

GENDER EQUALITY IN THE PACIFIC – BUILDING WITH WOMEN IN MIND



THIS STATUE, TITLED "EL ESFUERZO" (THE EFFORT) OR "LA CARGA" (THE BURDEN), IS LOCATED IN BARCELONA, SPAIN, ON CARRER DE LA PRINCESA NEAR THE INTERSECTION WITH VIA LAIETANA. The sculpture was created by artist Jaume Plensa.



GENDER EQUALITY IN THE PACIFIC

- **Gendered impacts of infrastructure development:** Infrastructure planning often overlooks the specific needs of women and girls, leading to unsafe or inaccessible transport, sanitation, and energy systems that reinforce gender inequality and limit opportunities.
- **Barriers for people with disabilities:** Inaccessible infrastructure—such as lack of ramps, tactile surfaces, or inclusive communication systems—excludes people with disabilities from fully participating in economic, social, and civic life.
- **Ethnic and social exclusion:** Marginalized ethnic or minority groups are frequently left out of planning and decision-making processes, resulting in unequal access to infrastructure services like clean water, electricity, and roads.

WOMEN IN THE PACIFIC FACE A UNIQUE SET OF INTERSECTING CHALLENGES

Deeply rooted gender norms and cultural expectations

Access to technical education and training

Representation in decision-making

Gender-based violence

Climate change and disasters

•**Spatial inequality and displacement:** Infrastructure projects often benefit urban or affluent areas while displacing or neglecting poor, rural, or minority communities, deepening geographic and social disparities.

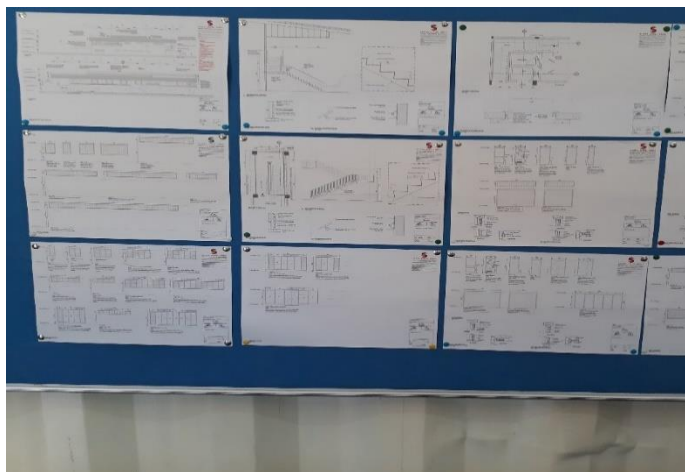
•**Data gaps and policy blind spots:** A lack of disaggregated data (by gender, disability, ethnicity) leads to infrastructure policies that fail to address the specific needs and rights of excluded groups.

•**Inclusive planning as a solution:** Applying intersectional, participatory approaches to infrastructure development helps ensure that the voices of women, people with disabilities, and minority communities shape decisions and benefit equitably.



Markets for Change has mainstreamed **women's participation in infrastructure** through three outcome areas of the project using the following methods:

- Voice and participation** - through the empowerment and inclusion of Market Vendor associations in decision making processes in market management and infrastructure plans and development;
- **Gender mainstreaming** with market management as “duty bearers” to ensure that management is able to engage with women market vendors, and are able to, and ensure inclusion of women's views;
- Joint actions** – scoping studies, design meetings, infrastructure meetings – completed jointly



MARKETS FOR CHANGE PROGRAMME GENDER INCLUSIVE PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE JOURNEY

VOICE AND PARTICIPATION

Multi level stakeholder consultation and engagement -

women vendors identified the necessity for better market infrastructure to address their needs.

consistent consultations with women vendors lead to their voices being heard and their issues addressed.

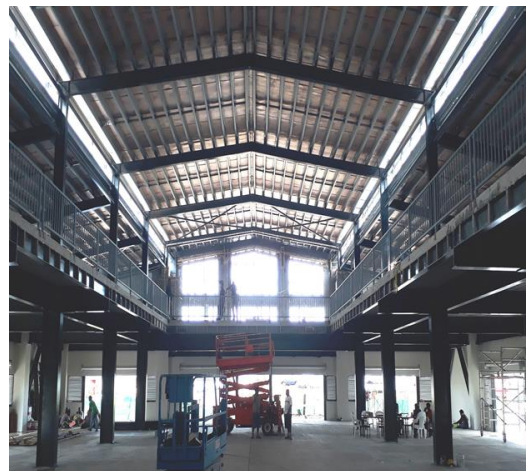
The 'needs list' identified by the women vendors followed consistent multi party consultation meetings to finalise the gender responsive infrastructure projects for each market site.





Management, monitoring and reporting of project

- UN Women Infrastructure checklist
- Infrastructure consultants engaged
- Technical steering committee
- Timely meetings and site visitations
- Infrastructure update at quarterly governance meetings
- Payment milestones



GENDER MAINSTREAMING WITH DUTY BEARERS

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Cost sharing initiative – ownership of the project by the National and Local government

Overtime the ownership of the infrastructure by the government and local councils have strengthened.

Investment in municipal and provincial markets has been a focus of Pacific governments

Not only physical infrastructure but also investing in putting in place better systems and processes for market management and operations including employing female market staff which was not the case before the M4C project

Recognition of market vendors as rights holders

Key players for food security and drivers of local economic development



Safety and Discrimination – improved systems and processes to address safety and discrimination of women vendors

Disaster Preparedness – Disaster management plans driven by women

Universal access – Fully integrated universal access design for all market projects.

Gender Responsive Budgeting – influence allocation of funds and resources



Participants at the Improving Market safety Meeting held in Lautoka. Picture SUPPLIED UN WOMEN

Safe market for all

Markets are the footsteps of the local economy. we need to protect, what we have as it will help us grow further. Protect, secure it and grow it.

JOINT ACTION



Land tenure issues/ Lack of available space for extension of markets

Political will – takes time and consistent efforts to influence politicians

Inadequate technical staff and Financial and technical capacity within municipalities

Natural disasters and climate change- intensity and frequency of natural disaster is on the rise in the Pacific



CHALLENGES

OPPORTUNITIES

Enabling environment

Enhanced economic opportunities for women

Leadership opportunities for women

Safe space for women at the market

