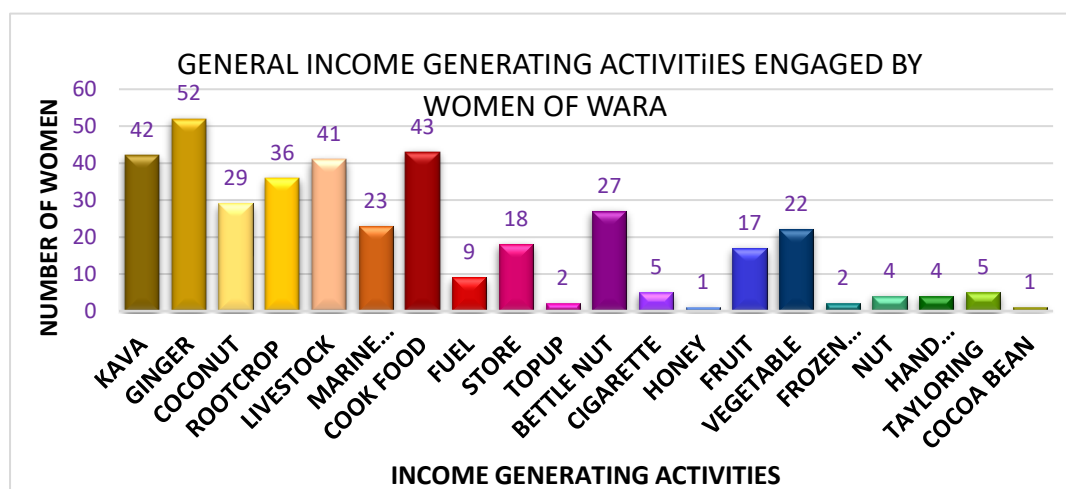
<sup>10</sup> WARA Narrative report 1 Aug-31 Dec 2020

notice of fees arrears from our son’s school for \$600. It was only then when I arranged to withdraw my savings that I told my husband about my savings. This made him realise that I was good at controlling money.” [female member-52 years]

**Case study:** One of the members is 29 years. She joined WARA 6 years ago when she got married. She heard about the WARA saving scheme from her mother-in-law and felt it was suited to her situation. She attended the financial literacy and business development trainings offered by WARA and undertook various income generating activities – selling solar, ice blocks, canteen, piggery etc. Doing all the training, she said she learned about controlling money, budgeting, and saving and planning. *“I have come to learn not to depend on my husband. When a woman has savings, she does not depend on her husband. My husband used to query my use of funds, but I told him we should have our own share and decide for ourselves. My own family come to me as they know I am good with controlling money. The best thing is that I can afford to pay for my son’s education.”*

The graph 1 below<sup>11</sup> shows the diverse range of income generating activities and livelihood diversification from which savings are derived.

**Graph 1: the diverse range of income generating activities and livelihood diversification.**



**Case study:** <sup>12</sup> A zone treasurer reported being involved in a diverse number of incomes generating activities. She had reached grade 6 and continued her education through Rural Training Centre. Despite the challenges faced, she was determined to build a family home. *“Living in the rural area is exceedingly difficult we must look for ways to earn an income to support our children’s education and family projects. My goal in applying for this loan is to complete our permanent house in the village”* She took a loan from the Revolving Fund to sell petrol as well as use it to cut timber for her family house. She also engages in mobile marketing of Sol Bako, selling betel nut, other market garden produce, seashells, pineapple, potato, taro, and pudding at log

<sup>11</sup> Source: WARA Narrative Report July 2021 -June 2022

<sup>12</sup> One of the 26 stories collated by WARA for publication

pod and sometimes on Sundays after church services. The income earned helps them to buy food, and then repay the loan money and purchase materials for the house she is building. She plans that once the house is completed, she will use it as a family home and rest house for guests.

**Finding 2.2:** There was limited evidence on women with disability having increased access to and control of money and strengthened Livelihoods. From KIIs, people with disabilities (PWDs) are generally neither valued nor accepted in the community “*Yu stap no moa*” (Just stay at home) was the expression used to keep PWD hidden away from the public eye. In two of the Zones visited, two of the WARA members were mothers of adult daughters with a disability. They provided care to their daughters and confirmed the need for WARA support. There was only one woman with disability, identified by WARA who participated in the evaluation, but her story below demonstrates significant change from WARA training and assistance<sup>13</sup>.

**Case study:** 42-year-old female member who identifies as PWD offers a Significant Change Story<sup>14</sup>. As an active member of WARA she had undergone skills training on crafting that enhanced her knowledge on crafts, as well as business trainings which she said enabled her to turn what she knew into something that could also help her financially. She now owns a business specialised in dyeing, kitchen crafts and pot plants, which is focused on wedding, birthdays, events management, wreath, and floral arrangements. She is very passionate about doing crafts and flower arrangements. Challenged by the condition of cerebral palsy resulting from meningitis when she was 6 years, she developed this physical disability and became a grade 5 dropout. Supported by her family she was motivated to engage with WARA training and to grasp the business opportunities. She was not discouraged by her disability. Her business attracts many customers earning up to SBD 10,000 for an event. This has led her to become involved in advocating for women with disability and she is now the disability representative on the WARA Governance Committee.

From program reports, WARA has conducted a number of disability awareness activities. In 2021, People with Disability Solomon Islands (PWDSI) & WRAM were engaged to raise disability awareness. In 2022 an Access Audit was conducted at the previous WARA office (YWCA). The Governance Committee has a representative of a person with disability and the 2023 AGM included a session on awareness raising on disability. WARA confirms that there are members who have special needs and identify as PWD who are invited to workshops and trainings, but no specific activities are targeted at this group.

The table 3 below<sup>15</sup> showed the total number of women and girls with disability who are registered as members of WARA savings group as 7. This is about 0.6% of the of registered members.<sup>16</sup> The data was limited in that it does not segregate women from girls and no detailed information about the nature of their disability.

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<sup>13</sup> Permission obtained

<sup>14</sup> Source KII and collection of stories by WARA awaiting publication

<sup>15</sup> Source: WARA Narrative report Aug-Dec 2020

<sup>16</sup> The WARA July-December 2021 records the total number of members as 1226 (this data is not provided for later years)

**Table 3: the number of women and girls with disability who are registered as members of WARA savings group.**

Zone	Women and girls with disability
1	1
2	1
3	1
4	1
5	0
6	0
7	0
8	2
9	0
10	0
11	1
12	0
13	0
Total	7

The evaluation found this to be the area of least attention and recommends an active partnership with PWDSI to identify PWD and activities that respond to the needs of WARA Women with Disability and those in their families and communities.

**Outcome 3: Rural communities in the Solomon Islands, especially women and girls, have increased resilience to adapt and respond to climate change impacts and disasters.**

**Finding 3.1:** There was some evidence that women and girls have enhanced resilience to climate change impacts and disasters. This evidence was nuanced as this was a relatively new area of focus for WARA arising from concerns raised by rural WARA members on the impact of rising sea levels and the impact of changing weather patterns. The inclusion of women representatives in the newly established Disaster Risk Management Committees in three zones (6, 5 and 3), two of which were visited, increases women’s resilience as their voice was heard and their knowledge and understanding of climate change also increased thus enabling them to consider relevant adaptation approaches.

From program data<sup>17</sup>, it was reported that in addition to the COVID-19, the impacts and effects of climate change on people’s lives are also at its peak in West ‘Are’Are. High sea level rise had wiped away some small Islands along the coast and removing important crops such as swamp taro, coconut trees and other essential marine foods which people depend on for survival.

