



Solomon Islands Government

"A united and vibrant Solomon Islands"

2009 POPULATION & HOUSING CENSUS

**Report on
Gender**

Solomon Islands National Statistical Office

Ministry of Finance and Treasury

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Foreword and acknowledgements

This report on gender provides in-depth analysis of the characteristics of the Solomon Islands population, as captured through the 2009 Population and Housing Census. It examines the differences and similarities between the female and male populations, in particular, their education, health and wellbeing, work and employment, migration and living conditions.

This report is one in a series of special census monographs on topics where statistics and information are in high demand. Other reports in the series are on economic activity and the labour force, and migration and urbanization. This publication provides new information and analysis to complement the standard reports on basic tables descriptions (volume 1), the national analysis report (volume 2), the 10 provincial reports (including Honiara) and the other special topic monographs stated earlier.

This report is an initiative of the Solomon Islands National Statistical Office (SINSO) within the Ministry of Finance and Treasury (MOFT), made possible with the support of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA).

The target audiences for this report are the planners, policy and decision makers within the Solomon Islands Government, as well as gender and development practitioners. The findings and data are relevant for policy and planning purposes, and the monitoring and evaluation of the National Development Strategy (NDS) 2011-2020, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and other national policies and programmes.

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Finally, I would like to extend my appreciation to the women and men in the Solomon Islands who participated in the census, for without them, this publication would not have been possible.

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Douglas Kimi
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October 2014

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Acronyms

APGR	Annual Population Growth Rate
CRPD	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
DHS	Demographic Health Survey
EFA	Education for All
GAR	Gross Attendance Rate
GEWD	Gender Equality and Women's Development
GPI	Gender Parity Index
HDI	Human Development Index
IMR	Infant Mortality Rate
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MEHRD	Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development
MICS	Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey
MOFT	Ministry of Finance and Treasury
MWYCA	Ministry for Women, Youth and Children's Affairs
NCRA	National Coalition for Reform and Advancement
NDS	National Development Strategy
NFD	National Fisheries Development
PWDSI	Persons with Disabilities Solomon Islands
RAMSI	Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands
SINCW	Solomon Islands National Committee for Women
SINSO	Solomon Islands National Statistics Office
SIWA	Solomon Islands Water Authority
SMAM	Single mean age at marriage
SPFL	Soltai Fishing and Processing Ltd.
SPC	Secretariat of the Pacific Community
TFR	Total fertility rate
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
UNSD	United Nations Statistics Division
WHO	World Health Organization
U5MR	Under 5 Mortality Rate
USA	United States of America

Preface

It is a pleasure to introduce this report on gender, based on results from our national population and housing census, conducted in 2009. This is one of several reports on the census results but it is the first to focus on gender issues. It explores the differences and similarities between women and men, girls and boys across the spectrum of topics available from the census, to reveal more about the roles they play in society and how that is changing over time.

This report has been written for a broad audience, so should be useful to readers who have little experience in using statistics. As well of being of importance to planners, decision makers and government officials, it is expected that the report will be of interest to anyone who wants to know more about gender issues in the Solomon Islands.

I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge with sincere gratitude the contribution of the Solomon Islands Government to this project as well as the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), which provided technical assistance.

It is also worth reiterating the value of the support of the people of the Solomon Islands for their cooperation in completing the census itself and to the others involved in assisting with the design, collection, processing and dissemination of the census results.

To the staff of the national statistics office, I would like to commend your contributions to this publication. I am pleased to see the special efforts being made to ensure that results from the census are widely used.



Hon. Rick Nelson Houenipwela
Minister of Finance and Treasury

Key findings

Population, marriage and families

- There are more males than females in Solomon Islands; for every 100 females, 105 males
- Urban centres have the biggest difference in the number of males and females with 110 males for every 100 females, indicating men are more likely to move to Honiara than women
- The number of dependents (children and elderly) compared to the working population remains about the same as ten years ago: 85 dependents for every 100 workers
- Women continue to get married younger than men: age 23 for women and 27 for men
- A small proportion of children aged 15-17 are already married: 4.7% of girls and 0.9% of boys
- Most women aged over 70 are widowed (55%) compared with 19% of men
- There are over 91,000 households with 16% being headed by women
- Women tend to be household heads only when there is no male spouse present in the household; only 8 percent of households containing a married couple are headed by women
- Average household size is getting smaller everywhere, except in Honiara; while the national average fell from 6.1 people per household in 1999 to 5.6 in 2009, in Honiara, households size grew from 6.7 people to 7.0
- There are around 6,700 households containing a lone parent and their children, most (91%) being in rural areas and the majority (76%) headed by women

Health and wellbeing

- No significant decline in fertility rates occurred over the last decade - 4.8 children per woman in 1999 to 4.7 in 2009
- Large numbers of children born each year is increasing demands on the limited health system
- Adolescent fertility remains high with around 8% (almost 2,000) of teenage women having given birth
- Teenage mothers are mainly out of school or never went to school
- Life expectancy is 73.1 years for women and 66.2 years for men
- Improvements in child mortality apply equally to boys and girls, although mortality rates are higher for boys than girls, which is typically the case due to biological factors
- People with a disability are mostly living in rural areas
- Disability is slightly more common among women
- The type (e.g. seeing, hearing) and severity of disability varies significantly between provinces

- Improving access to safe drinking water, and, in particular, adequate toilet facilities, is much needed to reduce risks to health
- Most households have access to decent drinking water (69%), but many continue to rely on sources that are more likely to become contaminated
- Few households have adequate toilet facilities; most common is for households to have no toilet (33%) and another 14% share theirs with other households, increasing risk of spread of bacterial disease

Education

- Around 13% of boys and girls of primary school age have never been to school
- Many more adult women than men have no schooling
- Current school attendance rates suggest Solomon Islands is heading towards gender parity in primary education
- More girls are leaving school around ages 14-15 than boys, especially in urban areas
- Men have attained a higher level of education than women
- Most Solomon Islanders complete a primary education or higher (64% of men and 53% of women), but few finish Form 6/7 of secondary school (10% of men and 5% of women)
- Few have tertiary qualifications: 1.3% of men and 0.4% of women
- Literacy rates are improving and the gender gap in literacy has almost closed amongst youth (age 15-24)

Work and employment

- Most 'employed' women are producing goods for own consumption, with 51% of women doing this type of work
- Men are much more likely to be doing paid work; more than half (51%) of employed men are paid, compared to only 26% of employed women
- Women are less likely than men to be self-employed or employers
- Men hold most jobs in both the private and public sector
- Of the 11,100 full-time home makers in Solomon Islands, almost 9,400 (84%) are women
- At 31% the proportion of women in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector is low and remains largely unchanged since 1999
- Occupations related to crops, vegetables or livestock dominate for both men and women, but the rest of the top 10 occupations vary
- Women's share of senior and higher positions has increased slightly from 16% in 1999, to 19% in 2009
- In the last ten years, women's share of professional and technical workers – jobs that are likely to be higher paid - has increased from 31 to 37 percent
- Unemployment rates are high for women (8.8%) and men (8.1%) in Honiara

Migration

- Immigration into the country is low (less than 1%) but most foreign-born residents are men (66%)
- Around 17% of men and 17% women have migrated over their lifetimes to live in a different province to where they were born
- Honiara and Guadalcanal continue to attract the most internal migrants
- Men and women who migrate are more likely to be in paid employment
- Female headed households are more likely to rely on remittances with 5% citing them as the main source of income compared to 2% of male headed households

Income and housing

- Less than one in five (16%) of the 91,250 households in Solomon Islands are headed by women
- Six percent of female headed households have no main source of income, compared to 3 percent of those headed by men
- Households headed by men are much more likely to have wages/salary as the primary income source than those headed by women; 25% and 17% respectively
- Almost all rural households produce food for subsistence and/or for sale; 94% of female headed and 95% of male headed households
- Vegetable crops are the most common form of food grown for subsistence and/or sale, with 78% of all rural households growing some kind of these crops
- Gender gaps are noticeable in cocoa production, which is grown by a third of rural households headed by men versus 23% of female-headed rural households
- Around half of female-headed rural households (55%) are involved in fishing versus 71% of those households headed by men

Introduction

Gender equality is central to development and the realisation of human rights. The Solomon Islands National Development Strategy (2011-2020) aims to build better lives for all Solomon Islanders. Achieving gender equality is part of that vision and the Solomon Islands National Policy on Gender Equality and Women's Development (2010-2012) provides the government's framework for doing so.

About this report

This report makes an important contribution to gender mainstreaming by providing government officials with evidence for targeting public policies and programs towards those most in need. It is part of the national strategy to improve analysis, dissemination and use of population and development data as a factual basis for planning.

This gender monograph demonstrates the value of the population and housing census for tracking progress towards national gender-related goals and international commitments. Many of the conclusions will be known but perhaps have not been easily quantified in the past. Some may even be a surprise. It is hoped that the results presented are of value and stimulate further research and inquiry into the complex issues surrounding gender.

This report links the census results with national priorities and presents findings under six themes:

1. Population, marriage and families
2. Health and wellbeing
3. Education
4. Work and employment
5. Migration
6. Income and housing

Information is provided in a way that can be easily understood by people with limited experience in using statistics. Technical explanations are avoided in an effort to make it engaging and interesting. Every attempt has been made to ensure the information is not misleading, and is factually correct.

Importance of gender statistics

The limited availability of sex-disaggregated data is a common criticism of national statistical systems. Often these data are collected, but are not analyzed or published in a form that meets the needs of data users. The Solomon Islands National Statistics Office (SINSO) aims to improve the availability of sex-disaggregated data in all its statistical releases. This is demonstrated in the existing census publications where a rich source of sex-disaggregated data is available. This report on gender looks at the data in further detail to draw out more findings relevant to policy issues. It is the first of its kind in the country and it is expected to become a standard practice in the future.

Census data is useful for tracking progress towards national goals, in particular, those related to education and economic status. However, the population and housing census is only one

of several sources of gender statistics in the Solomon Islands. Other important sources include:

- **2009 Family Health and Safety Study**
provides essential data on prevalence and attitudes towards gender-based violence
- **2006-2007 Demographic and Health Survey**
data on fertility, reproductive health, child health, nutrition, malaria and HIV/AIDS
- **2012-2013 and 2005-2006 Household Income and Expenditure Survey**
data on how much income earned and what households spend their money on
- **Data collected by ministries of health, education, etc.**

Together, these surveys, censuses and administrative data provide policymakers with facts about the realities of life for people across the Solomon Islands. While this report focuses only on what the census that reveals about gender issues, readers can find a list of key gender indicators based on a range of data sources at Annex 1.

BOX 1 – *WHAT IS GENDER?*

Gender relates to the roles that women and men, girls and boys, play in society; the expectations and opportunities associated with being male and female. Gender is a socially constructed concept learned through socialization, indicating what is expected, allowed and appreciated in a man or a woman in different situations. Gender influences the division of labour between women and men, access to education, types of work and employment, access to household income and assets, and migration. Gender is not about women only, it is about both men and women. It is part of a broad socio-cultural context, with other important aspects including race, ethnicity, poverty level and age.

Sex

Biological and physiological characteristics that define men and women

- Female and male
- Biology defines
- Relatively fixed

Gender

Socially constructed roles, behaviours, activities, and attributes considered appropriate for men and women

- Feminine and masculine
- Defined by social norms
- Often changing over time

Source: United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women).
www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/conceptsanddefinitions.htm

Gender and development in the Solomon Islands

The Solomon Islands is a small developing country in the South Pacific. Europeans arrived in the mid-sixteenth century, and the country was under British colonial rule from 1893 until it became self-autonomous in 1976 and independent in 1978. The country is home to around 516,000 people – 264,455 men and 251,415 women – with most (95%) being of Melanesian origin. The majority (80%) live in small villages in rural areas across the nine provinces. Traditional belief systems run in parallel to civil law and this sees men tending to play the role of primary decision makers.

The economy is narrow, with logging being the most important export and revenue-earning sector. Other export commodities are fish, copra, palm oil and cocoa. Gold mining – both reestablishment of the large-scale Gold Ridge mine and smaller alluvial extraction operations – has the potential to be an important sector in the future.

Subsistence agriculture is the most common main activity for women and men (51% of employed women and 33% employed men aged 15 and above). Less than a quarter of those employed are actually in paid employment, and the rate is much higher for men than women (31% of employed men and 16% of employed women).¹

Limited economic possibilities for women are shown by the 2012 women's economic opportunity index, which sees Solomon Islands ranked 124 out of 128 countries, similar to Papua New Guinea ranked at 125. Limited legal protection for women in the workplace, poor access to financial services, and a weak business environment are the main reasons for this poor ranking. ²

The United Nations Human Development Index (HDI), which looks at life expectancy, education, and gross national income, rates social development as low in the Solomon Islands, ranking it 143 out of 186 countries in 2013.³

Reports on progress towards the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) show mixed progress. The goals relating to gender equality and environmental sustainability are the furthest off track.⁴ Around a quarter of the population (22.7%) are living below the national

¹ Solomon Islands Government. 2009 Population and Housing Census: Report on Economic Activity and Labour Force.

² Economic Intelligence Unit. 2012. Women's Economic Opportunity 2012: A global index and ranking from the Economic Intelligence Unit. The index is based on data relating to labour policy and practice; access to finance; education and training; women's legal and social status; and the general business environment.

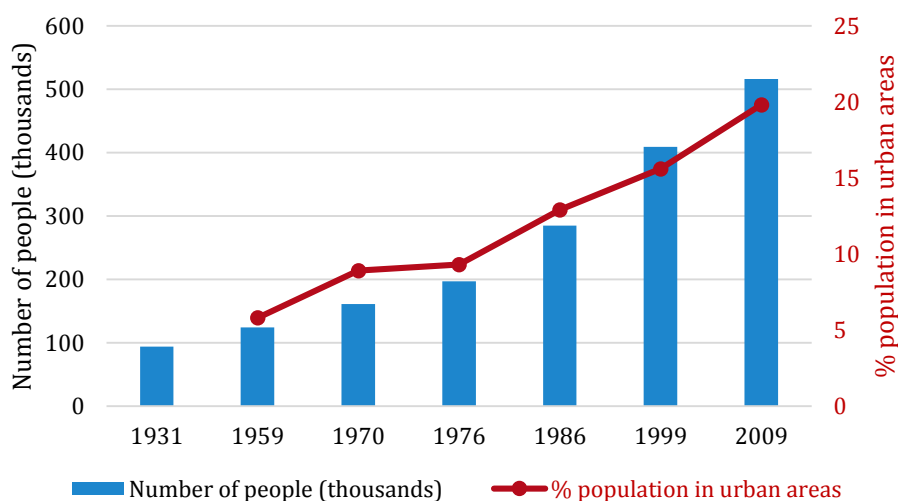
³ United Nations Development Program (UNDP). 2013. Human Development Report, The Rise of the South: Human Progress in a Diverse World. UNDP: New York.

⁴ Pacific Island Forum Secretariat (PIFS). 2013. Pacific Millennium Development Goal Tracking Report. PIFS: Suva.

poverty line of 2,100 kilocalories per day plus other basic needs.⁵ Although school enrolments are improving for both girls and boys, women are still less likely to have a formal education, and are less literate than men. With an average of 4.7 children per woman in 2009, fertility remains high, risking maternal and child health. Limited access and infrastructure in rural communities hampers delivery of health, education and other essential services.

Other development challenges include rapid population growth and high rates of rural-urban migration (Figure 1). Unplanned urban expansion is leading to housing pressure, the introduction of squatter settlements around Honiara, increased crime, and public health risks. This impacts women and girls differently to men and boys, because their vulnerability to violence can place more restriction on their freedom of movement. Also, discrimination against women tends to be more common in a male-dominated society with a limited labour market. Strategies to address the urbanization problem include improving living conditions in rural areas, improving infrastructure to allow for better access to markets, providing services and education opportunities for those in squatter settlements, and urban planning.⁶

FIGURE 1 – TRENDS IN POPULATION SIZE AND URBANIZATION, SOLOMON ISLANDS, 1931-2009



Source: Data are from Solomon Islands Government. 2009 Population and Housing Census: National Report (Volume 2) except for data on % population in urban areas in 1959 (data refers to 1960) and 1970, which were sourced from United Nations Population Division 2014 World Urbanization Prospects.

⁵ Solomon Islands National Statistics Office (SINSO) and United Nations Development Program (UNDP) Pacific Centre. 2008. Solomon Islands: Analysis of the 2005/06 Household Income and Expenditure Survey – Final report on the estimation of basic needs poverty lines, and the incidence and characteristics of poverty in Solomon Islands.

⁶ Government of the Solomon Islands, Ministry of Development Planning and Aid Coordination. July 2011. *National Development Strategy 2011 to 2020*.

A period of violent tension began in 1998, stemming from resentment towards the increasing migration of people seeking economic opportunities in Guadalcanal. This violence went on for four years, resulting in a breakdown in law and order and public service delivery. The government's call for assistance led to the establishment of the Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands (RAMSI) in 2003 – a partnership between Solomon Islands and 15 other Pacific countries – which has helped to restore law and order and rebuild national institutions.⁷ However, violence, particularly domestic violence, remains a reality for many women. The 2009 Family Health and Safety Study revealed that almost two thirds (64%) of women who have been in a relationship have suffered physical or sexual violence by their husband or partner.⁸

Gender equality is not only about women and girls; there are also challenges facing men and boys that require the attention of policymakers. Young boys tend to start school later than girls and are more likely to not attend, which may see future generations of men with lower education attainment and literacy levels. With large families and the work involved in child care falling mainly on women, men are under pressure to generate income and may be required to migrate to urban centres to find work. Limited job opportunities and higher concentrations of males in urban areas can lead to social problems and an increase in crime and violence. Men also tend to take greater risks with their health through smoking, and the consumption of alcohol and betel nut, reducing their quality of life and increasing pressure on the limited health system.

The national development strategy aims to “build better lives for all Solomon Islanders”, emphasising the importance of inclusive growth and equitable distribution of the benefits of development.⁹ A policy on Gender Equality and Women's Development (GEWD) outlines the national priorities for achieving gender equality and provides a framework for action. It identifies five priority areas:

1. Improved and equitable health and education for women and men, girls and boys
2. Improved economic status of women
3. Equal participation of women and men in decision making and leadership
4. Elimination of violence against women
5. Increased capacity for gender mainstreaming

The lead public agency for gender equality is the Ministry of Women, Youth and Children's Affairs (MWYCA). Civil society organizations, such as the Solomon Islands National Council of Women (SINCW), are also key actors. National Task Forces (NTFs) have been formed to oversee each of the five priority areas.

⁷ RAMSI. 2013. Background Briefing for the Pacific Islands' Forum on RAMSI's Achievements 2003-2013. www.ramsi.org

⁸ Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC). 2009. *Solomon Islands Health and Safety Study*. SPC: New Caledonia.

⁹ Solomon Islands Government. 2011. National Development Strategy 2011-2020.

1. Population, marriage and families

Society is shaped by its population and their characteristics – the number of people, their age, sex, marital status, living arrangements and so on. Norms around marriage, family size and household composition impact on the division of labour and the roles women and men play in society. This chapter gives a broad picture of the population in Solomon Islands at the time of the 2009 census, with emphasis on gender-relevant issues.

Key findings

- There are more males than females in Solomon Islands; for every 100 females, 105 males
- Urban centres have the biggest difference in the number of males and females with 110 males for every 100 females, indicating men are more likely to move to Honiara than women
- The number of dependents (children and elderly) compared to the working population remains about the same as ten years ago: 85 dependents for every 100 workers
- Women continue to get married younger than men: age 23 for women and 27 for men
- A small proportion of children aged 15-17 are already married: 4.7% of girls and 0.9% of boys
- Most women aged over 70 are widowed (55%) versus 19% of men
- There are over 91,000 households with 16% being headed by women
- Women tend to be household heads only when there is no male spouse present in the household; only 8 percent of households containing a married couple are headed by women
- Average household size is getting smaller everywhere, except in Honiara
- While the national average fell from 6.1 people per household in 1999 to 5.6 in 2009, in Honiara, households size grew from 6.7 people to 7.0
- There are around 6,700 households containing a lone parent and their children, most (91%) being in rural areas and the majority (76%) headed by women

About the Solomon Islands population

Although population growth is slowing due to gradually declining fertility rates (see page 36), the number of people continues to increase in all provinces of the country. This is especially the case in urban areas, which grew 4.7 percent annually between 1999 and 2009. Overall, there has been a 26 percent increase in the number of people since the last census in 1999.

As shown in Table 1, the most populous province is Malaita, which is home to 137,500 people (68,300 women and 69,200 men); more than one quarter (27%) of the national population. Guadalcanal province (excluding Honiara) follows with a population near 94,000 (18% of national population). The smallest province is Rennell-Bellona with around 3,000 residents.

What is a sex ratio?

The difference between the number of males and females is usually expressed as a sex ratio: the number of males divided by the number of females and multiplied by 100. A sex ratio of 100 means that there are equal numbers of males and females; lower than 100: more females than males and; above 100: more males than females.

The sex ratio shows there are slightly more males than females: for every 100 females, there are 105 males. Imbalance in the number of women and men are most noticeable in urban centres; in Honiara there are significantly more men than women in the capital (111.7 males to 100 females). This reflects the fact that men tend to migrate to urban centres more than women, as discussed in the chapter on migration. Although high, this difference has narrowed considerably from 1959 when there was three times the number of men to women (a sex ratio above 300).¹⁰ Temotu is the only place where females outnumber males: 96 males for every 100 females.

TABLE 1 – OVERVIEW OF THE SOLOMON ISLANDS POPULATION IN 2009

	Total	Males	Females	% female	Sex ratio	% of total population
Solomon Islands	515,870	264,455	251,415	49	105	
Urban	102,030	53,596	48,434	47	111	20
Rural	413,840	210,859	202,981	49	104	80
Choiseul	26,372	13,532	12,840	49	105	5
Western	76,649	39,926	36,723	48	109	15
Isabel	26,158	13,328	12,830	49	104	5
Central	26,051	13,261	12,790	49	104	5
Rennell-Bellona	3,041	1,549	1,492	49	104	1
Guadalcanal	93,613	48,283	45,330	48	107	18
Malaita	137,596	69,232	68,364	50	101	27
Makira-Ulawa	40,419	20,789	19,630	49	106	8
Temotu	21,362	10,466	10,896	51	96	4
Honiara	64,609	34,089	30,520	47	112	13

The sex ratio at birth is 107 males per 100 females – only slightly higher than the overall sex ratio of 105 males per 100 females.¹¹ There is no evidence to suggest bias in reporting

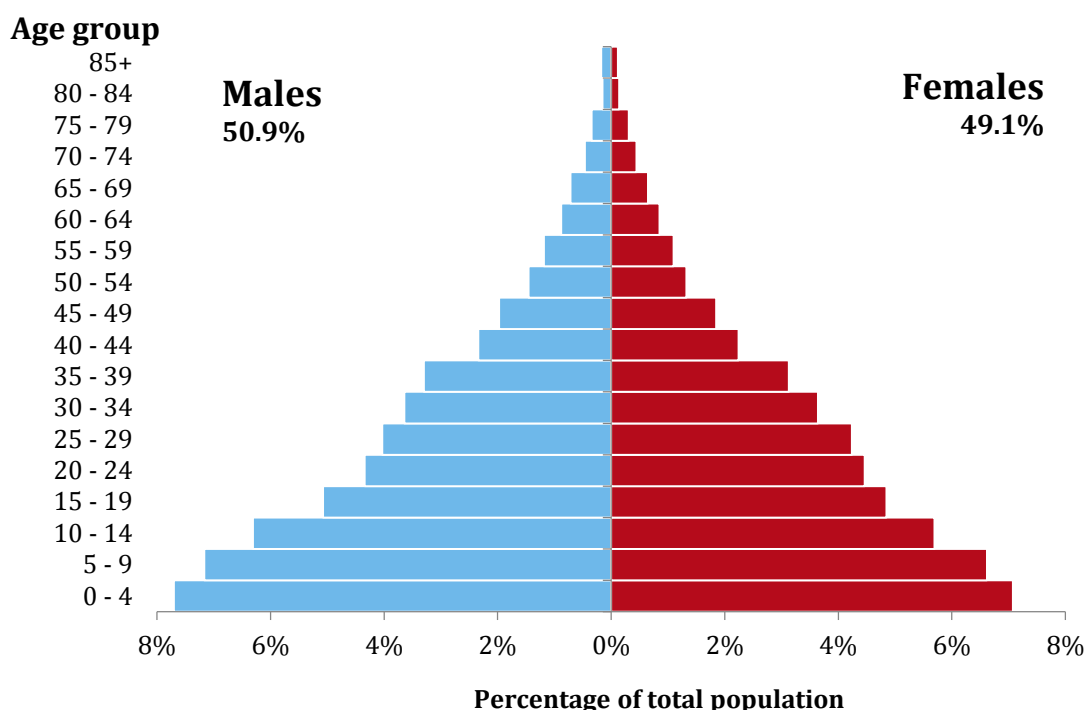
¹⁰ Solomon Islands National Statistics Office. 2009 Population and Housing Census Report on Migration and Urbanization.

¹¹ United Nations. 2012. *World Population Prospects: The 2012 Revision*. Population Division, Department of Economic and Social Affairs: New York.

of boys over girls, or a preference for sons and sex-selection. The sex ratio varies by province with Honiara recording the highest at 111.7 men per 100 women.

As is often the case for less developed countries, the Solomon Islands population is young. The *median age* - half the population below this age and half above - is 20 years for females and 19 years for males. By comparison, the world median age is 29 years, and for more developed regions, the median age is 40 years.¹² The relative size and age distribution of each sex, by five-year age groups, is illustrated as a population pyramid (Figure 2). The wide bars at the base of the graph show the large proportion of children, a sign of high fertility rates and the burden of care on women.

FIGURE 2 – TOTAL POPULATION BY SEX AND AGE, SOLOMON ISLANDS, 2009



The *dependency ratio* compares of the number of people at working age (age 15-59) to those who are likely to depend on them for care and wellbeing, namely children (0-14 years old) and the elderly (age 60 and above). This is an important indicator for gender policies and programs. A high level of dependency reinforces gender stereotypes of male breadwinner and female caregiver, and limits options for women to pursue income-generating opportunities.

