

SUPPORTING WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

What is Strongim Bisnis?

Strongim Bisnis is an Australian Government initiative, the first program of its kind in Solomon Islands to use a market systems development approach. This means we work with businesses, government and civil society to deal with barriers to growing, enhancing and diversifying operations. Through our private and public sector partnerships we encourage business enabling, innovation and support investment.

We look at ways to improve the underlying systems that drive sectors such as tourism, cocoa and coconut.



Strongim Bisnis works with the public and private sector and civil society to help strengthen Women's Economic Empowerment through interventions that promote equal opportunities, rights and responsibilities for women and men, girls and boys.

Why do we want women to be empowered?

Women have vital roles across the whole value chain and produce positive, long-lasting economic results. In Solomon Islands, women are limited in their capacity to engage in business by factors such as: violence, sexual assault, black magic practices (vele), limited decision-making rights, poor access to finance and training opportunities.

- ▶ Only 20% of women have a bank account
- ▶ 81% of women are unpaid in agricultural rural areas
- ▶ 1 in 4 women were vocational trainees

How have we been supporting?

- ▶ We have partnered with the West AreÁre Rokotanikeni Association (WARA), a leading women's savings organisation, to help grow rural women's businesses and

incomes. The partnership is providing women with financial management training and expanding WARAs' loan facility for women's business and long-term investments. The loans will be guaranteed by member savings.

- ▶ We are testing an innovative distribution model of SunPower solar products through the WARAs saving groups in Malaita to promote women's entrepreneurship and access to technology. If successful, it will be scaled up to the whole WARAs network (more than 3,000 women).
- ▶ Strongim Bisnis and Oxfam in Solomon Islands have completed a joint study into the gender norms that impact the economic empowerment of women and young people in rural communities. The study involved 3 communities in 3 provinces and provided recommendations for inclusive and gender-just economic development initiatives, especially in the cocoa, coconut and tourism sectors.
- ▶ To support value-adding processes in the cocoa sector, Strongim Bisnis brought together international chefs, women and young people, together with the Honiara Market Vendors Association, Youth@Work and JJD women's association. Training focused on new skills to develop new lines of chocolate products or new commercial activities in the cocoa sector.
- ▶ Strongim Bisnis worked with the Bethesda Rural Training Centre for people with disabilities to produce dolls for sale at the 2018 SolChoc Fair.
- ▶ We are supporting Dreamcast Theatre to raise awareness in 5 Guadalcanal communities throughout 16 days of activism. And work with the Ministry of Women, Youth, Children and Family Affairs and Honiara City Council to arrange activities around international awareness raising events.