From the FGD, women shared the concerns about their villages which are located on the coast of West ‘Are’Are, *“We are directly affected by rising sea levels and changing weather patterns. When there is severe rain, this affects our food supply as we rely on our gardens and the sea for food supply...”*

From program data, WARA has established Disaster Risk Management Committees (DRMC) in three communities – Zones 6, 5 and 3- deemed to be at high risk, to address sea level rise, raise awareness on impacts of climate change and manage community expectations of readily available government and other assistance, and to develop forward planning starting with what adaptation measures communities can engage themselves in. Two of the Women representatives of the DRMC in Pipisu - Zone 6, shared their initiative to respond to rising level (photo 1) resulting in the sea now coming into the village at high

<sup>17</sup> WARA Narrative report July 2021-June 2022

tide, WARA members have mobilised resources to build two flush toilet facilities and water tanks for use by the community as a whole especially for community events in the village during the daytime as part of the response and adaptation to rising sea level and environmental concerns.

**Photo1: Example of tidal rise in remote West 'Are'Are**



**Case study:** An example of adaptation was shared by the DRMC female representative who explained *“Normally there is no flush toilet, and we use shelter directly over the sea extending from land for toilets. With rising sea levels, this is a safety concern, and we see what goes out to see washes back right into the village. We have come to learn about hygiene and environmental concerns and so we women are not waiting for the men, we have mobilised with other women from our village who live in Honiara to support us with funding to make this change.”*

Program data confirms that WARA staff helped establish the DRMC and ensured the inclusion of female, youth, and disability representatives. In the KIIs, the Committee chair, a community leader shared that *“we have been discussing evacuation plans and routes and our concern is how to rescue the most vulnerable – pregnant women, elderly and people with disability and we are trying to raise awareness on the impacts of climate change.”*

With the additional resources funded under the Oxfam partnership, WARA plans to expand its focus in this area and support this program outcome. WARA plans to place more emphasis on activities that directly strengthen women’s resilience and adaptation particularly related to climate resilient infrastructure, climate resilient water services that ensure high quality drinking water. Given that market gardening is a key source of income for women, a focus on climate smart agriculture will be important focus for WARA moving forward.

**Outcome 4: WARA is strengthened to serve its membership and provide models and support to benefit other Indigenous women’s groups in the Solomon Islands.**

**Finding 4.1:** The greatest area of significant change has been the strengthening of WARA's organisational capacity evidenced in the steady implementation of its Succession Plan. Over time, WARA has grown in number and size, increasing its network, stakeholders, and donor partners. This required expansion in the number of its Honiara office-based personnel.

Due to time constraints, it was not possible to either visit or interview other network stakeholders but data from program reports confirm that WARA continues to replicate its model in the establishment of savings groups in other provinces.

On 1 July 2021, staff signed working contracts with WARA and so effective 1 January 2022, for the first time, WARA office was fully staffed with the compliment of 7 salaried staff. This was a significant change from having volunteer staff on allowances. Following restructure, the role of Executive Director was established and filled by Janet Fangata, the former project/program Manager. Former Women's Economic Empowerment (WEE) officer was appointed to the position of Project/Program Manager. The other full-time salaried positions have been filled by Young WARA volunteer recruits – Finance Admin officer, Business Development Officer, Research, Legal and Climate Change Officer, Women's Economic Empowerment Officer and Monitoring Evaluation and Learning Officer. IWDA funds three of the eight positions -namely, Project/program Manager, Business Development Officer, and the Finance Admin officer.

In addition to the full complement of salaried staff, other organisational strengthening activities within WARA have included on-going in-house staff training, development of organisational policies and a MEL Framework mainly supported by IWDA. WARA technical advisers and external consultants have run in-house training for staff and volunteers on topics such as financial literacy, revolving loan fund, project management. These training equipped staff and volunteers with knowledge and skills to run workshops and activities with rural WARA. The field evaluator was able to observe a IWDA funded in-house capacity building training session on project management run by an external consultant trainer which provided the opportunity for sharing and discussion of an area where most had limited experience. Staff were given a real-life situation and developed project plans. Most staff shared that they had not managed projects and benefited from the application of the workshop lessons.

With staff expansion, WARA was able to move to a new office equipped with necessary furniture and equipment. Oxfam and IWDA are jointly supporting the WARA Honiara based office operations and its overhead costs.

Program data confirm organisational changes have delivered improvements in program implementation especially where deferred activities are being restarted. Program reports also confirm that the additional staff have increased implementation capacity particularly post covid when the office had to close. It was reported that *“with the restructuring of office roles, responsibilities and duties are more evenly spread amongst the staff, making work more manageable and effective. The challenge for the staff is delivering quality outcomes to meet expectations in a timely manner.”*

Program data for January-June 2022 when the full staff compliment came into effect, shows an expanded range of activities including data collection, capacity building of savings club leaders to manage and administer the savings and loan scheme effectively, and documenting of stories of individuals who have established their small business activities. A draft publication of 26 WARA women's stories was shared with the evaluation team, who felt this was an excellent vehicle with which to evidence activities, impact and perhaps offer a preliminary cost benefit analysis or investment return paper. This could explore the investment return in terms of community impact and how WARA activities have provided opportunities for economic growth for both rural communities and individuals.

WARA staff were able to reach out to Savings groups in other provinces -Vaizoma Savings group in South Vella, Western Province, Tulagi Vaivine Women's Savings group in Central Islands province with plans to assist a Conservation Women's group in East AreAre, Malaita Province to establish their Savings group for the first time.

The evaluation was not able to assess quality or effectiveness of rural WARA, but a recurring comment noted during the KIIs with zone leaders, was a perceived inequity in that the WARA office was getting better resourced with fulltime staff based in Honiara and volunteers bring paid allowances. This was echoed in a zone leader KII *"We are doing all the work providing reports, organising meetings, collecting savings, managing the loans. Shouldn't we also be paid volunteer allowances?"*

WARA has also reviewed its constitution as recommended in the Succession Plan<sup>18</sup>. It was reported in the Plan that *"it is necessary and important to conduct the review, as WARA is expanding and growing, to guide its internal and external operations"* The revised WARA Constitution has been endorsed by the rural members at the WARA AGM, but it has yet to be finalised. The revised constitution spells further change in the governance and management roles and functions which have yet to be fully implemented.

### **SUCSESSES AND ENABLING FACTORS.**

**Economic independence:** There was evidence (KIIs and FGDs) that the savings scheme, loans scheme and Haiamasaha fund have demonstrably improved women's access to financial resources. Women reported increased participation in income-generating activities and livelihood diversification, gaining economic independence to make financial decisions such as funding higher education for their children without reliance on their husbands or member of parliament. The quarterly savings collection training conducted by WARA staff was seen as a critical enabler.

**Increased Confidence and Self-worth:** There was evidence (KIIs and FGDs) of women reporting increase in confidence and self-worth directly attributed to being a member of WARA, benefiting from workshops, trainings, and attending the Annual General Meetings (AGM). These activities have stimulated participation, developed friendships and bonding with each other.

**Higher Education for Children:** Almost all the rural WARA members reported (KIIs and FGDs) receiving limited or no formal education. However, through their regular savings with WARA and contributions to the Haiamasaha Fund, their children are able to attain improved education outcomes including university graduates. An enabling factor is the 30% fee top up from Haiamasaha Fund for education support which commenced in July 2021. A total of 34 students have had their education supported between July 2021-June 2023.<sup>19</sup>

**Strengthened Organisational capacity:** It was observed that WARA's organisational capacity has been strengthened with the implementation of a governance and management structure, revision of its constitution, development of policies, recruitment of eight full-time staff and move to a new furnished office. Attributable enabling factors include the implementation of the 2021 Succession plan, additional funding from the new Oxfam partnership, for the full salaried staff positions and co-financing of program activities; enhanced reporting/monitoring, weekly follow up and capacity building by IWDA.