In 1999, there were 87 dependent people for every 100 working age. This ratio has decreased only slightly to 85, ten years later. By comparison, the global dependency ratio is

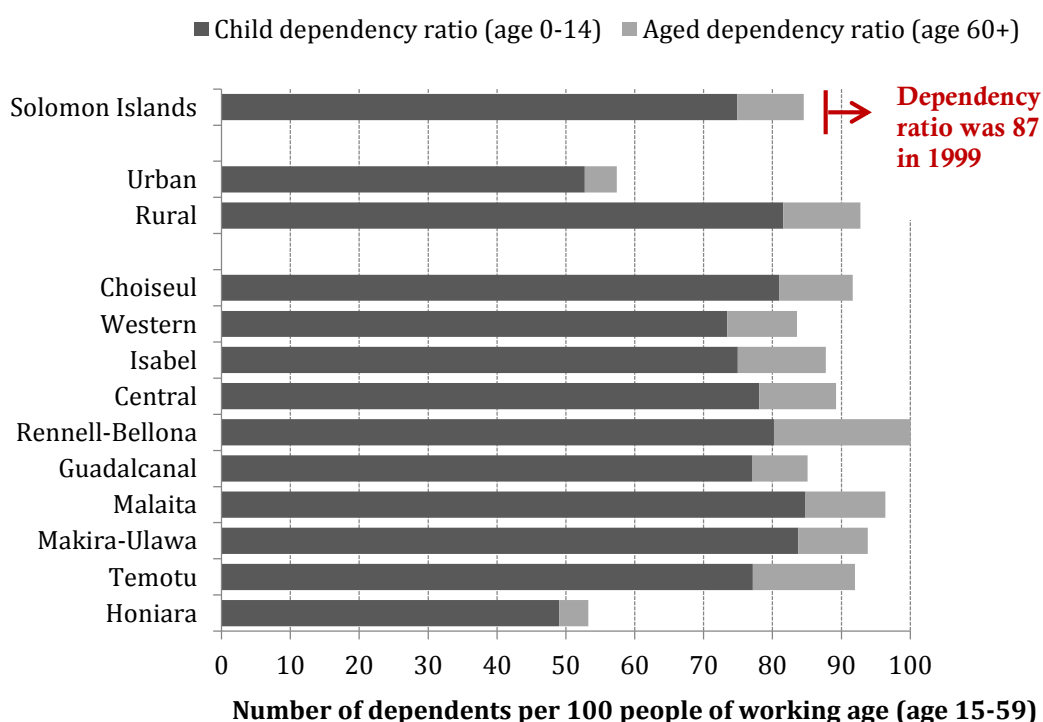
¹² United Nations Population Division. 2013. *World Population Prospects: The 2012 Revision*. United Nations: New York.

closer to 50, meaning there are two working age people for every one dependent (child/elderly) person.

As can be seen in Figure 3, dependency ratios in the Solomon Islands are higher in rural than urban areas, indicative of the fact that children and the elderly are more likely to remain in the village than relocate to urban centres. This demonstrates the importance of providing adequate health and education services to rural villages, as well as cost-effective mechanisms to enable workers to transfer funds earned in urban settings back to family members.

Proportion of dependent children and elderly remains high

FIGURE 3 – DEPENDENCY RATIO BY URBAN/RURAL AND PROVINCE, SOLOMON ISLANDS, 2009



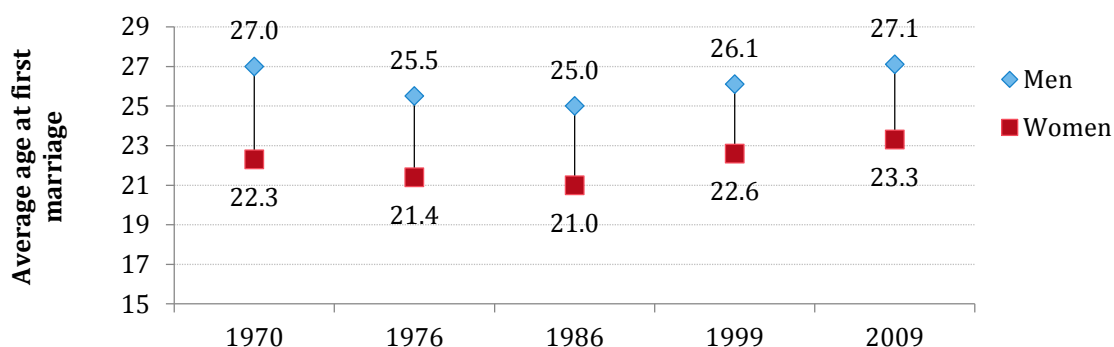
Marriage and families

Marriage is important to society and typically represents the creation of a new household and children to follow. The legal age without consent for marriage in the Solomon Islands is 18 for both women and men. Marriage from age 15 is legal, provided consent of the father, mother, guardian or a magistrate has been given.¹³ The 2009 census shows that the average age at first marriage is 23.3 years old for women and 27.1 years for men. Comparing this to results from previous censuses shows little change in the age of first marriage over the past 45 years (Figure 4).

¹³ Solomon Islands Marriage Act.

Little change in age of first marriage since 1970

FIGURE 4 – SINGULATE MEAN AGE AT MARRIAGE (SMAM) BY SEX AND PROVINCE, SOLOMON ISLANDS, 1970-2009



The average age at marriage differs between provinces (Table 2). Those living in Honiara and other urban areas tend to get married latest: men at around 28 years of age and women around the age of 25. Women marry earliest in Choiseul (22.1 years of age), Central and Guadalcanal provinces (22.6 years of age). The average age gap between men and women is highest in Rennell-Bellona (5.8 years) and Choiseul provinces (4.4 years); and lowest in Honiara (3.0 years).

TABLE 2 – AVERAGE AGE AT MARRIAGE (SMAM) BY SEX AND PROVINCE, SOLOMON ISLANDS, 2009

	Males	Females	Age gap
Solomon Islands	27.1	23.3	3.8
Urban	28.1	24.7	3.4
Rural	26.8	22.9	3.9
Choiseul	26.5	22.1	4.4
Western	27.9	23.6	4.3
Isabel	26.8	22.8	4.0
Central	26.7	22.6	4.1
Rennell-Bellona	29.0	23.2	5.8
Guadalcanal	26.9	22.6	4.3
Malaita	26.4	23.0	3.4
Makira-Ulawa	26.8	23.0	3.8
Temotu	27.7	24.1	3.6
Honiara	28.3	25.3	3.0

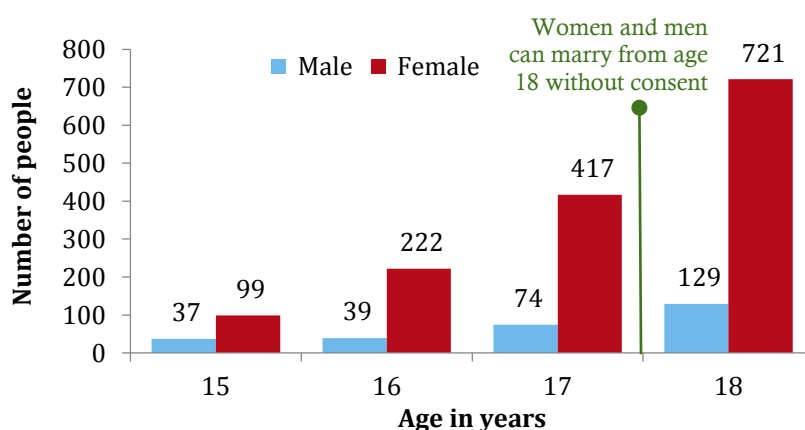
Early marriage

The census shows that a small proportion of children aged 15-17 were already married: 4.7 percent of girls and 0.9 percent of boys. As seen in Figure 5, early marriage is more common amongst girls than boys at every age between 15 and 18. Early marriage is considered a harmful practice and a violation of human rights. It limits women's education opportunities and reinforces gender stereotypes. As childbearing starts earlier, it tends to result in higher fertility, which has health consequences for mothers and children, as well as economic impacts on the family and delivery of public services.¹⁴

A third (31%) of the 37 girls who were married at age 15 had already given birth. The proportion that has had children climbs to 46 percent for girls married by age 17 and to 60 percent for those married at age 18. According to the 2007 Demographic and Health Survey (DHS), 22.4 percent of women aged 20-24 had been married before age 18. Although this is below the global average for developing countries (34%), the rate of early marriage in the Solomon Islands is too high and exceeds the East Asia and Pacific average of 18 percent.¹⁵

Early marriage more common for girls

FIGURE 5 – NUMBER OF PEOPLE EVER MARRIED* BY SEX, AGES 15-18 YEARS, SOLOMON ISLANDS, 2009



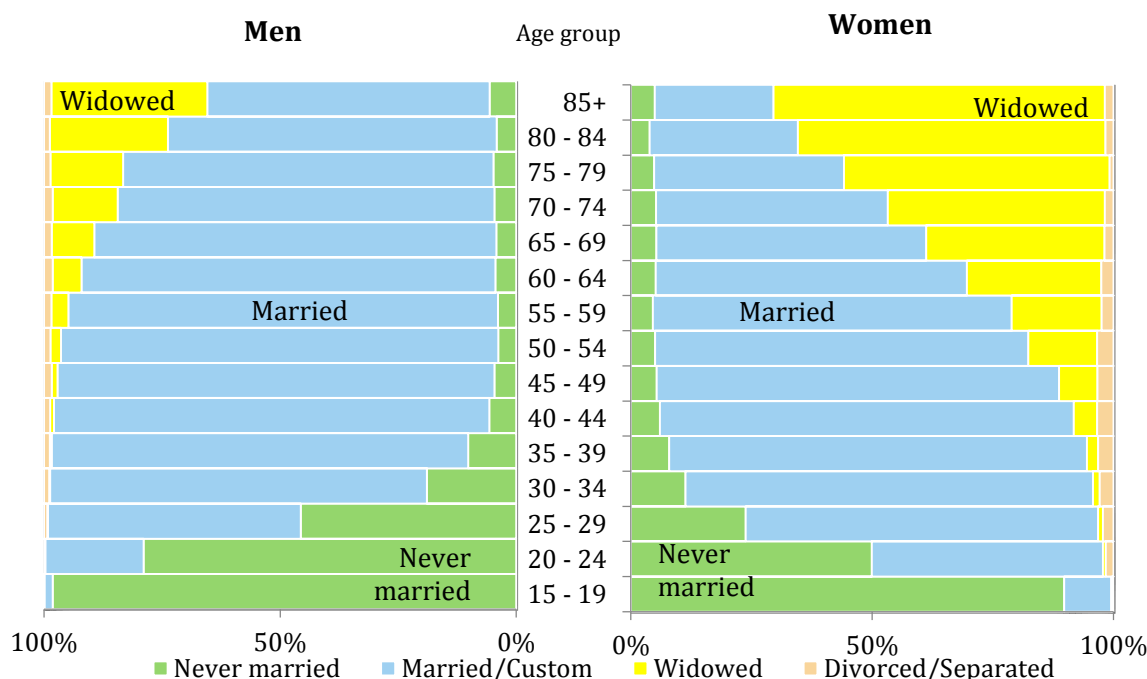
*Ever married includes current legal or custom marriage, separated, divorced or widowed.

Marital status differs for women and men based on their age, as shown in Figure 6. The patterns clearly illustrate later marriage for men (blue bars). The yellow bars show the greater tendency for women to be widowed; a combination of their longer life expectancy and that they marry men older than themselves.

¹⁴ 2005. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). *Early Marriage: A Harmful Traditional Practice – A Statistical Exploration*; 2012.

¹⁵ United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). *Marrying Too Young: End Child Marriage*.

FIGURE 6 – MARITAL STATUS BY SEX AND FIVE YEAR AGE GROUPS, SOLOMON ISLANDS, 2009



Widowhood

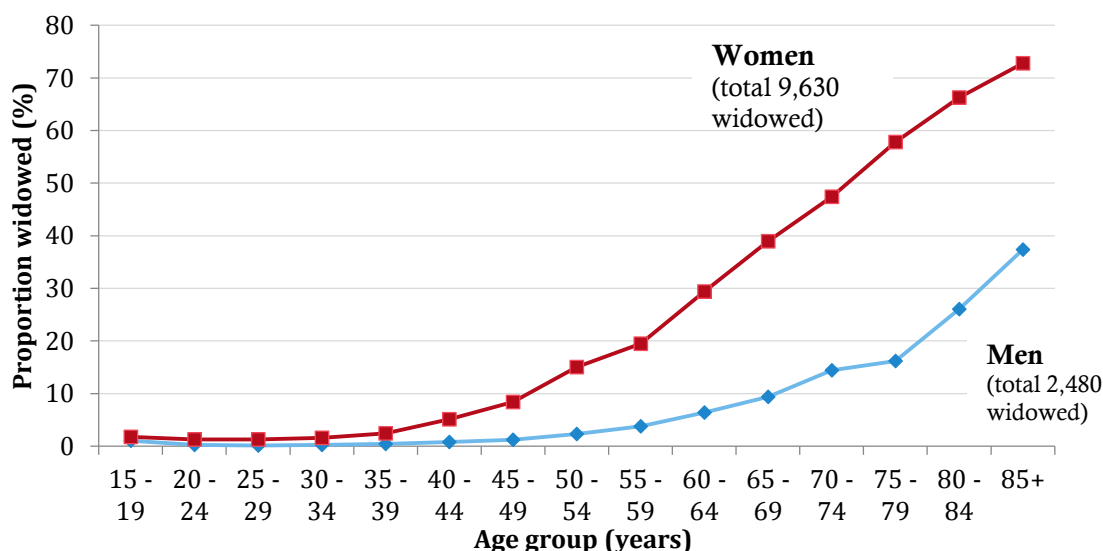
As women tend to live longer, and men may be more likely to remarry, there are striking gender differences in the proportion of men and women who are widowed in different age groups (Figure 7). For every 100 widowers in the Solomon Islands, 80 are women and 20 are men. Most women aged 70 and above are widows (Table 3). These older widows are particularly vulnerable to poverty. As aging occurs, health problems may become a barrier to earning an income and dependence on the support of relatives and others increases. Government programs are able to provide targeted assistance to this vulnerable group. Although the Solomon Islands still has a young population, the proportions of elderly, particularly women, will increase as longevity improves.

TABLE 3 – NUMBER AND PROPORTION OF PEOPLE WITH MARITAL STATUS OF WIDOWED, BY AGE AND SEX, SOLOMON ISLANDS, 2009

	Age	Total	Men		Women	
			Widowed Number	% of total	Total	Widowed Number % of total
	15-59	81,215	743	0.9	94,102	4,384 4.7
	60-69	7,872	608	7.7	7,310	2,452 33.5
	70-79	3,989	606	15.2	3,689	1,907 51.7
	80+	1,250	369	29.5	1,060	724 68.3

Most women aged 70 and above are widowed

FIGURE 7 – POPULATION OF WIDOWED AMONG EVER MARRIED POPULATION, BY AGE AND SEX, SOLOMON ISLANDS, 2009



Widowed women mainly live in rural areas and are less likely to be based in Honiara. Below the age of 60, most of widowed women (56%) and men (63%) are the head of household. As they get older, the reliance on their children or other relatives increases. Most (53%) of elderly widowed women aged 60 and above live with their children or other relatives and 46 percent of widowed men.

Families and households

In the Solomon Islands there were 91,251 private households at the time of the 2009 census. Of these, 83 percent were in the rural areas and 17 percent in urban centres. Less than one in five (16%) are headed by women. The average household size is 5.5 people. This is higher in urban areas (6.5 people per household) than rural (5.3 people). Honiara is the only area where household size has increased since the 1999 census, from 6.7 people to 7.0 (Figure 8).

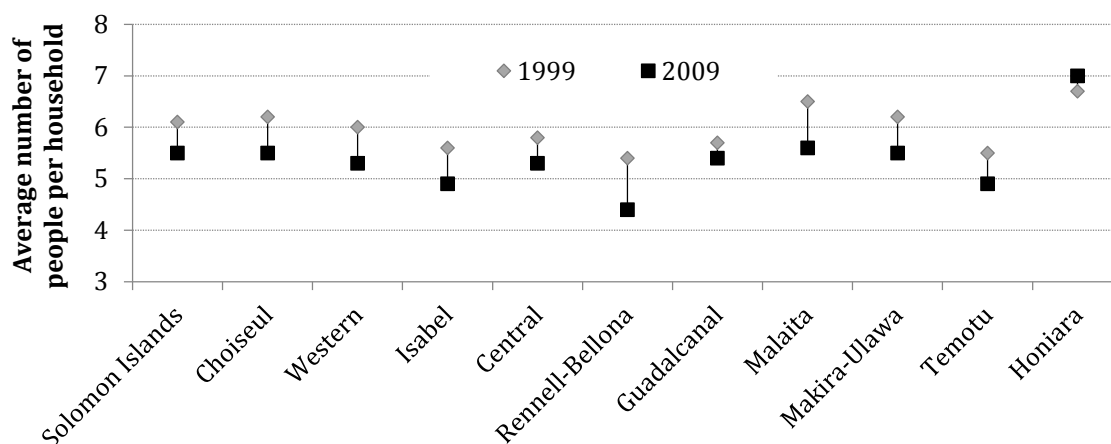
Important to know

A household is defined as those persons living together who usually eat together and share the work of preparing the food and/or the cost of work of providing it.

There are many contributing factors that influence household size. Historically, large families or households were seen as an advantage – the larger the household, the more the members could provide for others, particularly the young and the old. The average number of children per woman (total fertility rate) is 4.7 in 2009. There has been a trend towards smaller families and households throughout the world and Solomon Islands is no exception. Changes in family size are explored further in the chapter below on health and wellbeing (see page 36).

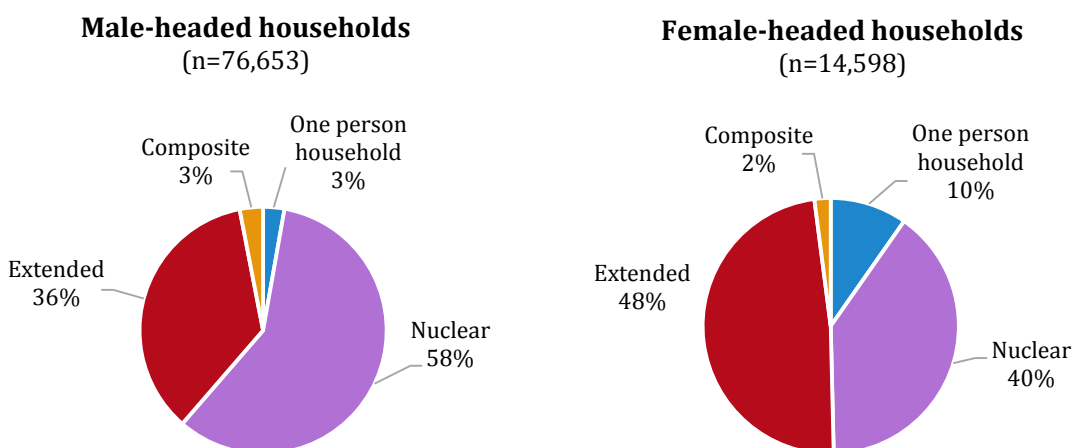
Household size reduces in all areas except Honiara

FIGURE 8 – AVERAGE HOUSEHOLD SIZE FOR SOLOMON ISLANDS, BY PROVINCE, 1999 AND 2009



Most households (55%) contain nuclear families, being single unit families comprising either a married couple (including customary marriages) with or without children, or single parents and their children (Figure 9). Extended families, those with one or more relatives outside the immediate family (e.g. grandchild, brother-in-law, parents), are also common (38% of private households). Table 4 shows the numbers of each type of household and how these differ between urban and rural areas, as well as by sex of the household head.¹⁶

FIGURE 9 – PROPORTION (%) OF EACH TYPE OF PRIVATE HOUSEHOLD, BY SEX OF HOUSEHOLD HEAD, SOLOMON ISLANDS, 2009



As expected, extended families and composite households are more common in urban than rural areas, where housing shortages lead people to seek accommodation with relatives or

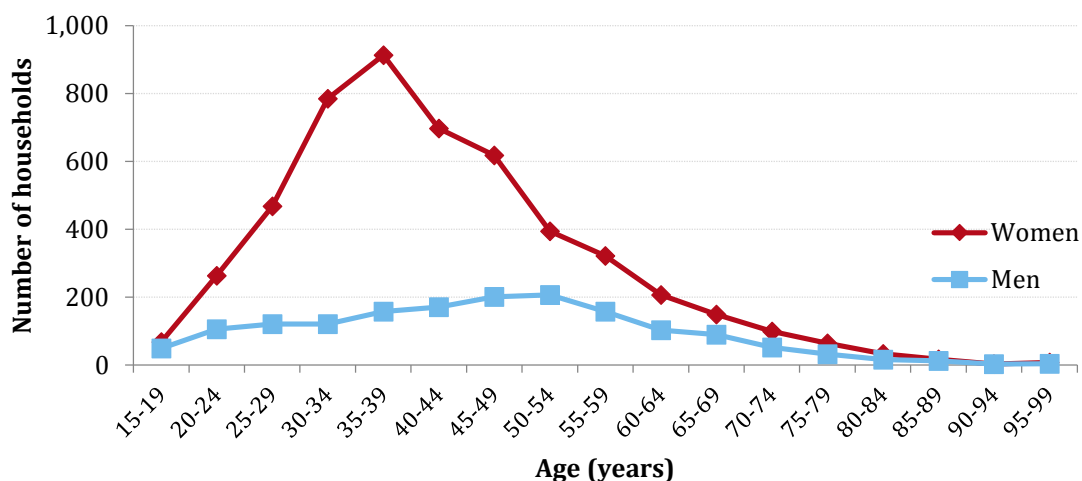
¹⁶ Classification of household types is based on that recommended in the United Nations Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses, Revision 2 (2008).

friends. Women tend to be household heads only when there is no male spouse present in the household; only 8 percent of households containing a married couple are headed by women.

There are around 6,700 households containing a lone parent and their children, most (91%) being in rural areas and the majority (76%) headed by women. Most of these are younger women aged 25-49 (Figure 10). Many of these lone parents are still married – 54 percent of female-headed lone parent households and 45 percent of those headed by males – but their spouse was not living with them at the time of the census. A large proportion of male lone parents have never been married; 21 percent compared to 10 percent of female lone parents. These 337 male single parents have an average age of 30 years.

Most single parent households are headed by younger women

FIGURE 10 – NUMBER OF SINGLE PARENT HOUSEHOLDS BY AGE AND SEX OF HOUSEHOLD HEAD, SOLOMON ISLANDS, 2009



Lone parent households are more likely to be participating in the labour force (86% of lone fathers and 88% of lone mothers) and their likelihood of being in paid work is higher than for the general population.

TABLE 4 – TYPES OF HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION, BY URBAN/RURAL LOCATION, SOLOMON ISLANDS, 2009

	Urban			Rural			Total		
	Male headed	Female headed	Total	Male headed	Female headed	Total	Male headed	Female headed	Total
Total private households	13,396	1,925	15,321	63,257	12,673	75,930	76,653	14,598	91,251
One person household	392	153	545	1,742	1,266	3,008	2,134	1,419	3,553
Nuclear									
Married couple no children	511	41	552	3,208	63	3,271	3,719	104	3,823
Married couple with children	4,897	115	5,012	34,679	499	35,178	39,576	614	40,190
Father with children	220		220	1,384		1,384	1,604		1,604
Mother with children		400	400		4,708	4,708		5,108	5,108
Extended (only relatives)									
Married couple (with or without children) and one or more other relatives	5,896	169	6,065	18,367	339	18,706	24,263	508	24,771
One person or lone parent families with one or more other relatives	745	960	1,705	2,275	5,586	7,861	3,020	6,546	9,566
Composite (contains non-relatives)									
Married couple (with or without children/other relatives) and one or more non-relative	637	14	651	1,326	31	1,357	1,963	45	2,008
One person / lone-parent (with or without other relatives) and one or more non-relative	98	73	171	276	181	457	374	254	628

2. Health and wellbeing

Good health is an essential ingredient for quality of life, social harmony and economic prosperity. There are a number of important indicators when it comes to health outcomes that are available from the census. This includes population figures that illustrate changes in demand for health services, fertility, teenage pregnancy, the prevalence of different types of disability and living conditions.

Key findings

- No significant decline in fertility rates occurred over the last decade - 4.8 children per woman in 1999 to 4.7 in 2009
- Large numbers of children born each year is increasing demands on the limited health system
- Adolescent fertility remains high with around 8% (almost 2,000) of teenage women having given birth
- Teenage mothers are mainly out of school or never went to school
- Life expectancy is 73.1 years for women and 66.2 years for men
- Improvements in child mortality apply equally to boys and girls, although mortality rates are higher for boys than girls, which is typically the case due to biological factors
- People with a disability are mostly living in rural areas
- Disability is slightly more common among women
- The type (e.g. seeing, hearing) and severity of disability varies significantly between provinces
- Improving access to safe drinking water, and, in particular, adequate toilet facilities, is much needed to reduce risks to health
- Most households have access to decent drinking water (69%), but many continue to rely on sources that are more likely to become contaminated
- Few households have adequate toilet facilities; most common is for households to have no toilet (33%) and another 14% share theirs with other households, increasing risk of spread of bacterial disease

Health is a key development issue for Solomon Islands with the government working towards the provision of better health services, especially in rural areas. The nature of a population and housing census – being to provide a snapshot of Solomon Islands society at a point in time – is not a good source of sensitive and detailed health data. The main data sources for monitoring general and reproductive health are the records maintained through the Ministry of Health and specialised household surveys. The population census does include questions on a number of health related issues and, because everyone in the country is included, it provides a good source of baseline information.

What information does the population and housing census gather about health?

Health-related questions in the Solomon Islands census are focused on births, age, living conditions, such as access to adequate water and sanitation and the use of bed nets to prevent transmission of insect-borne disease.

The health-related information gathered through the census includes:

- number and sex of children born to each woman aged 15+ and how many of these children have died
- number of pregnant women and children under the age of 5 who sleep under bednets*
- household access to water and sanitation

* Not reported here as information is collected at household level making gender analysis difficult.

Importantly, the census also provides key statistics on the population, which can be used by policymakers to improve access to health services. Census results can show:

- where demand is changing, such as through population growth or aging
- where there are higher levels of child births and deaths, which may point to the need for improved family planning, maternal and child health services
- the relationships between fertility, mortality and characteristics such as literacy, education level and employment

Detailed information about health issues and outcomes, such as types of illness and disease, are not usually collected via a census. This comes from records kept by hospitals and health services and specialised surveys such as a Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) and the Demographic Health Survey (DHS) (conducted in 2007/2008, and to be repeated in 2014/2015) and World Health Organization (WHO) malaria incidence monitoring.

Changing demands for health services

Solomon Islands continues to experience high population growth, particularly in urban centres, placing pressure on the supply of basic services, such as health care (see Figure 1). At the current growth rate of 2.3 percent per year (Table 5), the population of Solomon Islands will more than double to reach 1.3 million people by the year 2050 with 30 percent of these living in urban areas. Much higher growth rates in Guadalcanal (4.4%) will see this province overtake Malaita to become the most populated by the year 2020.¹⁷

Changes within the age structure of the population will impact on demands for health services. During an individual's lifetime, the need for health care is typically at its highest during infancy and then in later years. Therefore, indicators such as the *dependency ratio* can guide policymakers in estimating changing demands for health services. This is particularly important for gender and development. Women tend to play a more significant role in family and home care, and this high level of dependency reinforces this role and limits their possibilities to work outside the home. As outlined in Chapter 1, the national dependency ratio is 85 dependents (children and elderly) for every 100 people of working age. The ratio is much higher in the province of Rennell-Bellona (100) and Malaita (96). In Honiara, it is well below national average with only 56 dependents for every 100 working age persons.

