

# COMMUNITY HEALTH AND MOBILITY IN THE PACIFIC

▶ SOLOMON ISLANDS  
CASE STUDY



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Cover Photo: A logging site in Solomon Islands. © 2018/Patrick ROSE

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# FOREWORD

In order for Solomon Islands to continue its efforts to achieve gender equality, we must understand and address all barriers to gender equality, which include the different dynamics of gender-based violence. One classic example of this is the impact of logging and related projects – the logging industry has inevitably attracted foreign and local migrant workers into villages and communities, and this, in some cases, leads to sexual exploitation of and trafficking in women and girls.

There has been increasing public attention and criticism of the negative social impacts of the logging industry, including cases of sexual exploitation and forced marriages, and further evidence of these challenges is contained herein. However, the study also notes that this public criticism is frequently misdirected and focuses more on the roles of these foreign migrant workers as opposed to analysing risks and impacts of the industry on girls and women and communities at large. The way forward is to have effective policies and programmes, which can only be achieved with an open mind and by having all stakeholders, communities, chiefs, representatives of organizations supporting women and girls, and the Government of Solomon Islands working together, as further explained in this report.

The ultimate function of the Ministry of Women, Youth, Children and Family Affairs – together with development partners and stakeholders – is to develop and implement evidence-based policies and programmes purposely to improve and protect the lives of women, youth, children and families in Solomon Islands.

The research and recommendations in this study indicate that much can be done to improve the situation of communities near logging camps, and this can be done together with the International Organization for Migration (IOM).

With this data as starting point, the Ministry is ready to collaborate and work together with relevant partners to design evidence-based policies and programmes by responding to the research findings and ultimately protecting the rights of women, children, youth and families.



**Dr Cedric Alependava**

Permanent Secretary

Ministry of Women, Youth, Children and Family Affairs

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Finally, IOM is deeply grateful to the community members and key informants in Solomon Islands, including policymakers, service providers and other local stakeholders, who have given their valuable time to participate in this research.

## NAMES

Aside from the acknowledgements above, and the names included in the consultation list (where consent was provided), all quotes and references to key informants in the report are anonymized.

## THE CHAMP PROJECT

Migration is a social determinant of health. It is one of the many factors that influence the individual health and well-being of migrants, as well as the sedentary populations in the transport corridors through which they pass and the hosting communities (migration-affected communities). Heightened mobility dynamics also introduce particular challenges for women, as gender and mobility intersect on a number of key community health issues including communicable diseases, sexual and reproductive health (SRH), and violence against women and girls (VAWG).

Emerging evidence in the Pacific suggests that migration-affected communities face particular challenges in relation to community health and VAWG, including increased risk of sexual exploitation, trafficking and abuse. Despite frequent anecdotal reports on these issues, there is limited evidence or available data that specifically addresses the nexus of gender, mobility and health in the Pacific. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) Community Health and Mobility in the Pacific (CHAMP) project aims to address this gap.

The CHAMP project is being implemented in four Pacific countries – Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, Fiji and Papua New Guinea – and will produce case studies in each country. This research aims to provide up-to-date strategic information relating to the mobility dimensions of gender and community health for public dissemination and sharing with relevant stakeholders. It will also inform the production of training resources targeting the protection of women and girls in migration-affected communities in the Pacific.

The CHAMP project is aligned with Outcome 1.3 of the IOM Pacific Strategy – migrants, their families and migration-affected communities enjoy the benefits of good physical health. The overall objective of the project is to contribute to an environment that enables migrants, their families and migration-affected communities to enjoy the benefits of good physical health and well-being. The project aims to ensure that governments and civil society organizations develop, update, and deliver community health policies and programmes that are sensitive to gender and mobility. The CHAMP project aims to achieve this by better understanding the mobility dynamics of gender and health in the Pacific communities.

## FUNDING

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# LIST OF ACRONYMS

<b>CEDAW</b>	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
<b>CHAMP</b>	Community Health and Mobility in the Pacific
<b>CSEC</b>	commercial sexual exploitation of children
<b>CRC</b>	Convention on the Rights of the Child
<b>CSO</b>	civil society organization
<b>DFAT</b>	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (Australia)
<b>GBV</b>	gender-based violence
<b>IFC</b>	International Finance Corporation
<b>IOM</b>	International Organization for Migration
<b>KAP</b>	knowledge, attitude and practices (survey)
<b>KII</b>	key informant interview
<b>MMM</b>	mobile men with money
<b>MWYCFA</b>	Ministry of Women, Youth, Children and Family Affairs (Solomon Islands)
<b>NAACC</b>	National Advisory and Action Committee for Children
<b>NGO</b>	non-governmental organization
<b>RAMSI</b>	Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands
<b>RSIPF</b>	Royal Solomon Islands Police Force
<b>SBD</b>	Solomon Islands dollar
<b>SRH</b>	sexual and reproductive health
<b>STI</b>	sexually transmitted infection (or STD (sexually transmitted disease))
<b>SWD</b>	Social Welfare Division (Solomon Islands)
<b>TFR</b>	total fertility rate
<b>TIP</b>	trafficking in persons
<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Programme
<b>UNFPA</b>	United Nations Population Fund
<b>VAW</b>	violence against women
<b>VAWG</b>	violence against women and girls

# DEFINITION OF TERMS

## MOBILITY TERMINOLOGY

<b>Migrant</b>	Any person who is moving or has moved across an international border or within a State away from his/her habitual place of residence, regardless of: (a) the person's legal status; (b) whether the movement is voluntary or involuntary; (c) what the causes of the movement are; or (d) what the length of the stay is.
<b>Migration</b>	Movement of people. Migration can be internal or external – so within or between national boundaries.
<b>International migrant</b>	A person who is living in a country other than his/her country of birth.
<b>Internal migrant</b>	A person who has moved from his/her home but remains in his/her country of birth.
<b>Migrant worker</b>	An individual who has moved from his/her home for the purposes of employment and has established residency within the local community. This movement may be internal (within the country) or international (cross-border). Migrant workers can include contract and seasonal workers for purposes of this study.
<b>Migration-affected community</b>	A community that is impacted, both positively and negatively, by heightened rates of mobility.
<b>Mobile population</b>	A large category of persons who may cross borders or move within their own country on a frequent basis for a variety of work-related reasons, without changing place of habitual primary residence or home base.
<b>Trafficking in persons (TiP)</b>	The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. TiP can take place within the borders of one State or may have a transnational character.

# COMMUNITY AND HEALTH TERMINOLOGY

<b>Child</b>	In line with the definition from the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), a child is defined as a person under the age of 18. It is acknowledged that in the Pacific, some children do not know their dates of birth due to poor birth registration practices.
<b>Commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC)</b>	Sexual exploitation of a child by another person in return for remuneration, in cash or kind, paid to the child or paid to a third person or persons. It includes child prostitution, child pornography, trafficking in children for sexual purposes, child sex tourism and “sale” of children through improper marriage.
<b>Extractive industries</b>	Extractive industries involve the removal of non-renewable raw materials, such as oil, gas, metals and minerals from earth.
<b>sexual exploitation</b>	Any actual or attempted abuse of position of vulnerability, differential power or trust, for sexual purposes, including, but not limited to, profiting monetarily, socially or politically from the sexual exploitation of another. (Note: Sexual exploitation is a broad term, which includes a number of acts, such as transactional sex and exploitative relationship.)
<b>Gender-based violence (GBV)<sup>1</sup></b>	An umbrella term for any harmful act that is perpetrated against a person’s will; it is based on socially ascribed (gender) differences between male and female. It includes acts that inflict physical, sexual, or mental harm or suffering; threats of such acts; coercion; and other deprivations of liberty. These acts can occur in public or in private.
<b>Transactional sex</b>	The exchange of money, employment, goods or services for sex, including sexual favours and other forms of humiliating, degrading or exploitative behaviour. This includes any exchange of assistance that is due to beneficiaries of assistance.
<b>Violence against children</b>	Any violence against a person under 18 years of age. It therefore includes child maltreatment and overlaps with youth violence. The most frequent forms it takes are child maltreatment and youth violence.

<sup>1</sup> Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC), *Guidelines for Integrating Gender-Based Violence Interventions in Humanitarian Action: Reducing Risk, Promoting Resilience and Aiding Recovery* (IASC, 2015). Available from <https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/working-group/documents-public/guidelines-integrating-gender-based-violence-interventions> (accessed 11 May 2017).

**Violence against women (VAW)**

Any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual, or mental harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion, or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life.

**Violence against women and girls (VAWG)**

Violence against women as defined above, and includes also forms of violence against girls, because they are girls and that is rooted in gender inequality (e.g. harmful practices, and early, child and forced marriages). It emphasizes the heightened risk of women and girls to violence throughout the life course because of gender inequality and discrimination against them.

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Migration and mobility are central features of the Pacific Islands landscape. The diverse island States dispersed throughout the world's largest ocean are connected by thousands of years of migration, history and culture. Mobility continues to remain a cornerstone of contemporary Pacific Islander identity and is central to many facets of Pacific Islands life. Both push and pull factors – such as marriage and maintenance of kin relations, trade and exchange, livelihood and economic opportunities, and displacement and resettlement from conflict or environmental hazards – motivate movement.

Mobility brings both opportunities and challenges. With increasing rates of mobility and the expansion of extractive industries such as forestry, mining and commercial fishing in the region, it is of particular importance to understand potential community health challenges and vulnerabilities that may impact the populations and communities affected by these changes. Violence against women and girls (VAWG) is a worldwide public health issue, and emerging evidence from Solomon Islands has demonstrated that migration-affected communities face particular challenges in relation to community health and VAWG, including increased risk of sexual exploitation, trafficking and abuse. Despite a high number of anecdotal reports on this issue, little evidence or data currently exists that specifically addresses the nexus of gender, mobility and health in the Pacific. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) Community Health and Mobility in the Pacific (CHAMP) project has been established to address this gap.

This report presents key findings from an exploratory case study on the impacts of heightened mobility in remote communities in Solomon Islands. The purpose of the study was to improve understanding of the exposure to risks and vulnerabilities to sexual exploitation and trafficking in communities located near the extractive industries. Following a broad literature review on mobility, gender and health in the Pacific,<sup>2</sup> and preliminary research and deliberation with stakeholders in Solomon Islands, the scope of the study was narrowed to communities in close proximity to logging operations. This was decided due to the sheer magnitude of communities and people affected by logging, and from initial evidence and pre-existing research on the nexus of gender, mobility and health highlighting the increased risks for women and girls in these areas. The study also intended to identify any other emerging community health issues, risks or vulnerabilities associated with heightened mobility, particularly in relation to communicable diseases, sexual and reproductive health (SRH), and VAWG. Specific objectives of the research in Solomon Islands were:

- To produce up-to-date strategic information relating to the mobility dimensions of community health in Solomon Islands for relevant stakeholders and policymakers;
- To inform the development of training materials on gender, mobility and community health, which will also be produced under the CHAMP project.

The study utilized mixed methods and adopted a spaces-of-vulnerability approach to the research topic. “Spaces of vulnerability” is a sociogeographical approach that highlights the presence of different migrant and mobile populations and acknowledges that interaction with local communities creates a fluid social environment in which social norms typically regulating behaviour may not be followed. Attention is given to service delivery, health and social welfare system capacity, advocacy and policymaking, research and evidence within the targeted sociogeographical space, which allows for assessment of a range of influential factors and actors.

<sup>2</sup> Available from the International Organization for Migration (IOM) on request.

Research was undertaken over seven weeks in June and July 2018. Provincial visits included key informant interviews (KIIs) at the provincial capital and village levels, and data collection for the knowledge, attitude and practices (KAP) survey at the village level. KIIs were also conducted in Honiara, the national capital. A total of 68 KIIs and 153 KAP surveys were undertaken as part of the study.

Detailed findings are outlined in this report, highlighting the perceptions, knowledge, attitudes and behaviours of migration-affected community members, and key government and non-governmental stakeholders. Key areas investigated as part of the study included community and mobility dynamics; gender, relationships and trafficking risks; and health and SRH.

**The study found that migration and logging were often viewed as two sides of the same coin, and concerns about the presence of the industry far outweighed perceived benefits.**

Research findings present a bleak picture of the perceived impact of logging and related mobility on affected communities in the study sites, and Solomon Islands more broadly. Generally, communities were dissatisfied with logging operations, and while few noted the material and infrastructure benefits of the industry, more often than not community members reported grievances. While not all of these grievances can be solely attributed to logging or migration, the unique dynamics created by the influx of money associated with a minimally regulated industry, and increased mobility, were reported to heighten vulnerability in these communities, particularly for women and children.

In line with previous research,<sup>3</sup> this study also confirms that heightened mobility dynamics related to project-induced in-migration in logging-affected communities of Solomon Islands is linked with increased VAWG, particularly in regard to the occurrence of transactional and exploitative sexual relationships, child and forced marriages, and female spousal abandonment.<sup>4</sup> In a number of cases, these were reported to be facilitated by third parties for financial or material gain and contain the necessary elements to be defined as trafficking. Of the 68 KIIs conducted, transactional and exploitative sexual relationships were raised as a key issue in 57 interviews. Exposure to risks and vulnerabilities were particularly notable for children, with the reported age of girls involved often below 18 and as young as 12 years old.

Impacts of the logging industry, particularly in regard to sexual exploitation and forced marriages, are receiving increased public attention in Solomon Islands. However, the focus of the issue is often misplaced, narrowing in on the role and race of foreign migrant workers, to the exception of the broader dynamics of risk and vulnerability related to the introduction of a minimally regulated industry and pre-existing enabling and underlying drivers of vulnerability to VAWG. Without this broader view, it is unlikely that policies and programmes will be able to effectively prevent sexual exploitation of women and girls.

This study found that several localized and pre-existing dynamics and issues contributed to heightened risk and vulnerability in migration-affected communities. These included the limited reach and access to essential service provision, including health, education and justice; reliance on traditional forms of authority which often do not cater to gender-sensitive matters; and existing cultural and gender norms. Attitudes of acceptance regarding underage marriage were also

<sup>3</sup> For example, see: T. Herbert, *Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children in the Solomon Islands: A Report Focusing on the Presence of the Logging Industry in a Remote Region* (Vanuatu, Solomon Islands, Christian Care Centre, Anglican Church of Melanesia, 2007); Live & Learn, *Research of Aspirations and Perceptions: Combating Commercial Exploitation of Children and Violence against Women in Remote Regions of the Western Pacific Impacted by Large Scale Commercial Logging – Solomon Islands, Papua New Guinea, Vanuatu* (Melbourne, 2010); V. Maebiru, S. Ryan and J. Tung/Save the Children, "Sexual exploitation of children by travelling workers in the Solomon Islands", expert paper (Honiara and Melbourne, Save the Children, n.d.); and Save the Children, *Dynamics of Child Trafficking and Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children in Solomon Islands: Cross Provincial Study* (Honiara and Melbourne, Save the Children, 2015).

<sup>4</sup> IOM recognizes "female spousal abandonment" – which occurs when a husband or an intimate partner abandons his wife/wives and/or children in other countries following migration or displacement – as a form of gender-based violence (GBV).



highlighted. Furthermore, findings from this study show a key factor underlying vulnerability was the pre-existing limited availability of and access to the cash economy, converging with the sudden influx of money associated with extractive industries. This provided a compelling motivation for women and girls to engage in transactional and exploitative sexual relationships, as well as for third parties to exploit vulnerable members of the community, including family members and children.

Findings from the KAP survey indicate the respondents' significant reluctance to report matters relating to sexual exploitation and trafficking to government authorities. While recognizing the occurrence of exploitation of women and children, social welfare and police officers universally described the reluctance of community members to file official or police reports. They also cited human, financial and logistical resource constraints that affected their capacity to conduct awareness in remote communities within their respective jurisdictions. The study found that knowledge of formal laws in relation to consent, marriage and trafficking were low among survey respondents and key informants. Similarly, key informants reiterated that the majority of the population were not aware of laws relating to sexual exploitation and trafficking, and repeatedly highlighted the importance of awareness and education.