**Young WARA Leadership Pipeline:** WARA introduced a volunteer scheme which has successfully recruited young women (including graduates) in the WARA office. The volunteer scheme has served as a pipeline for recruitment of additional fulltime staff and provides work experience for young graduates

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<sup>18</sup> Succession Plan 2020

<sup>19</sup> Seven students received support July 21-June 22: 19 students (July-Dec 2022) and eight students (Jan-June 2023)



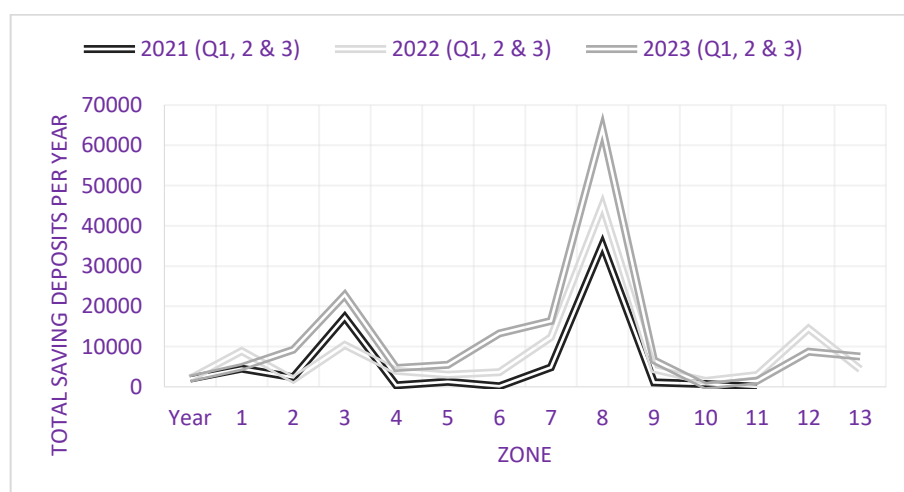
while they seek employment with other organisations. The provision of volunteer allowances by IWDA for some of the volunteers was recognised as an enabling factor.

**Staff leadership:** A recurring concern expressed in the last evaluation and also during both KIIs and FGDs in this evaluation was the belief that WARA will not survive without Dr. Alice. However, program data and targeted discussions with WARA suggest otherwise. In October 2021<sup>20</sup>, WARA staff team, including a volunteer, established a new savings group in Makira Ulawa Province – the first time a savings club has been established without Dr. Alice. Staff and volunteers organised and ran the 2023 AGM, which was the annual flagship event attended by zone representatives without either Dr Alice or Janet. Further work needs to be done to implement the succession plan and empower the new leadership team.

**Continued Savings by WARA zones:** Despite the significant challenges faced during and post Covid, limited infrastructure and persistent market barriers, many rural WARA members have continued their savings. Data provided by the WEE officer show a positive trend across a number of rural zones. This ongoing success is due to the lack of a penalty even when members were inactive. Savings are deposited as a group with ANZ, not as individual accounts. A significant motivating factor shared by several KIIs and FGDs was the eligibility for Haiamasiha fund 30% top up for university fees which was dependent on maintaining a good savings record.

Graph 2 (below) shows the saving deposit trends for 2021, 2022 & 2023, evidencing the fluctuation but consistent saving pattern by the Zones. Of the 4 Zones visited, Zones 12 and 3 are high savers, while Zones 10 and 6 are low savers. The difference was in leadership and level of activity in the zone. It was observed that the leaders of zones 12 and 3 are more active. In zone 12, members of the community live closer to each other and there was a wharf where women are able to sell food on the boats that berth at the wharf. At the time of the evaluation visit, a footpath was being constructed from one end of the village to the other in zone 12 with community members cooperating. There suggests a greater sense of social cohesion. In the KIIs for zone 12 the Vice President expressed a determination by their zone to win the 2023 Award for the highest saving group (usually worn by zone 3). Zone 3 was led by a highly active and dedicated Committee. In another KII, one of the money counters confirmed that they regularly visit the different areas within the zone where members live to proactively collect their savings.

**Graph 2: saving deposit trends for 2021, 2022 & 2023.**



<sup>20</sup> WARA Narrative report July-Dec 2021

## KEY CHALLENGES, BARRIERS, AND RISKS

The 2021 succession plan stated that WARA was facing **three main challenges: generational change, revitalisation, and sustainability (self-reliance)**. This evaluation confirms these key challenges still persist and were raised during KIIs and FGDs. The major challenge evidenced in this evaluation is an urgency to address the fact that WARA is an aging organisation. Despite the succession plan the founder and other pioneers, can often be seen in leadership positions both at the national and zone level. This has become a barrier to the active engagement of young women especially at the rural zone level and presents the risk that the WARA may not be able to be sustained beyond the life of the pioneers.

**Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic:** The pandemic resulted in a halt to all project activities from February until August 2020<sup>21</sup> and post COVID-19 WARA experienced a prolonged restart. Staff, volunteers, and Technical Assistants also fell ill and, after recovery, had to work from home. During COVID-19, WARA lost one of its founding members and also a member of the Advisory Committee. - Josephine Teakeni which deeply affected WARA staff, who sorely missed her presence. This resulted in WARA being unable to implement planned activities for almost a year, leading to underspending in ANCP funding assistance from IWDA. Underspends were carried over into the 2021 financial year. The WARA staff ensured that funds and support were dispersed to officers for survival during that difficult time. However, there was limited communication across WARA and rural WARA during the lockdown period, and during the KIIs and FGDs, many members expressed the concern and frustration experienced at that time.

For rural WARA, program data show that *“shortly after the COVID-19, members expressed that it was too difficult to save money because the cash flow in the rural area was extremely low. But as situations gradually came back, women started to pick up again, selling their garden products and marine foods to earn and save.”*<sup>22</sup>

**Attracting young women members and preparing future WARA leaders:** As highlighted in the previous two evaluations and the Succession Plan, WARA is an aging organisation, potentially posing a risk to continuity. This was again confirmed in the visits to the four Zones. Most of the women who attended the meetings and participated in the FGDs are well over 35 years old, with the majority being pioneer founding members. All rural FGDs expressed concern about the lack of involvement of younger women, with an expressed desire to involve more younger women. While opportunities exist to attract young women members to create a leadership pipeline the older women viewed engaging and attracting younger women as tricky in that younger women are well educated, more financially independent and have different interests from what they perceive WARA to be about. This was confirmed in 2 KIIs with teachers who have accounts with commercial bank accounts. To respond to the different needs of younger women in rural zones, it was proposed in the FGDs that the young WARA staff and volunteers in Honiara, who themselves are from West 'Are'Are, spend more time in the Zones to meet and talk with the young women to assess their needs as this might be more appealing than the older women talking to the younger women as this has not worked to-date.

**Increased competing priorities between multiple donor partners:** WARA has become dependent on donor funding, and while WARA has been successful in securing new partnerships, it also places competing priorities on WARA staff and its program delivery. This was expressed in a several KIIs. *“A key challenge for us is if we are spreading ourselves too thinly with a small budget for each project; if we are serious about what we are doing, we need to reflect on this.”* While WARA has enjoyed a long-term relationship with IWDA, who has been WARA's leading and only donor-related partner, the concern expressed in a KII was that *“Funding support from IWDA is limited, and we are reaching the budget ceiling.”* With the growing demand for WARA's services to its members and expansion of its networks

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<sup>21</sup> WARA Narrative report July 2021-June 2022

<sup>22</sup> WARA Narrative report July-Dec 2022

to other provinces and as expressed in the Succession Plan, *“its ambition to develop rural women in WARA and its network throughout the Solomon Islands has led to a greater need for resources in its Honiara office, making it harder to be sustainable on a volunteer basis.”*<sup>23</sup>

**Separation of powers and strengthen accountability between Governance and Management:** A governance committee has replaced the advisory committee, and the role and accountability of the governance committee was not clearly articulated in the revised constitution<sup>24</sup>. However, from the KIIs and firsthand observations, critical decision making still rest with Dr Alice, the Founder, who is still actively engaged, officially as a technical adviser. The KIIs also revealed a lack of clarity around what decisions should be made by the Governance Committee. For example, should the contract agreements be signed at the governance level, or should they at least be made aware of funding partnerships and contractual obligations?