Fertility and reproductive health

The total fertility rate (TFR) is the average number of live births each woman will have over her reproductive life. A TFR of 2.1 is generally taken as replacement level fertility: that is, the number of children is exactly enough to replace the number of parents and stop population growth. In 2009, the TFR for Solomon Islands was 4.7 children per woman, close to the same level it was in 1999 (4.8). Although still high, the rate has been decreasing steadily over the last 35 years (Figure 11). The current fertility levels of close to five children per woman represent a significant health burden for women. Most at risk are those women who have five or more children.¹⁸

TABLE 5 – POPULATION GROWTH RATES BY LOCATION, SOLOMON ISLANDS, 2009

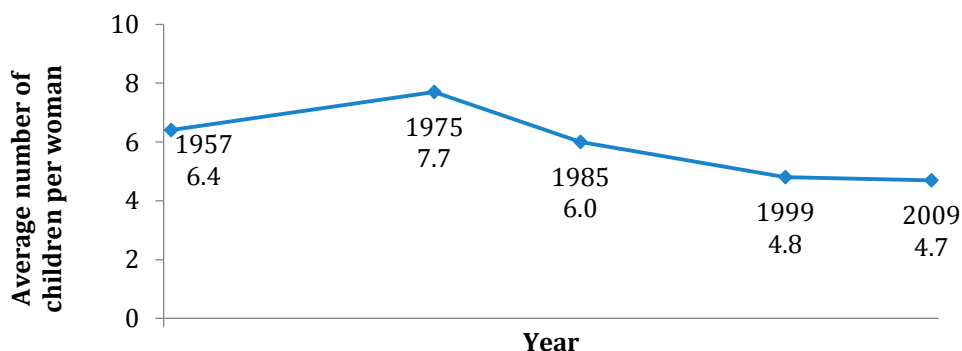
	Annual population growth rate (%)
Solomon Islands	2.3
Urban	4.7
Rural	1.8
Choiseul	2.8
Western	2.0
Isabel	2.5
Central	1.9
Rennell-Bellona	2.5
Guadalcanal	4.4
Malaita	1.2
Makira-Ulawa	2.6
Temotu	1.2
Honiara	2.7

¹⁷ 2013. Solomon Islands Government. 2009 Population and Housing Census: National Report (Volume 2).

¹⁸ 2001?. Solomon Islands Government. 1999 Population and Housing Census: Analytical Report.

No significant decline in fertility over last decade

FIGURE 11 – TOTAL FERTILITY RATE (CHILDREN EVER BORN METHOD), SOLOMON ISLANDS, 1957-2009

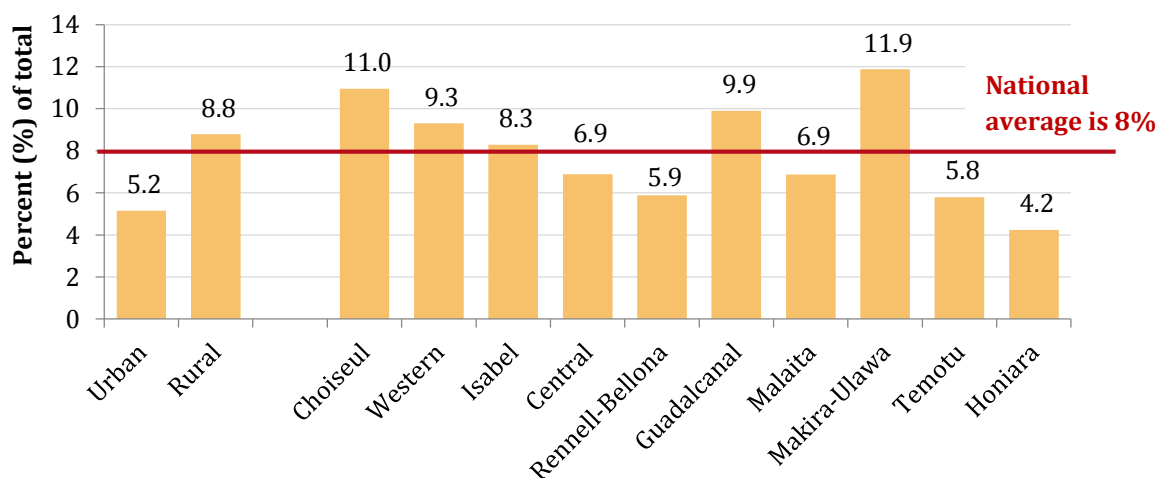


The average number of children per woman varies considerably across the country. Fertility rates are lower in urban areas (3.3) than rural areas (5.2) and highest in the provinces of Rennell-Bellona (5.9), Malaita (5.6) and Central (5.4). Honiara has the lowest fertility rate of 3.3 children per woman, and rates are also below the national average in Temotu (4.2) and Choiseul (4.6).

Adolescent fertility

Reducing teenage pregnancy is a priority in Solomon Islands and the number of women having children at a young age has fallen in recent years. In 2009, of the 25,000 women aged 15-19, around 8 percent (almost 2,000) had already had one or more children. In 1999, the proportion of women aged 15-19 who had given birth was slightly higher at 9.6 percent. The provinces of Makira-Ulawa (11.9%), Choiseul (11.0%) and Guadalcanal (9.9%) have the highest share of teenage mothers, all well above the national average (Figure 12).

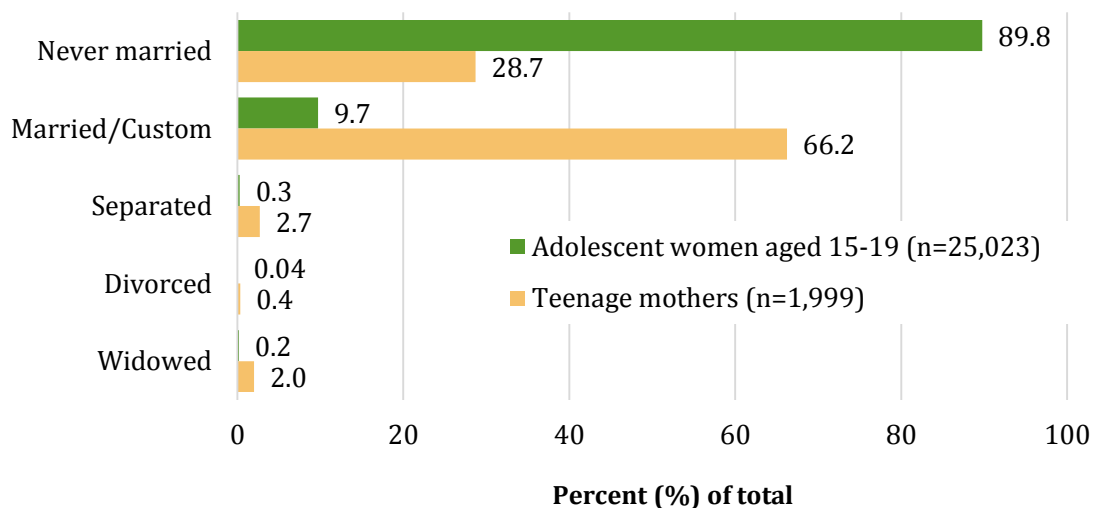
FIGURE 12 – PROPORTION OF WOMEN AGED 15-19 WHO HAVE HAD CHILDREN, SOLOMON ISLANDS, 2009



As shown in Figure 13, the majority of adolescent mothers are married (66.2%), either legally (54.3%) or through custom (11.9%). More than one quarter (28.7%) of young mothers have never been married, but whether they remain in a relationship with the father of their child cannot be ascertained from census data. Most unmarried teenage mothers live with their parents (72%) or other relatives (21%).

Most young mothers are married

FIGURE 13 – MARITAL STATUS OF ADOLESCENT WOMEN (AGE 15-19) AND MOTHERS, SOLOMON ISLANDS, 2009

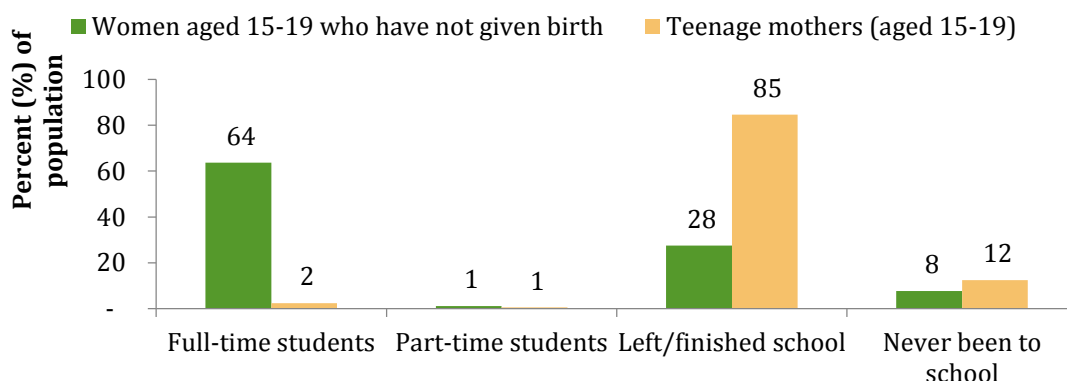


While incidence of teenage pregnancy varies according to urban or rural residence, a key factor associated with levels of adolescent fertility is education. Education of the teenager’s mother tends to be an important determinant while the education of the teenager herself tends to be strongly affected by the incidence of pregnancy.

The vast majority (85%) of teenage mothers have left or finished school, compared to only 28 percent of those who have not given birth (Figure 14). The likelihood of never going to school is also higher amongst young mothers. These relatively lower levels of education highlight the importance of ensuring family and reproductive health issues are included in the primary school curriculum and related health services reach those communities most in need.

Teenage mothers are mainly out-of-school

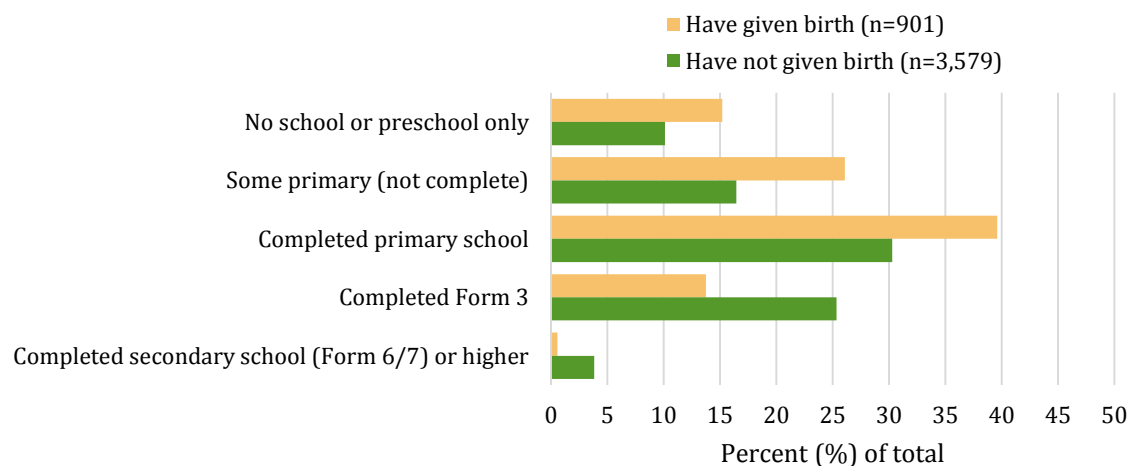
FIGURE 14 – EDUCATION STATUS OF GIRLS AGED 15-19 BY MOTHERHOOD, SOLOMON ISLANDS, 2009



The relative level of education among mothers aged 19 years illustrates the impact that early childbearing can have on education outcomes (Figure 15). By this age, most young women have finished or are close to finishing their studies, unless they go on to higher education. The census shows that of the 19 year old women who have had a child, their highest level of education is much lower than those who delay childbearing. Women who have not had a child at a young age are more likely to complete some secondary schooling or higher.

Young mothers achieve lower levels of education

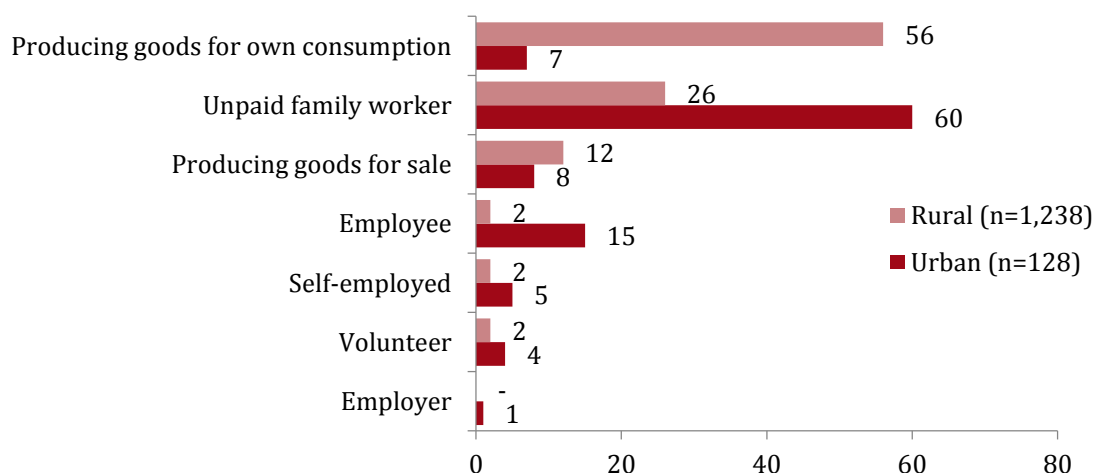
FIGURE 15 – HIGHEST EDUCATION LEVEL ATTAINED BY WOMEN AGED 19, SOLOMON ISLANDS, 2009



Adolescent mothers are more likely to live in rural areas: 86 percent are rural based, compared to 79 percent of all women aged 15-19. It may be that young women in rural areas are more likely to start childbearing early due to limited education and other opportunities. Reduced accessibility of health services and family planning information may also play a role.

The majority of adolescent mothers are economically active (68%), however, few are in income generating activities (Figure 16). In rural areas the majority produce goods for own consumption (56%), but most urban teen mothers are unpaid family workers (60%). Only 17 percent are in paid employment (28% of those in urban areas and 16% of those based rurally). Young mothers are likely to have limited choices for paid work due to child rearing responsibilities, combined with lower levels of education and work experience.

FIGURE 16 – STATUS IN EMPLOYMENT OF ADOLESCENT MOTHERS (AGED 15-19), BY RURAL/URBAN AREAS, SOLOMON ISLANDS, 2009



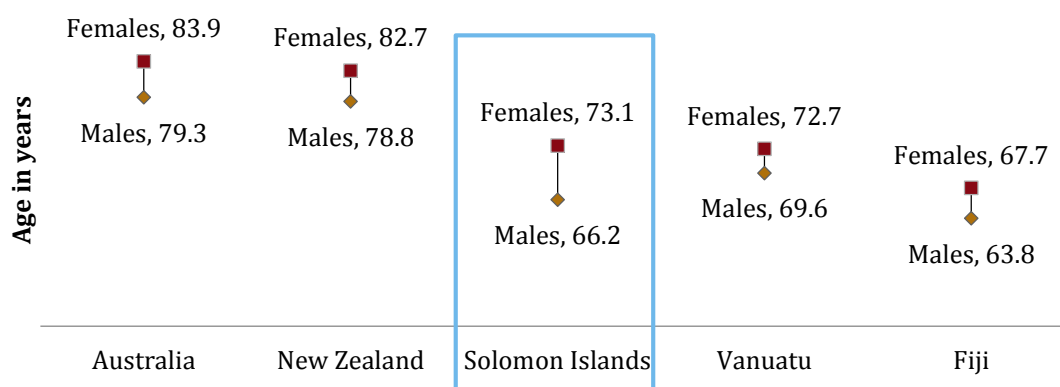
Life expectancy and mortality

Life expectancy for women has improved since 1999, but not so for men. As at 2009, life expectancy at birth is 73.1 years for women and 66.2 years for men. In 1999, it was 70.2 years for women and 67.0 for men. This large gender gap may be due to men taking greater risks with their health than women, such as smoking and alcohol and betel nut consumption.

While life expectancy in the Solomon Islands is around ten years shorter than in more developed neighbouring countries, such as Australia and New Zealand, it is similar to Vanuatu (Figure 17). However, the gender gap in the Solomon Islands is larger.

Comparing life expectancy across the region

FIGURE 17 – LIFE EXPECTANCY AT BIRTH IN YEARS, VARIOUS COUNTRIES, 2009*



* Data for Fiji relate to 2001

Data sources: Solomon Islands Population and Housing Census National Report (Volume 2); 2009 Vanuatu Population and Housing Census Gender Monograph (Vanuatu National Statistics Office, 2011) and the Secretary of the Pacific Community (www.spc.int/prism/life-expectancy)

Child mortality

Reducing child mortality – the probability of children dying before they reach age five years – is an essential goal for development and achieving a good quality of life. In Solomon Islands, child mortality is reducing, but action is still needed to reach national goals. In the last decade, there has been a significant improvement in two measures of child mortality:

- the Infant Mortality Rate (IMR) – probability of dying before age 12 months
- and the Under Five Mortality Rate (U5MR) – probability of dying before age 5 years.

Improvements in child mortality apply equally to boys and girls, although mortality rates are higher for boys than girls (Table 6). This is common in most countries and tends to be explained by biological factors that make boys more susceptible to disease and premature death than girls.

Important to know

The IMR makes up almost 70% of the U5MR, meaning that most children who die before age five are doing so before age one. In fact, according to the 2007 DHS, almost half (45%) are neonatal deaths, i.e. within the first 28 days.

TABLE 6 – MEASURES OF CHILD MORTALITY

		1999	2009
Infant mortality rate	Total	28	22
Number of infants dying before reaching one year of age (expressed as a rate per 1,000 live births)	Males	29	24
	Females	26	20
Under 5 mortality rate	Total	34	28
Probability of a child dying before reaching age 5 (expressed as a rate per 1,000 live births)	Males	36	31
	Females	32	25

The United Nations 2013 *Child Mortality Report* estimates that globally, the under-five mortality rate (U5MR) is 48 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2012 (including both developed and developing countries). At 28 in 2009, Solomon Islands is performing better than the global average, but it is still well away from the national target of 13 deaths per 1,000 live births, and the levels observed in developed regions (6 deaths per 1,000 live births).¹⁹

The gaps in child mortality rates between developed and developing regions show that most child deaths are preventable and treatable. The annual rate of reduction of the U5MR in Solomon Islands has been only 1 percent between 1990 and 2012. Tragically, an outbreak of diarrhoeal disease following the floods of April 2014 has reportedly taken the lives of 18

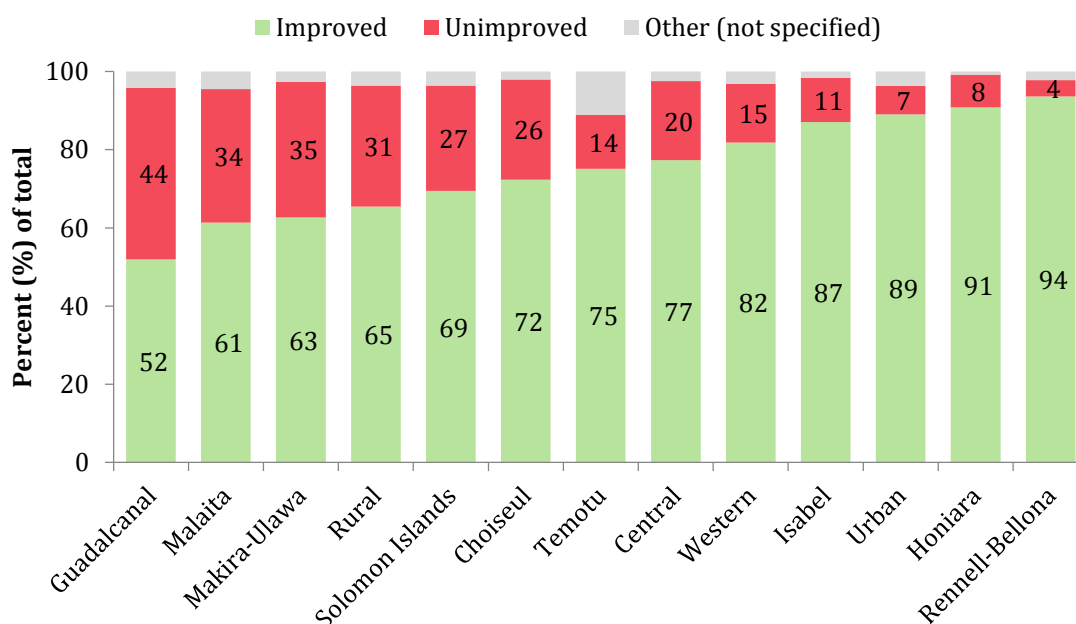
¹⁹ 2013. UNICEF et al. Levels and Trends in Child Mortality Report 2013: Estimates developed for the UN Inter-agency Group for Child Mortality Estimation.

children; evidence that the system for prevention and treatment of disease remains weak.²⁰ Health seeking behaviour is another issue likely to impact outcomes in Solomon Islands. Women often delay or avoid seeking medical treatment due to a lack of information about health care, and the travel time and transport costs involved in getting to a medical facility.²¹

Water and sanitation

An important aspect of reducing disease and high mortality rates is the supply of clean drinking water and adequate sanitation. Although the majority of households now have access to decent drinking water (69%), there are many who continue to rely on sources that are more likely to become contaminated, endangering health (Figure 18). The problem is particularly evident in Guadalcanal province, where almost half (44%) of households have poor (unimproved) drinking water. Malaita and Makira-Ulawa provinces also have high rates of households that rely on unimproved water sources.

FIGURE 18 – QUALITY OF DRINKING WATER, BY LOCATION, SOLOMON ISLANDS, 2009²²



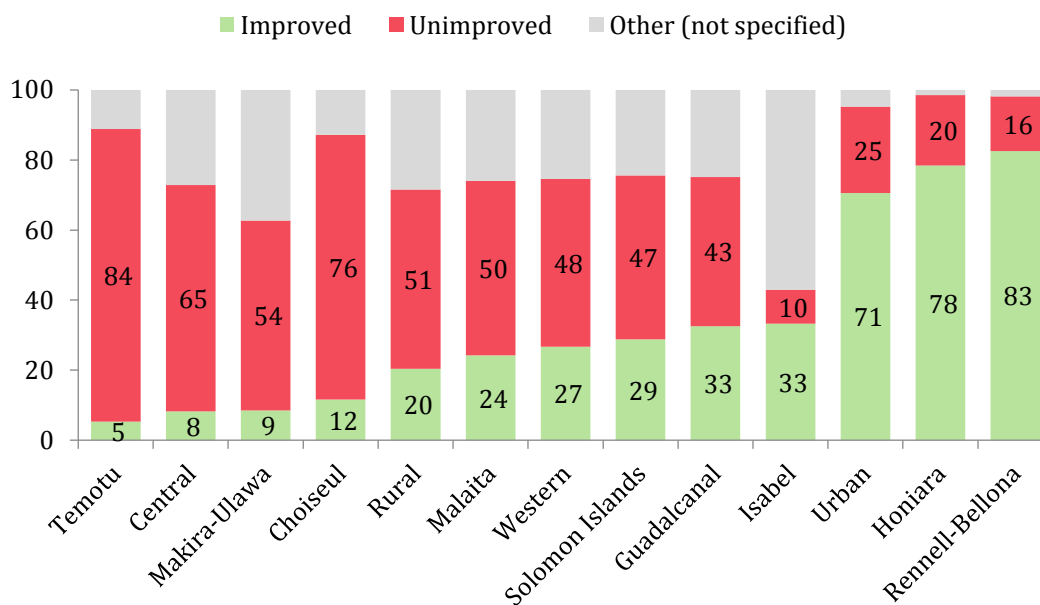
²⁰ 4 June 2014. Australia Network News. Diarrhoea outbreak kills 18 children in Solomon Islands (<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2014-06-04/solomon-diarrhoea-outbreak/5499312>)

²¹ Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC). 2013. Improving Women's Health in the Pacific Islands: Recommendations from the 12th

²² 'Improved' drinking water is either Metered-Solomon Islands Water Authority (SIWA), community standpipe, household tank, community tank, or a protected well. 'Unimproved' sources are unprotected wells, rivers, streams and bottled water (due to lack of environmental sustainability).

Too few households have adequate toilet facilities (Figure 19). Most common is for households to have no facility (33%). Another 14 percent of households share their toilet facilities with other households, increasing the risk of spread of bacterial disease. The situation is vastly better in Rennell-Bellona and Honiara, but the rest of the country is in great need of better sanitation infrastructure.

FIGURE 19 – TYPE OF TOILET FACILITY, BY LOCATION, SOLOMON ISLANDS, 2009²³



Prevalence of disability

Awareness and support for people with a disability is a national priority. In 2008, the government signed the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and is moving toward ratification. The Optional Protocol associated with the convention was signed in 2009. However, the current legal framework to protect the rights of disabled persons is weak, as is accessibility and infrastructure for people with a disability.²⁴

The first national disability policy was developed to cover the period 2005-2010 and is now being reviewed and revised. The main actor relating to rights of disabled persons in Solomon Islands is *Persons with Disabilities Solomon Islands* (PWDSI). They advocate for improved policies and services and promote awareness at national and community levels.

Around 15 percent of the total population reported some level of disability, with the prevalence being slightly higher amongst women (15%) than men (13%). Depending on the level of severity, people with a disability can function well in normal society and enjoy the same opportunities as others. However, they may need particular tools or support to be able

²³ 'Improved' toilet facilities are private flush, water-sealed toilets or pit latrines. Unimproved facilities are any that are shared (flush, water-sealed and pit latrines) or no toilet facility.

²⁴ 2014. Solomon Islands Country Gender Assessment (in draft).

to do so. They often lack access to such services and face discrimination in schools and the workplace.

As shown in Table 7, those with a severe disability (i.e. cannot see, hear, walk/climb stairs, or remember/concentrate at all) are much less likely to have been to school, or to do some form of productive work. There are no significant gender gaps in either the prevalence of disability, or in education or work outcomes.

People with a severe disability much less likely to go to school or get work

TABLE 7 – PREVALENCE OF DISABILITY BY SEVERITY AND COMPARISON OF EDUCATION AND WORK OUTCOMES, SOLOMON ISLANDS, 2009

	Total population		Never been to school (aged 6+)		Do not work (aged 15-64)	
	Males (%)	Females (%)	Males (%)	Females (%)	Males (%)	Females (%)
No disability No difficulties in all four domains	87	86	4	3	24	27
Some disability Some difficulties in any one or more of the domains	12	13	7	7	23	30
Severe disability Cannot do at all in any one or more of the domains	1	2	14	17	50	52

The 2009 population census collected information on different types of disability (see adjacent 'Important to know'). For each of the four types of disability – seeing, hearing, walking or climbing stairs, remembering or concentrating – a slightly higher proportion of females than males are affected (Figure 20). This may be due the fact that disability increases with age, and there are a more women amongst the elderly. Note that the population aged 0-2 years who reported some form of disability have been excluded from this analysis due to the possibility that difficulties are related to their level of development rather than ability.

Important to know

The census asks each person if they have any difficulties in four functional areas:

1. seeing
2. hearing
3. walking or climbing stairs
4. remembering or concentrating

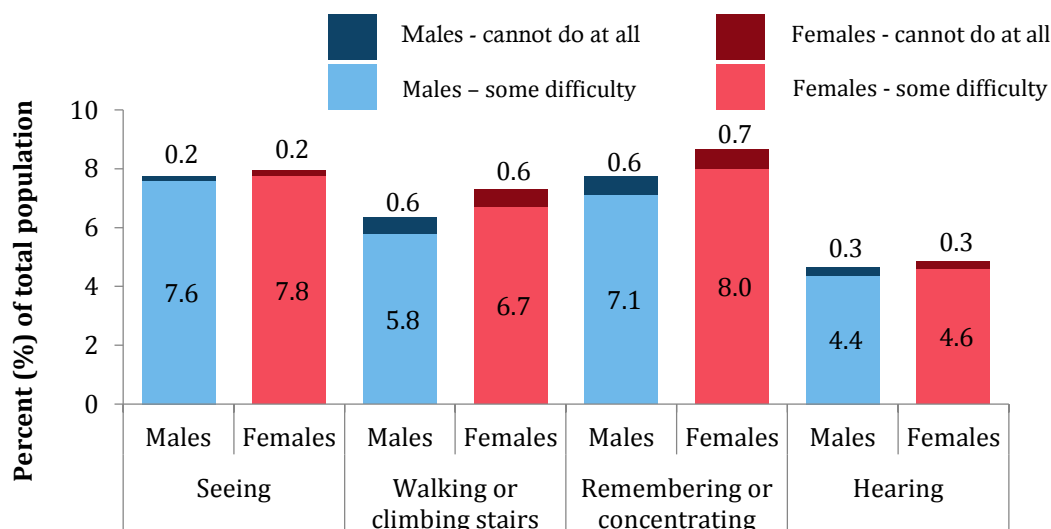
For each of these areas, people are asked whether they have (a) no difficulties; (b) some difficulties or (c) cannot do at all. Any difficulty should be of a permanent nature and not due to temporary illness or injury.