The research findings show that while community members perceive transactional and exploitative relationships to be common, they generally do not approve of them. This disapproval, however, mostly did not relate to perceived illegal activity nor the infraction of children's or women's rights. Rather, the basis for condemnation referred to sociocultural or financial factors relating to the temporary nature of the relationships. Furthermore, relationships and marriages were seen to be the purview of families, and as long as parents provided their consent, they were not considered a matter that could or should be addressed beyond the family. This relegation to the "private" realm, coupled with limited awareness of relevant laws and limited accessibility to formal justice systems, resulted in a pervasive culture of silence and reluctant reporting behaviour.

This research highlights that migration-affected communities are simultaneously impacted by pre-existing localized factors, in addition to introduced dynamics associated with logging operations and heightened mobility. These factors, coupled with limited industry accountability and formal protective policies, and restricted access to service provision and protective services in these remote areas, create an environment where these drivers of vulnerability can go unchecked.

## KEY SURVEY FINDINGS

- **Eighty-eight per cent (88%)** of respondents **did not think it was acceptable for children under the age of 18 to marry**, while **75 per cent reported knowing someone** who had married under the age of 18.
- **Ninety-nine per cent (99%)** of respondents **did not think it was acceptable for children** under the age of 15 years old to marry, while **41 per cent of respondents reported knowing someone** who had married under the age of 15.
- **Twenty-six per cent (26%)** of respondents had **heard of children under the age of 15 in their areas engaging in transactional sex**. When asked what they would do if they heard of or saw this happening, **27 per cent said they would do nothing**.
- **Forty-one per cent (41%)** of respondents thought girls or women in their areas **were forced to have marriages or relationships** that they could not leave.

- **Fifty-eight per cent (58%)** of survey respondents had heard of females (any age) engaging in transactional sex. Of these respondents, **63 per cent stated it was “very common”** and **83 per cent** believed that if a **third party** were involved, they received goods or money in exchange.
- **Sixty-three per cent (63%)** of survey respondents said that **condoms were not available** in their communities, and a further **10 per cent did not know**.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Future efforts to address community health impacts in migration-affected communities within Solomon Islands should incorporate understanding of the varying drivers of vulnerability and improve community awareness, formal protective policies and industry accountability.<sup>5</sup> The following recommendations stem from the research findings; however, it is likely that these are relevant to all logging areas in Solomon Islands and communities impacted by other forms of natural resources industries (e.g. tourism and mining).

### Recommendations for communities:

- Identify leaders in each community including youth, women and men, as well as individuals from faith-based organizations and churches, to be trained in child protection, sexual exploitation and relevant legislation, and who can provide referrals and advice regarding relevant services and authorities, and reporting processes.
- Enable reporting to formal justice representatives.
- Devise, implement and monitor community-led child protection protocols in line with national standards.

### Recommendations for service provision:

Service provision from provincial and national governments, as well as civil society organizations, should target the following areas:

- Raise awareness of the impact of increased mobility on gender and health outcomes in communities, including relevant preventative and responsive actions.
- Promote sustainable livelihood opportunities, particularly for young women, in rural and remote communities.
- Raise awareness of relevant laws and reporting mechanisms at the community level and enable reporting processes and response. Consult with communities on appropriate messaging.
- Address reluctance of community members to report cases of trafficking and sexual exploitation.
- Improve essential service availability, particularly in regard to SRH and justice services.

<sup>5</sup> As a direct follow-up activity of this study, training materials will be developed by IOM, informed by the study results and the knowledge, attitudes and practices (KAP) survey findings.

- Consult with communities, in particular women and youth, to develop appropriate outreach and messaging about accessing services. Raise awareness among community members and stakeholders of service provision availability at the community and provincial levels, including contact details for reporting or referral pathways.
- Continue raising awareness of and providing training in relevant laws and reporting mechanisms among key civil society, government and law enforcement personnel.
- Incorporate information dissemination and awareness-raising of risks of and vulnerabilities to trafficking into existing VAW and gender-based violence (GBV) and health training programmes.
- Expand provision of safe houses and SafeNet to survivors of GBV in provincial areas and to victims of trafficking.<sup>6</sup>

**Recommendations for logging companies, extractive industries and regulating government bodies (including the police):**

- Distribute these research findings to extractive industries and regulating government bodies to ensure awareness of current issues and encourage engagement in response.
- Promote and mandate more inclusive decision-making at the community level, including the direct representation of women, prior to the provision of extractive resource licensing.
- Make social impact assessments a mandatory component of all licensing applications.
- Enforce mandatory social safeguards within the regulations of extractive industries, including child protection policies, and appropriate penalties for noncompliance.
- Improve knowledge among workers and migration-affected communities of relevant laws, illegal activities including sexual exploitation and reporting pathways.
- Respond promptly and effectively to reports of underage marriage, sexual exploitation and child abuse, and utilize the updated trafficking legislation where appropriate.
- Foster greater cooperation between regulating authorities – such as the Ministry of Forestry and Research, the Royal Solomon Islands Police Force (RSIPF), the Ministry of Women, Youth, Children and Family Affairs (MWYCFA) and the Social Welfare Division (SWD) – and increase regulating authorities’ skills in and knowledge of relevant laws and policies.
- Increase the frequency of monitoring of logging (or other extractive industry) camps by joint monitoring teams, including representatives from the SWD, the MWYCFA and the RSIPF.

**Recommendations for policy and protective services:**

- Accede to the United Nations Convention on Transnational Organized Crime and the Palermo protocols.
- Raise the minimum legal age for marriage to 18 years and address harmful practices such as child marriage.
- Increase investigation and prosecution of commercial sexual exploitation of children and trafficking cases in migration-affected communities.

<sup>6</sup> SafeNet is a referral network for people experiencing GBV in Honiara.

- Collaborate with regulating authorities to raise awareness through media initiatives.
- Review, monitor and prosecute breaches of alcohol licensing, with the aim of reducing the prevalence and impact of alcohol consumption.
- Sign the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography.
- Assess the need for standalone legislation for trafficking in persons and related crimes.
- Review, monitor and prosecute breaches of labour laws, including the provision of household and domestic services in industry camps.
- Incorporate information dissemination and awareness-raising of risks of and vulnerabilities to trafficking into existing GBV-related training programmes.

**Recommendations for further research:**

- Conduct follow-up research on the experiences and perceptions of migrant workers in extractive industries in Solomon Islands to complement the findings presented in this report.
- Investigate risks and occurrence of labour trafficking in Solomon Islands.
- Conduct targeted research on clinical and mental health outcomes of mobile and migration-affected populations.
- Conduct research on the focus areas of this report in all provinces.
- Conduct research into service provision gaps in communities near logging camps.

# 1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

What are the gendered health and social impacts of heightened mobility dynamics in logging-affected communities in Solomon Islands?

This report presents key findings from an exploratory case study on the impacts of heightened mobility in remote communities in Solomon Islands. The purpose of the study was to improve understanding of the exposure to risks of and vulnerabilities to sexual exploitation and trafficking in communities located near the extractive industries, specifically, logging operations. The study also intended to identify any other emerging community health issues, risks or vulnerabilities associated with heightened mobility, particularly in relation to communicable diseases, sexual and reproductive health (SRH), and violence against women and girls (VAWG).

This study finds that in-migration associated with logging (and extractive industries more generally) create unique conditions that further heighten the exposure to risks of and vulnerabilities to sexual exploitation and trafficking in remote Solomon Islands communities. VAWG is a worldwide public health issue and one that has rightly received increased and constructive attention by the Government of Solomon Islands and development partners over the last decade. At the same time, communities in close proximity to logging operations portray specific dynamics that heighten the risks of and vulnerabilities to sexual exploitation and trafficking, particularly for young girls and women. These issues, while widely discussed anecdotally and are the focus of some national media attention, have not garnered the political attention required to prompt policy change or improve industry regulation and accountability.

Rural and remote areas of Solomon Islands experience heightened mobility dynamics in relation to extractive industries, particularly logging, with the influx of internal and international migrant workers. The social and health impacts of extractive industries on communities are widely acknowledged globally, and the link with sex trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC) is an increasing concern among national governments and advocates (US Department of State, 2017). These crimes frequently occur with impunity due to their often remote and difficult-to-access locations: affected areas may be isolated from government oversight and community support, and have less access to protective services, legal advocates or law enforcement personnel (US Department of State, 2017). Information on victim identification can also be difficult to obtain or verify.

Previous research in Solomon Islands has drawn attention to the impact of the logging industry, in particular on CSEC (Herbert, 2007; Save the Children, 2015), the sexual exploitation of women (Live & Learn, 2010) and trafficking (American Bar Association, 2014; ACP–EU Migration Action, 2016). Solomon Islands is listed as Tier 2 in the United States Department of State *Trafficking in Persons Report*, which references trafficking near extractive and entertainment industries.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>7</sup> The *Trafficking in Persons Report June 2018* states: “Traffickers subject Solomon Island children to sex trafficking and forced labor within the country, sometimes in exchange for money or goods, particularly near foreign logging camps, on foreign and local commercial fishing vessels, and at hotels and entertainment establishments. Girls and young women are recruited for domestic work and some are subsequently exploited in prostitution at the logging camps. Some parents receive payments for sending young women and girls into forced marriages with foreign workers at logging and mining companies; many of them are exploited in domestic servitude or prostitution. To pay off debts, families may offer their children for “informal adoption,” and the adopted family or guardians subject them to forced labor or sexual servitude. Traffickers at logging camps force young males to work as domestic servants and cooks.” (See: US Department of State, *Trafficking in Persons Report June 2018* (Washington, D.C., 2018))

Trafficking and sexual exploitation near extractive industries have also been noted by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime in its report *Transnational Organized Crime in the Pacific: A Threat Assessment* (2016), and in the concluding observations to both the recent Solomon Islands Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) (UN, 2014) and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) (UN, 2018) reports.

The negative social impacts of the logging industry, particularly in regard to sexual exploitation and forced marriages, are receiving increased public attention in Solomon Islands. However, the focus of the issue is often misplaced, narrowing in on the role and race of foreign migrant workers, to the exception of the broader dynamics of risk and vulnerability related to the introduction of a minimally regulated industry and pre-existing enabling and underlying drivers of vulnerability.

### Spaces of vulnerability

This study applies a spaces-of-vulnerability approach to examine the gender, community health and mobility dynamics in the study sites.<sup>8</sup> “Spaces of vulnerability” is a sociogeographical approach that highlights the presence of different migrant and mobile populations and acknowledges that interaction with local communities creates a fluid social environment in which social norms typically regulating behaviour may not be followed. For example, when poverty and limited access to educational and livelihood opportunities in migration-affected communities converge with an increase in migrant workers residing away from their families and with access to disposable incomes, this may lead to an increase in transactional and commercial sex and subsequent vulnerabilities to exploitation and trafficking.

Spaces of vulnerability refers to:

- The social and economic conditions within a locality which can affect the welfare of the resident population; and
- The personal circumstances of individuals in those conditions, which can influence their behaviour (IOM, 2014).

Applying a spaces-of-vulnerability approach facilitates analysis of the challenges that arise in migration-affected communities without stigmatizing specific population groups. Attention is given to service delivery, health and social welfare system capacity, advocacy and policymaking, research and evidence within the targeted geographical space. It also enables assessment of other influencing factors and the role of multiple actors in contributing to environments where issues such as exploitation occur. This is appropriate for the Solomon Islands context because the preliminary research that is available emphasizes that exploitation of women and children is linked with the presence of migrant workers, local cultural and socioeconomic dynamics as well as community members who may be profiting from such practices. It is noted that future research in this area should include in-depth interviews with migrant workers to ensure their perspectives and constraints are properly understood.

### Migrants and migrant workers

There is no universally agreed definition of the term “migrant”; however, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) defines a migrant as any person who is moving or has moved across an international border or within a State away from his/her habitual place of residence, regardless of (a) the person’s legal status, (b) whether the movement is voluntary or involuntary,

<sup>8</sup> A spaces of vulnerability framework has been successfully utilized by IOM in previous research-to-action projects addressing health and rights issues in migration-affected communities. See: IOM, *Health Vulnerabilities of Mobile and Migrant Populations in Selected Ports of South Africa: Regional Synthesis Report* (Geneva, 2015); E. Tansey, N. Theyise, R. Borland and H. West, “Southern African ports as spaces of HIV vulnerability”, *International Maritime Health*, 61(4):233–240 (2010).

(c) what the causes of the movement are or (d) what the length of the stay is. For the purposes of this report, “migrants” refers to both international and internal migrants – that is, those who have moved away from their countries of birth or within their countries of birth.

The focus of this research is on mobility dynamics related to extractive industries, particularly logging. As such, the study focuses on migrant workers. Migrant workers are individuals who have moved from their homes for the purposes of employment and have established residency within local communities. This movement may be internal (within the country) or international (cross-border). Migrant workers can include contract and seasonal workers for purposes of this study.

## Report structure

The remainder of this introductory chapter details the research objectives of the study and clarifies “migration-affected communities”. A country and policy background to the relevant issues in Solomon Islands is also provided, and a summary of the study methods is offered.<sup>9</sup> Chapter 2 details the findings from the research, according to the three key research topics: community and mobility dynamics; gender, relationships and trafficking risks; and health prioritization and SRH. Chapter 3 discusses the trafficking and related dynamics found during the study, examines the local and introduced drivers of vulnerabilities, and reviews the provision of protection and accountability, particularly in relation to the risks and vulnerabilities to trafficking and sexual exploitation. Chapter 4 concludes the report with key recommendations.

## 1.1. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES IN SOLOMON ISLANDS

In Solomon Islands, the Community Health and Mobility in the Pacific (CHAMP) project is being conducted alongside the complementary project Protection of Women and Children, Particularly Girls, in Migration-Affected Communities, which is funded by the European Commission and delivered by IOM, in partnership with the Solomon Islands Family Support Centre.

The objective of the research in Solomon Islands is thus twofold:

- To produce up-to-date strategic information relating to the mobility dimensions of community health in Solomon Islands for relevant stakeholders and policymakers;
- To inform the development of training materials on gender, mobility and community health, which will also be produced under the CHAMP project. These training resources will be shared with stakeholders and utilized under the complementary project being delivered by the Family Support Centre.

This research has been conducted in Solomon Islands with the support of the national government partner, the Ministry of Women, Youth, Children and Family Affairs (MWYCFA), as well as the national partner on the complementary project on protecting the rights of women and girls, the Family Support Centre.

<sup>9</sup> A detailed description of the research methodology is provided in Appendix B.

Both projects respond to emerging evidence that Solomon Islands faces significant challenges in relation to community health – such as SRH, VAWG, sexual exploitation and trafficking – in migration-affected communities, including those located near logging and mining camps and ports. In a development context of competing priorities and needs, the specific impacts of mobility dynamics on community health outcomes in migration-affected communities has been given little attention. Existing studies universally conclude with the need for more comprehensive research and awareness-raising.<sup>10</sup> This project, and this research, aims to address this gap.

## 1.2. MIGRATION-AFFECTED COMMUNITIES IN SOLOMON ISLANDS

Research on migration typically focuses on the well-being and health of individual migrants or the migrant community (i.e. the ones who move). Due to the presenting issues in Solomon Islands, this research shifts the focus to migration-affected communities.<sup>11</sup>

Solomon Islands is host to diverse typologies of migrants, and a wide range of communities may be regarded as “migration-affected”. These range from informal settlements, often inhabited by inter-island migrants over generations, to urban centres that host the high and increasing stream of rural-to-urban migrants. This research study focuses on the nexus of gender, community health and mobility, particularly in relation to extractive industries. Following a literature review,<sup>12</sup> preliminary research and deliberation with stakeholders, the scope of the research was narrowed to communities in close proximity to logging operations. This was decided due to the sheer magnitude of communities and people affected by logging, and from initial evidence and pre-existing research on the nexus of gender, mobility and health highlighting the increased risks for women and girls in these areas.