**Office Management:** As the Succession Plan recommends, the WARA Secretariat has 8 full-time positions led by the Executive Director. From KIIs, the reporting lines, some roles and responsibilities remain unclear e. g. the role of the Human Resource Manager remains unclear to the incumbent and also to other staff. A weekly group staff meeting was observed where updates are shared, but the lack of effective supervision and performance monitoring was noted. From staff KIIs, they are often unsure of their roles and responsibilities. The Executive Director also suffers from ill health which can impact operational performance and program activities especially when there was heavy workload. This affects office presence, supervision, and management of staff, performance, and staff motivation to progress tasks. The WARA secretariat need to operate as a staff management team with clear management arrangements was in place when the Executive Director is absent.

**Risk and sustainability:** This evaluation has identified a number of risks that require action so as to minimise any threat to WARA’s sustainability. Some risks are identified in the WARA funding proposals, and other risks discussed extensively in the succession plan. However, WARA needs to consider risk mitigation in setting its next strategic direction.

The key risks that WARA face are leadership succession, lack of sustained funding, ill health affecting key staff members and delays in implementation e. g. caused by pandemic or social unrest, political instability. Potential mitigation measures included widening of the candidate pool for the Governance Committee, the attracting of additional potential funders such as Oxfam and the New Zealand Aid, implementing of training and coaching to up-skill participants as well as developing a Youth Engagement Strategy (to attract younger participants) as well as prioritising enabling aspects of the plan to ensure implementation. However, at the time of this evaluation, only the risk to funding has partially been addressed, whilst attracting suitable candidates and the up skilling of staff and members, remain a barrier to the implementation of the Succession Plan.

It was also observed that majority of the strategic work continued to remain under the mandate of the founder. No evidence was seen so suggest planning or preparation for this transition had begun. This poses a risk for the sustainability of WARA, particularly with the ongoing health challenges of Dr Alice as well as the Executive Director. There is potential for WARA to transition and re-strategise its priorities, which may require hard decisions to be made with hard deadlines instituted.

**Technological repairs and maintenance:** Technological introductions like solar and freezers require ongoing maintenance and expertise. These were not working in all the Zones visited and have become *“white elephants.”* For such installations, an ongoing service contract with a solar company with local

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<sup>23</sup> Pg. 5 Succession Plan

<sup>24</sup> WARA Constitution final draft (2023)

training/capacity building is needed. Interestingly, the Fiji Ministry of Women built a barefoot college to train village women to manage/maintain village-based solar installations.

**Difficult market conditions:** Limited cash flow, especially since logging has ceased, has resulted in limited ability to save, often resulting in fluctuations in savings and demotivation amongst the women. Lack of access to markets<sup>25</sup>, and infrastructure and restricted or costly transportation costs have also resulted in demotivation and limited savings. Poor or lack of internet connectivity also limits communication and or making contact. A reported 56% of WARA members do not use phones<sup>26</sup>. There was anecdotal evidence of limited or illiteracy amongst the interviewed members. These challenges have resulted in inactivity between WARA office visits, leadership challenges, competing priorities and geographical spread, and Zone inactivity.

**Zone Leadership and governance:** The evaluation observed and heard from KIIs that there was zone inactivity between WARA office visits. Members would turn up for workshops but remain inactive until the next workshop. Meetings are infrequent, if they are held at all. Founding members continue to hold Zone leadership roles, but due to age, they are slowing down and are not actively recruiting or engaging younger women. In most cases, there was confusion about roles and responsibilities. WARA has recently produced a manual<sup>27</sup> to be used for leadership and governance training. There was expressed expectation by rural WARA leaders that there will be offices in rural WARA. This expectation was confirmed by the Executive Director who stated that there have been discussions about this previously in relation to the community hall built in zone 2 and the potential to attach an office to the market house in zone 1. The expansion of the WARA Honiara office increase of paid staff and volunteers with allowances has led to rural WARA executives asking whether they should be remunerated for their volunteer work. As one of the Zone leaders expressed, *“if not for us running around, getting information to Honiara, organising meetings, conducting activities, the Honiara office would not be able to do its work. Shouldn’t we also be receiving allowances?”*

While such expectations must be managed carefully, it reflects that rural WARA was actively watching the expansion of the Honiara office expansion of staff and volunteers and wondering why they are not getting the same attention and being valued equally for their voluntary contribution. This tension of a growing Honiara office and lack of development of rural WARA needs to be recognised and addressed.

**Administration of Revolving Loan Fund:** The revolving fund scheme was launched in 2004 to financially support WARA members in starting small income-generating activities. The 2019 audit<sup>28</sup> identified key challenges, including slowness of loan repayment, management, and administration of the scheme, recording and documentation and overall commitment and participation. This evaluation found that in three of the four Zones visited (75%), the scheme was suspended due to non-repayments of funds. This situation was confirmed in the project report<sup>29</sup>, which reveals that for the period July 2022-December 2023, only six of the thirteen Zones (46%) were able to issue loans, and between January-June 2023, only 4 out of 13 Zones (30%) were able to issue loans due to non-repayment of loans. The evaluation also found that Zone members and even executives were not well versed with the recording system used for administration and general management of the scheme due to low literacy levels. The other challenge expressed was that for those who take out a loan of, say SBD 500, it was difficult to make a profit with the high cost of goods, telecom top up and other unplanned family needs or traditional obligations. Refresher training and involvement of younger educated women who can assist with proper recording are needed.

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<sup>25</sup> Market analysis 2020, 2023

<sup>26</sup> Digital Study

<sup>27</sup> Basic leadership and governance skills for WARA, Pollard, A. 2024

<sup>28</sup> Revolving Loan Fund Audit Report November 2019

<sup>29</sup> January-June 2023 Narrative report

**Other Challenges:** While WARA promotes self-reliance, the Member of Parliament for West 'Are'Are gives handouts such as tanks, roofing irons, boats, and school fees as part of clientele politics, which has become rampant in the Solomon Islands political elections. When WARA members have voted for a female candidate of their choice, the sitting MP holds that against WARA and shuns away from any support to or working with WARA. For Zone 10, it was shared during the FGD that there has been tension and division amongst Zone members based on political affiliation and voting.

**Extent to which has the Program has impacted the lives of West 'Are'Are women in empowering and creating pathways to leadership due to the savings club and revolving loan and Haiamasiha (WARA Cares) funds:** Stakeholders confirm that WARA was highly respected, well established, and well recognised with the Central Bank of Solomon Islands (CBSI) legal mandate. As stated in a KII, *“the whole country knows about WARA’s saving scheme and demand to scale up and replicate the successful WARA model. WARA Savings scheme is the only one that is working, because they continue to manage it, helping improve women’s illiteracy levels and they also offer educational scholarships, maintain tradition. These gives WARA members the confidence that someone is looking after them. Other schemes not as effective having all sorts of rules, late fees (this was also confirmed by another KII) One of the key factors is that Alice commands their respect.”*

There was evidence (from KIIs and FGDs) that the savings scheme, revolving loan, and Haiamasiha Funds have empowered women to be economically independent, confident, and recognised as leaders. There was consistent and robust evidence that these schemes have improved women’s access to finance, increased participation in income-generating activities and diversified livelihoods. The Financial Literacy and business training provided by WARA has helped women learn to control money, build savings, and run small-scale businesses such as honey, canteen, market garden, piggery, sale of seafood, decorations for events, sale of -baking, betelnut, and petrol. The evaluation found these WARA schemes have brought out women’s leadership qualities such as self-confidence, public speaking, agency, assertiveness and even boldness to criticise men openly, as evidenced by the following statements.