Those that answer (b) "some difficulties" are considered to have some form of disability. Those that answer (c) "cannot do at all" are considered to be severely disabled.

This approach is based on international standards for collecting data on disability prevalence through population censuses.

Disability is slightly more common amongst women

FIGURE 20 – PREVALENCE OF DISABILITY, BY TYPE, SEVERITY AND SEX, SOLOMON ISLANDS, 2009

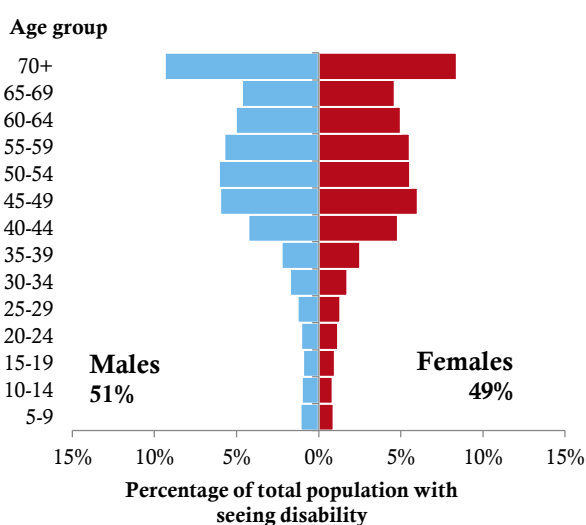


Note: prevalence rates exclude population aged less than 2 years due to tendency to report difficulties related to development rather than disability

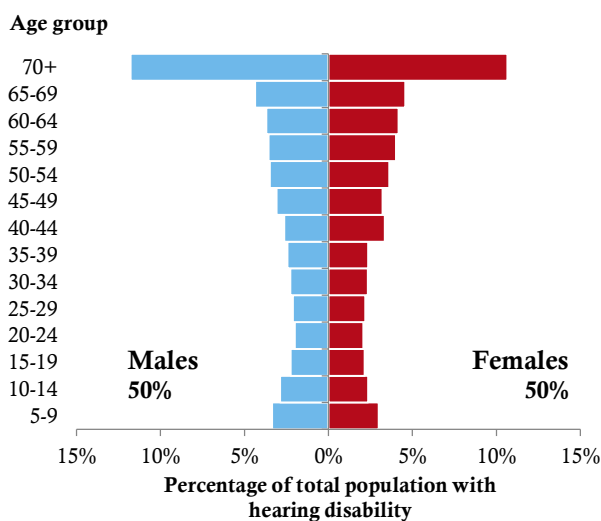
Figure 21 clearly illustrates the relationship between disability and aging. The widest bars being at the top of each chart show the large proportion of people with a disability are aged 70 or above. However, disability cannot be dismissed as an issue only for the elderly. Almost half (46%) of the 35,000 people that have difficulty remembering or concentrating are below 45 years old. Hearing difficulties are a challenge for 22,000 Solomon Islanders, with 40 percent of those being under the age of 45 years.

FIGURE 21 – AGE AND SEX STRUCTURE OF THE POPULATION WITH A DISABILITY, BY TYPE OF DISABILITY, SOLOMON ISLANDS, 2009

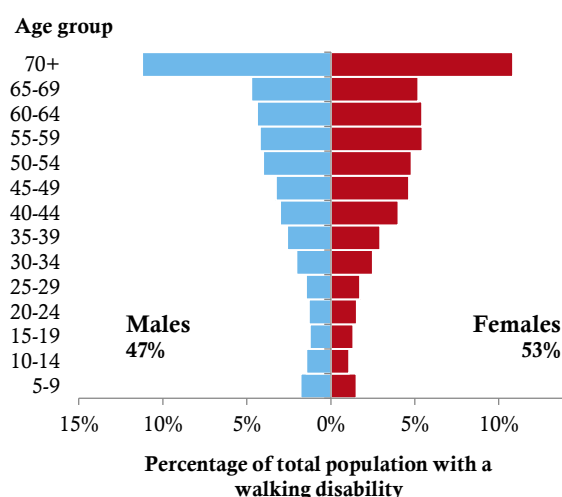
Population of people with a seeing disability, Solomon Islands, 2009



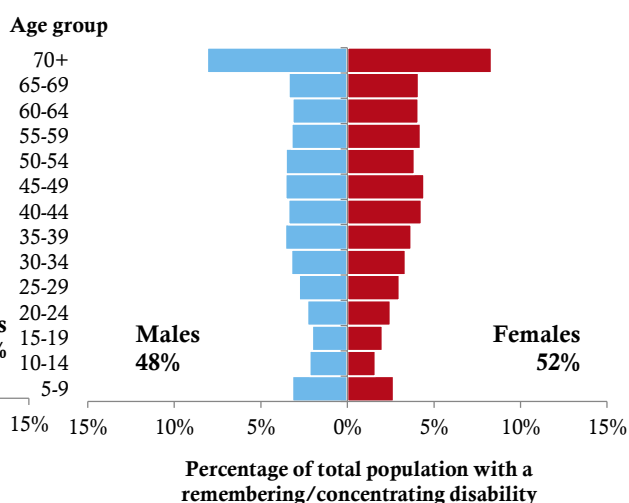
Population of people with a hearing disability, Solomon Islands, 2009



Population of people with a walking disability, Solomon Islands, 2009

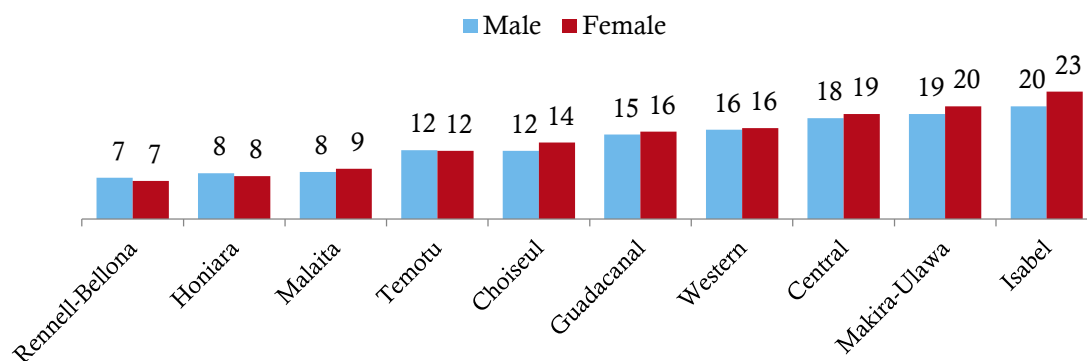


Population of people with a remembering/concentrating disability, Solomon Islands, 2009



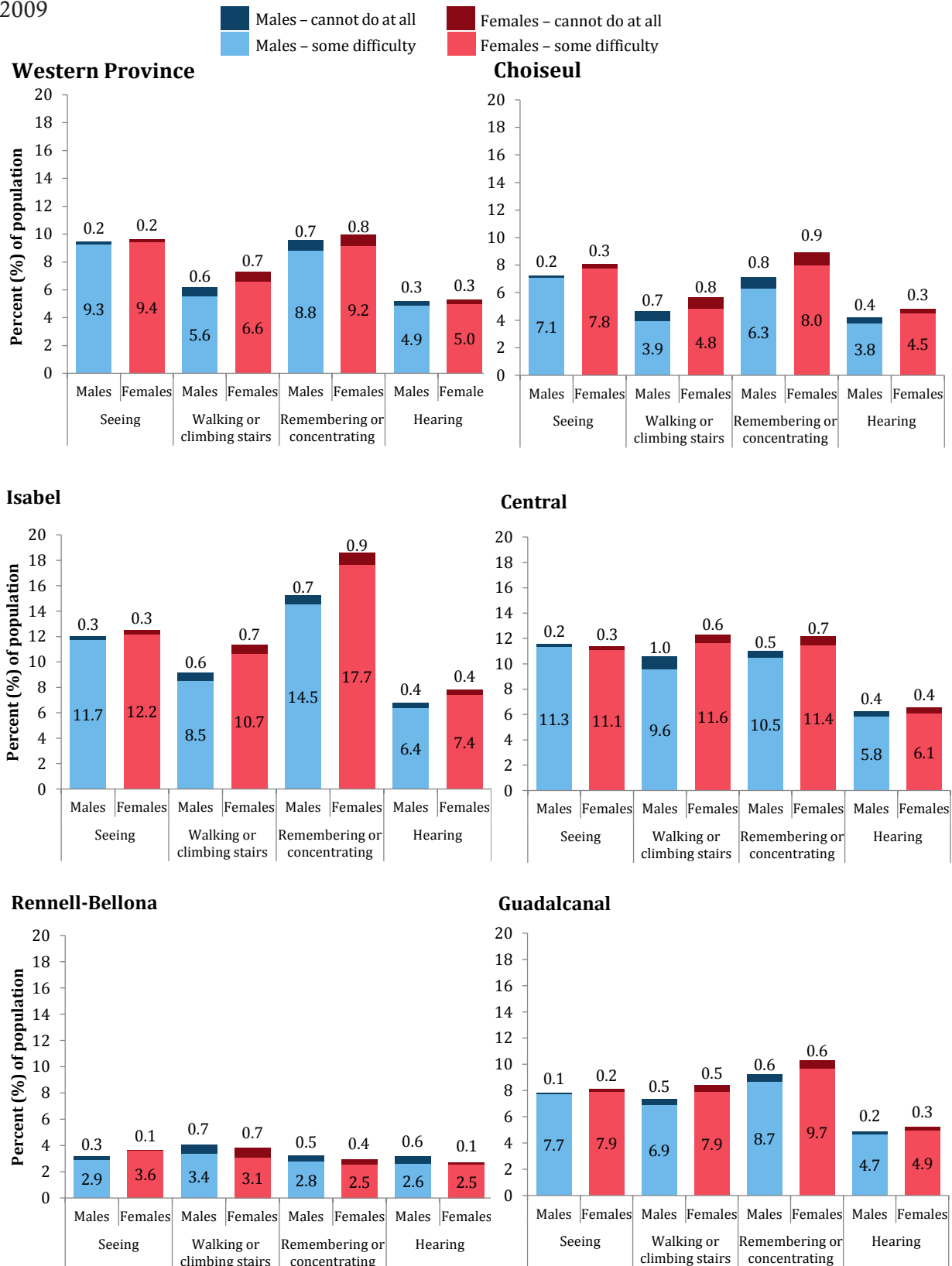
People with a disability are more likely to live in rural areas, highlighting the importance of providing services to those living outside of urban centres. The prevalence of disability varies by province. As can be seen in Figure 22, around one in five (20%) people living in Isabel, Makira-Ulawa and Central provinces reported having a disability. Rates were closer to 10 percent in Malaita, Honiara and Rennell-Bellona. The types and severity of disability experienced by people in each province are shown in Figure 23.

FIGURE 22 – PREVALENCE OF DISABILITY BY PROVINCE AND SEX, SOLOMON ISLANDS, 2009



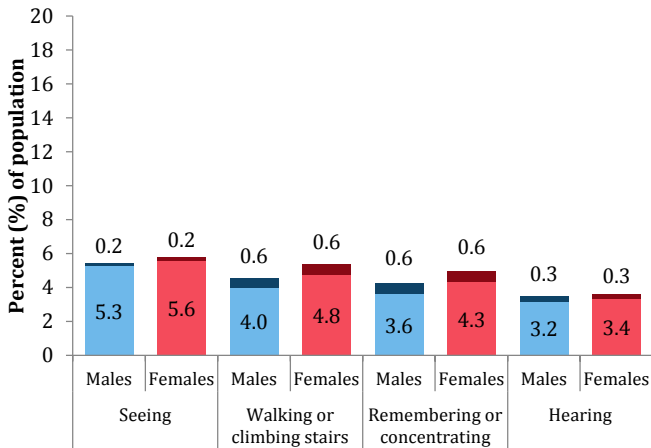
Note: prevalence rates exclude population aged less than 2 years due to tendency to report difficulties related to development rather than disability

FIGURE 23 – PREVALENCE OF DISABILITY, BY PROVINCE, TYPE, SEVERITY AND SEX, 2009

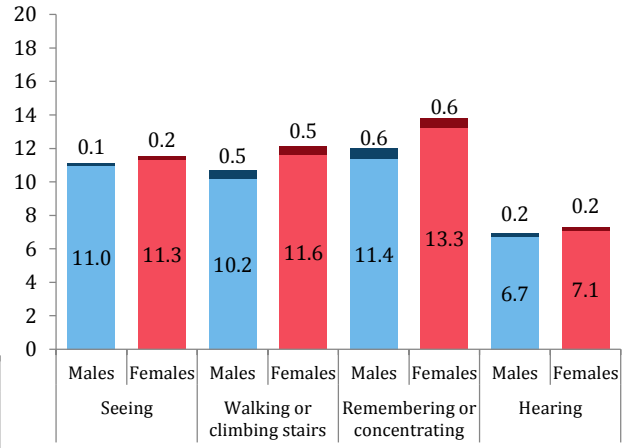




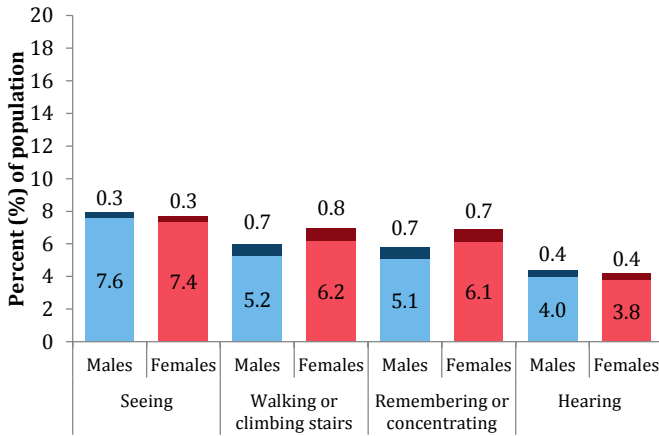
Malaita



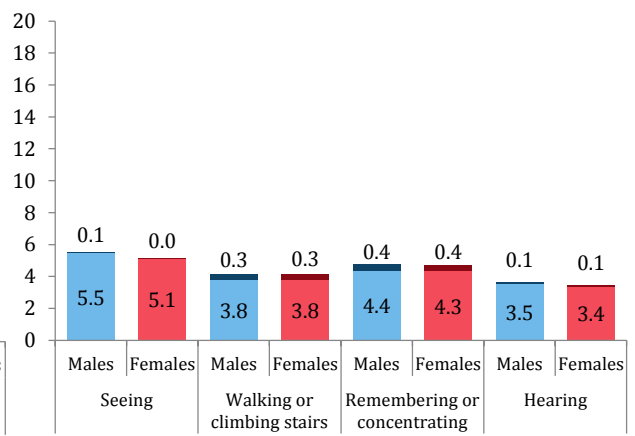
Makira-Ulawa



Temotu



Honiara



3. Education

Education is central to the social and economic development of Solomon Islands. From early childhood through to adult learning, formal and informal education provides fundamental knowledge and skills that influence all aspects of work and personal life. Key amongst these are the ability to read and write (literacy), work with numbers (numeracy) and the skills needed to function in everyday society.

Key findings

- Around 13% of boys and girls of primary school age have never been to school
- Many more adult women than men have no schooling
- Current school attendance rates suggest Solomon Islands is heading towards gender parity in primary education
- More girls are leaving school around ages 14-15 than boys, especially in urban areas
- Men have attained a higher level of education than women
- Most Solomon Islanders complete a primary education or higher (64% of men and 53% of women), but few finish Form 6/7 of secondary school (10% of men and 5% of women)
- Few have tertiary qualifications: 1.3% of men and 0.4% of women
- Literacy rates are improving and the gender gap in literacy has almost closed amongst youth (age 15-24)

National goals and priorities

Solomon Islands is committed to ensuring that all girls and boys are provided a full primary education. Education needs to be available to all, and of a high quality, to enhance national human resource capacity. This is reflected in the Education Strategic Framework (2007-2015) and the National Coalition for Reform and Advancement (NCRA) Government Policy statement (October 2010).

Equal representation of females and males - referred to as *gender parity* - among primary, secondary and tertiary students is also a national priority, as is improving early childhood education, increasing adult literacy and making primary school education compulsory by 2015.

The education system in Solomon Islands is non-compulsory. It comprises five general levels:

Early childhood (pre-school)
age 3-5

Primary
Preparatory (age 6) to Grade 6 (age 12);
Primary school education is free but not compulsory in the Solomon Islands.

Junior secondary
Form 1 (age 13) to Form 3 (age 15)

Senior secondary
Form 4 (age 16) to Form 6/7 (age 18)

Tertiary
age 19 and above
Institute in Solomon Islands or another country

Technical vocational education and training
Technical and trade-oriented training

The Solomon Islands Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development (MEHRD) performance assessment report (2006-2013) includes indicators for all levels of education in the Solomon Islands. The core information was obtained from the annual school census, which is updated every year by the Ministry. The performance indicators are aligned with the Millennium Development Goal 2 (Achieve universal primary education) and Goal 3 (Promote gender equality and empower women) and include:

- **Access indicators:** net enrolment, gross enrolment ratio, gender parity index of males and females in pre-school, primary and secondary schools only.
- **Quality indicators:** literacy rates at year 4 and 6; numeracy rates at year 4 and 6; and repetition rate
- **Management indicators:** public expenditure costs for secondary and tertiary education.

Only those indicators related to access and literacy can be calculated from census data, although it should be noted that the census asks about attendance, not enrolment. Other relevant information available from population and housing census data include:

- attendance in pre-school, primary, secondary and tertiary education
- adult education attainment levels
- adult and youth literacy rates

What information does a population and housing census gather about education?

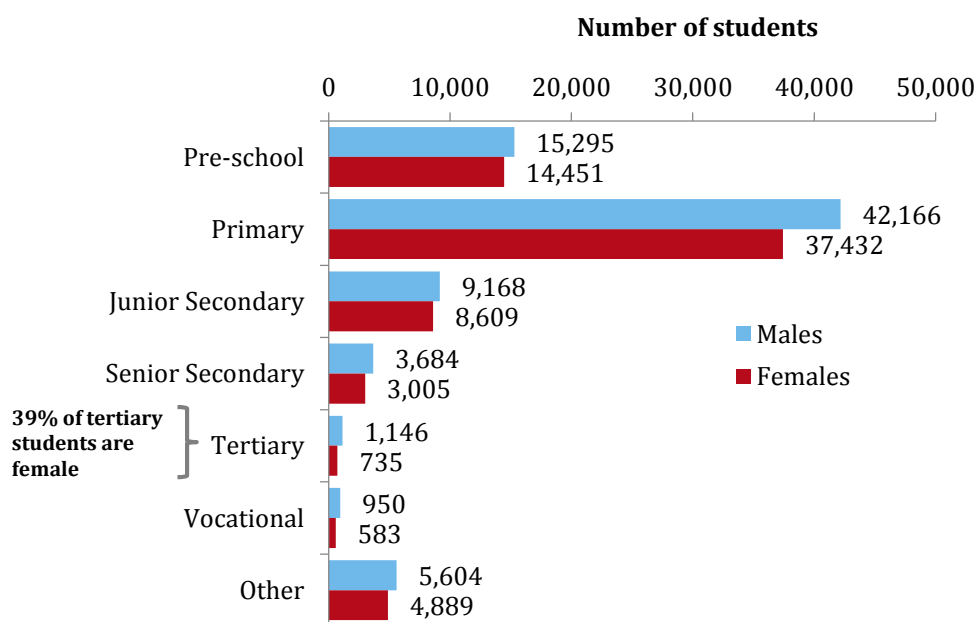
For all people aged five years or above, the 2009 Solomon Island population and housing census gathered information on:

- current attendance at a formal education institution and level
- ability to read and write in English, Pidgin, local language and other language
- the highest level of education that each person has completed (asked only of age 12 years and above)

Current student population

The population census shows that, as at 2009, there were around 148,000 people (47% female) currently attending a formal education institution. The majority of students are attending primary school (42,000 boys and 37,000 girls) and around 30,000 children attending pre-school (Figure 24). The secondary school population is around 24,000 students (47% girls). Less than 2,000 people are attending tertiary institutions and around 1,500 attending vocational courses. There is a significant gender gap at tertiary and vocational levels with less than 40 percent of students being women.

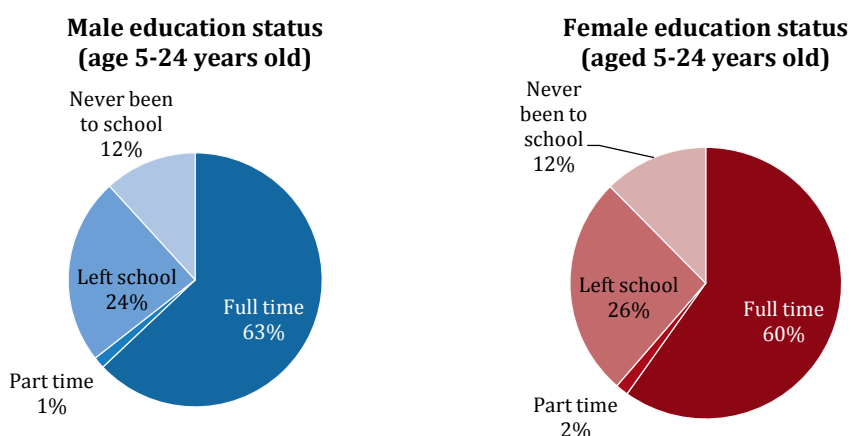
FIGURE 24 – NUMBER OF STUDENTS AT EACH LEVEL OF EDUCATION, BY SEX, SOLOMON ISLANDS, 2009



Who is missing out on an education?

Everyone aged five and above is either (a) currently a full-time student (b) part-time student, (c) have left school; or (d) have never been to school. To achieve the national goal for all Solomon Islanders to be provided with a full primary education, the aim over time is to bring the proportion of people who have never been to school down to zero. In 2009, attendance status amongst the population aged 5-24 years showed the percentage that have never been to school is 12 percent for both females and males (Figure 25).

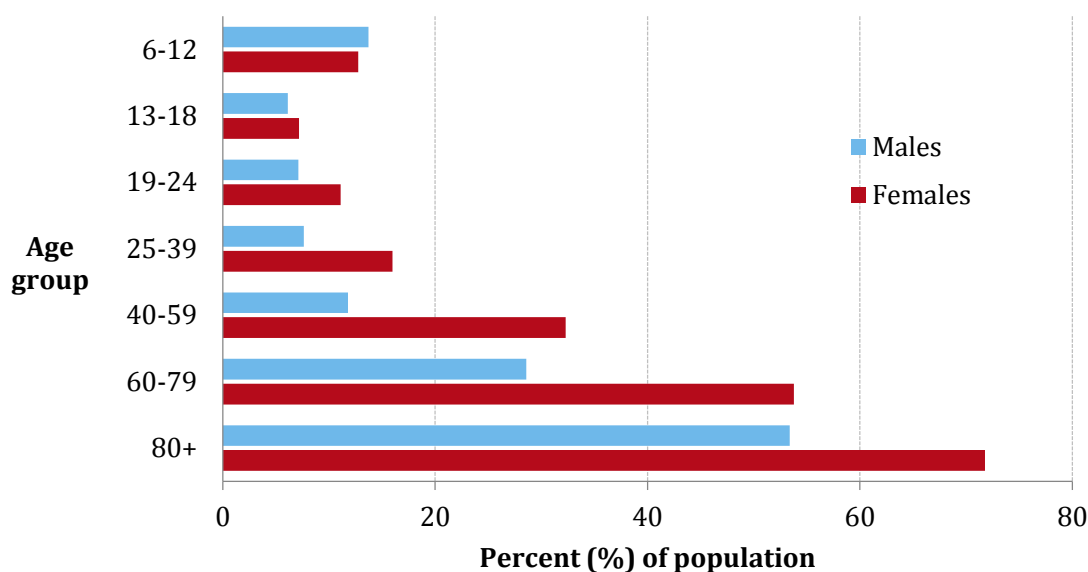
FIGURE 25 – EDUCATION STATUS BY SEX, SOLOMON ISLANDS, 2009



When the data is broken down by age, the gender gaps begin to show. As illustrated in Figure 26, there are more boys than girls who have never been to school amongst children at primary school age (age 6-12). For the older generations, it is the women who missed out on an education. A sharp decline in the proportion that have never been to school amongst those aged 13-18 and 19-24 shows the positive effects of increasing access to education are being felt by younger generations. Although, overall, more women have never been to school than is the case for men, the significant gender gap seen in older generations has been reduced. This shows that the goal of achieving gender parity in education is close to being achieved.

More often it is women that have never been to school

FIGURE 26 – PROPORTION OF POPULATION NEVER ATTENDED SCHOOL, BY SEX AND AGE GROUP, SOLOMON ISLANDS, 2009

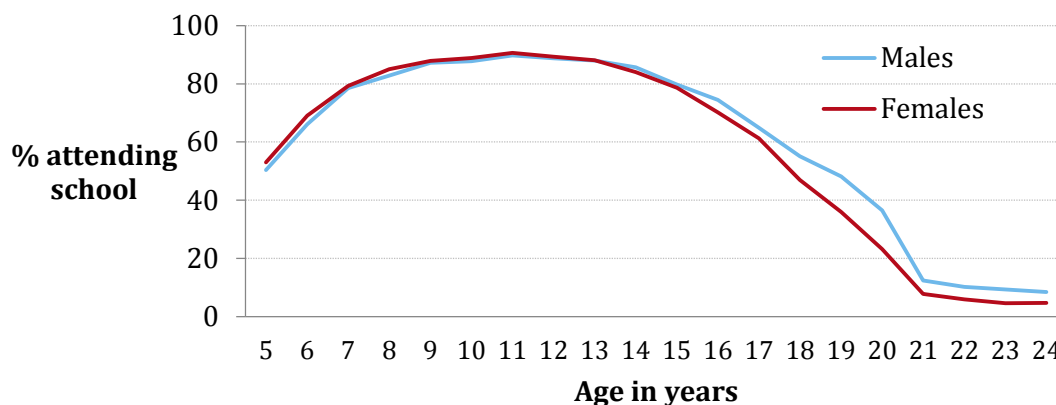


The education system may be improving, but retaining students remains a challenge. The graph below shows the proportion of boys and girls, at every age from 5 through to 24 who were attending school at the time of the census (Figure 27). Around 50 percent of boys and girls aged 5 were attending pre-school. Attendance rates are highest (around 90%) for those of primary school age, and then steadily decline through the late teenage years and early twenties. The differences between boys and girls are most evident from around age 15, when boys' attendance starts to overtake that of girls.