The report uses the term “project-induced in-migration”<sup>13</sup> in order to capture both internal and international migrant workers while simultaneously allowing the research to focus on the key community health and gender issues raised by earlier research in regard to extractive industries in Solomon Islands.

10 For example, see: Herbert, *Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children in the Solomon Islands*, 2007; Maebiru, Ryan and Tung/Save the Children, “Sexual exploitation of children by travelling workers in the Solomon Islands”, n.d.; UNICEF, United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) and End Child Prostitution, Child Pornography and Trafficking of Children for Sexual Purposes (ECPAT), *Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC) and Child Sexual Abuse (CSA) in the Pacific: A Regional Report* (Suva, Fiji, UNICEF, 2006).

11 Research with mobile populations in Solomon Islands was outside of the scope of this study and broader project; however, it is acknowledged that follow-up research on the experiences and perceptions of migrant workers in extractive industries in Solomon Islands should be undertaken to complement the findings presented here. Such research should also investigate risks and occurrences of labour trafficking in Solomon Islands.

12 Available from IOM on request.

13 “Project-induced in-migration” is a term used by the International Finance Corporation (IFC). The IFC’s 2009 *Handbook for Addressing Project-Induced In-Migration* is a publicly available resource for extractive companies, lending agencies, government authorities, consultants and practitioners to assess the risk of project-induced in-migration in a range of sectors and plan effective management responses.



### 1.3. COUNTRY CONTEXT

Solomon Islands has been politically independent from the United Kingdom since 1978. The official language is English; however, Solomon Islands Pijin is the general lingua franca. The country experienced a period of political instability and civil conflict from 1998 to 2003, during which the economy was destabilized and social development was disrupted (Government of Solomon Islands, 2012). This was followed by a 14-year Australian-led regional intervention, the Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands (RAMSI), conducted in partnership with the Government of Solomon Islands to restore law and order and the national economy.<sup>14</sup> The country is predominantly Christian, and most communities have at least one church.

The country is a double-chain volcanic archipelago comprising almost 1,000 islands. It is rich in natural resources, consisting of agricultural land, fisheries, forests and minerals. The culturally and ethnically diverse population of approximately 620,000 live across nine administrative provinces, namely, Choiseul, Western Province, Central Province, Isabel, Guadalcanal, Malaita, Makira, Temotu, and Rennell and Bellona, and the capital Honiara. Approximately 80 per cent of the population live in rural areas, many on remote islands or in mountainous terrain. Travel to these areas can be difficult and delivering essential services to the population is a challenge for the Government, one factor contributing to high rates of rural-to-urban migration.

While the majority of the population live in remote areas, the urban population are growing at 5 per cent per annum – more than twice the overall rate of national population growth (WHO, 2018). The population of Solomon Islands remains one of the youngest in the region, with 39 per cent aged under 15 years and a median age of 20.6 years; incorporating youth into the productive labour force is consequently a major challenge (UNFPA, 2014:70).

Land tenure systems in Solomon Islands are complex and vary across the country. Land ownership is typically customary and primarily clan-based, whereby single individuals or nuclear families rarely outright own land. While this customary ownership restricts economic development, it also serves to limit poverty by ensuring that most of the population have access to natural resources for livelihoods, housing materials and food gardens. The Solomon Islands economy is based largely on subsistence agriculture supplemented by cash cropping (cocoa and palm oil), fishing, forestry and mining. The country receives significant overseas aid, with Australia being a major donor with an estimated contribution of AUD 187 million in the 2018–2019 budget estimate (Government of Australia DFAT, 2018). The gross national income per capita in 2016 was estimated at USD 1,880 (Government of Australia DFAT, 2018).

In 2018, Solomon Islands ranked 156th on the Human Development Index (UNDP, 2018). The country is considered one of the poorest in the Pacific region; however, the manifestation of poverty is complex – the country is rich in natural resources, and cultural and resource management practices typically provide a welfare safety net for housing and food security. The Government, however, struggles to provide essential health, education and justice services, particularly to remote and rural populations (ADB, 2015:3). Likewise, income distribution is inequitable between rural and urban areas, with access to opportunities to earn money being a particular issue for those living away from urban centres. Women are highly active in small-scale income generation and agriculture, but their economic participation and control of productive resources are constrained for reasons such as lack of education, sociocultural discrimination, and lack of access to key resources such as transport and market infrastructure (ADB, 2015:xv).

<sup>14</sup> The Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands (RAMSI) was a regional intervention involving 15 Member States. RAMSI was predominately led by Australia, which contributed approximately 95 per cent of the total cost (Australia spent approximately AUD 2.6 billion in the initial 10 years of the intervention) (J. Hayward-Jones, *Australia's Costly Investment in Solomon Islands: The Lessons of RAMSI* (Sydney, Lowy Institute, 2014)). For more information on RAMSI, see: [www.ramsi.org/about-ramsi/](http://www.ramsi.org/about-ramsi/)

Access to health care is a challenge across Solomon Islands, particularly for those living in rural and remote areas. Rural women, in particular, are likely to face greater challenges in health care, constrained by heavy workloads at home, lack of funds for transport and/or cultural requirements to obtain family permission to go for treatment (ADB, 2015:xiv). Non-communicable diseases (NCDs) are the leading cause of mortality in Solomon Islands, with 60 per cent of all deaths caused by cardiovascular diseases, cancer, chronic respiratory diseases, diabetes and other NCDs (Government of Solomon Islands, n.d.b). The cost of food is high relative to the low pay scales of casual and informal employment (ADB, 2015:3); however, store-bought packaged food is often considered desirable, for its convenience, taste and association with “progress” or “modernity” (Minter et al., 2018:34). These foods are often of low nutritional value and contain high amounts of salt, sugar, and fat.

Solomon Islander women face some of the most challenging gendered everyday and structural conditions in the world: they experience the highest rates of violence in the world (double the global average) and the lowest rates of political representation (Barbara and Baker, 2016).

### Logging industry

Logging operations have been taking place in Solomon Islands for the last century; however, the nature of these operations has dramatically shifted over the last 40 years. Earlier operations prior to independence were conducted on government land by a small number of logging companies and under close government supervision (Minter et al., 2018:12). From the mid-1980s, a different approach allowed logging to shift onto customary land and foreign companies to operate throughout the country with minimal oversight (Minter et al., 2018:12). Over the last decade, the industry has intensified, expanding to more remote locations and closer to remote villages and communities.

Aside from a few permanent plantations on alienated or registered land, logging operations are mostly temporary establishments, conducted for 1–5 years at a time, on customary owned land. The logging industry is currently dominated by Malaysian-owned companies, which are facilitated by Solomon Islander licence holders (Minter et al., 2018:12). Being temporary, logging operations are typically not associated with long-term development or investment in the area, unless arrangements are made between the licence holders, landowners and companies, for example, in the form of housing schemes to build permanent housing.<sup>15</sup> Developments in community infrastructure that are made, such as roads and school buildings, typically deteriorate after the company’s departure.

Workers in the logging industry include international and internal migrants, many of whom may have experienced working in other logging operations in provinces or elsewhere in the country, as well as local community members, where skills and positions allow. Solomon Islander women are often employed as cooks, cleaners and other housekeeping roles. International female workers are not typically associated with the logging industry in rural and remote areas of Solomon Islands. The social impacts of the logging industry for a number of years – such as alcohol and drinking (Kabutaulaka, 2000), community conflict (Allen et al., 2013), and sexual exploitation of women and children (Herbert, 2007; Save the Children, 2015) – have been noted with concern.

<sup>15</sup> Permanent housing typically refers to houses constructed with milled timber, metal nails, corrugated iron roofing and/or a concrete slab. Houses made of these materials are considered desirable, as they last longer and require less maintenance compared with housing made with locally available materials, such as woven walls and thatched roofs.

## 1.4. POLICY CONTEXT

Solomon Islands is party to a number of key international human rights instruments and regional working groups, detailed in Appendix A. At the national level, the Government of Solomon Islands has made constructive progress towards updating legislation and national action plans for trafficking in persons (TiP), ending VAW and child protection. The following presents a summary of key policies and progress in related sectors.

### Immigration and trafficking in persons

The updated Solomon Islands Immigration Act (No 3. 2012) legally commenced in 2014, and for the first time in Solomon Islands, human trafficking and people smuggling were criminalized in domestic legislation. The Act defines “exploitation” to include all forms of sexual exploitation (including sexual servitude and exploitation of another person’s prostitution), forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude and the removal of organs. The Act includes the specification – and potentially harsher penalties – of trafficking in children if the trafficked person is under 18 years of age. The Act stipulates that the consent of a trafficked person is not relevant, nor can it be used by the trafficker as a defence. This Act supplements other legislation relevant to the enforcement and prosecution of TiP in Solomon Islands such as the Constitution, the Penal Code,<sup>16</sup> the Labour Act, the Family Protection Act, and the new Child and Family Welfare Act. Solomon Islands is not yet signatory to the Palermo protocols or the Convention on Transnational Organized Crime; however, efforts are currently being made to accede by 2019.

Other government efforts to combat TiP include:

- the Anti-Human Trafficking Advisory Committee (AHTAC) (formerly known as the Trafficking in Persons Advisory Committee or TIPAC), which is mandated to provide advice and policy guidance to the Government of Solomon Islands on the response to human trafficking in the country; AHTAC meets quarterly and members include relevant government ministries, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and UN agencies;
- the National Action Plan against Human Trafficking and People Smuggling 2015–2020, which sets a road map to meet international obligations to the Palermo Protocol and promotes an integrated approach and response by key national stakeholders;
- the development of Operational Guidelines for Immigration and Law Enforcement on Trafficking in Persons to support the implementation of the Solomon Islands Immigration Act;
- the development of Standard Operating Procedures on the Identification, Protection and Referral of Victims of Trafficking in Solomon Islands for government and civil society stakeholders working with victims of trafficking; and
- the Joint Monitoring Agency Team, consisting of Immigration, Customs, Police, Labour, Forestry and Inland Revenue.

### Health and sexual and reproductive health

The Ministry of Health and Medical Services (MHMS) is responsible for health care provision in Solomon Islands. NGOs and faith-based organizations partner with the MHMS in service delivery and financing, leaving the private sector to play a minimum role in health service delivery (WHO,

<sup>16</sup> According to the Penal Code (Sexual Offences) Amendment Act 2016, “a person engages in internal people trafficking if the person recruits, transports, harbours or receives another person within Solomon Islands for the purpose of exploitation”. The Act defines “exploitation” as including “all forms of sexual exploitation (including sexual servitude), forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude and the removal of organs”.

2018). Like many other Pacific Islands countries, a number of factors create a host of challenges for the health system and improvements in delivery of health services including the geographical terrain of the country and its vulnerability to natural disasters, the mostly rural population, and the limited resource and infrastructure facilities.

The Solomon Islands National Health Strategic Plan for 2016–2020 (Government of Solomon Islands, n.d.a) identifies four key result areas: (1) improve service coverage; (2) build strong partnerships; (3) improve the quality and support of health services; and (4) lay the foundations for the future. These, in turn, shape the 16 outcome statements identified in the strategic plan, which include:

- Outcome 2: Improved maternal health across all provinces, especially for high risk mothers and those in hard-to-reach communities, including objectives to reduce maternal mortality to 7 per year by 2020, improving family planning practices and knowledge, and attaining 100 per cent health facility-based deliveries by skilled health workers by 2020;
- Outcome 3: Improved health and well-being of youth and adolescents, including the objective to develop a youth and adolescents health strategy by 2018;
- Outcome 7: Improved health sector responsiveness to gender-based violence, including objectives to implement the relevant health provision of the Family Protection Act 2014, and to nationalize Seif Ples programme across identified health services by 2020.

Improving the health service coverage from the current 60 per cent of the population to universal coverage is the highest priority of the National Health Strategic Plan (Government of Solomon Islands, n.d.a:14). The health system continues to battle to control communicable diseases and maternal and child health provision, while NCDs such as diabetes, heart and respiratory diseases, cancers, mental health conditions and injuries are increasing (Government of Solomon Islands, n.d.a:14). Priority population groups identified in the National Health Strategic Plan include: (a) people with disabilities; and (b) women exposed to violence and abuse.

The National Strategic Plan for HIV and STIs 2014–2018 notes that the country has registered a low number of cases of HIV (cumulatively 22 cases by the end of 2013); however, access to testing is limited. Despite the low reported prevalence of HIV, data consistently shows that a high proportion of both women and men are infected with sexually transmitted infections (STIs) across the country (Government of Solomon Islands, 2015:13), and there is a serious lack of knowledge about the virus among high-risk populations (ADB, 2015:xiv).

Solomon Islands has one of the highest rates of fertility in the Pacific, with teenage fertility being particularly high in rural areas. Fertility level is higher in rural areas (4.7 births per woman) than in urban areas (3.4 births per woman).<sup>17</sup> Women with less education are more likely to have higher fertility than women with greater education (4.7 births compared with 3.1 births). Adolescent fertility among women aged 15–19 years has decreased over the last 20 years, from 88 births per 1,000 women in 1996–2000 to 77 births in 2011–2015. There was, however, a small increase in the most recent four-year period (74–77 births per 1,000 women).<sup>18</sup>

## Women, youth and children

The MWYCFA works in partnership with other government ministries and civil society organizations (CSOs) to address the needs and concerns of women, youth and children in Solomon Islands. The

17 Solomon Islands National Statistics Office, Solomon Islands Ministry of Health and Medical Services, and Pacific Community, *Solomon Islands Demographic Health Survey 2015: Final Report* (2017).

18 Ibid.

Social Welfare Division (SWD) within the MHMS provides key child protection and child welfare services. The respective provincial governments also have departments for community affairs, which typically oversee children, women, youth and sports coordinators.

The Islanders' Marriages Act of 1945 prohibits the marriage of children younger than 15 years of age while allowing children between 15 and 18 years to marry with the written consent of their parents. Under customary law, however, girls may be married when they reach puberty (sometimes as young as 12 or 13 years of age). Given that customary law has constitutional status, that many births are not officially registered and that the registration of a marriage is voluntary, enforcing the legal minimum age for marriage is very difficult (UNHCR, 2015).

The report *Solomon Islands Family Health and Safety Study: A Study on Violence against Women and Children*<sup>19</sup> found that 64 per cent of ever-partnered women aged 15–49 years reported physical and/or sexual abuse by an intimate partner and 42 per cent of women reported physical and/or sexual partner violence in the last 12 months. A UNICEF study on HIV/AIDS found that 38 per cent of sexually active youth had experienced forced sex (UNICEF, 2010:66). Key challenges for access to justice for women include women's lack of awareness of their own rights, the scarce presence of the justice system beyond Honiara, and limited presence of females in top levels of the judicial system and law enforcement (ADB, 2015:xiii)

Addressing VAWG has been a key priority of the MWYCFA, the SWD and the Government of Solomon Islands, and this focus has led to the development of updated legislation, including:

- the Family Protection Act 2014, which criminalizes domestic violence and offers greater protection to prevent and respond to gender-based violence (GBV), covering physical, psychological, economic and sexual abuse;
- the Penal Code (Sexual Offences) Amendment Act 2016, which includes new definitions for internal people trafficking, CSEC, and stricter penalties for rape, sexual assault and defilement; and
- the Child and Family Welfare Act 2017, which mandates the SWD to better develop and coordinate child protection services and emphasizes support for child victims and their families.