*“WARA has built us up made me believe in myself. I am confident and not afraid to speak up, even to tell my husband and other men when they are not doing the right thing.” [WARA leader]*

*“WARA women have provided strong leadership in families, Zone leadership, committees, churches, community, schools.” [Male community leader]*

*“I have been doing the recording for savings and loans to support to my wife’s leadership as she did not have any education at all... But now, she is very smart and able to do these things and be a strong leader.” [husband of a Zone leader]*

*“I was determined to save in order to have my children educated as I was not well educated, and I have been able to buy timber to build our house.” [female member]*

*“The Haiamasiha Fund has helped me pay for my son’s university education at SINU. Otherwise, he cannot continue.” [female member]*

**Partnership between IWDA and WARA; IWDA's support to WARA supported the program outcomes and contributed to WARA's organisational development:** For eight years, IWDA supported WARA's primary office operations in Honiara, including its overhead costs and core activities. WARA has described it as a great partnership. Since the last evaluation, the organisation was "strongly footed." There is now 8 full-time positions of Executive Director, Finance, Project Officer, Human resources, Women's Economic Empowerment, and Business Development Officer. IWDA is funding 3 positions of Human Resources, Finance and WEE. IWDA has supported WARA's move to a new office to accommodate all the staff, provide more space, and acquire and install new equipment.

*"Strong relationship with IWDA – weekly meetings, minutes provided, well informed. But funding support from IWDA is limited, we are reaching budget ceiling."*

Statements made included:

*"Strong, open, honest, mutual respect."*

*"Very happy with IWDA contribution to WARA – 'strongly footed'."*

*"IWDA deals with donor reporting and management."*

*"IWDA has made intensive investment in staff capacity building – skills, knowledge, confidence & Institutional strengthening – policies."*

*"One to one Mentoring, coaching support; team building; weekly chats/meetings; trouble shooting, forward planning; resource mobilisation."*

*"Regular visits, technical support, inhouse training, partnership review"*

*"Long term solid relationship and visibility has enabled WARA to secure other funding partnerships – SB, Oxfam, Irish Aid, PPAC."*

*"Funding for 3 full-time staff has attracted graduates."*

*"Support has led to Improvements in reporting quality and timeliness (critical for donor confidence)."*

*"Great improvement in financial reporting and management."*

Some concern was expressed that IWDA has other partners and maybe providing less support to WARA. A KII made reference to IWDA quarterly update, where it did not feature WARA but WRAM. Questions asked were: was GBV the priority now? We have noted that IWDA strategic plan has a shift to climate change.

Core funding for full-time salaried staff was a result of the ongoing IWDA support and this long-term relationship with IWDA was catalytic to securing the new partnership between Oxfam and WARA in that IWDA had been a long-term partner demonstrating confidence in WARA. IWDA was funding three of the positions – Finance Admin officer, Program/Project Manager and Business Development Officer, while Oxfam was funding the Executive Director, Research, Legal and Climate Change Officer, Women's Economic Empowerment Officer and Monitoring Evaluation and Learning Officer.

From the KIIs, IWDA confirmed that it was not planning to end its relationship with WARA. Currently, funding support was on an annual basis due to the grant requirements of ANCP which WARA was funded under.

**Impact of WARA’s support for young women leaders in terms of enabling young women’s leadership within the organisation and more broadly and the impact of WARA’s organisational capacity and sustainability:** WARA has supported young women from West ‘Are’Are who engage as volunteers in the WARA office and with program activities. In the past year, there has been active recruitment of 10 young graduates – 5 have found jobs and 5 are continuing as volunteers. The young women are referred to as “Young WARA” and considered as WARA’s leadership pipeline.

At the sensemaking workshop the concept of “bloodline” – being from West ‘Are’Are and sharing common ancestry and “lifeline” – breathing new life into WARA were also discussed. While there was no written concept or developed program for ‘Young WARA,’ the intention as explained <sup>30</sup>. Their involvement in the WARA office was to give them work experience / exposure and help the young women graduates find paid employment. A stakeholder noted that WARA is the only organisation that is actively involving young women in succession planning.

In terms of enabling young women leadership within the organisation and impact on organisational capacity and sustainability, several young WARA have become full-time salaried staff. They were previously engaged as volunteers and have developed commitment, passion, and loyalty to WARA and its objectives. As WARA staff, the young women are not yet in decision-making roles but in conducting their roles, they exercise leadership. Examples are -representing the organisation externally, engaging with donors, running workshops with rural WARA. The most significant impact was when neither the Founder nor the Executive Director were available to lead the July 2023 AGM, this was run and led by the young women. The AGM included five high school students as part of a leadership programme where they participated in speech contest, poem writing and debates.

Five young women who were recruited as volunteers have since found paid employment in other organisations. While this may not directly contribute to WARA’s sustainability, it confirms the impact of support that WARA provides these young women

At the time of the field visit, there were currently 5 young WARA volunteers who are paid a daily allowance similar to a work attachment arrangement. From the FGD with this group, it was reported that they have learned a lot from working with WARA, they have broadened their knowledge base (both of WARA and development work), increased confidence, professionally developed, gained valuable work experience, increased confidence in public speaking and are motivated to give back to the community. However, the initial experience of the volunteers was fragmented and unstructured approach. The volunteers arrive to work not knowing what they were to do that day and they are assigned different tasks each day. The temporary nature of the attachment led to anxiety and uncertainty amongst the volunteers. WARA leadership acknowledge that the recruitment of young women needs to be reviewed and organised more effectively and be more intentional and purposeful activities, structured learning, supervision of young WARA for leadership within WARA to further support its sustainability.

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<sup>30</sup> KII, WARA leadership

## CONCLUSION

The last evaluation held in 2019 highlighted the need for WARA to meet the needs of a growing organisation and address succession planning given the ageing nature of the organisation. It encouraged nurturing of younger women leaders, strengthening of zone governance and management, address organisational and financial sustainability and the development of a strategic plan. These recommendations are ongoing and echoed in this evaluation.

This evaluation concludes that WARA has significantly strengthened its institutional capacity with IWDA's support and new partnerships, and has substantially impacted women's economic empowerment and leadership development through the Savings Scheme, Revolving Loans Scheme, and Haiamasiha Fund while positioning itself as a model for other Indigenous women's groups. However, significant concerns remain regarding its financial sustainability, the need for a new leadership structure and an organisational reset in line with its revised constitution.

WARA continues to enjoy a strong partnership with IWDA, leading to increased organisational capacity. WARA funds three of the seven full-time staff members in the WARA office. At the same time, IWDA has expanded its partnership with other organisations in the Solomon Islands, and WARA has expressed its concern that IWDA funding to WARA might have reached its ceiling, which could lead to a shift in focus by IWDA. In response, IWDA has confirmed that there are no plans to end its relationship with WARA.

**Strengthened Governance and Management:** The Governance and Management roles and responsibilities need to be strengthened in line with the revised constitution, which sets the duties and accountabilities of the Governance Committee, the Management Team under the leadership of the Executive Director, phasing out of the Technical Advisor roles and creation of a Patron role for Dr Alice as recommended in the Succession Plan.

**Revitalisation of rural zones:** While the WARA office has been strengthened, rural Zones need more consistent engagement to remain active and vibrant. There was an expressed need<sup>31</sup> for clarification and a shared understanding of the positions and roles of Zone Executive members.

While the WARA office has been strengthened, rural WARA needs further attention. All the 4 Zones visited confirmed they have been inactive without regular meetings. The women come together when the WARA office visits or when an AGM or workshop was delivered.

*“Rural Zone is the heart of WARA, when we talk WARA, we talk rural WARA. They need to be well informed, well resourced, vibrant. They still need the office as it is important to drive the Zones.” [Founder]*

**Leadership pipeline:** To deliver the leadership pipeline more sustainably, young WARA must be engaged directly in developing the next-generation leadership plan and to work with rural WARA.