Differences in attendance patterns are more pronounced between urban and rural areas than between boys and girls. As shown in Figure 28, young girls living in urban areas are leaving school from about age 14, and at a faster rate than boys. The trend of leaving school early is similar in rural areas, except there is a less of a gender gap until around age 16 (Figure 29).

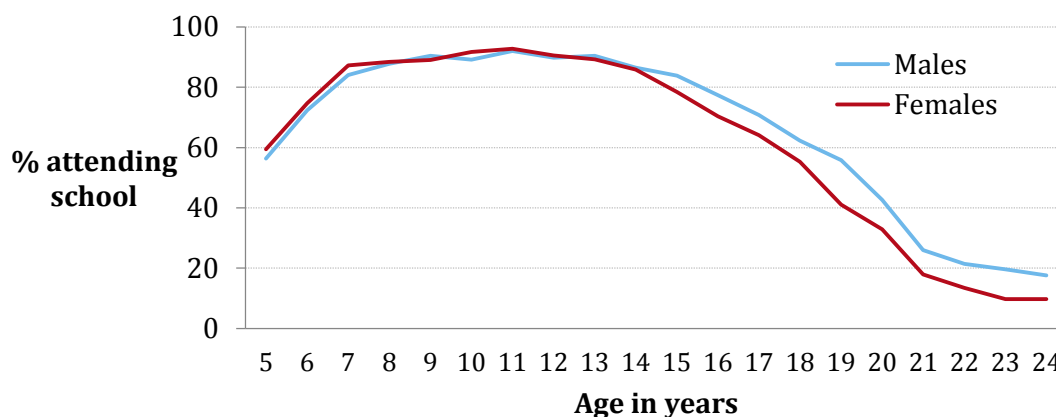
Gender gap in school attendance begins around age 15

FIGURE 27 – AGE SPECIFIC SCHOOL ATTENDANCE RATES, SOLOMON ISLANDS, 2009



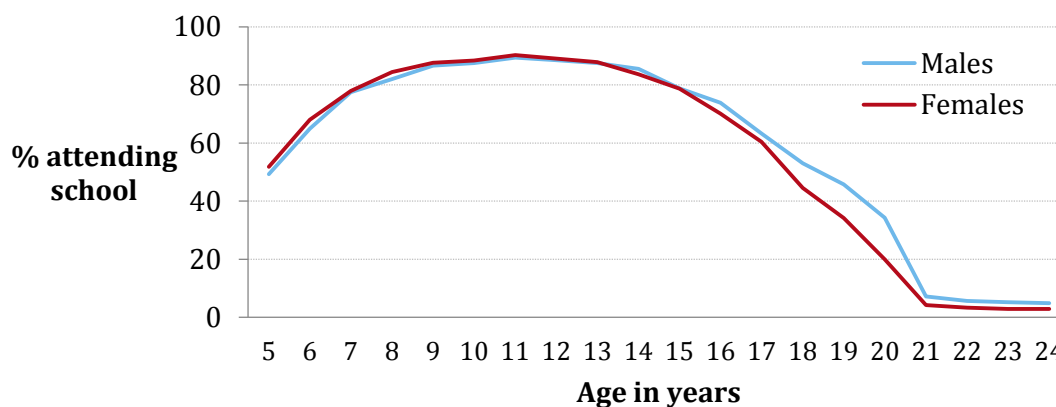
Girls in urban areas are leaving school earlier than boys

FIGURE 28 – AGE SPECIFIC SCHOOL ATTENDANCE RATES, URBAN AREAS OF SOLOMON ISLANDS, 2009



Rural areas have slightly lower attendance overall

FIGURE 29 – AGE SPECIFIC SCHOOL ATTENDANCE RATES, RURAL AREAS OF SOLOMON ISLANDS, 2009



Important indicators of access to education are net and gross enrolment rates. The Ministry of Education typically produces these indicators based on enrolment data collected at each school. The census asks about school attendance, which differs from enrolment (see **Box 2**). This provides another measure of access to education and the possibility to produce net and gross attendance rates (Table 8).

BOX 2 – SCHOOL ATTENDANCE VERSUS ENROLMENT – WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE?

Enrolment and attendance are both measures of participation in the education system but they are not the same thing. The population census asks about attendance in education at the time at which the census was conducted (October 2011). On the other hand, enrolment tends to be based on records compiled at the start of the school year by the national education system.

It is possible to enrol in school but never attend. It is equally possible to attend school and not be enrolled. Given this, both attendance and enrolment are valuable and important indicators of the effectiveness of the education system.

Net attendance rates show that just over half of children aged 6-12 years old were attending primary school at the time of the census (54% of boys and 55% of girls).²⁵ Gross attendance rates are much higher for both boys and girls (85% and 83% respectively), which indicates that a large number of primary school students are outside the official age range (usually older).²⁶ This is usually due to a combination of starting school late and having to repeat one or more years before being able to progress. The age of students at each level of schooling is illustrated in Figure 30 to Figure 33.

TABLE 8 – NET AND GROSS ATTENDANCE RATES IN PRIMARY, SECONDARY AND TERTIARY EDUCATION, BY SEX AND URBAN/RURAL LOCATION, SOLOMON ISLANDS, 2009

	Urban		Rural		Total	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Net attendance rate in primary education (%)	60.1	60.8	52.7	53.3	53.9	54.5
Gross attendance rate in primary education (%)	83.1	81.3	85.8	83.8	85.4	83.4
Net attendance rate in secondary education (%)	43.9	44.1	22.7	24.9	26.7	28.7
Gross attendance rate in secondary education (%)	66.9	58.7	31.6	31.1	38.4	36.6
Net attendance rate in tertiary education (%)	6.2	4.7	0.6	0.5	2.1	1.6
Gross attendance rate in tertiary education (%)	11.5	8.0	1.4	0.8	4.2	2.7

The tendency for students to be outside the official age range is a consistent factor in all levels of education, from preschool through to tertiary level. Census data allows

²⁵ Net attendance rates are calculated by dividing the total number of boys/girls of official primary school age (i.e. 6-12 years old) who are attending primary school (numerator) over the total number of boys/girls of official primary school age (denominator).

²⁶ Gross attendance rates are calculated by dividing the total number of boys/girls regardless of age who are attending primary school (numerator) over the total number of boys/girls of official primary school age (denominator).

identification of the number of students at each age, which can be compared to the official age ranges. This shows that the vast majority (77%) of preschool students are above the age of 5 (Figure 30), demonstrating how late children tend to start their education. At primary school level, most students are aged between 9 and 13 years old, with 48 percent being over the official age range of 6-12 years (Figure 31). In 2009, secondary school students were far more likely to be within the official age range of 13-18 years, with less than 1 percent being younger and 25 percent being 19 or older (Figure 32). Tertiary students tend to be of varying ages given that people can return to study later in life, particularly at post-graduate levels. Taking the five years following secondary school age as the official range for tertiary (as per UNESCO guidelines), the census shows that about one quarter (24%) of students were aged between 19 and 24 years.

FIGURE 30 – PRESCHOOL STUDENTS BY AGE AND SEX, SOLOMON ISLANDS, 2009

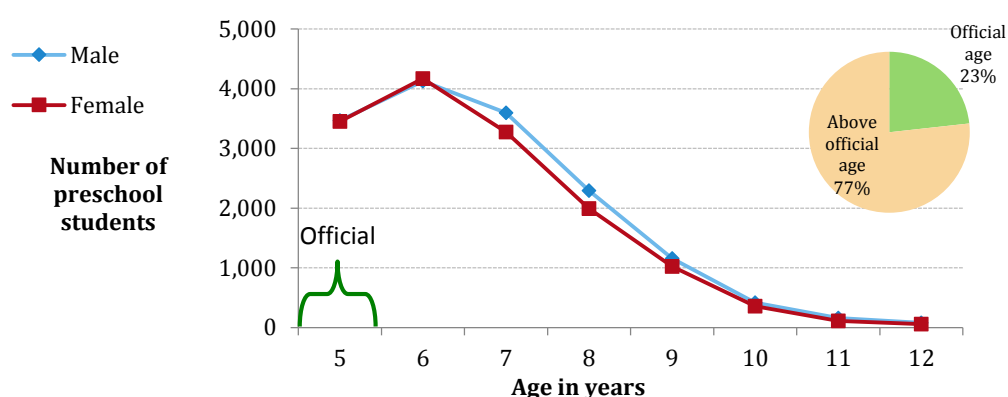


FIGURE 31 – PRIMARY SCHOOL STUDENTS BY AGE AND SEX, SOLOMON ISLANDS, 2009

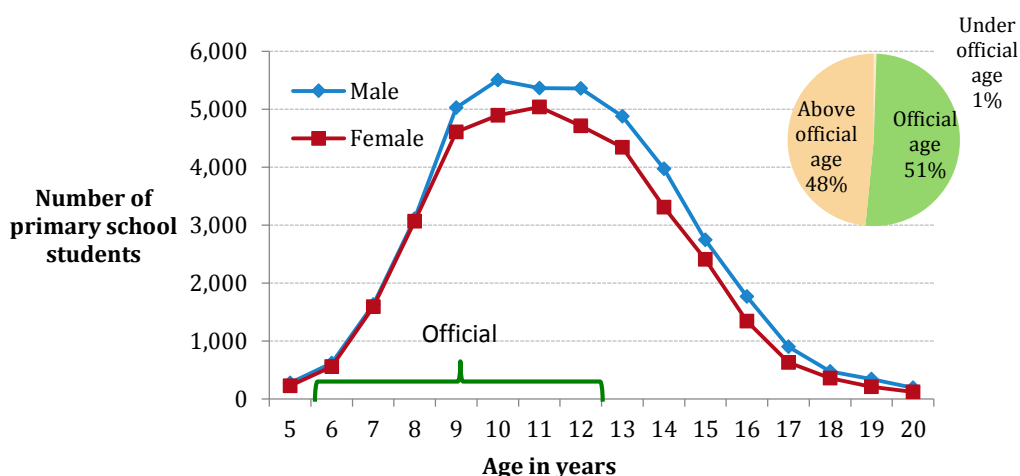


FIGURE 32 – SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS BY AGE AND SEX, SOLOMON ISLANDS, 2009

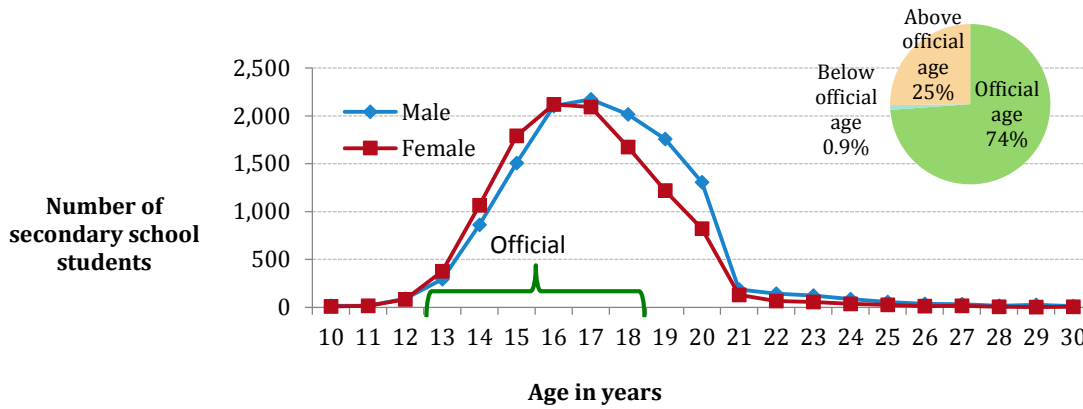
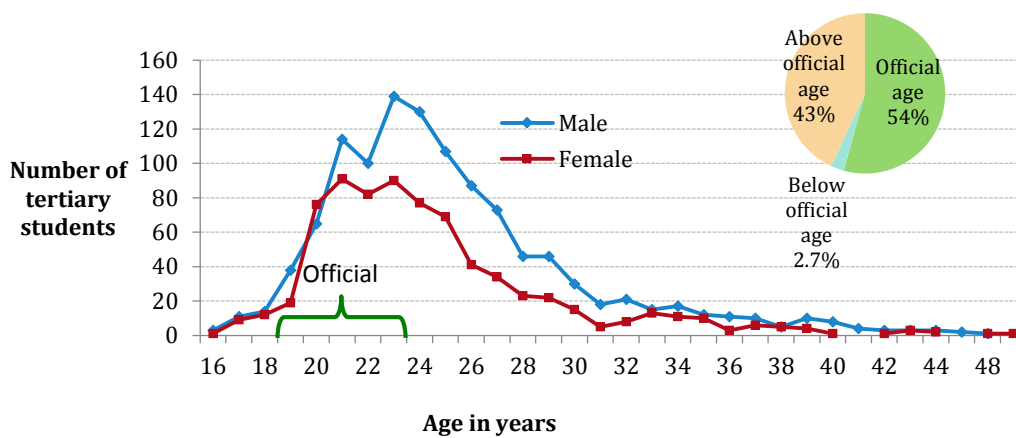


FIGURE 33 – TERTIARY STUDENTS BY AGE AND SEX, SOLOMON ISLANDS, 2009



Gender parity index

When it comes to currently attending primary school, boys have a slight advantage over girls. The Gender Parity Index for primary school attendance is 0.99 for Solomon Islands. This means that the proportion of boys attending primary school is slightly more than the proportion of girls (see box below for more information on this indicator). The graph below shows how the primary school GPI differs between rural and urban locations, as well as in each of the provinces.

Boys have slight advantage in primary school attendance

FIGURE 34 – GENDER PARITY INDEX (GPI) FOR PRIMARY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE, SOLOMON ISLANDS, 2009



Solomon Islands in context

Gender Parity Index Primary Attendance / Enrolment

	2009
Afghanistan	0.67
Nigeria	0.88
Cambodia	0.95
Samoa	0.98
Solomon Islands	0.98
France	0.99
Australia	1.00
New Zealand	1.01
China	1.04

Data source for all except Solomon Islands: United Nations Millennium Development Goal Database (mdgs.un.org).

BOX 3 – WHAT IS THE GENDER PARITY INDEX (GPI)?

The gender parity index (GPI) at the primary school level indicates whether male and female children are equally likely to attend primary school, or whether there is a gender gap in their participation. The GPI is a comparison between males and females based on the gross attendance ratio (proportion of children of any age attending primary/secondary school of the total number of official primary/secondary school age). It is also calculated for secondary school, tertiary and pre-school attendance.

What does it mean?

A GPI of 1.0 indicates gender parity - the outcome policymakers are typically aiming for. A GPI of less than 1.0 indicates gender disparity in favour of males (more males than females attending school); more than 1.0 indicates disparity in favour of females (more females than males).

The overall GPI for current secondary school attendance in Solomon Island is 0.96, indicating that at the time of the census in 2009, boys were more likely than girls to be attending secondary school.

Tertiary education is an important priority. It enhances the skills of young people to meet the demands of the future labour market. The gender parity index is 0.62 for Solomon Islands, representing much higher attendance of young men in tertiary education relative to young women. This gender gap was common across urban and rural areas, as well as in all provinces.

What is the level of education in the Solomon Islands?

An important development indicator is the highest level of education each adult has attained – also referred to as *adult educational attainment*. This is used as an indicator of human capital and covers the population aged 15 and above (Table 9).

TABLE 9 – HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION OF POPULATION AGED 15 AND ABOVE, BY SEX AND URBAN/RURAL LOCATION, SOLOMON ISLANDS, 2009

	Total (%)		Urban (%)		Rural (%)	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
No schooling / preschool	11.8	21.4	4.4	9.8	13.8	24.4
Some primary schooling	27.4	27.8	16.9	19.7	30.4	29.9
Completed primary schooling	31.6	30.2	27.5	29.5	32.7	30.3
Some secondary schooling	19.9	15.6	31.1	27.6	16.7	12.5
Completed secondary (<i>i.e. Form 6 or 7</i>)	2.1	1.2	5.1	3.8	1.3	0.6
Some college	4.7	2.7	9.4	7.2	3.3	1.5
Tertiary qualification	1.3	0.4	4.1	1.7	0.5	0.1
Vocational certificate	1.3	0.6	1.6	0.7	1.3	0.6
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

The results show that 88 percent men and 79 percent of women have some school education. Gender gaps are most prominent amongst those with no schooling/preschool. There is little difference between men and women in terms of primary education, but a higher proportion of men have a secondary school, university or vocational qualification. Some people 15 and above are still studying and will go on to achieve higher levels of education.

As shown in Table 10, differences in the highest level of education between men and women are more evident by province. Education levels are lowest in Malaita and Central provinces, with few women and men progressing past primary school. The gender gaps are most notable in Rennell-Bellona, where one third (33%) of men have some secondary school education or higher, but only 19 percent of women. Gender gaps are also high in Honiara, Isabel and Guadalcanal.

TABLE 10 – HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION OF POPULATION AGED 15 AND ABOVE, BY PROVINCE AND SEX, SOLOMON ISLANDS, 2009

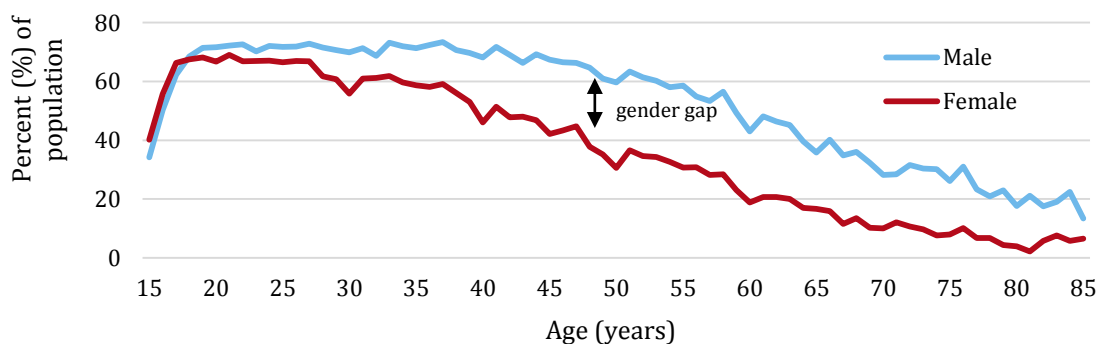
	Choiseul		Western		Isabel		Central		Rennell-Bellona	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
No school / preschool	4.4	4.8	4.2	4.1	13.2	23.4	12.5	26.6	4.6	5.8
Some primary	31.6	31.8	25.6	27.7	21.4	19.6	32.7	34.3	29.8	35.3
Completed primary	40.5	44.8	42.6	46.2	31.3	32.2	31.2	24.0	32.9	39.9
Some secondary	16.6	14.9	18.5	17.1	27.4	21.8	18.6	12.8	16.4	13.2
Secondary	1.2	0.8	1.5	0.9	1.5	0.6	1.3	0.4	2.2	1.6
Some college	3.3	2.0	4.6	2.4	3.9	1.8	2.9	1.4	9.8	2.1
Tertiary qualification	0.5	0.1	1.0	0.3	0.4	0.1	0.3	0.1	2.1	1.1
Vocational certificate	1.7	0.8	2.0	1.2	1.0	0.5	0.5	0.5	2.3	1.1

	Guadalcanal		Malaita		Makira-Ulawa		Temotu		Honiara	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
No school / preschool	15.8	25.4	19.3	35.9	10.2	17.7	14.4	33.4	3.7	8.8
Some primary	28.2	29.4	33.8	31.1	27.7	27.6	30.8	27.8	14.7	18.1
Completed primary	28.8	26.9	27.4	21.6	34.8	35.9	32.2	24.8	25.3	27.6
Some secondary	19.3	14.1	14.1	9.3	19.0	15.1	16.5	11.5	32.8	29.7
Secondary	2.0	1.1	1.3	0.5	1.4	0.7	0.9	0.6	5.9	4.5
Some college	3.9	2.4	2.8	1.3	3.9	1.8	3.6	1.5	10.8	8.3
Tertiary qualification	0.8	0.2	0.4	0.1	0.6	0.2	0.6	0.1	5.2	2.3
Vocational certificate	1.1	0.4	0.8	0.3	2.4	1.1	1.0	0.3	1.6	0.7

Education attainment by age reveals how access to and quality of education are changing over time. The proportion of each age who have completed primary school or higher is shown in Figure 35, with the completion rates being around 70 percent for those aged 20-30 years, much higher than is the case for older generations. The biggest improvement over time is for women with the gender gap narrowing significantly for those aged less than 30 years. However, it requires many more years of continued efforts to ensure both boys and girls complete their education before men and women will enjoy equal levels of education.

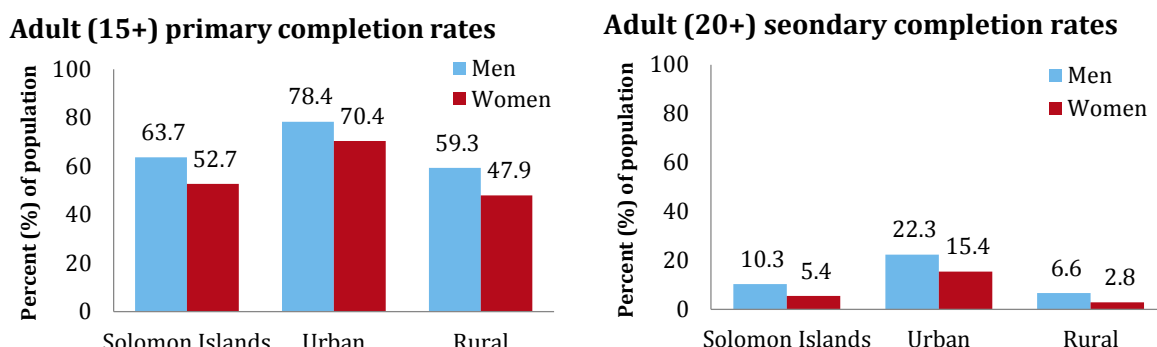
Higher primary school completion among younger generations shows improvements

FIGURE 35 – PROPORTION WHO HAVE COMPLETED PRIMARY SCHOOL OR HIGHER, BY SEX, SOLOMON ISLANDS, 2009



Adult primary and secondary school completion rates are an important indicator of the relationship between gender and education outcomes (Figure 36). Most Solomon Islanders have completed a primary education or higher (64% of men and 53% of women), but few complete Form 6 or 7 of secondary school (10% of men and 5% of women). Significant gaps exist between urban and rural areas and between men and women.

FIGURE 36 – ADULT PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOL COMPLETION RATES, BY SEX AND URBAN/RURAL LOCATION, SOLOMON ISLANDS, 2009

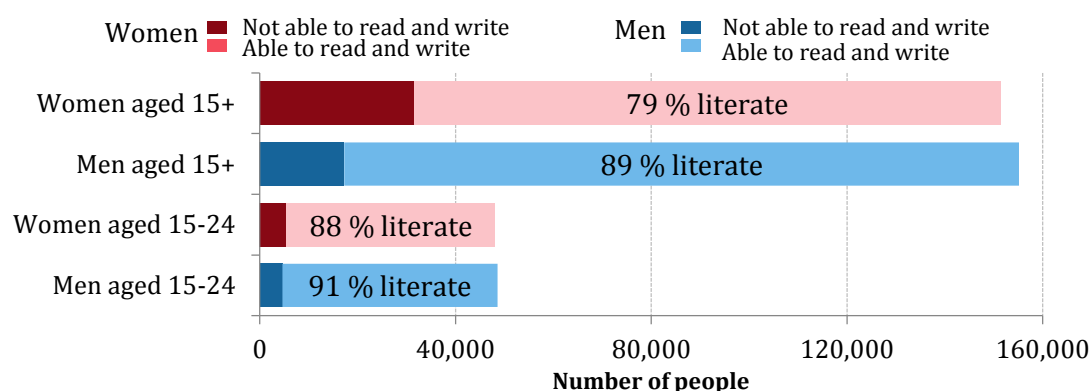


Literacy and language

A person is considered literate if they can read and write in at least one language. The 2009 census shows that literacy rates in Solomon Island are reasonably high, with 77 percent of the population aged 5 and above - 78 percent of males and 74 percent of females - literate in at least one language (English, Pidgin, local language or other language).

For the adult population (aged 15 and over), 89 percent of men and 79 percent of women are literate (Figure 37). Youth literacy rates (age 15-24) are slightly higher for men (91%) compared to women (88%). Overall, the differences in adult and youth literacy rate show improvements for younger generations and a narrowing of the gender gap.

FIGURE 37 – ADULT AND YOUTH LITERACY RATES BY SEX, SOLOMON ISLANDS, 2009



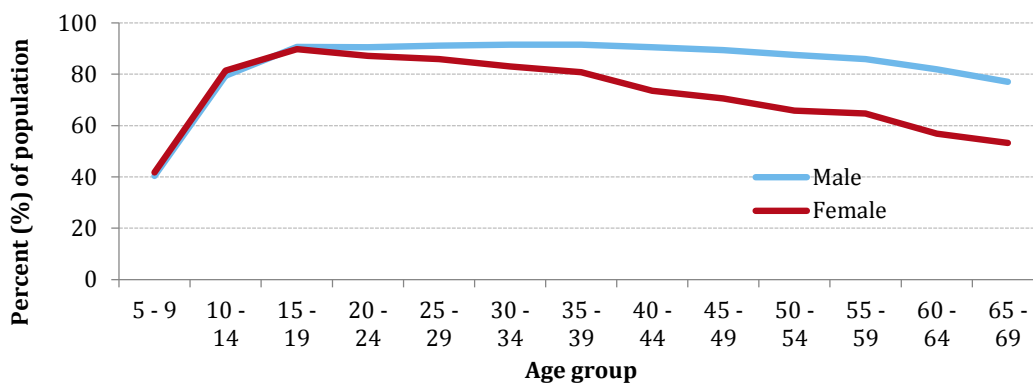
Important to know

The census relies on self-assessment and does not actually test a person's ability to read and write.

Census collectors ask if each person in a household can read and write a simple sentence in English, Pidgin, Local Language or any other language(s). A person is considered literate if they can read and write in at least one language.

Gender differences are more apparent when looking at how literacy varies between age groups (Figure 38). From around 20 years of age, men are increasingly more literate than women. The largest difference occurs at ages 60-64, with 82 percent of men versus 57 percent of women being literate. This is likely a result of earlier attitudes and policies that did not emphasise education for girls.

FIGURE 38 – LITERACY RATES (IN ANY LANGUAGE) BY FIVE-YEAR AGE GROUPS, SOLOMON ISLANDS, 2009

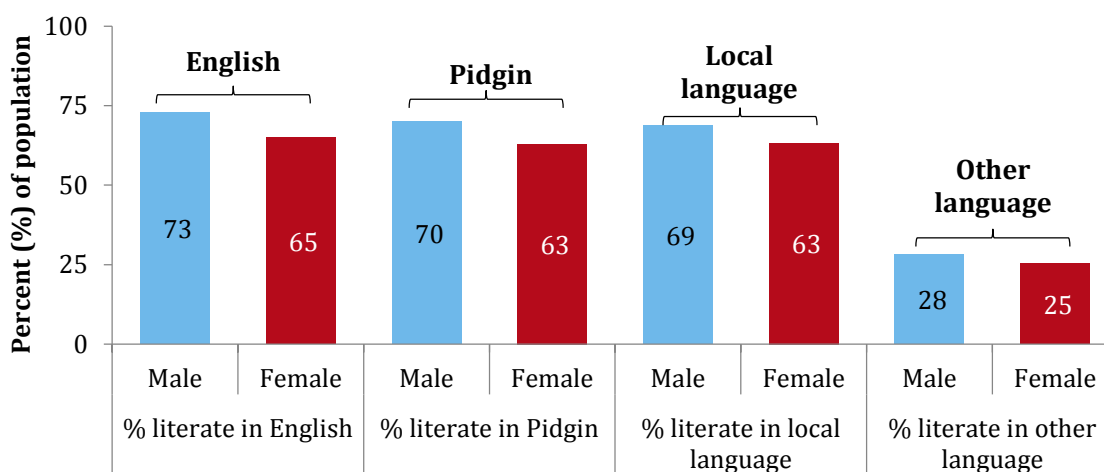


The trend towards higher and similar literacy levels in the younger generations indicates that equality in access to education has improved. For primary school age (10-14 years) girls are more literate (81%) than boys (79%). Policymakers should pay attention to the trend towards slightly lower literacy in boys.