Other relevant policies and government efforts targeting the protection of women and girls include:

- the National Policy to Eliminate Violence against Women and Girls 2016–2020, which sets a road map for preventing and responding to VAWG;
- the establishment and increased strengthening of the SafeNet referral system for survivors and victims of GBV, a collaborative multisectoral network consisting of the SWD, the MHMS, the Police, the Public Solicitor's Office and two CSO service providers – namely, the Christian Care Centre and Family Support Centre; the objective of SafeNet, which is mostly limited to Honiara, is to better coordinate the work of stakeholders working on GBV, and facilitate referrals between the service providers;
- the National Advisory and Action Committee for Children (NAACC), which operates at the national level and meets quarterly to oversee the implementation of the CRC across government ministries; it includes four clusters, namely, protection, survival, development and participation; and

<sup>19</sup> Secretariat of the Pacific Community, *Solomon Islands Family Health and Safety Study: A Study on Violence against Women and Children* (Honiara, Solomon Islands, National Statistics Office, Ministry of Finance and Treasury, National Reform and Planning, 2009).

- the establishment of Seif Ples, a one-stop service for victims of GBV, offering emergency accommodation, medical care and psychological first aid. Seif Ples also hosts a 24/7 hotline for SafeNet. The service is jointly operated by the Police and Health Ministries. This service is also limited to Honiara.

The 2014 CEDAW concluding observations for Solomon Islands documents concerns regarding trafficking and exploitation of women, noting that Solomon Islands is not party to international treaties on trafficking. It also records concerns on the lack of data on trafficking and women in prostitution, sexual exploitation of girls in logging areas and through pornography, the use of the bride price system to allow temporary marriages of girls to foreign workers, and the fact that sex tourism is not criminalized. The United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women further notes its concern regarding the limited assistance available for women and girl victims of trafficking and the criminalization of women in prostitution.

The 2018 CRC concluding observations also notes concern with the sale of girls to foreign workers in the natural resource sector for purposes of sex and marriage, and reports sexual exploitation of girls in the logging and tourism industries. The CRC Committee recommends encouraging community-based programmes aimed at preventing and tackling domestic violence, child abuse and sexual exploitation, and criminalizing and strictly prosecuting the sale of girls to foreign workers for sex and marriage. The CRC Committee also conveys concern with reported cases of child labour in the logging, tourism and fishing industries. The CRC concluding observations also expresses serious concern that the minimum age for marriage remains at 15 years old under the Islanders Marriage Act, and urges this is revised to 18 years old, and for the Government to take all measures necessary to eliminate child marriage.

### Forestry

The Ministry of Forestry and Research is responsible for oversight of the management and exploitation of the country's forest resources. The logging industry is governed by the Forest Resources and Timber Utilisation Act (FRTUA), which was enacted in 1968, and the Revised Solomon Islands Code of Logging Practice, enacted in 2002, which outlines the key standards for sustainable logging practices. These are criticized for being outdated and poorly enforced; previous attempts to update to more effective and regulatory instruments, however, have failed (Minter, 2018:12). At the time of research, the FRTUA was undergoing review. The current forestry legislation does not contain social safeguarding or child protection policies.

## 1.5. STUDY METHODS

This research employed a mixed-methods approach to achieve its objectives. The research was exploratory in nature. Appendix B provides further detail on the study methodology including data on the study participants and research locations. Research methods included the following:

- **Desk review and literature review:** Prior to the Solomon Islands case study research, a literature review was completed for the regional CHAMP project.
- **Stakeholder consultation:** A stakeholder consultation and round table informed the development of the KAP survey. The research methodology was also discussed, and study locations were confirmed.
- **KIIs:** KIIs were conducted with 68 key informants. These comprised a range of stakeholders at the national, provincial and village levels. While all quotes included in this report are anonymized, where consent was provided, names and positions of interview respondents are included in Appendix C. Sampling for the KIIs was purposive and included: stakeholders

from national government ministries, officials from provincial governments, representatives from the police force, health officers, nurses and teachers (referred to throughout the report as “government officers”); and service providers, NGOs and CSOs (referred to throughout the report as “NGO representatives”). Interviews were also conducted with community leaders, including chiefs and church representatives, and community members at the village level. While key informants in Honiara were primarily interviewed in relation to their spheres of professional influence, almost all also willingly reflected on their own experiences of the social impacts of logging in their home communities. It was evident during the KIs that logging and the issues associated were pervasive, and everyone had a story to tell.

- **KAP survey:** A KAP survey targeting men and women, female youth and male youth<sup>20</sup> was conducted in the chosen case-study sites with 153 participants. The resulting data is not representative outside of the study sites and is descriptive in nature. The KAP questionnaire survey was exploratory; survey questions were designed to provide insights into the knowledge, perceptions and behaviour of community members in relation to a number of identified areas relating to gender, mobility and health. Survey questions included closed questions (yes/no/don’t know) and multiple select questions (the ability to provide a number of responses, coded by the enumerator).
- **Informal observations of spaces of vulnerability:** In addition to the formal data collection, the research team engaged informally with the community. The research team engaged in reflective discussions during the field visits, and enumerators wrote reflections of the field research upon return to Honiara.

This research employed qualitative and quantitative methods; however, it does not purport to be representative within or outside of the study areas. To do so would require more systematic sampling approaches and a more representative sample. Due to the limited sample size, it is imperative to note that the findings are not representative of the population and analysis should consider the relatively limited dataset. Rather, this research provides rich insights into the nexus of mobility, gender and health in logging-affected communities, particularly in relation to protecting the rights of women and girls. The study sheds light on the behaviours and perceptions of the target population to inform development programming and training resource development.

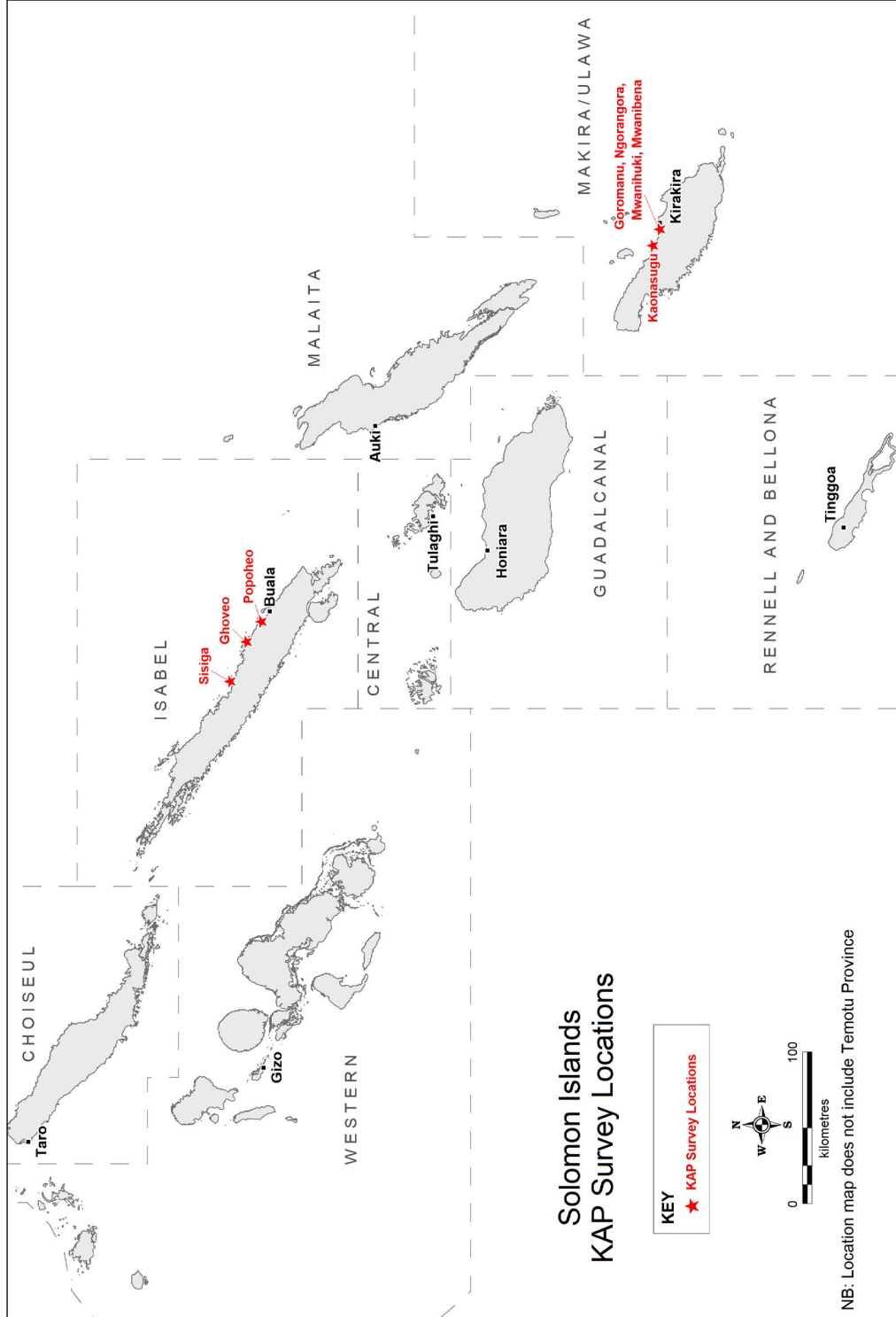
This research did not collect data in logging camps nor did it target migrant workers in its sample. IOM recognizes that there is limited research on international migrant workers in Solomon Islands and would aim to address this gap in the context of follow-up research.

## Field sites

Study sites include five villages in Makira and three villages in Isabel. **Many key informants at the provincial and national levels also reflected on the impact of logging in other communities and provinces, and therefore the findings presented in this research are not solely attributed to these research sites.** Logging operations occur around both Isabel and Makira provinces, with forestry officers reporting 18 current active licences in Makira serviced by approximately six Malaysian-owned companies, and 22 current active licences in Isabel, serviced by approximately nine Malaysian-owned companies. All of the study site locations were a short distance from one or more logging operations. Further information on the study sites is provided in the methodology in Appendix B. Figure 1 depicts the study site locations on a country map of Solomon Islands.

<sup>20</sup> The Solomon Islands Ministry of Women, Youth, Children and Family Affairs (MWYCF) considers youth to include those between 15 and 34 years of age. The survey was not conducted with anyone below the age of 15. Surveys with those below the age of 18 were done only with parental or guardian consent.

Figure 1: Map of Solomon Islands and study sites



Source: Map produced by Gerard Kelly using spatial data from the National Geographic Information Centre, Ministry of Lands, Housing and Survey, Solomon Islands.  
 Note: This map is for illustration purposes only. The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by IOM.



## 2. FINDINGS: COMMUNITY HEALTH AND MOBILITY IN SOLOMON ISLANDS

Overarching research questions were designed to highlight the mobility dynamics in the study sites – the spaces of vulnerability – and to improve understanding of the exposure to risks and vulnerabilities to sexual exploitation and trafficking in communities located near the extractive industries. The study also intended to identify any other emerging community health issues, risks or vulnerabilities associated with heightened mobility, particularly in relation to communicable diseases, SRH and VAWG. Findings are presented thematically, incorporating both quantitative and qualitative results.

### 2.1. COMMUNITY AND MOBILITY

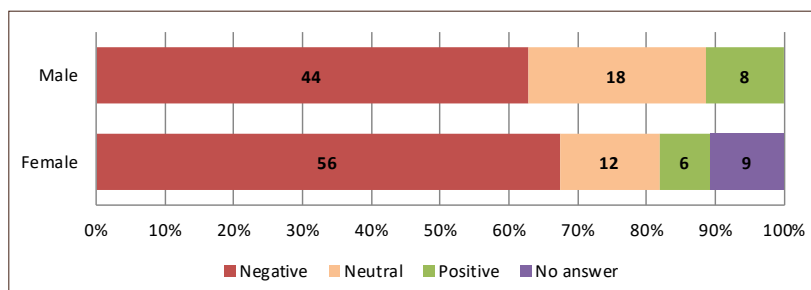
Asking about the mobility dynamics in migration-affected communities highlights the nature of migration, the perception of migration and associated drivers of migration (e.g. resource industries), and the perceived impacts of migration in these communities.

#### 2.1.1. COMMUNITY DYNAMICS

The majority of survey respondents (n=134; 87.58%) indicated they were from their respective survey locations. Of those who indicated they were not from the area, 78.95 per cent (n=15) stated they moved to the area due to marriage, with only a small number (n=4) moving specifically due to work. All fieldwork sites were located close to logging operations, and 100 per cent of survey respondents indicated that logging occurred in their areas. Workers included both international and internal migrants, as well as who were locally employed.

In total, 65.36 per cent (n=100) of survey respondents stated they felt logging had an overall negative effect on their communities. Figure 2 provides a breakdown of perceived impacts of logging by survey respondents, disaggregated by gender.

Figure 2: Perceived impacts of logging by gender



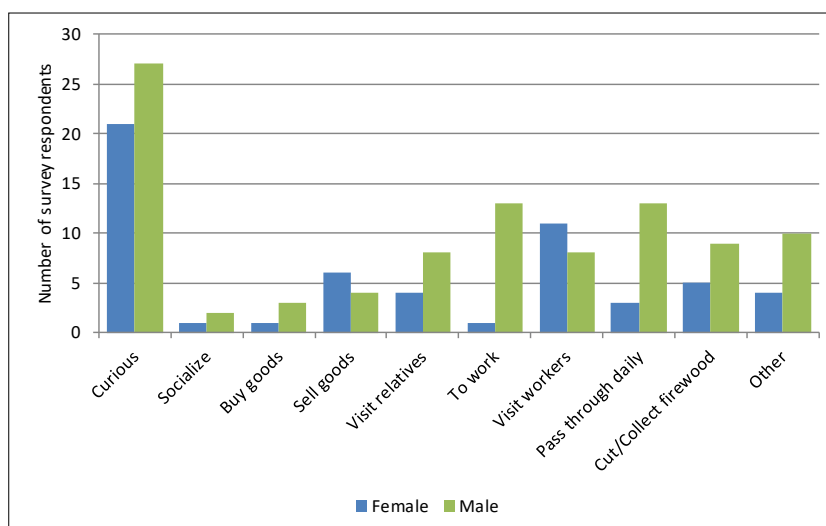
Note: Labels denote number of survey respondent answers by section.

## 2.1.2. MOBILITY DYNAMICS

International migrant workers were identified as primarily from Asian countries (i.e. Malaysia, Indonesia and the Philippines). With the exception of one female international migrant (the wife of the logging company manager), all foreigners were reportedly male. Internal migrant workers included workers from across Solomon Islands. While these were mostly male, there were reportedly some, albeit far fewer, females who also moved to work in the logging camps in domestic duties. Many families also moved to the logging camps to reside with their working male relatives.

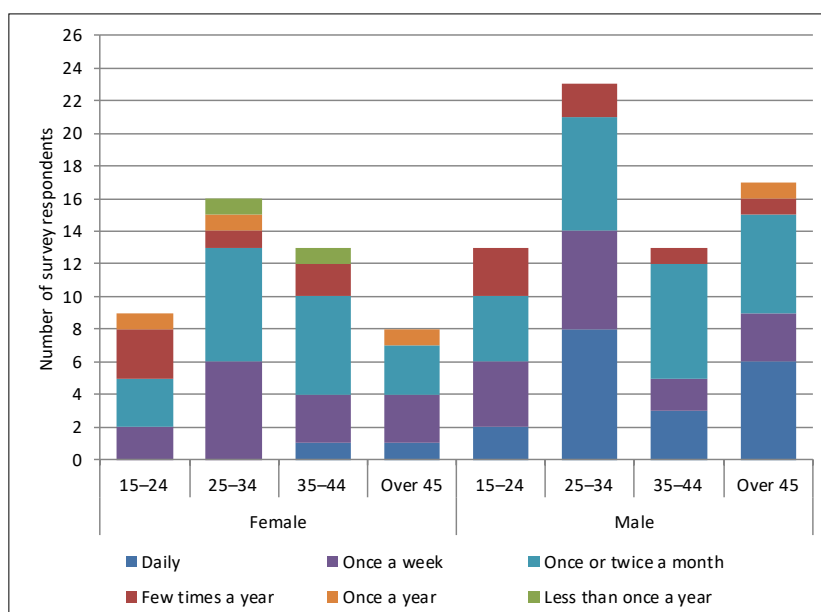
A high level of interaction was reported between community members and migrant workers. The majority of survey respondents (73.20%; n=112) indicated that they had been to a migrant worker camp. Reasons for visiting these camps are presented in Figure 3, disaggregated by gender. Estimated frequency of visiting the logging camps in each gender is presented in Figure 4 according to age and gender.