**Women with disability:** WARA recognises they can do more to ensure members and stakeholders with a disability have the necessary access to their services and trainings and is planning to develop a disability inclusion policy and action plan, but it does not have a database of members or women with disability in the zone communities. This would be an important starting point. Collecting data on disability is a vital step in understanding the situation of women with disability more clearly. Noting that the Solomon Islands government now has a policy<sup>32</sup> and WARA could be a stakeholder and could support

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<sup>31</sup> From KIIs, FGDs and narrative reports

<sup>32</sup> <https://solomons.gov.sb/national-disability-development-policy-2022-2031-rehabilitation-strategic-plan-2022-2031-successfully-launched/>



the implementation of the National Disability Development Policy 2022-2031 by developing its organisational strategy and action plan. The CEO of PWDSI has proposed that there be more intense awareness and understanding of preconditions in disability inclusion and data collection jointly conducted by WARA and PWDSI regarding awareness on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). This was supported by the disability member of the Governance Committee, who also proposed training on the Washington Group Short Set of Questions<sup>33</sup> and conducting an access audit (toilet too high, door too narrow), training in life skills, and awareness of CRPD. PWDSI also confirmed that it could provide finance and training to WARA for small income-generating projects.

**Patron role for Founder:** Although a succession plan is in place, an explicit withdrawal plan needs to be openly discussed and agreed to regarding the WARA founder Dr Alice. She wishes to step back into a support/consultative role rather than continue in her current leadership/operational role.

*“We should work on a slow phase out for me by the end of 2024. I should not receive all emails and not come into the office. I can help from a distance.”*

[Founder]

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<sup>33</sup> Comprises six questions that explore functional abilities including seeing, hearing, walking understanding, self-care and communicating.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1. Strengthen WARA Governance and Management:** Clearly delineate the roles and responsibilities of those involved in governance and management of WARA and implement succession planning by phasing out the founder's central role and appoint her as a patron by the end of 2024.
- 2. Enhance Rural Operations:** Focus on revitalising regular meetings and increase activity levels in the rural Zones, and ensure they remain the beating heart of WARA. Building climate change resilience maybe a useful new activity to reengage rural zones, attract new partners/ donors, and provide a focus for young women. Appoint a Zone development officer, as recommended by the Succession Plan. Consider allowances for volunteers stationed with rural WARA as applied for those stationed in the Honiara WARA office
- 3. Develop Young Leadership:** Structured the volunteer scheme to help attract young women, this engagement strategy should include training, employment and create a sustainable pipeline of future leaders with links to rural zones.
- 4. Partner with Disability Organizations** to strengthen then inclusion of Women with Disability in WARA program and activities. Partner with PWDSI and engage with Disability Women's Empowerment to collect data, conduct access audit, community awareness, education, design a life skills programme for girls and women with disability in the rural Zones. Develop a Plan of Action with activities that support and focus on the abilities of women with disability.
- 5. Establish a Business Arm:** Conduct a feasibility study to establish a self-sustaining business arm to support WARA's financial independence and long-term sustainability. This could be a social enterprise model.
- 6. Embrace Digital Finance:** Adopt Technology and Implement digital finance solutions to enhance operational efficiency and financial management, ensuring WARA remains at the forefront of technological advancements.

## **ANNEX 1: LIST OF DOCUMENTS REVIEWED**

1. WARA Constitution (March 2004)
2. (Revised) WARA Constitution - Final Draft 2023
3. 2016-2019 Final Evaluation Report (2020)
4. Succession Plan, 2021
5. WARA Strategic Plan\_2021\_2024\_Final Draft
6. IWDA Project Proposal ANC Annual Plan 2019/2020
7. Narrative Report August-December 2020
8. WARA Project Proposal FY2021 – ANC
9. WARA Narrative Report Jan-Jun 2021 (Final Draft)
10. Final Narrative Report July-December 2021 (Interim 6-month report)
11. Full Project Proposal. ANCP 21-22\_WARA\_FINAL
12. Final Narrative Report 1<sup>st</sup> July 2021- the 30th of June 2022
13. Narrative report July-December 2022 (Interim 6-month report)
14. Narrative Report July 2022 – June 2023
15. WARA Jan-June 2023 Narrative Report
16. 2021-26 Oxfam Kotui Programme Overview Country Projects. see p.8-9 for WARA
17. Market Analysis Field Trip summary- Draft Final (October 2020)
18. Revolving Loan Fund\_ Audit Report the 19th of November
19. WARA 22-23 ANCP Proposal Stage 1 draft v5
20. WARA ANCP Proposal 190819
21. WARA ANCP Proposal Format 2023-24
22. WARA Women Business Story. Compile Draft 260324
23. Basic Leadership and Governance Skills Manual\_ Draft March 2023

**ANNEX 2: PARTICIPANT LIST**

**Zone 12 – UHU**

	<u>Name</u>	<u>Female/Male</u>	<u>Age</u>			<u>Role</u>
			<u>25yrs</u>	<u>26-34yrs</u>	<u>35+</u>	
1.	AN	F			x	President -KII
2.	A K	F			x	Vice President -KII
3.	GR	F			x	KII
4.	G W	F			x	Money Counter -KII
5.	B	F			x	Executive member -KII
6.	J W	F			x	Member -KII
7.	R H	F			x	Member -KII
8.	P I	F			x	Member -KII
9.	MP	F			x	Member
10.	D O	F			x	Member
11.	I	F			x	Member
12.	D	F			x	Member
13.	G I	F			x	Member

14.	M R	F			x	Member
15.	P N	M			x	Leader - KII
16.	J N	M			x	Teacher - KII

**Zone 6 - PIPISU**

	<u>Name</u>	<u>Female/Male</u>	<u>Age</u>			<u>Role</u>
			25yrs	26-34yrs	35+	
1.	A R	F			x	President -KII
2.	I A	F			x	Treasurer
3.	G S	F			x	Member
4.	L P	F			x	Member
5.	T H	F			x	Member
6.	A U	F			x	Member
7.	R H	F			x	Member -KII
8.	JO	F	x			Member
9.	J R	F			x	Member
10.	M A	F			x	Member -KII
11.	S W	F			x	Member

12.	R P	F			x	Member -KII
13.	G H	F			x	Member
14.	M S	F			x	Member
15.	S R	F			x	Member
16.	S E	F			x	Member
17.	S S	F			x	Member -KII
18.	H H	F			x	Member
19.	A A	F			x	Member
20.	R A	F			x	Member -KII
21.	J E	F			x	Member - KII
22.	J I	F			x	Member
23	M	M				Chair, Disaster Committee -KII

**Zone 10 - ROHINARI**

	<u>Name</u>	<u>Female/Male</u>	<u>Age</u>			<u>Role</u>	<u>Village</u>
			25yrs	26-34yrs	35+		
1.	AS	F			x	President	Poporo -KII
2.	T H	F			x	Member	Rukahau -KII

3.	P K	F			x	Member	Rutorea
4.	F T	F			x	Member	Rutaorea
5.	M H	F			x	Member	Rutaorea
6.	R W	F			x	Member	Tasipae
7,	V R	F			x	Member	Rutaorea
8.	MM	F			x	Member	Rutaorea -KII
9.	S W	F		x		Member	Rutaorea
10.	MW	F			x	Member	Rutaorea
11.	E K	F			x	Member	Poporo
12.	D	F			x	Member	Rutaorea
13.	J K	F		x		Member	Poporo
14.	Z	F		x		Member	Rutaorea
15.	J M	F			x	Member	Rutaorea -KII
16.	Ch	F		x		Member	Poporo -KII
17.	DO	F		x		Member	Rutaorea
18.	R A	F			x	Member	Huporo -KII
19.	Jr T	F			x		KII
20.	E O	F			x		