The official languages of Solomon Island are: English, and Pidgin. A large number of local languages are also spoken. There is a small difference between men and women’s literacy rates by language (Figure 39). As with overall literacy, more males than females are literate in both of the official languages.

Literacy rates highest in English

FIGURE 39 – PROPORTION OF PEOPLE AGED 5 AND ABOVE LITERATE BY LANGUAGE, SOLOMON ISLANDS, 2009



4. Work and employment

In many countries, women are at a disadvantage when it comes to opportunities for work and employment. As societies change, with new technologies impacting the way we live, so too are gender roles. This chapter looks at gender differences in employment status, industry and occupations, participation in the public vs. private sectors, wage employment and unemployment.

Key findings

- Most 'employed' women are producing goods for own consumption, with 51% of women doing this type of work
- Men are much more likely to be doing paid work; more than half (51%) of employed men are paid, compared to only 26% of employed women
- Women are less likely than men to be self-employed or employers
- Men hold most jobs in both the private and public sector
- Of the 11,100 full-time home makers in Solomon Islands, almost 9,400 (84%) are women
- At 31% the proportion of women in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector is low and remains largely unchanged since 1999
- Occupations related to crops, vegetables or livestock dominate for both men and women, but the rest of the top 10 occupations vary
- Women's share of senior and higher positions has increased slightly from 16% in 1999, to 19% in 2009
- In the last ten years, women's share of professional and technical workers – jobs that are likely to be higher paid - has increased from 31 to 37 percent
- Unemployment rates are high for women (8.8%) and men (8.1%) in Honiara

What information does a population and housing census gather about work and employment?

For everyone aged 12 years and over, the census asks:

- Whether they did any work in the last seven days, and if so:
 - The type of work/activity they usually do (e.g. employer, employee (government or private sector), production of goods for sale, voluntary work)
 - Their main occupation (e.g. teacher)
 - The industry or sector they work in (e.g. tourism and hospitality)
- If they don't work:
 - Whether they actively looked for work
 - Reasons for not looking for work (e.g. they are a full-time student)
 - If they are available for work

About the Solomon Islands economy

Solomon Islands' economy comprises a number of sectors that impact the formal, cash economy, and the informal, subsistence economy. Major export commodities are timber, fish, copra, palm oil and kernel, and cocoa. The *Report on Economic Activity and Labour Force* also based on the 2009 census provides a valuable overview of economic development over the last decade.²⁷

Agriculture

Coconut production is widespread and an important activity for rural households, with copra (the dried meat of the coconut) being the most common product. There has been an increasing production of coconut oil, which gives higher returns than copra. Both are traded internationally.

Cocoa is produced on a small scale and on larger plantations. With increasing availability of fermentation and drying equipment, producers have been able to raise their sales price, and the relative size of cocoa as an export commodity has grown significantly over recent years.

Palm oil and palm kernel have been produced, mainly in Guadalcanal, since the mid-1970s. Impacted significantly by the tensions, this sector has been undergoing rehabilitation and by 2009, production returned to the levels seen in the 1990s.

Forestry and logging

Logs are a significant export commodity and production has been increasing steadily over the last 30 years. Some small-scale logging is undertaken, but it is mainly done by large-scale commercial enterprises. The potential for communities to receive income from carbon emission trading schemes for not logging is also emerging.

Fishing

The major operators in the fishing sector are the government-owned Soltai Fishing and Processing Ltd. (SPFL), the National Fisheries Development (NFD) and Solgreen Fishing Company Ltd. The size of the fish catch has been reduced significantly from the levels seen prior to 1999. The main factors have been withdrawal of Japanese funding, an ageing fishing fleet, high fuel prices and possible impacts of reduced fishing stocks due to past overfishing.

Mining

There have been some major gold mining operations in Guadalcanal, which ceased operation due to the deteriorating security situation. Smaller alluvial extraction and mineral prospecting continues in various parts of the country.

Manufacturing

This sector is relatively small with the main activities involving food processing and the production of beer, furniture, construction materials and traditional handicrafts.

Tourism

Promotional work being done by the Solomon Islands Visitors Bureau (SIVB), and an increase in the number of airlines and flights, has seen the number of visitor arrivals steadily increase since 2005 to levels higher than before the tensions. The most popular destinations have been Honiara and Western province.

²⁷ Solomon Islands Government. 2013. 2009 Population and Housing Census: Report on Economic Activity and Labour Force.

Labour force participation

There are many types of work, both paid and unpaid. Included in the national definition of employment is work to produce goods (e.g. vegetables, fish) for own consumption, or for sale. The population census gathers information from everyone aged 12 and above about whether they work and, if so, what type of work they do. With this information the population can be classified into three mutually exclusive categories: employed, unemployed or economically inactive. The potential labour force is all those aged 12 and above, with the actual "labour force" being the all those people who are employed or unemployed.

As Table 11 shows, gender differences in labour force participation are only significant in urban areas, where 52.5 percent of men are employed versus around 45 percent of women. In rural areas the employment to population rate is about the same: around 65 percent of both women and men are employed, most of these in unpaid subsistence production. There are, however, stark gender differences in paid employment, with far more men occupying wage and salary paying jobs than women in both urban and rural areas.

TABLE 11 – ECONOMIC ACTIVITY STATUS, BY SEX AND URBAN/RURAL LOCATION, SOLOMON ISLANDS, 2009, POPULATION AGED 12 AND ABOVE²⁸

	Solomon Islands		Urban		Rural	
	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females
Employed	107,692	102,693	20,419	15,746	87,273	86,947
Paid employment	54,571	26,669	17,978	9,798	36,593	16,871
Unemployed	2,490	1,841	1,444	1,067	1,046	774
Labour force (<i>employed + unemployed</i>)	110,182	104,534	21,863	16,813	88,319	87,721
Outside the labour force	63,849	63,859	17,032	18,107	46,817	45,752
Total population (aged 12+)	174,031	168,393	38,895	34,920	135,136	133,473
Employment to population rate (%)	61.9	61.0	52.5	45.1	64.6	65.1
Paid work to population rate (%)	31.4	15.8	46.2	28.1	27.1	12.6
Unemployment rate (%)	2.3	1.8	6.6	6.3	1.2	0.9
Labour force participation rate (%)	63.3	62.1	56.2	48.1	65.4	65.7
Economic inactivity rate (%)	36.7	37.9	43.8	51.9	34.6	34.3

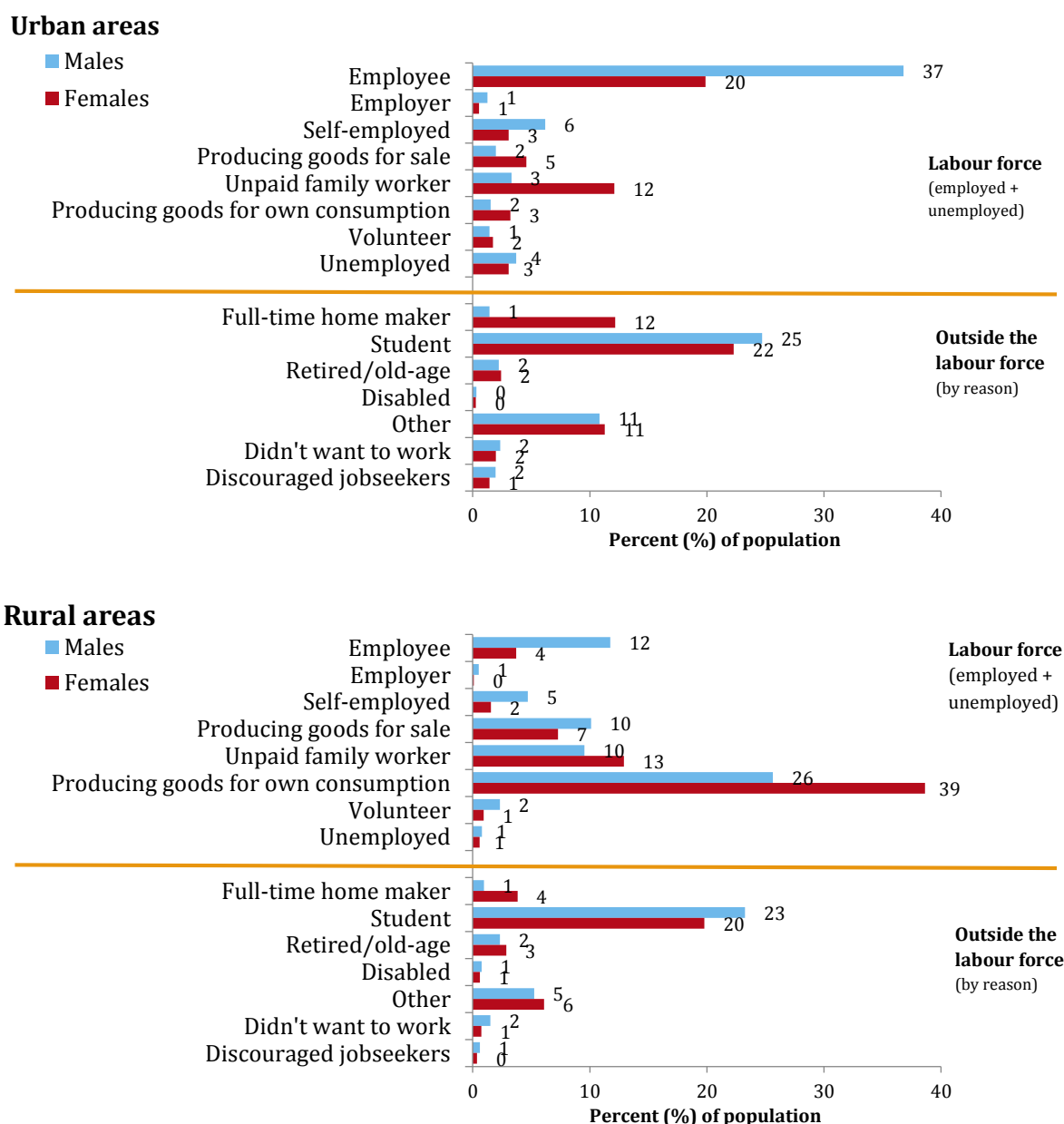
Everyone who is employed has a particular *employment status*. This indicates whether they are paid or unpaid, and suggests the type of employment arrangements they are subject to. There are seven broad categories of employment in the Solomon Islands: (a) employee

²⁸ This table includes revised estimates of labour force and unemployment. Previously published data on the number of unemployed, and therefore the number of people inside and outside the labour force, included people who were seeking work but were not available for work. Applying the availability criteria, in accordance with the official definition of unemployment, reduces the number of unemployed by 553 people (296 men and 257 women), subsequently reducing the labour force and increasing those outside the labour force by the same amount. The revised unemployment rates and labour force participation rates are therefore slightly lower than previously published.

(broken into government and private sector); (b) employer; (c) self-employed; (d) voluntary work; (e) unpaid family work; (f) producing goods for sale; and (g) producing goods for own consumption.

Men are much more likely to be in paid employment than women: 31 percent of men are paid compared to only 16 percent of women. Paid employment includes the categories of employee, employer, self-employed and producing goods for sale. The remainder are either unpaid (producing goods for own consumption, unpaid family workers, volunteers or unemployed) or outside of the labour force (full-time home maker, student, retired/old-age, disabled or other). As shown in Figure 40, the situation differs significantly between urban and rural areas.

FIGURE 40 – DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION AGED 12+ BY EMPLOYMENT / ACTIVITY STATUS AND SEX, URBAN AND RURAL AREAS OF SOLOMON ISLANDS, 2009



Note: 'Discouraged jobseekers' are those who did not seek work because they either 'believe no work is available' or due to 'bad weather/no transport', as well as those who were seeking work but were not available.

Vulnerable employment

Certain types of employment are more vulnerable than others. They may be unpaid or with an irregular income, lacking formal work arrangements and protection and are therefore thought to be most exposed to risks, such as floods, drought, or fluctuations in market prices. The international definition of vulnerable employment considers people who are self-employed (own account workers) and unpaid family workers (contributing family workers) amongst those most vulnerable.²⁹ In Solomon Islands, people producing goods for sale or for own consumption are counted as employed and should also be considered vulnerable as these people would have no source of income or food if they were unable to produce goods due to cyclone, flood or some other problem.

Table 12 shows the proportion in vulnerable employment using two different definitions. The first includes those self-employed, producing goods for sale, and unpaid family workers. The second incorporates all those producing goods for own consumption as their main activity. Under both definitions, most of the population is in vulnerable employment, with women much more likely to be so than men.

TABLE 12 – VULNERABLE EMPLOYMENT BY LOCATION AND SEX, SOLOMON ISLANDS, 2009

	Solomon Islands		Urban		Rural	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Vulnerable employment rate (%)*	54.1	75.3	21.0	40.7	61.8	81.5
Vulnerable employment rate (%) including own-use production	67.4	86.3	24.8	50.9	77.4	92.7

* The sum of people in self-employment, producing goods for sale and unpaid family workers divided by the total number in employment, multiplied by 100.

Vulnerable employment is highest in rural areas, where the main activity is subsistence (own-use) production and more women do this kind of work than men. In urban areas, where subsistence production is low, the gender gap in vulnerable employment remains high, with just over 40 percent of women in vulnerable jobs compared to around 20 percent of men (using the definition that excludes own-use production). This is because urban women are more likely to be unpaid family workers or producing goods for sale than men, and most men in the urban labour force are employees, a more stable and considered to be the least vulnerable form of employment (Figure 40).

Paid work

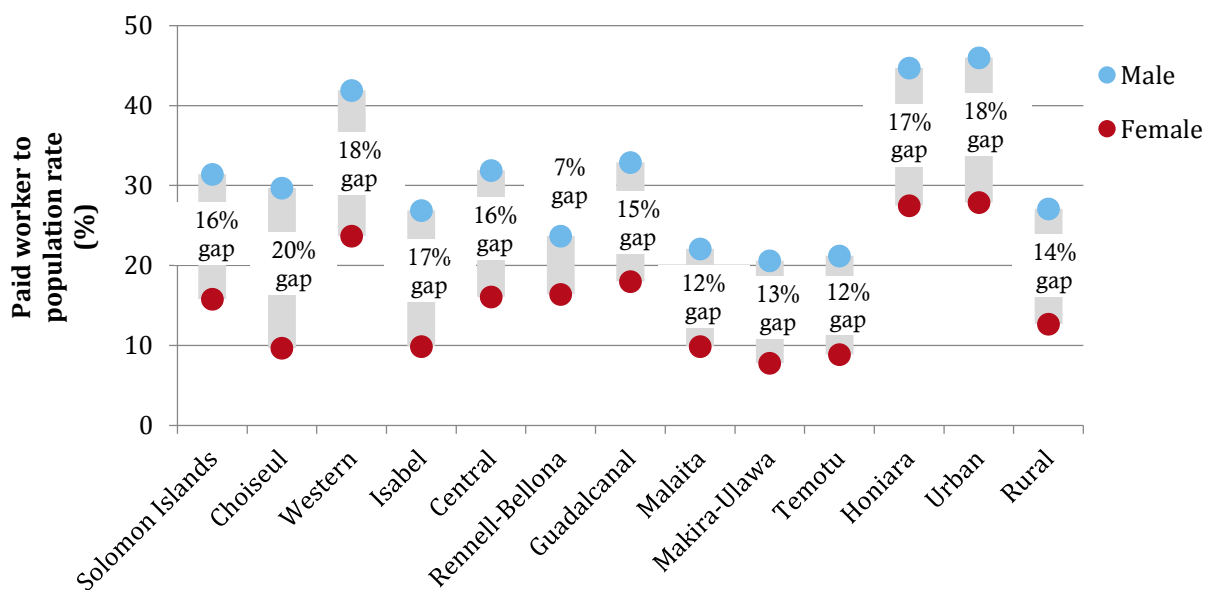
The job market in Solomon Islands differs vastly between urban and rural areas, and between provinces. Not surprisingly the rates of people in paid work also varies (Figure 41). Aside from the capital, Honiara, where the majority of job opportunities exist, paid jobs are

²⁹ United Nations Millennium Development Goal (MDG) indicator metadata.
<http://mdgs.un.org/unsd/mdg/Metadata.aspx?IndicatorId=0&SeriesId=772>

highest in Western province, with 42 percent of men and 24 percent of women in paid employment.

The proportion of people in paid work has risen slightly over the last decade, but it is still relatively low. In 1999, 32 percent of men aged 15 and above were in paid work, compared with 15 percent of women. In 2009, this proportion had risen slightly to 35 percent of men and 18 percent of women. An important finding is that the gender gap has not changed significantly over this time.

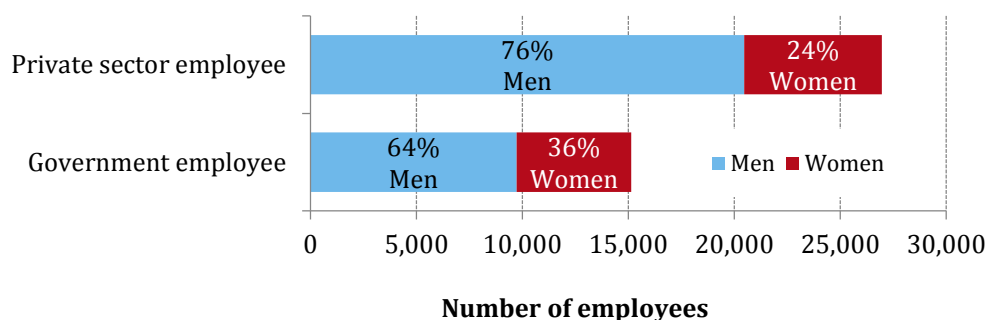
FIGURE 41 – PROPORTION OF POPULATION IN PAID WORK, BY PROVINCE AND SEX, SOLOMON ISLANDS, 2009



Wage and salary earning jobs – those occupied by ‘employees’ – are considered to be amongst the most stable and reliable. The private sector, comprising close to 27,000 employees, is male dominated, with women holding less than one quarter of these jobs (24% women). With around 15,000 employees, the public sector is just over half the size of the private sector. In the public sector, women have a greater share of jobs than they do in the private sector (36%), but they are still far from equally represented.

Men hold most jobs in both private and government sectors

FIGURE 42 – SHARE OF EMPLOYEE POSITIONS BY SECTOR AND SEX, SOLOMON ISLANDS, 2009



Although women hold a smaller share of the employee jobs, their level of qualification is generally higher than their male counterparts (Table 13). The share of women who have completed a senior secondary qualification is greater than men. This may indicate a pattern of women requiring better qualifications than men to attain a similar type of job.

TABLE 13 – EDUCATION LEVEL OF EMPLOYEES IN GOVERNMENT AND PRIVATE SECTORS, SOLOMON ISLANDS, 2009

	Government employees				Private sector employees			
	Men		Women		Men		Women	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Primary or lower level schooling	1,439	15	540	10	10,637	55	3,098	50
Completed some secondary	1,402	15	824	16	3,825	20	1,184	19
Completed senior secondary	2,954	32	1,851	35	3,004	16	1,326	21
Tertiary	3,556	38	2,002	38	1,906	10	627	10
Total	9,351	100	5,217	100	19,372	100	6,235	100

Primary or lower level: No school completed; Preschool/nursery school; some primary; Primary leaving certificate

Completed some secondary: Form 3 certificate or Year 10 leaving certificate

Completed senior secondary: Senior secondary certificate; university entrance; some college but no degree

Tertiary: Bachelor's degree; Master's degree; Doctoral degree; or Vocational certificate

Outside the labour force

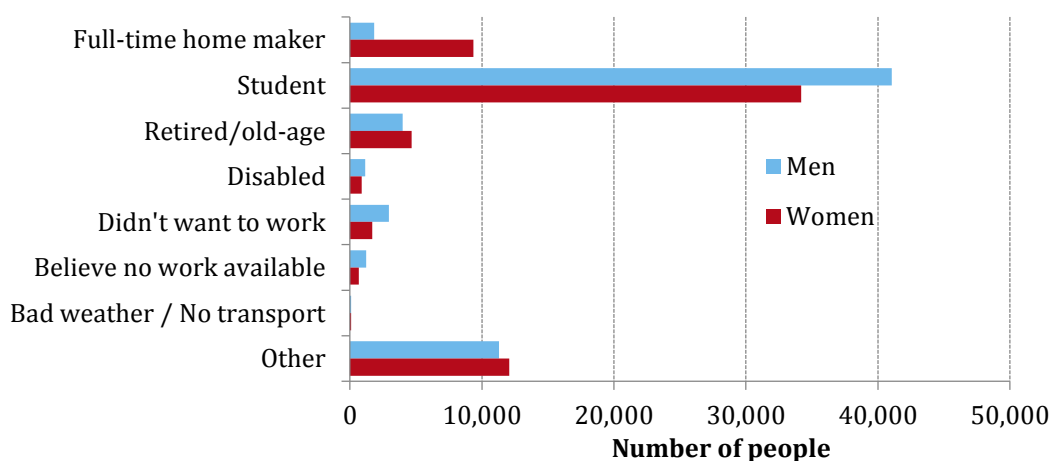
People who are neither employed nor unemployed, and are not available for work, are counted as outside the labour force. This may be for a range of reasons, such as being retired, a student, full-time homemaker, being unable to work, or simply choosing not to work. Around the same rate of women are outside the labour force as men: 32 percent of women aged 15 and above and 30 percent of men.

As shown in Figure 43, the main reason both sexes give for not being available for work is due to being a student (65% of inactive men and 54% of inactive women). Doing 'other' activities was the second most common reason given by 18 percent of men and 19 percent

of women outside the labour force. More than two thirds of men and women who gave 'other' as their reason for not participating in the labour force were young people aged less than 35 years. They may be disenfranchised youth, or young parents, for whom the reasons listed did not accurately describe why they had not actively looked for work.

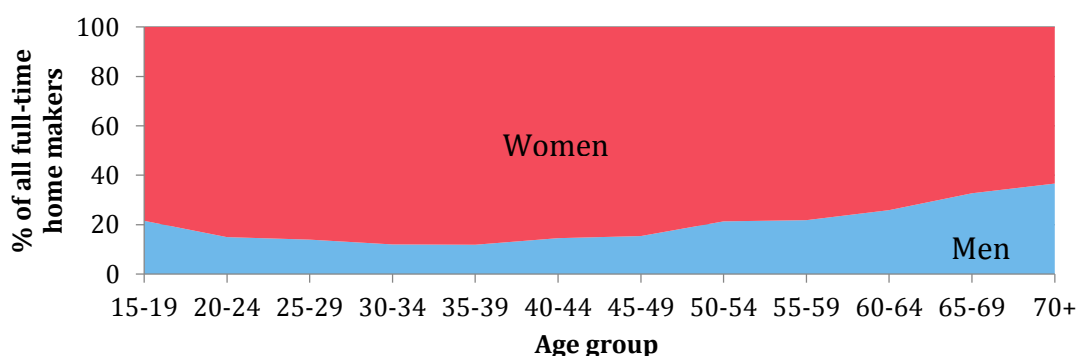
People outside the labour force are mainly students

FIGURE 43 – REASON GIVEN FOR NOT BEING ECONOMICALLY ACTIVE (AGE 12 AND ABOVE), BY SEX, SOLOMON ISLANDS, 2009



Women are far more likely to undertake the role of full-time homemaker than men. Of the nearly 11,200 full time homemakers in Solomon Islands, almost 9,400 (84%) are women. As shown in Figure 44, women are the majority of homemakers in all age groups, but especially between the ages of 20 and 44 years, when families are most likely to have dependent children at home.

FIGURE 44 – FEMALE AND MALE SHARE OF FULL-TIME HOMEMAKERS, BY AGE, SOLOMON ISLANDS, 2009



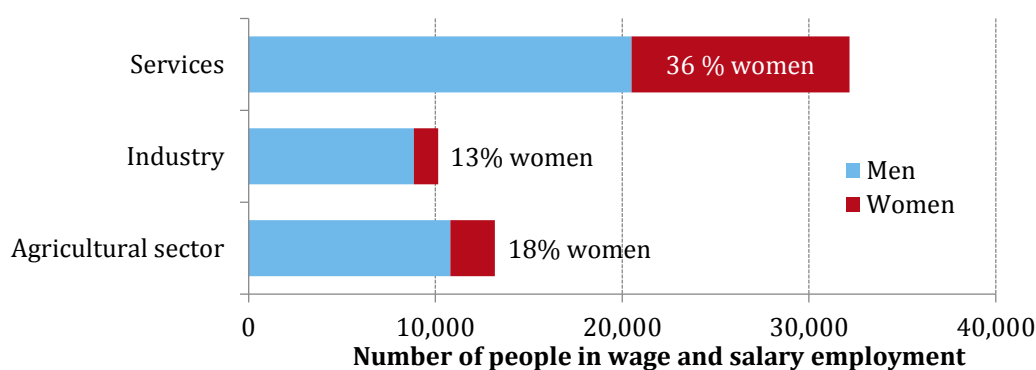
There is not much difference in the employment status of people with a disability versus the total population. A higher proportion of the disabled population are involved in productive activities, such as producing goods for own household consumption, than is the case for the total population. Once again, this is mainly a reflection of the older age of the disabled population who are less likely to be a full-time homemaker or student. See chapter 2 on health and wellbeing for more information about the disabled population.

Sectors of employment

The share of women in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector is an indicator of women's ability to get employment outside of the traditional agricultural sector. It is one of the three Millennium Development Goal indicators under *Goal 3: Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment*. In Solomon Islands, men hold the greater share of jobs in all sectors. Women's share of wage and salary employment in the non-agricultural sector (i.e. industry and services) is 31 percent (33% in urban areas and 28% in rural). This is a slight increase from 27 percent in 1999 although the data are not strictly comparable.³⁰

Men hold the greater share of jobs in all sectors

FIGURE 45 – NUMBER IN WAGE AND SALARY EMPLOYMENT BY SECTOR, SOLOMON ISLANDS, 2009



Compared to other countries, the share of women's wage employment in non-agriculture sectors is low. According to the United Nations MDG database, in Vanuatu it is 39 percent (2008), and in Papua New Guinea it is 32 percent (2000). In Australia and New Zealand, women's share of wage earning jobs in the services and industry sectors combined is around 50 percent.³¹

Occupations of men and women

Table 14 shows the "top 10" occupations for both men and women. While occupations related to crops, vegetables or livestock dominate for men (43% of employed men)

Important to know

The economy is divided into three sectors:

- **Agriculture**
including farming, fishing and logging
- **Industry**
including manufacturing and mining
- **Services**
including tourism, retail sales and transportation

The non-agricultural sector is all economic activity in the other two sectors: industry and services.

Wage and salary employment includes government and private sector employees, employers, and the self-employed.

³⁰ The figure from 1999 includes those in any form of paid employment, i.e. employee, employer, self-employed and those who produce goods for sale. The 2009 figure includes only wage and salary earners (employee, employer and self-employed) and not those who are producing goods for sale.