Figure 3: Reasons for visiting logging camps by gender



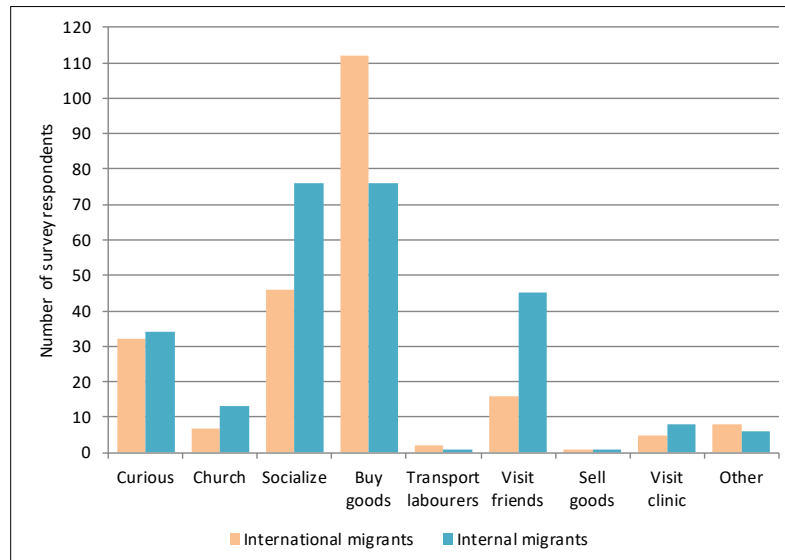
Note: Survey respondents were able to select more than one choice.

Figure 4: Frequency of logging camp visits by age and gender



The majority of survey respondents also indicated that both international migrant workers (88.24%; n=135) and internal migrant workers (79.74%; n=122) interacted with their respective communities. Figure 5 illustrates the perceived reasons why international and internal migrant workers visited the study sites.

**Figure 5: Perception of reasons migrant workers visit local communities**



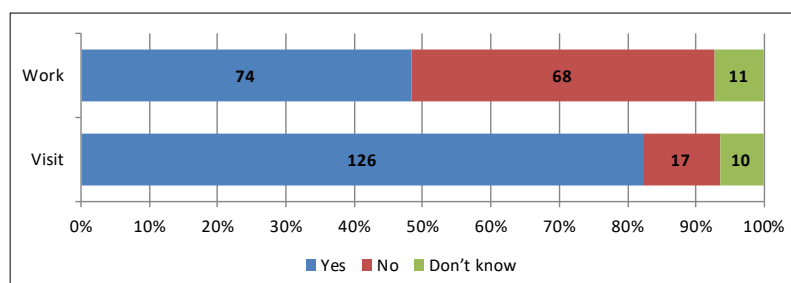
Note: Survey respondents were able to select more than one choice.

While respondents perceived international migrants to typically visit communities to buy goods, internal migrants were perceived as more social with community members. Interviewees expanded on the interactions of migrant workers, highlighting concerns with the increased socialization of (typically internal) migrant workers, especially regarding drinking and fighting.

*The main impact local migrants cause is about drinking. They take some girls from the village too. Drinking is very heavy in the camps. They make disputes, make noises or disturbances at night. (Government officer, male, Isabel)*

Figure 6 illustrates that a majority of survey respondents (82.35%; n=126) indicated that children (under 18 years) visited the logging camps. A high proportion of respondents also indicated that children worked in the logging camps (48.37%; n=74).

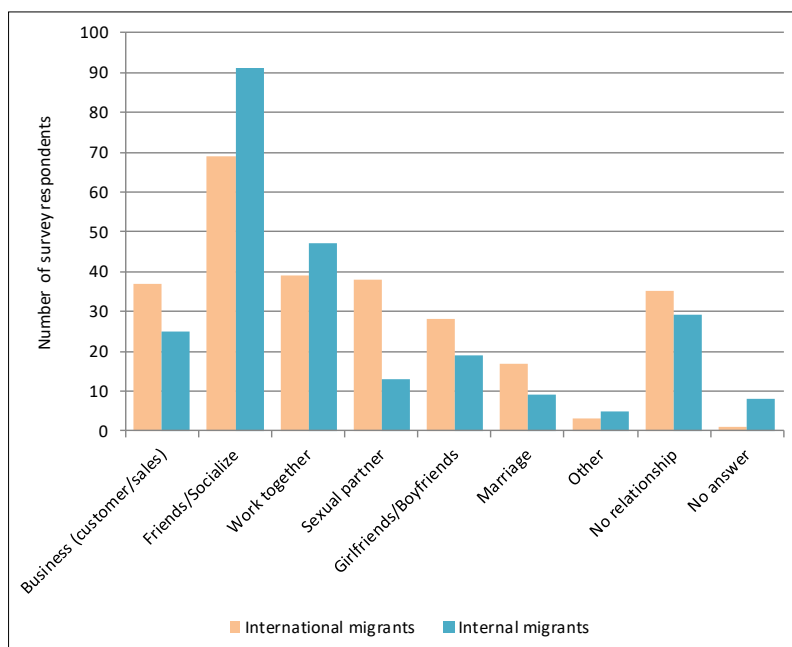
**Figure 6: Children visiting and working at logging camps**



Survey respondents were asked what kinds of relationships they perceived international migrant workers had with individual community members. This question was multiple select, meaning enumerators could code more than one response. Most common perceived relationships between international migrant workers and individual community members included friends (45.01%; n=69), colleagues (25.49%; n=39), sexual partners (24.84%; n=38) and business (i.e. customers/sales) (24.18%; n=37). Other notable relationships mentioned included girlfriends/boyfriends (18.30%; n=28) and marriage (11.11%; n=17).

In contrast, overall perceived internal migrant worker relationships with individual community members did not prompt as many responses regarding sexual or intimate relationships. Most common perceived relationships between Solomon Islander migrant workers and individual community members included friends (59.48%; n=91), colleagues (30.72%; n=47), no relationship (18.95%; n=29), business (16.34%; n=25), girlfriends/boyfriends (12.42%; n=19), sexual partners (8.50%; n=13) and marriage (5.88%; n=9). Perceived relationships between migrant workers and community members are illustrated in Figure 7.

**Figure 7: Perceived relationships between community members and migrant workers**



Note: Survey respondents were able to select more than one choice.

Survey respondents and interviewees were asked about the perceived benefits and concerns relating to migration and mobility in their communities. Migration, however, is highly linked with the logging industry in the study sites, and responses often reflected respondents' general feeling about logging operations as well as any associated mobility dynamics. In line with the question above regarding the perceived positive or negative effects of logging, the overwhelming majority of survey respondents and key informants indicated that migration brought no benefit to their communities.

*There are no benefits for the community. It brings a big problem for us. (Community leader, female, Makira)*

*No good things. No benefits. (Community leader, male, Isabel)*

When asked about any concerns survey respondents had in regard to international migrant workers living in their communities, 35.29 per cent (n=54) mentioned sexual relationships with young girls from the communities and 15.69 per cent (n=24) highlighted an increase in teenage pregnancies. Concerns regarding pressure of local resources were also raised by 22.88 per cent (n=35) of respondents. Other notable concerns included interpersonal relationships including extramarital affairs (13.73%; n=21) and intermarriage into the community (13.07%; n=20), increased land disputes (11.76%; n=18), impacts on custom and culture (11.11%; n=17), and loss of respect for traditional authorities (9.80%; n=15). Lastly, 22.22 per cent (n=34) of survey respondents indicated they had no concerns in regard to foreign migrant workers living in their communities.

When asked about what concerns they had with internal migrant workers, 46.41 per cent (n=71) of survey respondents indicated they had no concerns. Of the concerns raised, notable responses included sexual relationships with young girls from the area (15.69%; n=24), increase in alcohol and/or drugs (15.69%; n=24), impacts on custom and culture (14.38%; n=22), loss of respect for traditional authorities (12.42%; n=19), extramarital affairs (10.46%; n=16) and increased conflict in the community (11.76%; n=18).

Interviewee responses in migration-affected communities echoed and expanded on the above survey results. Migration and logging were often viewed as two sides of the same coin, and concerns about the presence of the industry far outweighed perceived benefits.

Benefits of increased migration cited by interviewees included opportunities for increased marketing local produce, improvements in infrastructure, such as roads and housing, and increased contributions to community fundraising. Interviewees in Makira tended to offer more positive responses than those in Isabel – which may be due to the fact that logging was a more recent development in the communities in Makira.

*I was in a village yesterday that has logging for a while and all the houses are proper houses, not like these leaf houses. So that's good. (Community leader, female, Makira)*

When asked about the benefits of logging-related migration, the majority of interviewees stated that there were no benefits for the community and immediately began discussing their concerns:

*In the past we had logging here before, and I didn't agree with how they acted. They married with us. They married girls from here. They were young girls. They gave them children and then they went back to their homes. (Community leader, male, Makira)*

It was often stressed that while the negative impacts of logging affected the whole community, the benefits were limited to the few who received royalties:

*It brings money for the community. But only a few people hold it. And they don't help the community. (Community leader, male, Makira)*

*Landowners like the migrant workers to come. But us people who are not landowners, it's hard. How can we stop it? Landowners like it because they like money. (Community leader, female, Isabel)*

*People are happy they come in. But the men who have the royalties, they are the ones we are not happy with. The bosses spoil everything, the landowners. (Youth, female, Makira)*

Similarly, interviewees that identified logging as a positive industry were typically those who were direct beneficiaries of the industry or had a direct stake in the operation, such as landowners, chiefs and licence holders. Generally, their responses differed greatly from other respondents. Other interviewees who noted positive elements of the logging industry were typically workers from local schools or clinics, who expressed appreciation of material and financial contributions.

*The company has some benefits – it might help with schools, but not really big help. Maybe they give 5 gallons of petrol, and that's it. (Government officer, male, Isabel)*

*And through logging, the school gets some materials too – timber, plywoods, paints or nails. Some help, some don't. (Government officer, male, Isabel)*

Perceived benefits of increased mobility and the logging industry were interlinked with potential benefits for community members, in the form of improvements to the local economy and infrastructure. Potential employment opportunities were also a major drawcard of the logging industry; however, a number of interviewees noted disappointment that there were either not more positions offered to local community members or that the positions were lowly paid and dangerous.<sup>21</sup> These concerns, in turn, affected the perception of migrant workers:

*Men go and work with the logging companies – which is seen as beneficial. But they are paid very poorly – 4 dollars<sup>22</sup> an hour. And when logging comes, there are lots of accidents, lots of people die. Solomon Islanders have accidents, I haven't heard of foreigners dying. Accidents with trees or trucks. The logging managers should look at the risk and the life of people. (NGO representative, female, Isabel)*

Concerns about migrant workers cited by interviewees in the field sites also echoed these results. The overwhelming concern regarding foreign migrant workers related to their relationships with girls and women from the community, particularly with regard to the responsibility for the care of any children in case the girls and women became pregnant. This was often spontaneously and immediately raised by interviewees and freely discussed with the research team.

*It's good when they come, but some of them marry and give children here and go back ... They have been coming for a long time. They are all around Makira. They come and leave children, then go to the other place they work, and then go back to their country. (Youth, female, Makira)*

Findings related to this issue are discussed in more depth in succeeding sections. Other concerns regarding increased mobility included increased availability and consumption of alcohol and drugs, breakdowns in marriages/affairs due to extramarital relationships, and diminished authority/traditional authority and respect for local custom – all of which were raised as key social issues in the communities by survey respondents and interviewees.

### 2.1.3. SOCIAL CONCERNS

Survey respondents and interviewees were asked what they considered to be the main social issues in their communities. By far, the issue of most concern across the field sites were alcohol and marijuana, followed by increased conflict in the community, either in terms of family breakdowns, land disputes or alcohol-fuelled disturbances. A third issue often raised was in regard to teenage relationships, teenage pregnancies and underage marriage. Key informants regarded such relationships to be the main concern in regard to increased mobility dynamics in the community

<sup>21</sup> Hourly wages reflected the Solomon Islands minimum wage of SBD 4 an hour.

<sup>22</sup> The amount is in SBD.

more broadly, as well as the biggest impact of increased migration on women and girls; these topics are discussed in more detail in section 2.2. Causes of these social issues were perceived to be related to the presence of the logging industry near the communities, the influx of money and the introduction of “outside” influences (e.g. from other parts of Solomon Islands as well as foreign influences).

### Alcohol and marijuana

Drinking alcohol was noted by almost all interviewees and a majority of survey respondents as a major concern in their communities. Dozens of interviewees described with concern the effect of alcohol on their communities, describing alcohol as a driver to further issues in the community such as increased fighting and disturbances, increased domestic violence and reduced productivity in the community. Alcohol consumption often referred to beer; however, interviewees also identified *kwaso* (illegal locally made home brew) as a concern. Consumption of alcohol was a major issue for survey respondents and interviewees from both Makira and Isabel, and was often linked to the proximity of logging operations and the increased cash flow into the community due to associated royalties and wages.

*Here, problems arise from drinking. Beer is a problem in the community, causes people to be drunk, sing out, fight. But if young men don't drink, then everyone is good, but drinking causes problems. When logging comes in, then drinking increases. They get money and then they drink. (Community leader, male, Isabel)*

In addition to alcohol and *kwaso*, marijuana was frequently identified by respondents as a concerning issue in the community. It was perceived by interviewees that transport corridors for logging also allowed the transportation of marijuana, primarily from Solomon Islander workers coming from Honiara.

*Boys here have big problem with marijuana. Here they don't plant it. They bring it from Honiara to the logging camp ... The logging boats, tug boat which pulls the barge, they bring in the marijuana. They come and sell kwaso too. When they drink, then they fight. (Government officer, male, Isabel)*

The young age of those consuming alcohol and marijuana was of a particular concern, and often cited by primary school teachers and women's leaders. Nurses and health officers also noted drug and alcohol use as the main issue in the communities.

### Conflict

Increased conflict in the community was another common social issue cited by interviewees and survey respondents. Causes of conflict were often ascribed to the logging industry and the resulting influx of cash, and manifested at the family, tribal and community levels, as well as with the logging companies. This included increased fighting and disturbances in the community (including domestic violence), conflicts with companies regarding logging practices, and conflicts within the community regarding land disputes and royalties. Increased rates of domestic violence were often seen as fuelled by increased access to money and alcohol in the community:

*With logging, all our men work as labourers, so when pay day, they drink, and then increase in domestic violence at the houses. (Community leader, female, Makira)*

Alcohol was also commonly seen as fuelling fighting and general bad behaviour at the family and community levels. This was often commented on in regard to internal migrant workers, who were described as more social with community members:

*Sometimes there are problems like fighting in the community. Not the waku,<sup>23</sup> the Solomon Islanders come and fight. (Community leader, male, Isabel)*

Conflict was also often described within communities and families, in regard to land disputes, royalties and benefits of logging:

*Sometimes families fight each other because they are fighting over money, royalties or accusing someone of being greedy. Or if money is not shared equally, that also causes a problem. (NGO representative, female, Honiara)*

*Logging and mining also causes land disputes. Disputes over whether land is registered or customary land, it's a big problem in Isabel. The people who claim the land as theirs argue over whose land belongs to who. (Community leader, male, Isabel)*

*When logging comes here, people start to fight, between families and the community. People fight over money, because of the logging. Money from the logging goes only to some people. Only some people benefit. (Youth, female, Makira)*

Increased conflict was also described between communities and representatives of the logging companies. The research team was informed of conflict between community members and logging companies, and was shown where roadblocks had been made to halt operations.