21.	CA	F			x	Treasurer	Rutaorea-KII
22.	SL	F			x	Member	Huporo
23.	TC	F			x		
24.	SR	F		x		Just attending	Huporo
25.	JR	F				Just attending	Rutaorea
26.	JH	F				Just attending	Rutaorea
27.	LR	F		x		Member	Rutaorea
28.	PN	F			x	Member	Ruataorea

**Zone 3 - WAISISI**

	<u>Name</u>	<u>Female/Male</u>	<u>Age</u>			<u>Role</u>	<u>Village</u>
			25yrs	26-34yrs	35+		
1.	IM	F			x	President	Kopo -KII
2.	AA	F				Member	Surairo
3.	RM	F				Member	Nahu
4.	B	F			x	Pioneer Member	Kopo
5.	HM	F			x	Money Counter 1	Surairo
6.	LT	F			x	Member	Kopo



7.	H H	F			x	Member	Kopo
8.	G H	F			x	Member	Kopo
9.	J O	F			x	Pioneer Member	Nahu
10.	M G	F			x	Pioneer Member	Kopo
11.	R H	F			x	Pioneer Member	Surairo
12.	J K	F			x	Member	Nahu
13.	B P	F			x	Member	Nahu
14.	M A	F		x		Member	Kopo
15.	C W	F			x	Member	Kop
16.	C S	F			x	Treasurer	Kopo
17.	L W	F		x		Member	Surairo
18.	B H	F			x	Member	Kopo
19.	T Wu	F			x	Member	Waimaamaa
20.	A M	M				Chief -KII	Surairo
21.	Wi A	M			x	Leader - KII	Kopo
22.	RI	M				Leader -KII	Kopo

**ZONE 8 -HONIARA**

1.	Asaneth Toponi	Lio Creek, East Honiara	Originally from Waisisi – Zone 3
2.	Janet Airahui Uitaraha	Mbokonavera 2, Tehamaurina Central Honiara	Originally from Heu Village

**STAKEHOLDERS**

	<b><u>Organisation</u></b>	<b><u>Name</u></b>	Female	Male	<b><u>Role</u></b>
1.	Transparency Solomon Islands	Ruth Liloqula	x		Executive Director
2.	Ministry of Women, Children and Family Affairs	Thompson Araia		x	Women's Economic Empowerment officer/ Trainer
3.	People with Disability, Solomon Islands	Casper Fa'asala		x	Chief Executive Officer
4.	Disability Women's Empowerment Association	Dianne Ma'ahoro	x		Member of the WARA Governance Committee
4.	Women's Right Action Movement	Pionie Boso	x		Program Manager
5.	Stongim Bisnis	Grace Hilly	x		GEDSI Hub Lead
6.	IWDA	Emma Clampett	x		Program Manager (Leadership)
7.	IWDA	Ava Rego	x		Program Coordinator

8,	IWDA	Suzanne Fletcher	x		Finance Business Partner
9.	Consultant Trainer	Dr. William Parairato		x	Inhouse trainer – Project Management

**WARA LEADERSHIP, STAFF & VOLUNTEERS**

	<b><u>Name</u></b>	<b><u>Role</u></b>
1.	Dr. Alice Aruhe'eta Pollard	Founder, Technical Adviser
2.	Sharon Tohaimae	Chairlady, WARA Governance Committee
3.	Rose Isukana	Technical Adviser
4.	Janet Fangata	Executive Director
5.	Christina Paeni	Program Manager
6.	Lois Auariri	Human Resource Manager
7	Indy Honimae	Finance Manager
8.	Judy	Business Development Officer
9.	Maureen	Monitoring and Evaluation Officer
10.	Sharon	Legal Officer and Climate Change

**SENSE MAKING WORKSHOP****Date:** Friday 17<sup>th</sup> April 2024**Time:** 9am-12 noon**Venue:** Heritage Park

No.	Name	Role
1	Loisy Auariri	Human Resource Manager
2	Dr. Alice Pollard	Technical Advisor
3	Rose. Isukana	Technical Advisor
4	Indy Honimae	Finance Manager
5	Judy Horoau	WEE officer
6	Grace Kwaisi	Business Development Officer
7	Sharon S Ulufia	Legal Climate Change Officer
8	Rebekah Maeniuta	Volunteer
9	Maureen Warahiia	MEL officer
10	Theresa Namoka	Volunteer
11	Joanna Sauka	Zone 8 member
12	Annie Ke'eamane	Zone 8 member
13	Sylvana Kenikeremia	Volunteer
14	Bahiyih Tahanapisi	Volunteer
15	Christina Mara	Project officer
16	Dulcinea Pisipua	Zone 8 member
17	Janet Uitaraha	Zone 8 member

**ANNEX 3: KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW / FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION – TRIGGER QUESTIONS GUIDE**

Trigger Question	Follow on Sub Questions	Stakeholders
Introductions and ethics [gain informed consent]		
<p><b>1. Briefly – what is your knowledge of the Program.</b></p> <p><b>What has been your involvement / role since what time?</b></p>	Introductory question	<p>program staff; stakeholders.</p> <p>Zone members</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>PROBE:</b></li> <li>Did you attend any workshops, conferences as a result of your involvement in the Program? How was your participation beneficial to you in any way?</li> </ul>		
<p><b>2. To what extent have the program outcomes/objectives been achieved?</b></p>	3,4,5,6	<p>program staff; stakeholders.</p> <p>Zone members</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>PROBE: Outcomes</b></li> <li>Outcome 1: Increased active participation in Leadership and Decision making.</li> <li>Outcome 2: Increased access to and control of money, strengthened livelihoods.</li> <li>Outcome 3: Increased resilience to adapt and respond to climate change impacts and disasters.</li> <li>Outcome 4: WARA is strengthened to serve its membership and provide models and support</li> </ul>		

Trigger Question	Follow on Sub Questions	Stakeholders
<p><b>3. How was the Program implemented?</b></p>	<p>1,2</p>	<p>program staff; stakeholders. Zone members</p>
<p>• <b>PROBE:</b></p> <p>How did the Program activities contribute to the changes?</p> <p>What happened to achieve the change you described? Who was involved? When did this happen?</p> <p>What are some examples of what worked well? Are there any examples of areas for improvement?</p>		
<p><b>4. How has the savings club, revolving fund, Haiamasiha fund impacted your life?</b></p>	<p>7</p>	<p>Zone members</p>
<p>- <b>PROBE</b></p> <p>Increased decision making, leadership</p> <p>Economic empowerment</p> <p>Climate resilience and adaptation</p> <p>What has been the most significant change in the past year?</p>		
<p><b>5. Based on your experience of the Program how have the needs of women with disability been included?</b></p>	<p>9</p>	<p>program staff; stakeholders. Zone members</p>

Trigger Question	Follow on Sub Questions	Stakeholders
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>PROBE:</b></li> </ul> <p>How have women with disability increased their leadership and decision making; increased access to and control of money and strengthened their livelihoods</p>		
<p><b>6. To what extent has the Program strengthened women and girls’ resilience and adaptation to climate change impacts and disaster?</b></p>	8	<p>program staff; Zone members</p> <p>stakeholders</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>PROBE</b></li> </ul> <p>Oxfam/SICAN partnership</p>		
<p><b>7. Has the partnership between IWDA and WARA contributed to WARA’s organisational development? If so, how?</b></p>	10,11	WARA staff; IWDA
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>PROBE:</b></li> </ul> <p>IWDA support to WARA</p> <p>Organisational development</p> <p>Strategic Plan</p> <p>use of time and money   governance and management arrangements   skill / personnel   M&amp;E   risk</p>		
<p><b>8. How has WARA enabled and supported young women’s leadership and the impact on WARA’s organisational capacity and sustainability</b></p>	12, 13	WARA staff, Young WARA

Trigger Question	Follow on Sub Questions	Stakeholders
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• PROBE: Succession planning Sustainability of WARA</li></ul>		



## **ANNEX 4: EVALUATION INFORMATION SHEET**

### **Evaluation of the Solomon Islands Rural Women's Economic Empowerment and Leadership Program - Information for Participants**

#### **About the evaluation**

Between April and June 2024, an independent team is undertaking an evaluation of the Solomon Islands Rural Women's Economic Empowerment and Leadership Program which is implemented by West 'Are'Are Rokotanikeni Association (WARA). This evaluation has been commissioned and funded by WARA's partner International Women's Development Agency (IWDA).