³¹ United Nations Millennium Development Goal (MDG) Database – <http://mdgs.un.org>

and particularly for women (61%), there are some significant differences. Women are much more likely to be in sales and handicraft related occupations. On the other hand, men are more likely to be extraction and building trade workers, work in protective services, and be drivers and mobile plant operators.

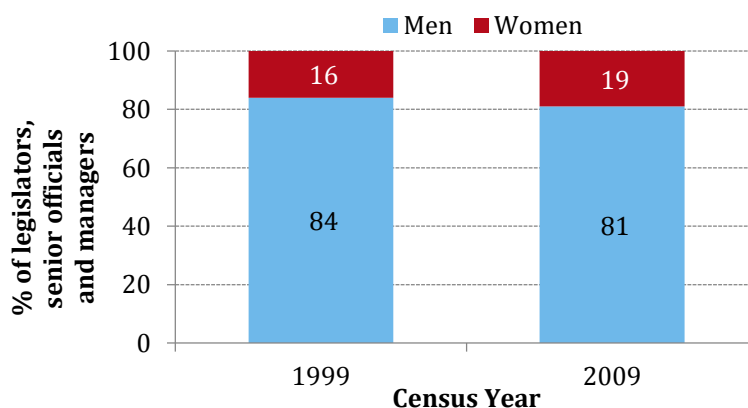
TABLE 14 – TOP OCCUPATIONS FOR WOMEN AND MEN, SOLOMON ISLANDS, 2009

Men			Women		
Occupation	Number of men	% of employed men	Occupation	Number of women	% of employed women
1. Subsistence crop farmers	46,768	43.4	1. Subsistence crop farmers	62,914	61.3
2. Market oriented skilled agriculture and fishery	9,805	9.1	2. Sales and services elementary occupations	9,576	9.3
3. Extraction and building trade workers	8,705	8.1	3. Market oriented skilled agriculture and fishery	7,829	7.6
4. Subsistence agricultural and fishery	7,961	7.4	4. Personal and protective services	6,657	6.5
5. Teaching professionals	4,293	4.0	5. Teaching professionals	3,483	3.4
6. Protective service workers	3,500	3.3	6. Models, salesperson and demonstrators	2,772	2.7
7. Drivers and mobile plant operators	3,269	3.0	7. Food processing, wood working, garment & other craft	1,464	1.4
8. Models, salesperson and demonstrators	2,457	2.3	8. Precision, Handicrafts and printing	1,336	1.3
9. Metal machinery and related workers	1,842	1.7	9. Life science & health professionals	824	0.2
10. Stationery plant and related operators	1,783	1.7	10. Subsistence agricultural and fishery	700	0.7

Women in decision-making positions

Traditionally, women have not occupied senior positions in the workplace. If legislators (i.e. elected officials), senior officials and managers are taken as a group, less than one in five (19%) are women (Figure 46). This is a long way from equal representation and only a slight improvement from 1999, when 16 percent of senior positions were occupied by women.

FIGURE 46 – PROPORTION OF LEGISLATORS, SENIOR OFFICIALS AND MANAGERS BY SEX AND CENSUS YEAR, SOLOMON ISLANDS



More men in the position of legislators, senior officials and managers have tertiary qualifications than women, as is the case across the entire Solomon Islands adult population (refer to the chapter on education). However, a higher proportion of women have completed senior secondary education than men (Table 15).

TABLE 15 – EDUCATION LEVEL OF LEGISLATORS, SENIOR OFFICIALS AND MANAGERS, SOLOMON ISLANDS, 2009

Qualification	Men		Women	
	Number	%	Number	%
Lower level	664	36	123	30
Completed senior secondary	707	39	189	46
Tertiary	461	25	101	25
Total	1,832	100	413	100

Lower level: No school completed; Preschool/nursery school; some primary; Primary leaving certificate; Form 3 certificate or Year 10 leaving certificate

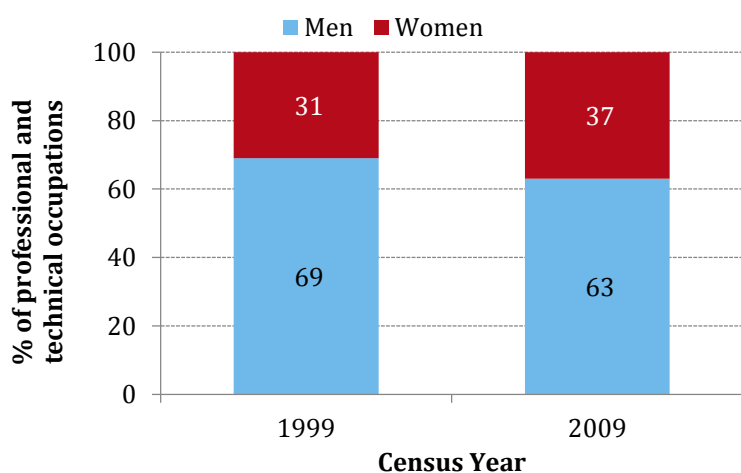
Completed senior secondary: Senior secondary certificate; university entrance; some college but no degree

Tertiary: Bachelor's degree; Master's degree; Doctoral degree; or Vocational certificate

Professionals and technical jobs are male dominated, but women are progressively occupying a greater share. Together with senior-level positions, these jobs are likely to be higher paid. In the last ten years, women's share of professional and technical workers in Solomon Islands increased from 31 to 37 percent (Figure 47).

Women's share of professional/technical work increasing

FIGURE 47 – PROPORTION OF PROFESSIONAL AND TECHNICAL JOBS, BY SEX AND CENSUS YEAR, SOLOMON ISLANDS



Professionals include:

- Civil engineers
- Nurses/ Midwives
- Teachers
- Medical doctors
- Accountants
- Lawyers...etc.

Technical workers include:

- Mechanics
- Ship's engineers
- Dental assistants
- Farming advisor...etc.

Unemployment

Urban unemployment rates are much higher than rural unemployment rates (Table 16). This may seem on the surface to be an anomaly as most jobs are in urban areas. However, there are strict rules about counting unemployed and spending time looking for work is one of them. In rural areas, if there are no jobs available, then there is no point looking and those people who were not looking are not counted as unemployed. The rural to urban drift (discussed in chapter 5 below) is often driven by the lure of the possibility of work in urban areas, and the reality is that the work is not always available.

Using the standard definition, unemployment is highest among for urban men and women, with rates of 6.6 percent and 6.3 percent respectively. When using the 'relaxed' definition (explained in the notes to the table below), women in Honiara have the highest unemployment rate at 11.7 percent, well above the national average of 3.2 percent. The low unemployment rates for both men and women in rural areas (around 1%) may be a reflection of high levels of subsistence farming (which is considered employment) and may mask a desire for paid work that cannot be fulfilled.

Unemployment is highest amongst women in Honiara

TABLE 16 – UNEMPLOYMENT RATES (REVISED[#]) ACCORDING TO INTERNATIONAL AND 'RELAXED' DEFINITIONS, BY SEX AND LOCATION, SOLOMON ISLANDS, 2009

	International definition of unemployment*			Relaxed definition of unemployment*		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
Solomon Islands	2.0	2.3	1.8	3.2	3.6	2.7
Urban	6.5	6.6	6.3	9.1	9.4	8.7
Rural	1.0	1.2	0.9	1.8	2.1	1.4
Choiseul	1.3	1.5	1.0	2.3	2.8	1.6
Western	1.4	1.6	1.0	2.4	3.0	1.7
Isabel	1.5	1.3	1.7	2.1	1.9	2.3
Central	0.9	0.9	0.9	1.8	2.1	1.5
Rennell-Bellona	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.3	1.3	1.3
Guadalcanal	1.5	1.8	1.2	2.5	2.9	2.0
Malaita	0.8	1.1	0.6	1.5	2.0	1.0
Makira – Ulawa	2.5	2.4	2.7	3.6	3.4	3.9
Temotu	0.5	0.8	0.4	0.8	1.2	0.5
Honiara	8.4	8.1	8.8	11.5	11.3	11.7

As noted in Table 11, unemployment rates have been revised to account for the 553 people who were actively seeking work but not available.

* According to standard definitions, to be unemployed, someone is not employed, available for work and actively looking for work. In countries like the Solomon Islands, where job opportunities are limited, people may not actively look for work because they believe it to be unavailable, lack of transport, or some other reason. Therefore, a relaxed definition is also applied that counts people as unemployed if they are either (a) seeking work but not available; or (b) available to work, but not looking because they believe not work to be available, or similar problems.

People are considered unemployed if they:

- Did not work or have a job prior to the census
- Spent time looking for work, and
- Were available to work if a job was offered to them

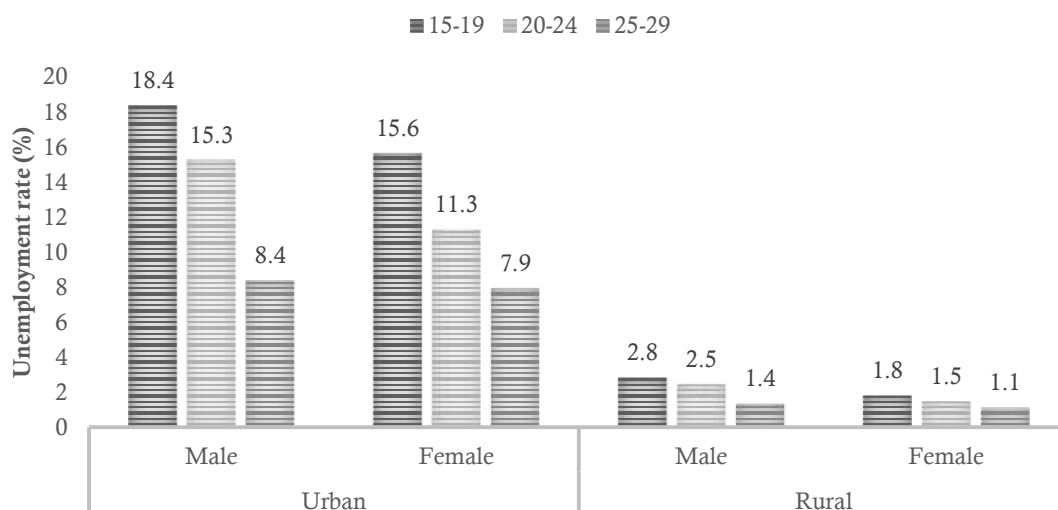
In the 2009 census 4,884 adults met the criteria (2,786 male and 2,098 female). Another 553 adults were seeking work, but not available at the time of the census, and 2,037 adults did not have a job and were not actively seeking one because they thought no work was available, didn't have transport or weather prevented them from doing so.

At 5.1 percent for males and 3.5 percent for females, youth unemployment rates are more than twice as high as for the overall population. As shown in Youth unemployment **is high in urban areas**

Figure 48, the problem of unemployment amongst young people is particularly high in urban areas and among the youngest of jobseekers (age 15-19). Unemployment impacts young men more than women, particularly among urban youth.

Youth unemployment is high in urban areas

FIGURE 48 – YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT RATES, BY SEX AND AGE GROUP, SOLOMON ISLANDS, 2009



5. Migration

The census collects information on two types of migration: those who move between different wards within the country and those residents who have moved to Solomon Islands from other countries. Most migration is internal, with movements mainly occurring from rural to urban areas where better education and employment opportunities are to be found. Urbanization is a significant issue for the country with the rate of population growth in Honiara and other urban centres being significantly above the national average.

People move for many reasons, both social and economic. Motives can include seeking work, going to school or university, or moving to stay with wantoks.³² Migration is closely linked with sex and age, with gender roles influencing freedom of movement and availability of employment and education opportunities.

Key findings

- Immigration into the country is low (less than 1%) but most foreign-born residents are men (66%)
- Around 17% of men and 17% women have migrated over their lifetimes to live in a different province to where they were born
- Honiara and Guadalcanal continue to attract the most internal migrants
- Men and women who migrate are more likely to be in paid employment
- Female headed households are more likely to rely on remittances with 5% citing them as the main source of income compared to 2% of male headed households

National goals and priorities

Migration contributes to the social and economic development of the country. Gender is an important factor in migration, with different proportions of men and women becoming migrants, or being impacted by migration. Understanding the causes, processes and impacts of migration on women and men, girls and boys, can play an important role in achieving development goals. Currently, little is known about the relationships between gender and migration in Solomon Islands, nor the policies needed to maximize the benefits while reducing the socio-economic costs. Key policy issues include the ongoing rural to urban drift and the social and economic impacts of this. As rural residents seek opportunities in urban centres this puts pressure on housing, infrastructure and impacts the families that are compelled to accommodate them.

³² Solomon Islands Government. 2013. 2009 Population and Housing Census Report on Migration and Urbanization.

What information does a population and housing census gather about migration?

- place of birth
- place of usual residence
- place of residence five years prior to the census (gathered only for people age five years and above)

International immigrants make up less than 1% of the population

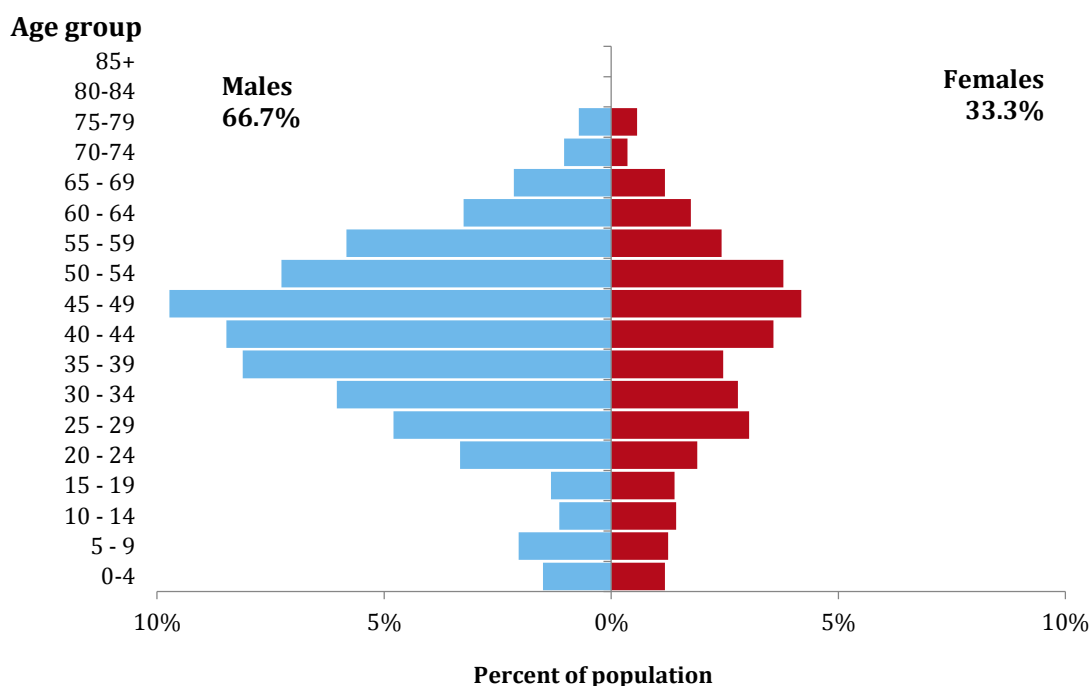
Residents born outside of the Solomon Islands represent a small proportion of the population (less than 1%), but there are considerably more men than women amongst them (Table 17). There were almost 3,000 foreign residents at the time of the census (1,866 men and 931 women). Most immigrants are from Papua New Guinea and there are a similar proportion of men and women (55% men). A large number of foreigners also come from Asia and these are mainly men (86%). Unlike for other countries, women consistently comprise almost half of immigrants from Pacific island countries, suggesting that families from the Pacific are more likely to migrate with both spouses together.

TABLE 17 – FOREIGN-BORN RESIDENTS BY COUNTRY OF ORIGIN AND SEX, SOLOMON ISLANDS, 2009

Country of origin	Male	Female	Total	% women
Papua New Guinea	336	276	612	45
Fiji	59	53	112	47
Vanuatu	37	35	72	49
Australia	189	113	302	37
New Zealand	50	31	81	38
Other Pacific	170	155	325	48
Asia	587	92	679	14
United Kingdom	29	14	43	33
Other Europe	32	9	41	22
North America	33	19	50	38
Other country	346	134	480	28
Total	1,866	931	2,797	33

Migration patterns are influenced by age and sex; as shown in Figure 49, most immigrants are men aged between 45 and 59 years old. The number of women is much lower, but also concentrated around this age group. As may be expected from the imbalance of foreign-born men to women, few migrants bring children with them, indicated by the narrower bars at the base of the pyramid.

FIGURE 49 – POPULATION PYRAMID OF FOREIGN-BORN RESIDENTS, SOLOMON ISLANDS, 2009



Male foreigners in Solomon Islands are mainly working in the private sector (52%), mostly in the logging industry, which employs 471 foreign-born men, but less than 5 foreign women. In fact, foreign workers represent 12 percent of the employees in the private forestry and logging sector. The most common occupation for male foreign employees is as driver and mobile plant operators (220) or metal and machinery related workers (111). Foreign-born women working in Solomon Islands tend to be teaching (26) or other professionals (22).

Internal migration

Most migration relates to Solomon Islanders moving between wards and provinces within the country. In 2009, around 9 percent of females and 10 percent of males aged five years and over were recent migrants, meaning they were living in a different province compared to where they were in 2004. Around 17 percent of men and 17 percent of women were lifetime migrants, meaning they now live in a different province to where they were born.³³ These patterns of interprovincial migration are not as high as in countries like Vanuatu, where closer to 30 percent of residents have migrated in their lifetime.³⁴ As Figure 50 shows, migration is most common amongst women and men between the ages of 20 and 29 years old.

³³ Around 6% of the population were away from home on census night and were counted at a place that was not their usual residence. People away from home are not considered migrants.

³⁴ Vanuatu National Statistics Office. 2012. Gender monograph: Women and Men in Vanuatu.

FIGURE 50 – POPULATION PYRAMID OF LIFETIME MIGRANTS, SOLOMON ISLANDS, 2009

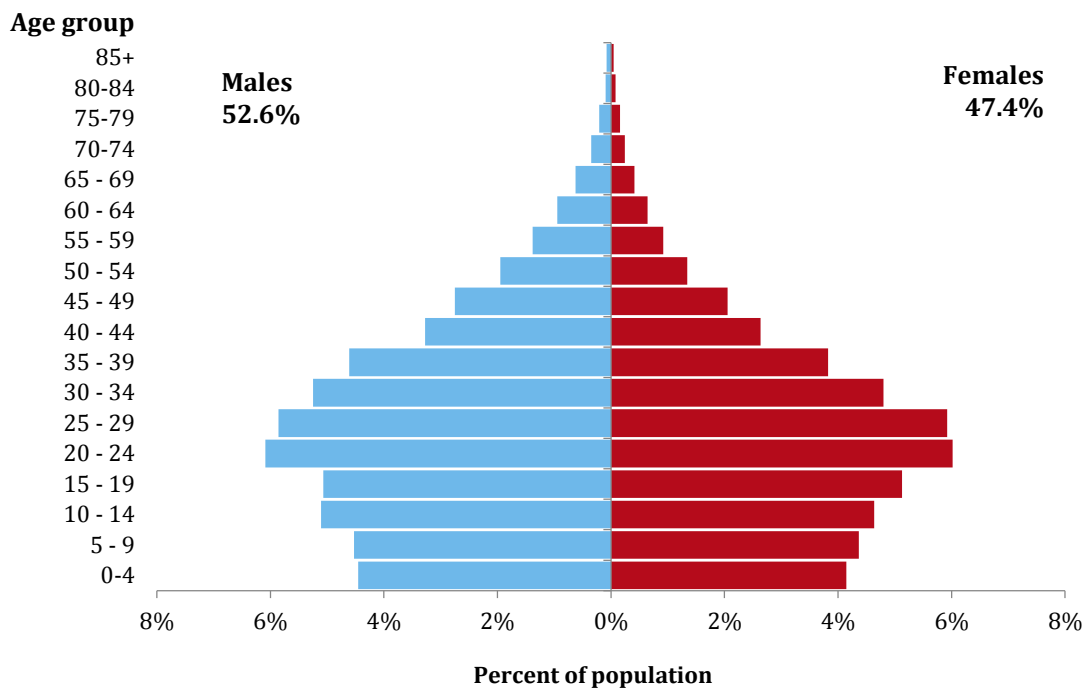
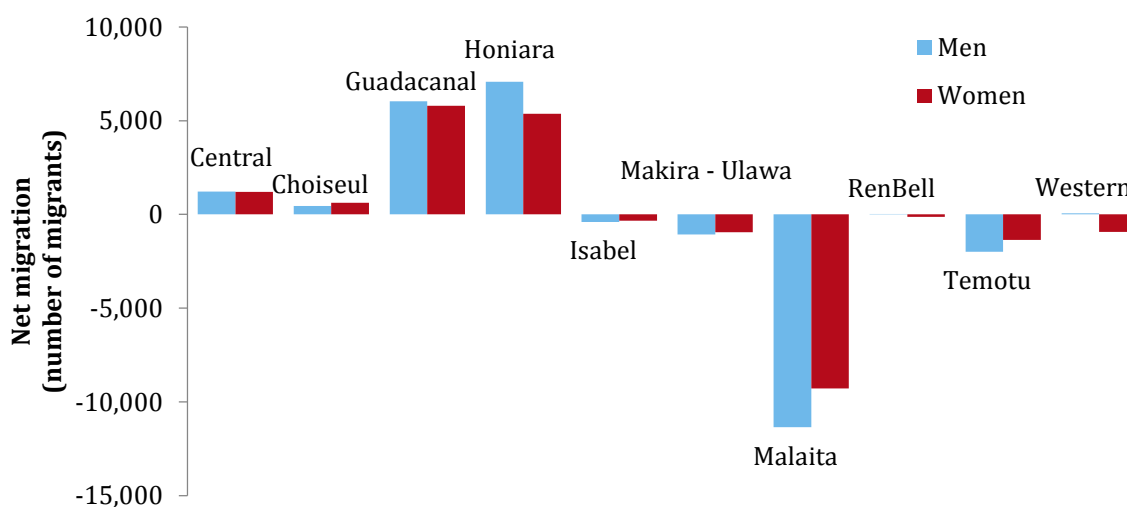


Figure 51 shows how females and males have moved between provinces since birth. Most internal migration is to Honiara and Guadalcanal province. Central and Choiseul provinces also attract more people than they lose through migration. Most lifetime migrants come from Malaita, and the majority of these are men, most likely moving to Honiara and surrounds to seek work.

Honiara and Guadalcanal attract the most migrants

FIGURE 51 – NET MIGRATION BY PROVINCE AND SEX OF MIGRANTS, SOLOMON ISLANDS, 2009

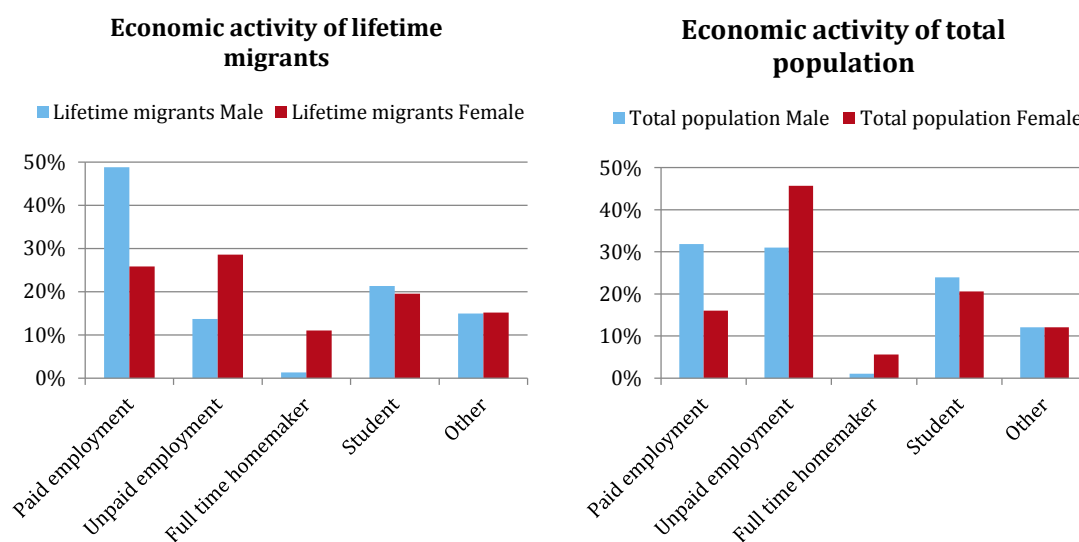


Both men and women who migrate are much more likely to be paid employment than the general population, confirming that migration is primarily economically related. There is a

higher proportion of full-time homemakers amongst women who migrate than women generally, suggesting some relocate to provide home care for other family members.

Men and women who migrate are more likely to be in paid employment

FIGURE 52 – ECONOMIC ACTIVITY STATUS OF LIFETIME MIGRANTS VERSUS THE TOTAL POPULATION, SOLOMON ISLANDS, 2009



Remittances

The benefits of migration may be seen in the amount of remittances received – sending of money back home to family or friends. Remittances are an important source of income for many families, but are the *main* source for only 2.2 percent of households (1,984) in the Solomon Islands. However, 20 percent of households received some remittances, and in some places the proportion was as high as 40 percent.³⁵ Female headed households are more likely to rely on remittances with 5 percent citing them as the main source of income compared to 2 percent of male headed households.

³⁵ 2013. Solomon Islands Government. 2009 Population and Housing Census: Report on Economic Activity and Labour Force.

6. Income and housing

Income levels, ownership of assets and housing condition are important indicators of quality of life that can be used to monitor social and economic development. The census collects this kind of information for each of the 91,000 households across the Solomon Islands.

Housing conditions, access to land and control of assets are key gender issues. Traditional customs and sometimes legal requirements often put women at a disadvantage when it comes to owning and controlling resources. This affects their economic empowerment, limiting their opportunities to raise capital for starting a business, or having security in case of widowhood or abandonment.

Key findings

- Less than one in five (16%) of the 91,250 households in Solomon Islands are headed by women
- Six percent of female headed households have no main source of income, compared to 3 percent of those headed by men
- Households headed by men are much more likely to have wages/salary as the primary income source than those headed by women; 25% and 17% respectively
- Almost all rural households produce food for subsistence and/or for sale; 94% of female headed and 95% of male headed households
- Vegetable crops are the most common form of food grown for subsistence and/or sale, with 78% of all rural households growing some kind of these crops
- Gender gaps are noticeable in cocoa production, which is grown by a third of rural households headed by men versus 23% of female-headed rural households
- Around half of female-headed rural households (55%) are involved in fishing versus 71% of those households headed by men

National goals and priorities

Household characteristics are an indication of socio-economic development. In line with national goals for gender equality, economic prosperity, social wellbeing and environmental sustainability, there are a number of priorities related to households.

Knowing the number of people per household, the number of rooms and the type of assets that are owned – e.g. motor vehicle, television, fridge/freezer, and livestock – provide insights into the living conditions and quality of life in Solomon Islands. Data on building materials used and the age of dwellings are used to monitor the overall quality of housing.

This information helps to shape national and local plans and actions, including disaster management strategies, policies on building codes and projects to establish and maintain water and sanitation infrastructure.

What information does a population and housing census gather about households?