## 2.2. GENDER, RELATIONSHIPS AND TRAFFICKING RISKS

VAW and sexual exploitation of women and children were identified priority areas of migration-affected communities covered by the CHAMP project. This study sought to understand the dynamics of trafficking, sexual exploitation and transactional relationships – to understand what is occurring, who is affected, how these issues are perceived by the community, what elements are perceived as problematic, and how families and communities respond. Broadening the scope of the research beyond CSEC and sexual exploitation to the dynamics of normalized and accepted relationships, the experiences of women and children, and community perceptions of these issues allowed respondents to illustrate knowledge, attitudes, perceptions, and practices in relation to risks and vulnerabilities to women and children.

### 2.2.1. GENERAL RELATIONSHIPS KNOWLEDGE, ATTITUDES AND PRACTICES

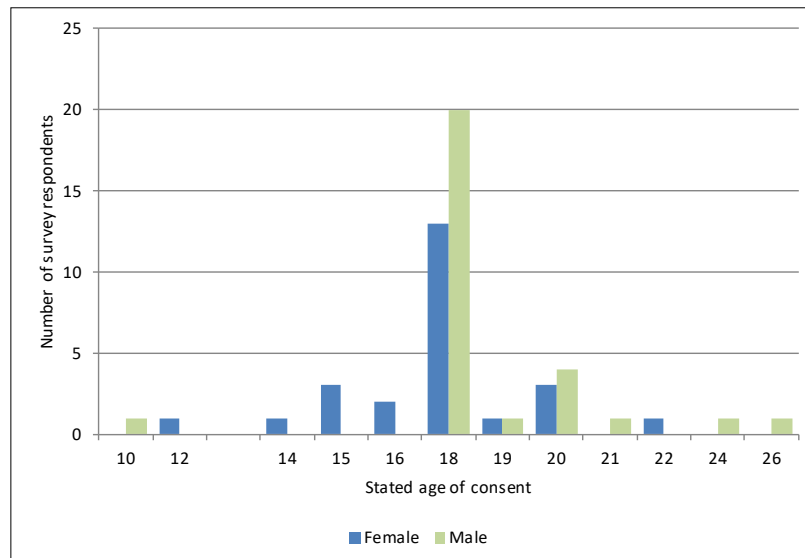
When asked if they knew the legal age for sexual consent in Solomon Islands, 64.71 per cent (n=99) responded no. Of note, an age of sexual consent is not clear in Solomon Islands, and this question caused confusion among many of the key informants, including those from the relevant sectors of government. Recent changes to the Penal Code deem sexual intercourse with anyone below the age of 15, regardless of consent, illegal. It also stipulates that sex with a child under the age of 18, by a person in a position of trust, is a crime irrelevant of consent.

<sup>23</sup> "Waku" is a term colloquially used in Solomon Islands to refer to people of South-east Asian or Chinese descent.



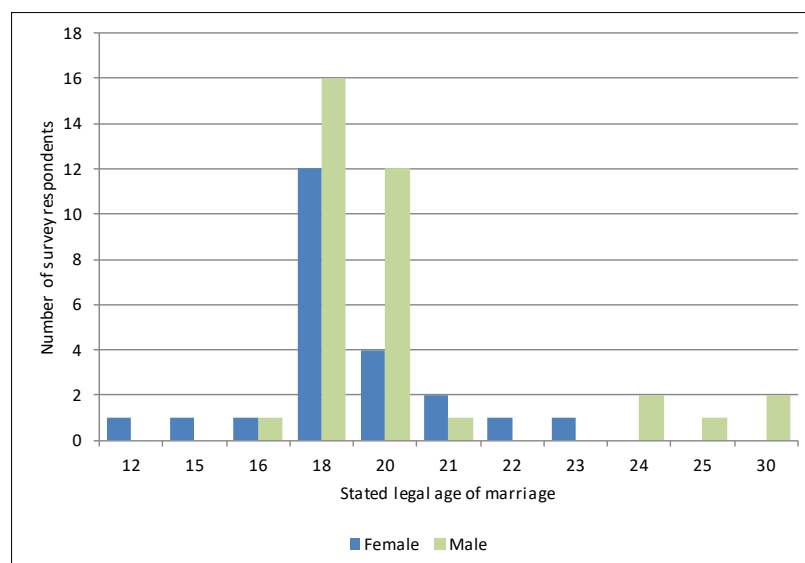
Of the survey respondents that self-reported knowledge of the age of consent (35.29%; n=54), when further asked as to what the age was, answers varied widely, from as young as 10 years up to 26 years old, with the average being 18.11 and the median being 18 years. Figure 8 illustrates these responses disaggregated by gender. Interestingly, male respondents assumed the age of consent to be higher than what female respondents reported.

**Figure 8: Perceived age of sexual consent by gender**



Similarly, when asked if they knew the legal age for marriage in Solomon Islands, 60.78 per cent (n=93) of survey respondents stated they did not. Of those that said yes (37.91%; n=58), when further asked as to what the legal age of marriage was, answers also varied widely, from 12 to 30 years, with the average being 19.38 and the median 18 years. Figure 9 shows these responses disaggregated by gender. Again, overall, male respondents assumed the age to be higher than the age mentioned by female respondents.

**Figure 9: Perceived legal age of marriage by gender**



A majority of survey respondents (75.16%; n=115) stated that they knew someone who had married before 18 years of age. However, when asked if they thought it was okay to get married before the age of 18, a majority answered no (87.58%; n=134). Survey respondents were asked for what reasons they believed people under the age of 18 married: the most common response cited was pregnancy (mentioned by 39.22%; n=60). Other common responses included sexual enjoyment and relationships, love, and because family found out about a relationship.

A little less than half of survey respondents (41.18%; n=63) stated that they knew someone who had married before the age of 15. Those who stated that they knew someone who had married before the age of 15 years were then asked of the gender of those who married. Just over half of respondents (52.38%; n=33) said that they were only female, and just under half of respondents (46.03%; n=29) said they were both male and female. Only one respondent said he only knew of a male married youth.

Almost all survey respondents (98.69%; n=151) stated that they did not think getting married before the age of 15 was okay. However, while they did not think it was acceptable, they mostly indicated that they would not report it should it occur. These respondents were asked what they would do if they heard of or saw someone under the age of 15 getting married. The most common response by 28.76 per cent (n=44) of respondents was they would do nothing, while 18.95 per cent (n=29) said they did not know what they would do. On the other hand, 22.22 per cent (n=34) considered it to be a community or family issue and indicated they would tell their families, report it to the chief or offer advice to the children intending to marry. Of note, 12.42 per cent (n=19) mentioned that they would report to the police and no respondent said they would report it to the SWD.

All respondents who did not mention reporting to police (n=132) were subsequently asked reasons why they would not consider doing so. Reasons stated included “because it’s a family/community matter”, “not a police matter” (31.06%; n=41), “it’s not my business” (26.52%; n=35) and “fear of getting involved” (18.3%; n=28).

While underage marriage was often raised as an issue by key informants at the community level in relation to logging and related migration, it was not presented as an issue of concern outside of those mobility dynamics. Key informants explained that underage marriage was often considered both culturally and legally acceptable.

*People don't worry about the girls being young; more that they don't want boys from other places. The age is not so much an issue because in customary marriage there is no age limitation. (NGO representative, female, Honiara)*

Rather, underage and other marriages with migrant workers were primarily highlighted within the communities as a concern due to their temporary nature, with the migrant worker leaving at the end of his contract, and the subsequent responsibility of caring for children resulting from these relationships:

*The victims are the families in the communities. What can we do to help these single mothers? Who will support them? (Government officer, male, Isabel)*

IOM refers to this phenomenon as “female spousal abandonment” – when a husband or intimate partner abandons his wife/wives and/or children in other countries following migration or displacement – and recognizes it as a form of GBV. Social welfare and police officers explained that relationships with migrant workers were often accepted within communities while the couple stayed together and any children were supported. It was on the departure of the migrant worker and the cessation of financial support that authorities received reports and requests for assistance from women and their families to access child support.

*Especially those expats who work in logging, the issue we sometimes come across and the reports that come to the office ... they give children to the local girls who go there to work as house girls. Then they go back to their homes, and then they go forever. That is something we come across. (Government officer, male, Isabel)*

*Way back in 2007, I went to Makira ... So when we were there, those women asked if they could have any support from Social Welfare or things like that. But in our law in Solomon Islands, it's only if the dad is a Solomon Islander then they can apply for maintenance, but it's not applicable for foreigners. So Social Welfare Division told those girls they couldn't get support and those girls regretted their relationships. They stayed in the camp, the dad had gone back. (Government officer, female, Honiara)*

*One is marriage, they marry local girls, and when they go back, they leave behind the girls and the kids, and they come to us about maintenance, but the man has already left. It's really quite hard for us, we can go to court but how can we enforce it? (NGO representative, female, Honiara)*

Another key concern raised particularly in regard to foreign migrants was their marital status in their home countries. Interviewees described feeling deceived when workers presented themselves as single and engaged in temporary relationships with community members for the duration of their contracts. A number of interviewees reported foreign migrant workers returning to their home countries for a “holiday”, never to return to the communities or their partners/children.

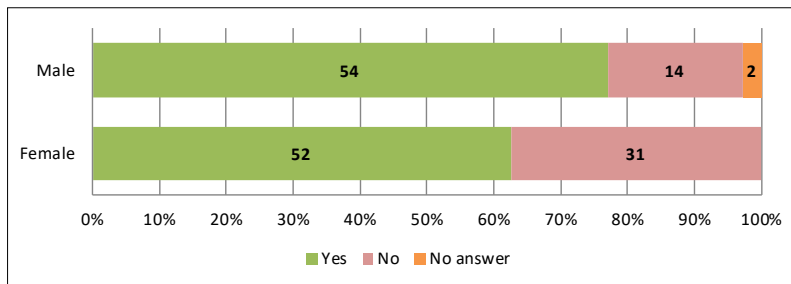
*Some stay with the man, then the man says that he is going for a holiday and leaves the girl with the baby for good. Or he might go to another logging camp and not tell her. (Government officer, female, Isabel)*

### **2.2.2. SEXUAL AND RELATIONSHIP RISKS AND BEHAVIOURS**

Sexual and other relationships between migrant workers (internal and international) and female community members were reportedly common and often raised by survey respondents and key informants as a concern, primarily in regard to the responsibility of taking care of children. Of concern, these relationships often involved girl children, reportedly as young as 12 years old, and were often reportedly facilitated by third parties in exchange for money or goods. Relationship dynamics varied and included short-term sexual relationships, transactional sexual relationships, temporary relationships that ended when the migrant worker moved away, and long-term relationships where the migrant worker either remained in the community or the female community member followed him to the next workplace or moved back to his home province or country. Often the term “marry” or “marriage” was used to refer to cohabitation of a couple, as well as customary, church or civil marriage.

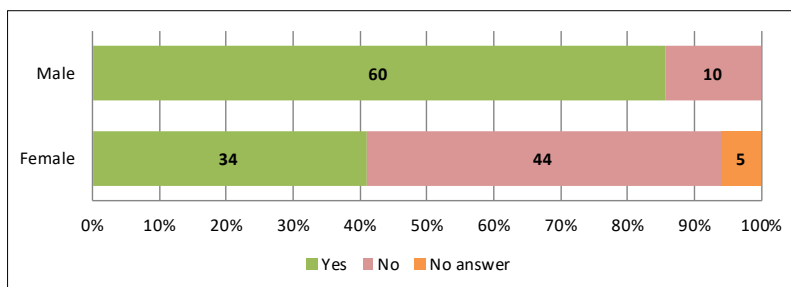
A majority of survey respondents stated that they had heard of international migrant workers having both long-term relationships/marriages (69.28%; n=106) and sexual relationships (82.35%; n=126) with individuals from their respective survey locations. Similarly, a majority of survey respondents also stated that they had heard of internal migrant workers having both long-term relationships/marriages (61.44%; n=94) and sexual relationships (62.09%; n=95) with people from their respective survey locations. Figures 10–13 illustrate a breakdown of these responses.

**Figure 10: International migrant workers and long-term relationships with community members by gender**



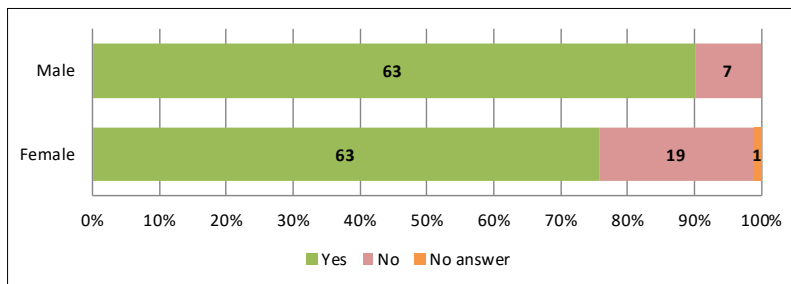
Note: Labels denote number of survey respondent answers by section.

**Figure 11: Internal migrant workers and long-term relationships with community members by gender**



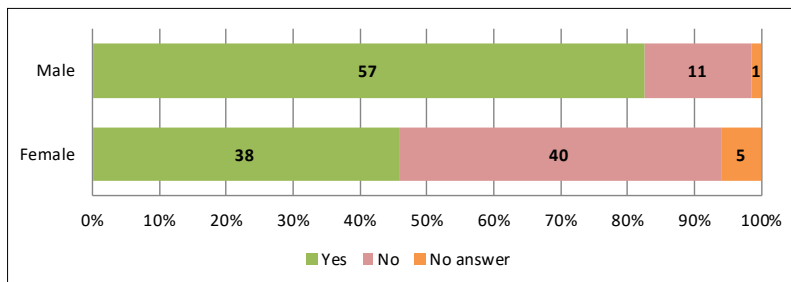
Note: Labels denote number of survey respondent answers by section.

**Figure 12: International migrant workers and sexual relationships with community members by gender**



Note: Labels denote number of survey respondent answers by section.

**Figure 13: Internal migrant workers and sexual relationships with community members by gender**



Note: Labels denote number of survey respondent answers by section.

Recognizing that a number of respondents were likely referring to the same cases, those who said they had heard of the relationships mentioned were then asked if they thought these relationships were very common, somewhat common or not common. This illustrates the perception of the occurrence of these relationships in their communities. As shown in Table 1, in all four categories, “very common” was the most cited response.

**Table 1: Perceived frequency of relationships with migrant workers**

Relationship dynamic	Very common	Somewhat common	Not common	Total
Foreign migrant workers/ long-term relationships	64	19	23	106
Foreign migrant workers/ sexual relationships	80	40	6	126
Local migrant workers/ long-term relationships	58	25	11	94
Local migrant workers/ sexual relationships	50	38	7	95

Key informants described temporary relationships or marriages which lasted for the duration of the migrant workers’ contracts, referring to these as “rubbish marriages”. The exploitative nature of these relationships was emphasized with key informants often describing them as resulting from girls or women working in nearby logging camps:

*When they say “to house girl”, it means to have a relationship with them, and then to be a wife. (Community leader, female, Isabel)*

*That’s the main way – girls go to house girl and then they get married. (Community leader, male, Isabel)*

*Commercial sexual exploitation takes place across the country. Where the logging companies are, they take women as domestic workers and then they abuse them. The migrant workers create a relationship with the local girls. Some stay together as husband and wife. They might lure them with goods or money, to the girls or her parents. When the man finishes work, he goes back and leaves the baby kids. For some of them, the parents might encourage the girls to go with the men. They [the workers] might pay parents a cultural arrangement where they pay bride price. (Government officer, male, Honiara)*

*Some young people go and find work and see it as a way of accessing some income. So some of them go for house girls, and after all, they get abused. Some of them are young, they are not in the age to get ready to get pregnant. This causes another issue, for their health. (NGO representative, female, Makira)*

*Most of the ones married to the workers are young ones – aged 18. When they finish school, they go there to work, laundry, washing, mess. Then they get married to the foreigners. Then some have children, some stay with them for two or three children. Some of them follow them back to their countries. But not most. A lot of them stay here with their families. A lot move with the man to the other logging sites. (Government officer, male, Isabel)*

Often the young women involved were in fact children – girls under the age of 18. A number of school teachers recounted cases involving primary and high school students, as well as children who were no longer in school, or visiting home villages during school holidays.