The evaluation team consists of independent consultants - Dr. Andrew Matheson, Ms. Elizabeth Palu and Ms. Emele Duituturaga. Emele Duituturaga will be conducting the field interviews in Honiara and West 'Are'Are during the month of May.

You have been invited to participate in this evaluation because of your experience in engaging in one of the program activities and with your involvement with WARA.

This information sheet will help you make an informed decision about whether or not you would like to participate. Participation in this evaluation is voluntary. If you do not wish to take part, you do not have to. There will be no consequences to you from WARA, IWDA, or evaluators if you withdraw. Please read this form and ask any question you may have before agreeing to participate in the study.

If you agree to be interviewed in this evaluation, you will be asked to sign the statement of consent at the end of this information sheet and declare that you have read and understand this information.

Alternatively, you may give verbal consent on a digital audio recorder. If you will require a guardian or a trusted person to give consent on your behalf, let us know how best to arrange this. If a young person under the age of 18 years will participate in the focus group discussion, we will require parental consent.

#### **Your participation**

Participation in this evaluation will involve one of the following: An interview with the consultant no more than 45 minutes; or Participation in a Focus Group Discussion at least an hour.

We will ask about the outcomes, successes, challenges, impact, and sustainability of the Program.

Information you provide may be quoted in the report, noting the type of role you are associated with (for example, program staff member, civil society representative, government official) however the quote will not be attributed to you using your name. The information you provide will only be used for the purpose of this evaluation and it will only be disclosed with your permission.

Participation will involve one of the following: An interview with the consultant, no more than 45 minutes; Participation in a Focus Group discussion, at least an hour.

The interview will take place at an agreed location ensuring privacy and the consultant will come to meet you. The consultant will conduct the interview in English or Pidgin English as you prefer. Note that the focus group discussion will involve other participants.

#### **Privacy during the interview**

Every effort will be made to ensure privacy with the interview venue and time selected in agreement with yourself.

Information you provide will be analysed along data from all interviews to produce an evaluation report. The consent form below indicates three options for privacy that you can choose from:

- **To be identified and have your responses attributed to you in the evaluation report.**  
(with the option to review and approve any of your quotes that are included)
- **For your name and your organisation to be included in the list of contributors to the report (but remain anonymous in the body of the report)**
- **To remain anonymous and for your identity to be protected through the removal of any identifying information and the use of a pseudonym OR a general attribution (for example, program staff member, civil society representative, government official) in all research outputs.**

If you wish to review the findings prior to publication, we will advise WARA and IWDA.

You have the right to withdraw from the evaluation at any stage prior to the publication of the report without giving reason. You can do this by contacting the WARA Program Manager or the consultant by email (contact information at the end of this sheet). Any data you have provided will be destroyed. You can also ask the evaluator not to use things that you have said to them during the interview. You are also free not to answer any questions you may be asked during the interview or focus group discussion or to end the interview early. The consultant will support your decision whatever you choose.

### **Confidentiality**

HANDWRITTEN NOTES OF THE INTERVIEW WILL BE TAKEN BY THE CONSULTANT AND WILL BE RECORDED WITH THE USE OF A DIGITAL AUDIO RECORDER IF YOU AGREE. THESE NOTES WILL BE KEPT CONFIDENTIAL WITH CODED IDENTIFICATION TO ENSURE ANONYMITY. ALL DATA WILL BE STORED SECURELY IN A PASSWORD PROTECTED FILE.

### **Risks and Benefits of being in the evaluation.**

It is acknowledged that there could be some risk and or inconvenience caused in your participation in this evaluation including potential harm if the information shared is sensitive and the information is discovered by another party. As outlined above, strategies are in place for confidentially storing data shared with the evaluator. Where information is shared with other participants, for example in focus group discussions, the evaluator will outline privacy and confidentiality expectations for participants.

Sharing sensitive personal information may lead to distress. If you become distressed, support will be provided to you, and you may cease your participation at any time.

Please note there are no direct financial benefits for participating in this study however your participation will inform key learning which will contribute to future planning and implementation of this Program.

### **Results of the Study**

The consultant will submit the evaluation report to IWDA and WARA, who will share it with the donor and other key stakeholders. The report will be publicly available online.

The information used in reporting will be de-identified. Your name will not be used in relation to any of the information you have provided, unless you specifically wish it to be used.

## **Research Approval**

The ethical aspects of this research have been approved by the IWDA Ethical Review Committee.

### **Who to contact if you have a question about the evaluation.**

If you have any concerns or complaints about how this evaluation has been conducted, please contact:  
Janet Fangata, WARA Program Manager -phone +677 7222489

*For more information on the evaluation:*

Emele Duituturaga; [Emele.duituturaga@gmail.com](mailto:Emele.duituturaga@gmail.com); phone +679 9991864 (Fiji)

*Contact details for someone independent of the research process:*

Alice Ridge (IWDA Research Ethics Committee Chair); [aridge@iwda.org.au](mailto:aridge@iwda.org.au)

**ANNEX 5: WRITTEN CONSENT FORM: PARTICIPATION IN INTERVIEW**

I have had a conversation with the evaluator about this evaluation and have read the above information. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I consent to participate in the study.

	YES	NO
I hereby give my consent for audio recording		
I give consent to be identified in the report and have my responses attributed to me (with the option to review and approve any of your quotes that are included)		
I consent for my name and organisation to be included in a list of contributors to the report (but remain anonymous in the body of the report)		
I would like an alias used in any publication (please do not use my real name)		
I understand that I can withdraw from this study at any time (including withdrawing the use of certain information), with no consequences		

I would like a copy of the evaluation report sent to me at the address I provide below (email or postal)	Or	I do not wish to receive any information (please tick)

**Declaration by Evaluation Participant:** I have chosen to participate in this research with full consent:

SIGNED \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

**(If relevant)**

**Declaration by Guardian** confirming you have chosen to participate in this evaluation.

SIGNED \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

**Declaration by Evaluator:** I have given a verbal explanation of the study; its procedures and risks and I believe that the participant has understood that explanation.

Evaluator's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

SIGNED \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

**ANNEX 5 A: VERBAL CONSENT SCRIPT (ENGLISH)**



I have read out the information sheet about the Evaluation of the Solomon Islands Rural Women’s Economic Empowerment and Leadership Program by WARA.

Did I make things clear?

Do you want to ask me any questions about the project?

I would like to record this interview using a digital audio recorder. That way, I can listen to the recording afterwards to ensure that I have a clear and correct understanding of what was said. I will not give access of the recording to anyone else. Do you give me permission to record?

Some of the information you give me may be published. Unless you want the information specifically attributed to you in the evaluation report, your identify will be protected and general attribution will be used.

You can stop this interview at any time, without giving me any reason. If you mention anything that you do not want me to use in the study, please say so and I will follow your request. You can withdraw from the research at any time. Okay?

Do you have any further questions?

Can we start the interview now?



**ANNEX 6: RISK ASSESSMENT MATRIX**

**(IWDA HAS THE APPROVED VERSION)**

**ANNEX 7: TERMS OF REFERENCE**

(IWDA HAS THE APPROVED VERSION)