Population and housing censuses gather information about “households” – that is a group of persons living under the same roof who usually eat together and share the work of preparing the food and/or the cost of providing it. Information is collected about:

- type of living quarters – e.g. detached house, apartment
- building materials used for walls, floor and roof
- number of rooms
- source of drinking and washing water
- toilet facility
- form of household rubbish disposal
- source of lighting and cooking energy
- any livestock and cash crops
- house and land tenure
- land use
- use of bednets
- assets of the household such as motor vehicle, fridge/freezer, TV, radio, gas stove, etc
- involvement in growing food, livestock, and fishing
- main source of income for the household

Gender issues in households

Of the 91,250 households in the Solomon Islands, 16 percent of them are headed by women. It is a challenge to analyse gender differences for information that is collected about the household as a whole. Collecting information at the household level requires the assumption that everyone in the household has equal access to the assets. It does not tell us whether particular individuals own and control certain assets, while others do not. For example, a household may have ten goats, but they might be owned by one household member and when sold, the profits might not necessarily be shared with the rest of the people in the house. However, with these limitations in mind, this chapter presents some information about the differences and similarities between the income and assets of women and men.

This leads many gender analysts to look at differences between households based on the sex of the “household head”. However, as there is no clear definition of who should be the household head – it is up to each household to decide – this analysis may be misleading. The boxed below provides more information on the household head concept.

BOX 4 – WHO IS THE “HOUSEHOLD HEAD”?

In order to gather information about the composition of the household – who lives there and how they are related to each other – statisticians often ask for someone to identify as the “household head”. In the Solomon Islands, the head is the “person in charge” of the household – man or woman – and it is up to the household members to decide who that is. Except for the fact that the household head must be currently living at that address at the time of the census (although not necessarily present at the time of interview), there is no way to know how the decision was made. The household head might be the main breadwinner in the house, or the oldest adult male, if one is present.

The concept of “household head” implies that hierarchical relationships exist between adults in the household; that one person is in charge of all the major decisions. In many households, this may not be the case, with decision-making and responsibilities shared equally between couples or household members.

Given these variations, presenting statistics according to the sex of the household head can be misleading. The United Nations *2010 Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses* (UNSD, 2008) discourage such analysis, suggesting that the household head concept should only be used to determine household composition, and not in analysing census results. However, it may be the only viable option for exploring whether gender impacts on household characteristics.

Income

The sale of fish, crops and handicrafts is the most common source of income for households in the Solomon Islands, with 44 percent of households indicating this was their primary source. This was true for both male and female headed households with 44 and 45 percent respectively. However, households headed by men are much more likely to have wages/salary as the primary income source than those headed by women; 25 percent and 17 percent respectively. It is rare for households to receive no income, but it is twice as likely they are female headed; 6 percent of female headed households have no main source of income, compared to 3 percent of those headed by men.

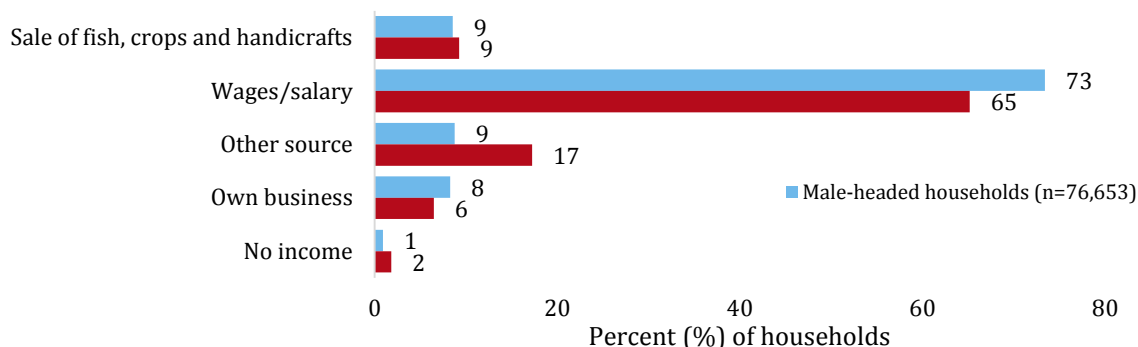
Differences in primary source of income differ significantly between urban and rural areas (Figure 53). In urban centres, wages and salaries are the main source for the majority of households, with 73 percent of male headed households and 65 percent of female headed households indicating this was the case. The sale of goods is the main means of income generation for less than 10 percent of urban households, regardless of whether they are headed by a man or a woman.

Wages and salaries play a minor role in rural households, with the sale of goods being the main means of income generation (52% of male headed households and 51% of female headed). ‘Other’ sources are important in many rural households, with almost one quarter (24%) of male headed households and 30 percent of female headed citing this as their main source. ‘Other’ includes a small number that receive remittances as the main source, which is more important for female headed households, particularly in rural areas where 5 percent

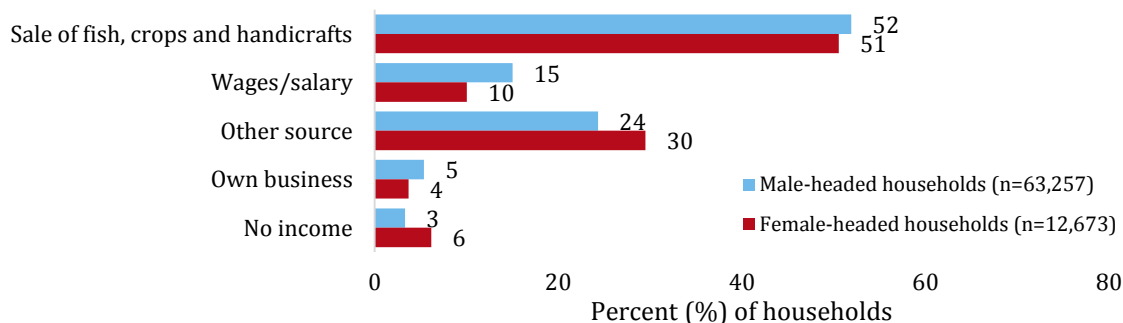
of them depend on remittances, compared to 2 percent of male headed rural households. The data below for 'other' includes income from land lease and house rent (the main source for less than 1% of households). For the majority citing other, the actual source is unspecified.

FIGURE 53 – MAIN SOURCES OF INCOME BY URBAN AND RURAL AREAS AND SEX OF HOUSEHOLD HEAD, SOLOMON ISLANDS, 2009

Urban households



Rural households



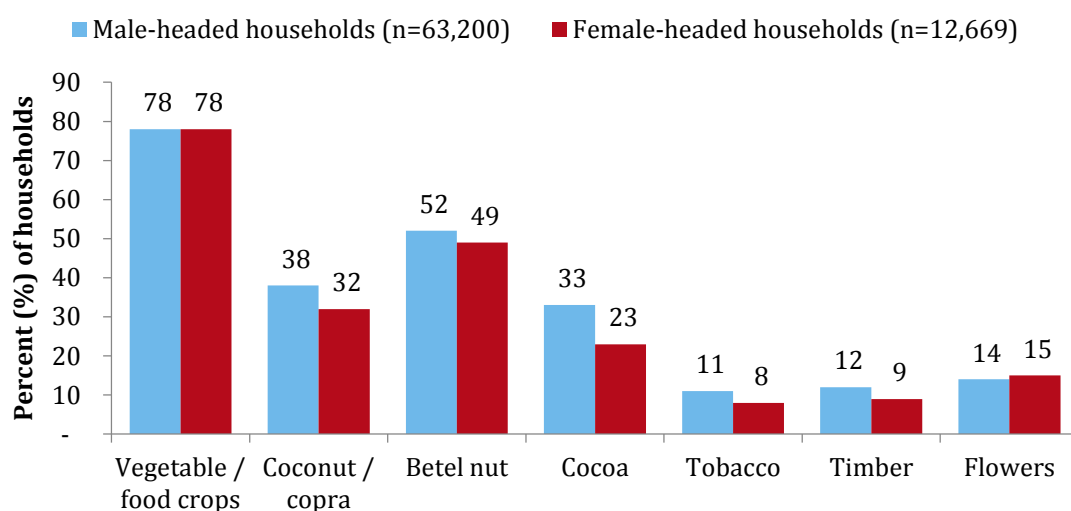
Subsistence production

Almost all rural households produce food for subsistence and/or for sale; 94 percent of female headed and 95 percent of male headed households. In urban areas, around half the households (52% of female headed and 57% of male headed) are involved in food production, mainly for subsistence only.

Gender gaps are noticeable in cocoa production, which is grown by a third of rural households headed by men versus 23 percent of female-headed rural households. Male-headed households are also more likely to be involved in coconut/copra production, which is heavy physical work to produce. This is consistent with studies that found men tend to control these type of cash crops, whereas women are more involved in production and marketing of fruits and vegetables.³⁶

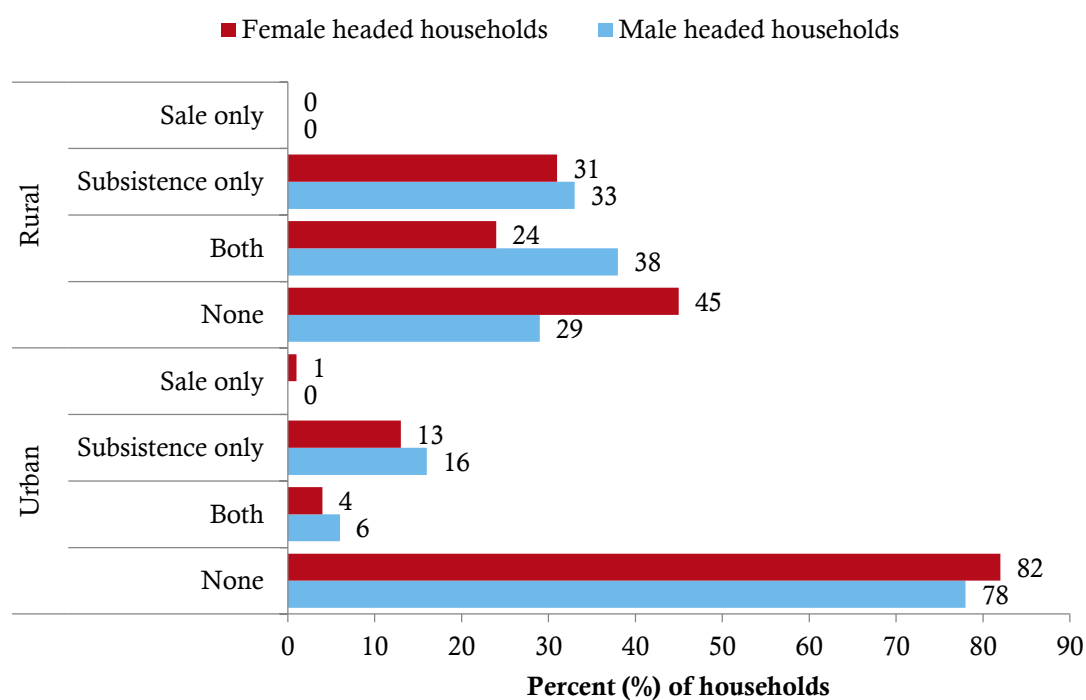
³⁶ Jansen, T. et al. 2006. Solomon Islands Smallholder Agriculture Study, Volume 2: Subsistence Production, Livestock and Social Analysis. Australian Government: Canberra.

FIGURE 54 – CASH CROPS GROWN BY RURAL HOUSEHOLDS (%), BY SEX OF HOUSEHOLD HEAD, SOLOMON ISLANDS, 2009



The fact that men are more likely to be engaged in fishing is also reflected in the census results (Figure 55). Around half of female-headed rural households (55%) are involved in fishing versus 71 percent of those households headed by men. This illustrates that fishing is an important source of subsistence and income to both women and men in rural areas. However, a significant proportion (45%) are not involved and this may impact on their relative cost of living and nutritional status.

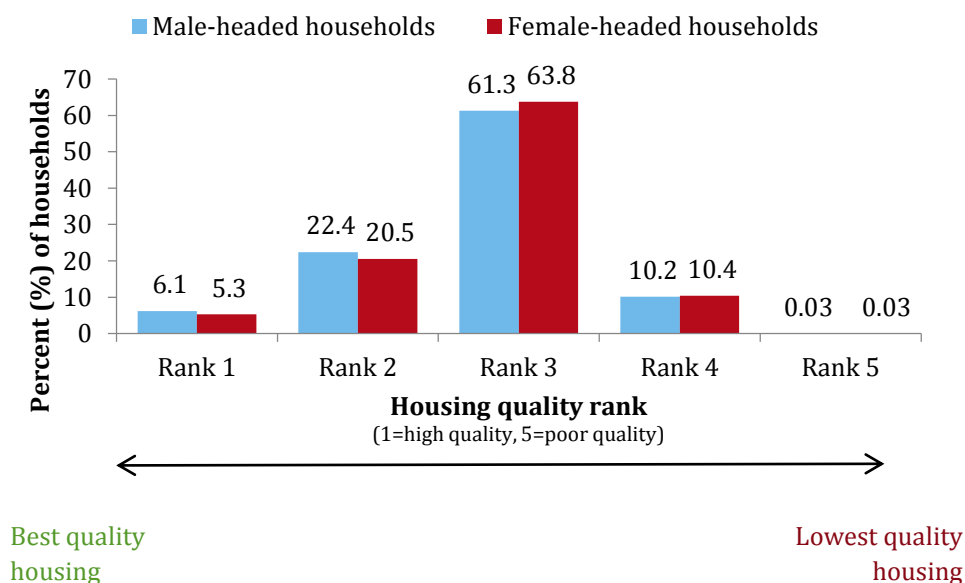
FIGURE 55 – HOUSEHOLDS' INVOLVEMENT IN FISHING, BY URBAN/RURAL LOCATION AND SEX OF HOUSEHOLD HEAD, SOLOMON ISLANDS, 2009



Housing quality

A rating of housing quality based on building materials, number of rooms per person, availability of adequate drinking water and toilet facilities, and the type of energy used for lighting and cooking has been calculated for each household (see Annex 2 for methodology). The outcomes show little difference in the housing quality between households headed by women versus those headed by men. There is a slight tendency towards lower standard housing for female headed households, but this is likely to be due to the relative size of the population.

FIGURE 56 – DISTRIBUTION OF HOUSING QUALITY (%), BY SEX OF HOUSEHOLD HEAD, SOLOMON ISLANDS, 2009



Glossary

Adolescent mothers

Women aged 15-19 years who have given birth to a child.

Age dependency ratio

The ratio of persons defined as dependent (under 15 years and over 64 years) to persons defined as economically productive (15 –64 years).

Agriculture

A basic category or sector of business activity. Including farming, fishing and logging.

Average age at first marriage (SMAM)

Approximation of average age at marriage, based on proportion of population never married (single).

Divorced

The final termination of a marital union, cancelling the legal duties and responsibilities of marriage and dissolving the bonds of matrimony between the parties (unlike annulment which declares the marriage null and void).

Education attainment

Highest level of formal schooling attended and successfully completed.

Employed population

Population aged 12 years who “work for pay” (i.e. employees, employers and self-employed) or “produce goods mainly for sale” or “produce goods mainly for own consumption” or do “voluntary work” or do “unpaid family work”.

Employer

Person or business that employs one or more people especially for wage or salary.

Gender³⁷

Gender relates to the roles that women and men, girls and boys, play in society; the expectations and opportunities associated with being male and female. Gender is a socially constructed concept learned through socialization, indicating what is expected, allowed and appreciated in a man or a woman in different situations. Gender influences the division of labour between women and men, access to education, types of work and employment, access to household income and assets, and migration. Gender is not about women only, it is about both men and women. It is part of a broad socio-cultural context, with other important aspects including race, ethnicity, poverty level and age.

Gender parity index

³⁷ United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women). www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/conceptsanddefinitions.htm.

An index designed to measure the relative access to education of males and females.

Gender sensitive data³⁸

Gender sensitive data are statistics collected on women and men separately in relation to all aspects of their functioning – ethnicity, class, caste, age, location.

Gender statistics³⁹

Gender statistics are defined as statistics that adequately reflect differences and inequalities in the situation of women and men in all areas of life. Gender statistics are defined by the sum of the following characteristics:

- a) data are collected and presented disaggregated by sex as a primary and overall classification;
- b) data are reflecting gender issues;
- c) data are based on concepts and definitions that adequately reflect the diversity of women and men and capture all aspects of their lives; and
- d) data collection methods take into account stereotypes and social and cultural factors that may induce gender biases.

Health professionals

Includes paramedics, dentists, optometrists, dieticians, pharmacists, physiotherapists and other health care workers.

Household

Those persons who usually eat together and share the work of preparing the food and/ or the cost of work for providing it.

Household head

Person who identifies as the head of the household. It may be the main breadwinner in the house, or the oldest adult male, if one is present, or the responsible adult who is interviewed by the census collector.

Household size

Number of persons living together in one household.

Industry

A basic category or sector of business activity. Includes mining, construction, and manufacturing.

Infant mortality rate

The number of infant deaths (children younger than 1 year) per 1,000 births.

³⁸ United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA). *Gender Statistics Programmes Glossary*.

³⁹ United Nations Statistics Division. May 2013. *Gender Statistics Manual: Integrating a gender perspective into Statistics: Glossary of Terms*.

Internal migration

The temporary or permanent relocation or movement of population inside the boundaries of a national state.

International migration

When peoples cross national boundaries and stay in the host country for some minimum length of time.

Life expectancy

The average number of additional years a person could expect to live if current mortality trends were to continue for the rest of that person's life, usually in terms of years from birth.

Literacy rate

Proportion of the population who reported they could read and write a simple sentence in any language.

Population census

A count of a given area resulting in an enumeration of the entire population and the compilation of demographic, social and economic information pertaining to that population at a specific time.

Median age

The age at which exactly half the population is older and half is younger.

Outside the labour force

Those people who did not work during the week prior to the census, did not have a job and are not seeking or available to work, e.g.: full time student, retired.

Pre-school

Early childhood education for children aged 3 to 5 years old.

Producing goods for own consumption

A person who performs tasks such as farming, gardening, fishing or handicraft to produce goods that are mainly for consumption/use by themselves and/or other members of their household; often described as subsistence production.

Producing goods for sale

A person who performs tasks such as farming, gardening, fishing or handicraft to produce goods that are mainly sold to or exchanged for profit with others.

Professional workers

Includes occupations such as teachers, medical doctors, nurses/midwives, lawyers, accountants and civil engineers.

Sanitation

The type of toilet facility used by the household.

Services

A basic category or sector of business activity. Includes government services, tourism, retail sales and transportation.

Sex

Refers to the relatively fixed biological and physical characteristics that define men and women.

Sex-disaggregated statistics⁴⁰

Sex-disaggregated statistics are data collected and tabulated separately for women and men. They allow for the measurement of differences between women and men on various social and economic dimensions and are one of the requirements in obtaining gender statistics. However, gender statistics are more than data disaggregated by sex. Having data by sex does not guarantee, for example, that concepts, definitions and methods used in data production are conceived to reflect gender roles, relations and inequalities in society (also see gender statistics).

Sex ratio

The ratio of males to females in a given population, usually expressed as the number of males for every 100 females.

Subsistence

See producing goods for own consumption.

Technical workers

Includes occupations such as mechanics, ship engineers, dental assistants and farming advisors.

Total fertility rate

The average number of children per woman.

Under 5 mortality rate

Probability of a child dying between birth and age 5 (expressed as a rate per 1,000 live births).

Unemployed population

People aged 12 years and over who did not work in the week before the census, did not usually have a job, but were looking for work and were available for work.

University

An educational institution of learning at tertiary level either in Solomon Islands or another country.

⁴⁰ United Nations Statistics Division. May 2013. *Gender Statistics Manual: Integrating a gender perspective into Statistics: Glossary of Terms*.

Unpaid family work

Those persons aged 15 years and over who do work but did not receive wage, salary, commission or other commission of remuneration from their family business.

Vocational education

Technical education combined with practical experience in Solomon Islands or another country.

Voluntary work

Those persons aged 12 years and over who work without pay, commission or profit for an organization.

Wage and salary employment

Remuneration (pay) based on time worked or items produced, independent of profits or expectations of profits.

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Annex 1: Key gender indicators

These key indicators are drawn from the latest available sources, including the 2009 Population and Housing Census, 2007 Demographic and Health Survey, 2009 Family Health and Safety Study and records from the national parliament. The indicators selected include those from the United Nations core set of gender indicators for which data are available.⁴¹

Economic empowerment	Year	Urban		Rural		Total	
		Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Labour force participation rates for persons aged 12+ (%)	2009 ¹	56.2	48.1	65.4	65.7	63.3	62.1
Labour force participation rates for persons aged 15+ (%)	2009 ¹	56.9	48.8	72.2	72.0	68.7	67.0
Youth labour force participation rates (aged 15-24) (%)	2009 ¹	31.4	34.2	43.2	50.3	40.4	46.4
Proportion of employed (age 15+) who are employers (%)	2009 ¹	2.4	1.2	0.8	0.2	1.1	0.3
Proportion of employed (age 15+) who are employees (%)	2009 ¹	70.3	44.2	18.4	5.7	28.3	11.7
Proportion of employed (age 15+) who are self-employed (%)	2009 ¹	11.8	6.8	7.3	2.4	8.2	3.0
Proportion of employed (age 15+) who are unpaid family workers (%)	2009 ¹	6.2	26.7	14.7	19.7	13.0	20.8
Proportion of employed (age 15+) producing goods for sale (%)	2009 ¹	3.7	10.1	15.6	11.2	13.4	11.1
Proportion of employed (age 15+) producing goods for own consumption (subsistence workers) (%)	2009 ¹	2.9	7.2	39.6	59.4	32.6	51.3
Proportion of employed (age 15+) who are volunteers (%)	2009 ¹	2.7	3.8	3.6	1.4	3.4	1.8
Proportion of employed (age 15+) working in agriculture (%)	2009 ¹	15.6	17.5	75.9	79.8	64.5	70.2
Education	Year	Urban		Rural		Total	
		Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Youth literacy rate (aged 15-24) (%)	2009 ¹	96.3	94.8	88.7	86.4	90.6	88.4
Adult literacy rate (aged 15+) (%)	2009 ¹	96.3	90.7	86.7	76.2	88.9	79.2
Net attendance rate in primary education (age 6-12) (%)	2009 ¹	60.1	60.8	52.7	53.3	53.9	54.5
Gross attendance rate in primary education (age 6-12) (%)	2009 ¹	83.1	81.3	85.8	83.8	85.4	83.4
Net attendance rate in secondary education (age 13-18) (%)	2009 ¹	43.9	44.1	22.7	24.9	26.7	28.7
Gross attendance rate in secondary education (age 13-18) (%)	2009 ¹	66.9	58.7	31.6	31.1	38.4	36.6
Net attendance rate in tertiary education (age 19-23) (%)	2009 ¹	6.2	4.7	0.6	0.5	2.1	1.6
Gross attendance rate in tertiary education (age 19-23) (%)	2009 ¹	11.5	8.0	1.4	0.8	4.2	2.7
Primary education completion rate (age 15+) (%)	2009 ¹	78.4	70.4	59.3	47.9	63.7	52.7
Secondary education completion rate (age 20+) (%)	2009 ¹	22.3	15.4	6.6	2.8	10.3	5.4
				Urban	Rural		Total
Gender parity index in primary school*	2009 ¹		0.98		0.98		0.98
Gender parity index for secondary school*	2009 ¹		0.88		0.98		0.95
Gender parity index at tertiary level*	2009 ¹		0.69		0.58		0.64

⁴¹ United Nations Statistical Commission. 2013. *Gender statistics: Report of the Secretary-General* (E/CN.3/2013/10).

* Gender parity indices are calculated based on gross attendance rates (GAR); female GAR divided by male GAR.

Health		1986	1999	2009
Maternal mortality ratio				143 ²
Total fertility rate		6.1 ¹	4.8 ¹	4.7 ¹
	Year	Rural	Urban	Total
Adolescent fertility rate	2009 ¹	44	68	62
Use of contraceptives among married women aged 15-49 (%)	2007 ²	35.4	29.3	34.6
Use of modern methods of contraception among married women aged 15-49 (%)	2007 ²	23.2	28.0	27.3
Unmet need for family planning (%)	2007 ²			11.1
Antenatal care coverage	2007 ²	95.2	94.7	95.1
Proportion of births attended by skilled health professional (%)	2007 ²	84.1	95.2	85.5
	Year	Male	Female	Total
Under-5 mortality rate	2009 ¹	31	25	28
Infant mortality rate	2009 ¹	24	20	22
Life expectancy at birth (years)	2009 ¹	66.2	73.1	69.6

Public life and decision-making

	Year	Total
Proportion of seats held by women in national parliament (%)	2012 ⁴	2
Women's share of government ministerial positions (%)	2012 ⁴	0
Women's share of managerial positions (%)	2009 ¹	19

Human rights of women and girl children

	Year	Honiara	Provinces	Total
Proportion of women aged 15-49 subjected to physical or sexual violence in the last 12 months by an intimate partner (%)	2009 ³			41.8
Proportion of women aged 15-49 who have been in a relationship subjected to physical or sexual violence by an intimate partner (%)	2009 ³			63.5
Proportion of women aged 15-49 subjected to physical or sexual violence since age 15 by persons other than an intimate partner (%)	2009 ³	33.7	27.8	29.1
Percentage of women aged 20-24 years who were married or in a union before age 18 (%)	2007 ²			22.4

1 Population and Housing Census; 2 Demographic and Health Survey (DHS); 3 Family Health and Safety Study; 4 Solomon Islands Parliament (www.parliament.gov.sb)

Annex 2: Methodology for calculating housing quality

Each household is given a housing quality rating based on materials used for construction of walls, floor and roof; source of drinking water; the type of toilet facility, and the energy used for lighting and cooking. The rating is calculated by applying a score for each housing element, as per the tables below, and summing the scores for a final index. With eight variables that are scored between 1...n, the lowest score possible is 8 and the highest is 54. The lower the score, the better the housing quality.

Construction material	Wall	Floor	Roof	Crowding – method for calculation			Score
Wood	2	2	3	Average rooms per person	0.70	2+ AD above mean	1
Tin / corrugated iron	4	4	2	Minimum	0.01	1+ AD above mean	2
Concrete/cement/brick	1	1	4	Maximum	7.00	Mean +- 1 AD	3
Traditional materials	3	3	1	Average deviation (AD)	0.30	1+ AD below mean	4
Makeshift of improvised materials	5	5	5			2+ AD below mean	5
Other	6	6	6				

Drinking water		Sanitation		Cooking fuel		Lighting	
Metered - SIWA	1	Flush - private	1	Electricity	1	Electricity	1
Communal standpipe	3	Flush - shared	4	Kerosene	3	Own generator	3
HH Tank	2	Water sealed - private	2	Wood / coconut shells	5	Solar	2
Community tank	4	Water sealed - shared	5	Charcoal	4	Gas	4
Protected well	5	Pit latrine - private	3	Gas	2	Kerosene lamp	5
Unprotected well	7	Pit latrine - shared	6	Other	6	Coleman lamp	6
River/stream	8	Other	7			Wood/coconut	7
Bottled water	6	None	8			Other	8
						None	9

The average score across all households is 28.7 and the median 30.0. Households are then ranked into one of five groups based on their score: between 8 and 17 is Rank 1; a score between 18 and 26 is Rank 2; score between 27 and 35 is Rank 3; score of 36 and 44 is Rank 4; and score between 45 and 54 is Rank 5. As Figure 57 shows, most households are ranked 3, with a quality rating between 30 and 37.

FIGURE 57 – DISTRIBUTION OF HOUSEHOLDS BASED ON HOUSING QUALITY RATING