*At the previous school I worked at, it happened to very young girls ... Young girls would go with the men there and end up married. They would go with Solomon Islanders and foreigners. They were girls who were 14 or 15, pregnant to Solomon Islanders. (Government officer, female, Makira)*

*Some girls here like to get married to the foreigners. Some of them are very young – some are just 14. They are under 18. They go to school, high school, then come back for holidays and go with the foreigners. Then some are pregnant. (Government officer, female, Isabel)*

Several teachers and parents in the study sites described their students and daughters being approached and offered cigarettes, money or soft drinks by migrant workers, or offered to play games on their phones:

*It disturbed a lot of schoolgirls ... The girls followed the money. So if they offered money the girls would follow. Here, last year, it happened at the school, too: they give cigarettes and money. The students reported it to me. That workmen called the girls over when they walked home from school. They call out to them and offered them smokes and money. They are Solomon Islanders. (Government officer, female, Makira)*

Exposure to risks of sexual exploitation and trafficking were raised across the research sites. Key informants who had previously worked in the logging industry described the requests:

*For example, I worked a little bit in the camp, and they just asked me for my daughters. They said they will pay, asked how much. Lots of them just come and ask for girls in the village. (Community leader, male, Isabel)*

Primary and high school teachers, social welfare and health officials, police officers and forestry officials repeatedly raised with concern the “selling” of young girls and women by their family members to migrant workers for financial and material returns.

*Over a few drinks, men will say, it's ok, you can take my niece. It's common around the country ... Those girls don't know their own rights. Tradition has it that way. They have to comply. Authority in the house must be obeyed, if someone tells them to do it. (Government officer, male, Makira)*

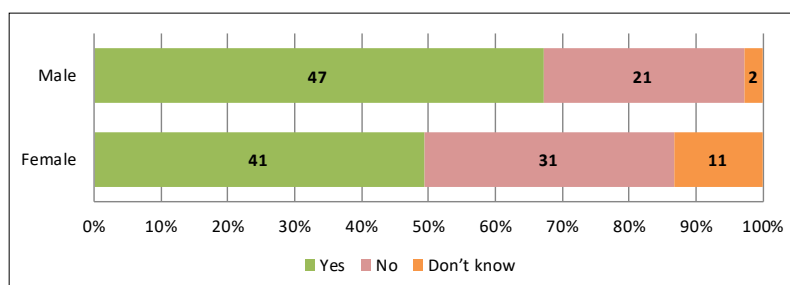
*Sometimes parents give the girls because they need money. They don't have enough so they use the girls to marry those who come for logging, especially Asians. (Government officer, male, Makira)*

*The parents encourage it because of money. It's a big issue here. Some of the parents take their daughters, and they make an agreement with the foreigners that they can marry the daughters to, then build a good house for them. Those parents they stay around here, especially the areas where there is logging. (Community leader, female, Makira)*

*At the beginning parents are not happy, but when they see the waku starts to flow with money and food, they agree. They give enough to fit the household. Some build houses for them, some don't. Some just meet food requirements. After his work finishes, he goes back. (Community leader, male, Isabel)*

When asked if survey respondents had heard of stories of females of any age having sex in exchange for goods or money in the survey site areas, 57.52 per cent (n=88) stated that they had (Figure 14).

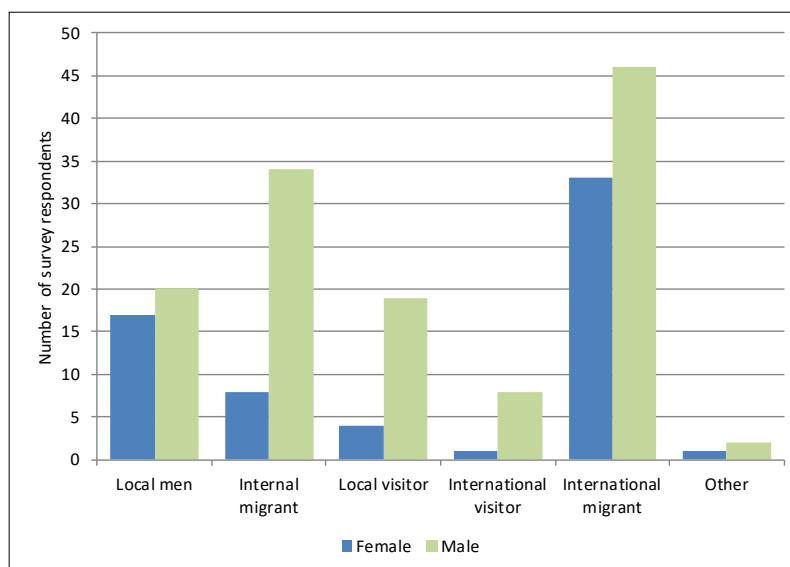
Figure 14: Heard of transactional sex (any age) by gender



Note: Labels denote number of survey respondent answers by section.

These 88 respondents were then further asked a series of questions relating to their perceptions of the occurrence of transactional sex. When asked who they believed engaged in these transactional relations with female community members, 89.77 per cent (n=79) of respondents noted international migrant workers. Figure 15 shows the responses given. It is important to note that respondents may have been more inclined to mention international migrants as they are more conspicuous than internal migrants and transactional relationships with Solomon Islander men may be considered less remarkable.

Figure 15: Perceived participants in transactional sex



Note: Survey respondents were able to select more than one choice.

In relation to perceived frequency of transactional sexual relationships within their respective communities, 62.5 per cent (n=55) stated these were “very common”; with 30.68 per cent (n=27) and 6.82 per cent (n=6) respondents stating these were “somewhat common” and “not common”, respectively. These same respondents were also asked who they believed arranged the transactional relationships, to which the most cited responses were the individual female herself (85.23%; n=75) or a friend of the female (62.5%; n=55). Other responses included “someone else in the community” (15.03%; n=23), “friend of a migrant worker” (10.46%; n=16) or “family” (9.8%; n=15). A majority of these respondents (82.95% n=73) stated they believed that if someone else facilitated the transaction, they received goods or money in exchange for doing so.

Interviewees described these transactional sexual relationships being arranged for local and foreign migrant workers alike, often by local colleagues, who in return would receive low-value items such as cigarettes, beer or occasionally money:

*The workmen who are from this village and work in the camp, they will go and find girls and influence them to go with the men, because after that, they [workers] will give to the man who made the arrangement. They give money to the girls, and to the man who makes the arrangements. (Government officer, female, Makira)*

*Some men are good friends with the workers, so they are like a middle man. They say, if you help me, I'll find a woman for you. Then he takes money or smokes or beer. Not a lot, just cigarettes or something. (Government officer, male, Makira)*

*The first thing loggers do when they arrive at a community is find a young girl. They must like the young ones. Like from age 15 ... I think they pass messages on to local boys, and give them free smokes or something, to help them get young girls. (Community leader, female, Makira)*

An interviewee who worked in the local logging industry elaborated on the third-party facilitation of transactional sexual relationships:

*They [foreign migrants] ask their work colleagues who they are close with to make arrangements. They give them money or beer. Or goods from the store. Maybe about 200 dollars.<sup>24</sup> They go with different girls, not always same ones. (Community member, male, Makira)*

Family members, particularly parents, were also often mentioned as facilitators of transactional sexual and more long-term relationships of young women by interviewees, reportedly driven by the opportunity to access money or other low-value items such as packaged food:

*But the parents send them to go. To go work as a house girl. When they go to be a house girl, they get relationships with the Asians. They are under 18, all the way down to 15 years old. I saw someone who was 12 years old. The girls are forced to labour and they are forced to marry. That's how I see it. Because of relatives or parents, they want money. The Asians give money to the girl, or sometimes straight to the parents. Not only money, but food, or items, like rice, clothing bales, foodstuffs. It's not too big, it's small things ... It's a big issue. In every logging camp, it's an issue. Not just in Isabel, but throughout the whole country. (Government officer, male, Isabel)*

*What I experience here, I think they give a bit of money to the parents for the girls. Even though they know that he is a married man, they take it, because it's money. Some is just 500 or 1,000 dollars.<sup>25</sup> Then while they are here, they might keep giving more money, but after they go, nothing. (Government officer, male, Makira)*

*But, nevertheless, some students, their parents look at logging as a way to earn money and build a proper house. They see it as a chance – let the daughter marry the Asian and then we can have a permanent building. It's happened here, in this case with the young girl from here. (Government officer, female, Makira)*

<sup>24</sup> The amount is in SBD.

<sup>25</sup> The amounts are in SBD.



*And then we have one case. Actually, the mum and dad of the girl forced the girl to go to the camp to sleep with foreigners, to bring back cartons of mi goreng for the family. That girl got pregnant. (Government officer, female, Honiara)*

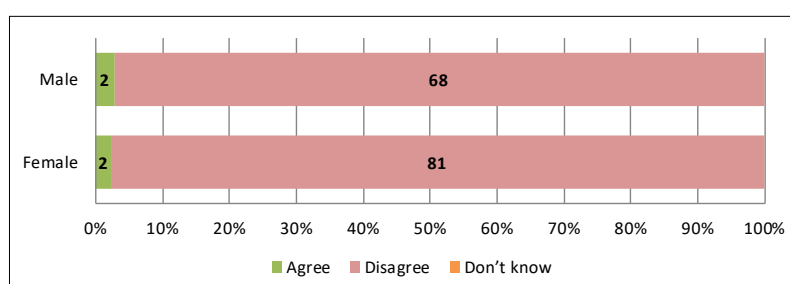
*In Solomon Islands, if you violate cultural norms, people will ask for compensation. When that type of thing happens, Asians give compensation money, so the families agree that the young girl can stay with the Asians, and that becomes a source of support for relatives. One will start, then another one goes, and another one. (NGO representative, male, Honiara)*

One senior government official was brought to tears when describing the exploitation of children facilitated by parents for monetary benefits:

*Other parents might encourage it, because they struggle. So they allow their kids to be abused for money instead of engaging in farm or gardening or fishing grounds. Instead of that, they let them abuse their children. It's a big worry of mine. (Government officer, male, Makira)*

While transactional sexual relationships were found to be considered common in the survey sites, attitudes towards these arrangements were disapproving and the practice was not socially accepted. Almost all survey respondents (97.39%; n=149) disagreed with the statement that “it is okay for a woman to have a sexual relationship in exchange for money or goods”. Figure 16 illustrates these results disaggregated by gender.

**Figure 16: Attitudes towards transactional relationships by gender**

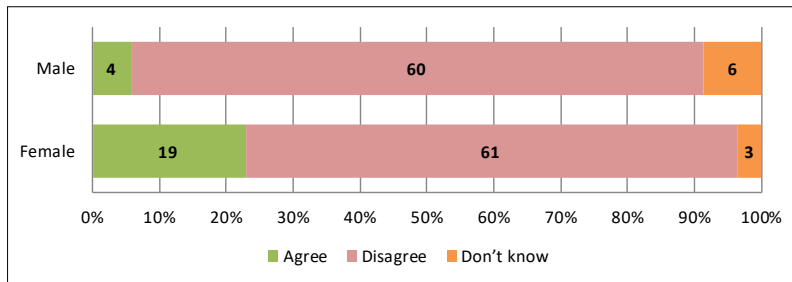


Note: Labels denote number of survey respondent answers by section.

All survey respondents were further asked a series of questions specifically relating to attitudes towards transactional sex and relationships with international migrant workers. It is important to note that this line of questioning specifying international migrant workers arose from existing research regarding this migrant group in Solomon Islands, as well as known patterns of behaviour with migrant groups globally, such as “mobile men with money” (MMM). As the findings have demonstrated, however, the issue pertains to internal migrant workers from Solomon Islands also, and government and community responses to this issue must recognize the underlying socioeconomic and cultural dynamics and drivers that underpin its occurrence, as are discussed in the next chapter. It is also prudent to note that this research is not suggesting that all relationships that contain mobility dynamics in these communities contain exploitative factors.

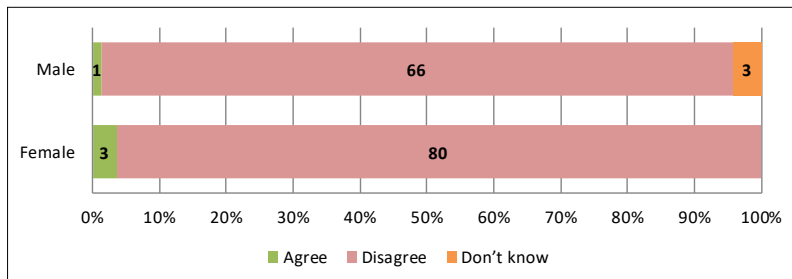
Three questions were asked of all survey respondents to illustrate attitudes regarding relationships with international migrant workers. Overall, 79.08 per cent (n=121) disagreed with the statement “it is okay for a single woman (over 18 years) to marry a foreign migrant worker”; 95.42 per cent (n=146) disagreed with the statement “it is okay for a girl (under 18) to marry a foreign migrant worker”; and 75.82 per cent (n=116) disagreed with the statement “marrying a foreign migrant worker brings status to a women/her family”. These results indicate disapproving attitudes towards relationships with international migrant workers. Figures 17–19 illustrate respondents’ answers, disaggregated by gender.

Figure 17: Attitudes towards adult marriage with international migrant workers by gender



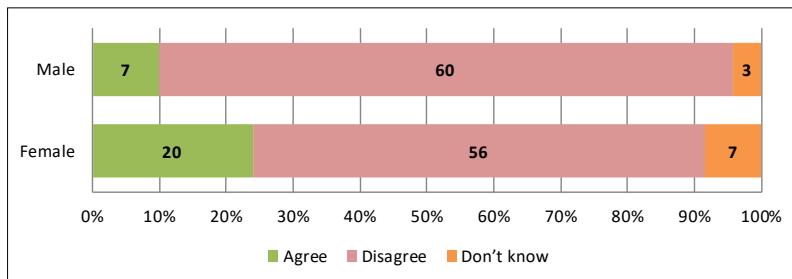
Note: Labels denote number of survey respondent answers by section.

Figure 18: Attitudes towards child marriage with international migrant workers by gender



Note: Labels denote number of survey respondent answers by section.

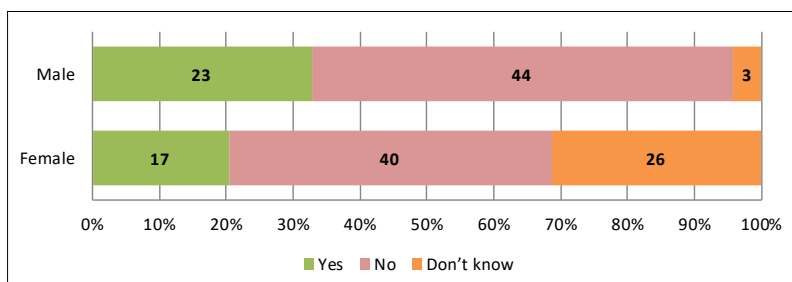
Figure 19: Perception of status and marriage with international migrant workers by gender



Note: Labels denote number of survey respondent answers by section.

When asked if survey respondents had heard of stories of anyone under 15 years of age having sex in exchange for goods or money in the survey site areas, 26.14 per cent (n=40) stated that they had. Figure 20 shows a breakdown of these responses by gender. Response rates were higher in Isabel, which may reflect the higher number of logging camps in proximity to the survey study sites and longer recent time periods in which logging operations were present in those areas compared with the study sites in Makira.

Figure 20: Heard of girl children under 15 engaging in transactional sex by gender

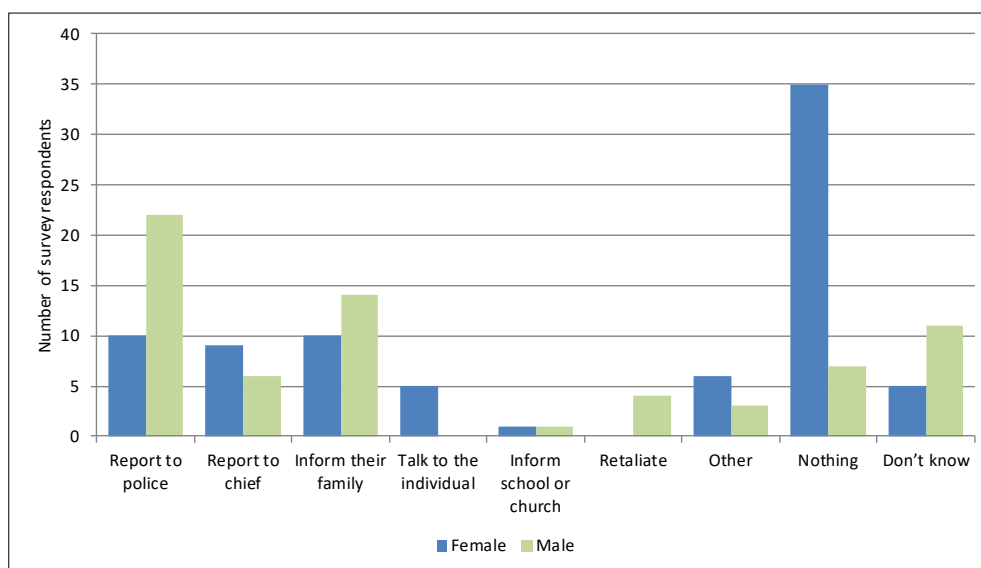


Note: Labels denote number of survey respondent answers by section.

By far, the most common perceived reasons stated by respondents as to why children under 15 years of age engaged in transactional sex included obtaining money or goods for the individual (87.50%; n=35), obtaining money or goods for their families (17.50%; n=7), and the individual's desire to engage in such relationships (12.50%; n=5).

When asked if survey respondents thought it was acceptable for children under 15 to engage in transactional sex, 97.39 per cent (n=149) stated no. Despite this, when asked what respondents would do if they heard of or saw someone under the age of 15 engaged in transactional sex, the most commonly reported answer was to do nothing (27.45%; n=42), as illustrated in Figure 21. Of note, women were more likely to do nothing than men, and men were more likely to report to the police than women.

**Figure 21: Response to under-15-year-olds engaging in transactional sex by gender**



Respondents who did not mention reporting to police (n=116) were subsequently asked reasons why they would not consider reporting. Reasons stated included “because it’s a family/community matter”, “not a police matter” (37.93%; n=44), “not wanting to cause trouble” (23.28%; n=27), “it’s not my business” (21.55%; n=25) and “fear of getting involved” (21.55%; n=25). Of note, five respondents stated that they did not know how to report it, and three stated that there were no police to report to or police were too far away.

Key informants repeatedly reiterated the young age and transactional nature of relationships between migrant workers and girls, citing access to money as a driving force for these relationships. A health official explained:

*When logging comes, they give them the girl for money. The parents give them, to get married ... Some ages of them are less than 18. The youngest ones that we see, I saw one that just grew up – not even in class 5 or 6. She was 12 or 13 years old. She came and had a baby at the hospital. The father was a foreigner, an Asian. (Government officer, female, Isabel)*

When asked if this health official reported this case to the SWD or the police, the official described the difficulty in doing so without the parent’s permission.

*No one reported it because the parents agreed, because of money.*

Similarly, social welfare and police officers also mentioned that parental consent of the relationships was a key barrier to reporting. As a result, the girl victims are let down by both formal and informal forms of social protection on which they are supposed to rely.

Homosexuality (of any sex) is criminalized in Solomon Islands and widely considered a taboo topic. The risk of sexual exploitation of boys and/or men was raised with few key informants, of whom none indicated knowledge of relationships between male migrant workers and male community members. However, one teacher noted that her students reported migrant workers showing them pornographic videos:

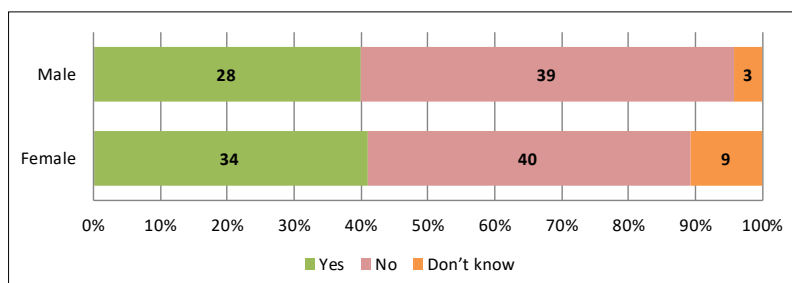
*Some men who stay in the logging camp – foreigners – they let the children watch blue movies. The children tell us. Some of the children saw it and reported. They show it to the small boys. (Government officer, female, Isabel)*

### 2.2.3. TRAFFICKING KNOWLEDGE, ATTITUDES AND PRACTICES

The majority of survey respondents (88.24%; n=135) stated they had not heard the term “human trafficking” before. Of the 11.11 per cent (n=17) respondents who stated they had, the newspaper was the most cited source of hearing the term (n=8), followed by friends or family (n=5), radio (n=3), NGO (n=2) and police (n=2). Understanding that “trafficking” is not widely understood in Solomon Islands, the survey enquired about indicators of risks of and vulnerabilities to trafficking, including forced marriage and forced labour.

A total of 62 survey respondents (40.52%) stated they thought some girls or women in their areas were forced to have either marriages or relationships that they could not leave. Figure 22 illustrates these responses, disaggregated by gender.

Figure 22: Perception of occurrence of forced marriages/relationships

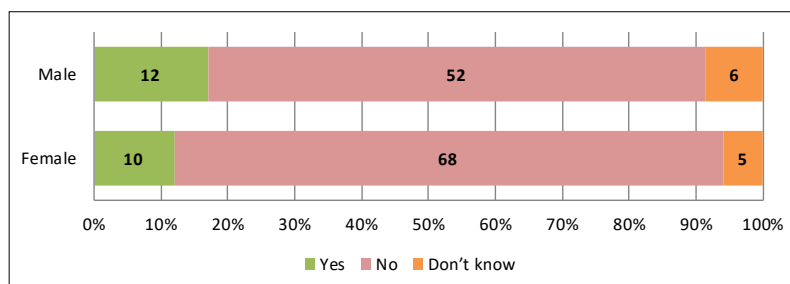


Note: Labels denote number of survey respondent answers by section.

These 62 respondents were then asked who they believed were the partners of these females and were allowed to record more than one response. The most cited response was “local men” (69.35%; n=43), followed by “international migrant workers” (37.10%; n= 23) and “Solomon Islander migrant workers” (24.19%; n=15). Family members were cited by almost all of these respondents (93.55%; n=58) when asked who arranged or forced these relationships. “Somebody who works in the logging industry” was also cited by 14.52 per cent of the respondents (n=9).

Perceptions of the prevalence of forced labour were low, compared with forced marriage and sexual exploitation. When asked if survey respondents believed that any males or females in their respective areas were forced to work and unable to leave, 14.38 per cent (n=22) stated yes, illustrated in Figure 23.

Figure 23: Perception of occurrence of forced labour by gender

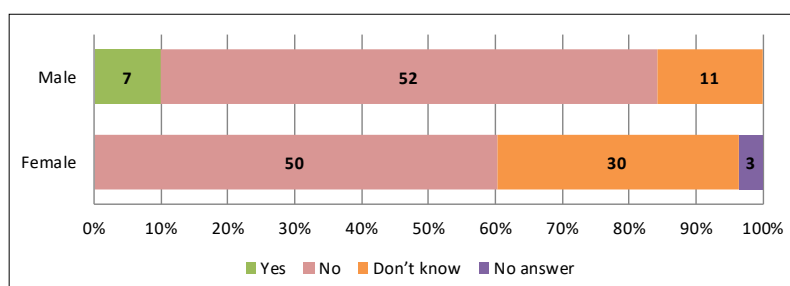


Note: Labels denote number of survey respondent answers by section.

These 22 respondents were further asked a series of questions regarding these perceived cases. Just under half of respondents (45.45%; n=10) said that they believed victims of forced labour were both male and female, and the remaining 12 respondents were split evenly between male only and female only victims (27.27% each; n=6). The majority of these respondents (81.82%; n=18) believed these victims of forced labour were to work for a logging company and that this labour was organized and/or forced by a family member (77.27%; n=17).

When asked if they believed that migrant workers in their respective areas were forced to work and unable to leave, 4.58 per cent (n=7) of survey respondents stated yes, as shown in Figure 24.

Figure 24: Perception of occurrence of forced labour of migrant workers



Note: Labels denote number of survey respondent answers by section.

The total survey respondents were asked what they would do if they heard of or saw either forced relationships/marriage or forced labour. The most commonly reported response to forced marriage or relationships was to do nothing (43.79%; n=67). This was followed by not knowing how to respond (18.95%; n=29) and reporting to the police (12.42%; n=19). The most commonly reported response to forced labour was also to do nothing (41.83%; n=64). This was also followed by not knowing how to respond (22.88%; n=35) and reporting to the police (12.42%; n=19). No survey respondents mentioned reporting to the SWD in either scenario. Responses are illustrated in Figures 25 and 26.

Figure 25: Response to forced marriage/relationships by gender

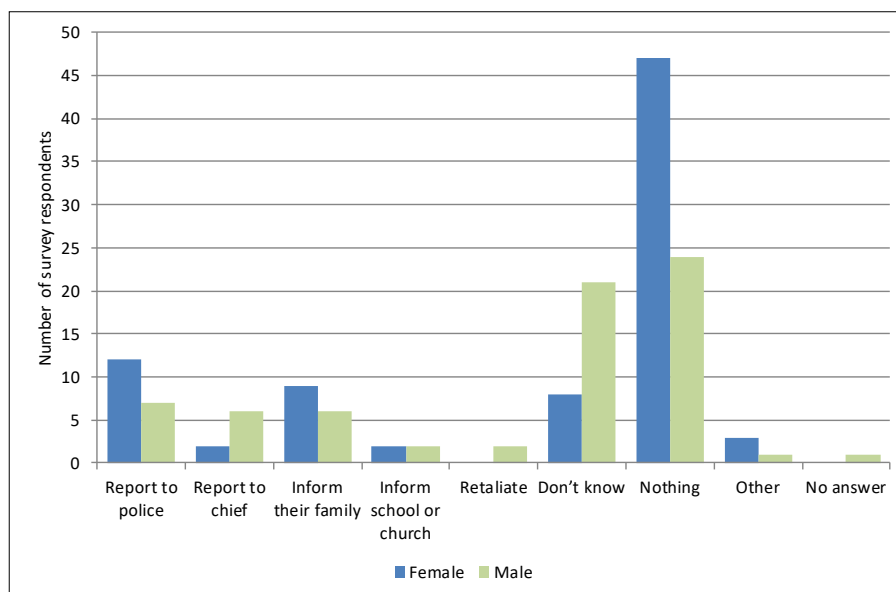
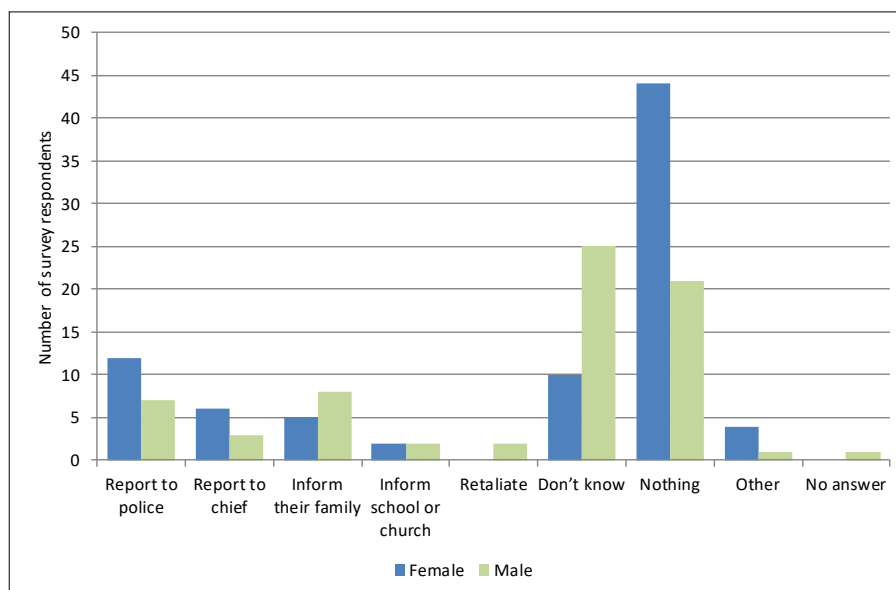


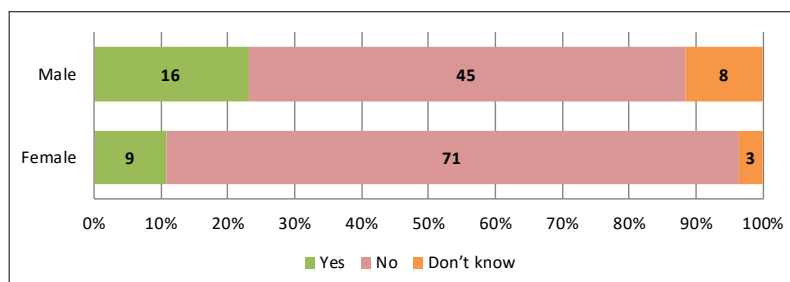
Figure 26: Response to forced work by gender



Towards the end of the survey, enumerators provided a definition of trafficking to survey respondents,<sup>26</sup> followed by a series of questions relating to the respondents' perceptions of the occurrence of trafficking in their respective communities. Of the survey respondents, 16.34 per cent (n=25) stated they believed any girls or women in their communities were victims of human trafficking. Similarly, 10.46 per cent (n=16) stated they believed boys or men in their communities were victims of human trafficking. Also, 15.69 per cent (n=24) stated they thought migrant workers (internal or international) were victims of human trafficking. These responses are illustrated in Figures 27–29. When asked where victims of trafficking should seek help, the most commonly cited response was the police (75.82%; n=116), followed by the community chief (17.65%; n=27), but some did not know where to ask for help (13.73%; n=21).

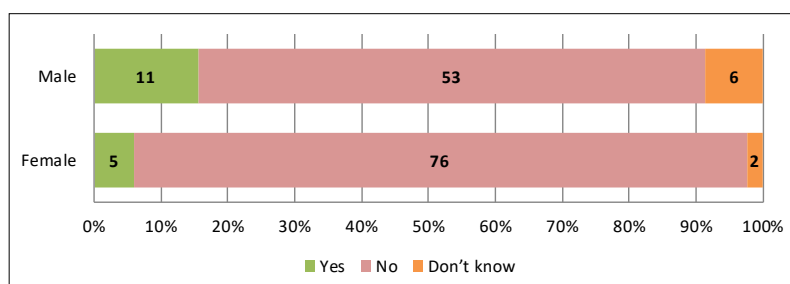
<sup>26</sup> The definition provided was: "Trafficking is when someone is tricked (deceived) or forced into a situation that they cannot leave, and another person benefits from it. For example, through receiving goods or money, or free labour. An example of trafficking is if a person is forced to have a relationship or marriage, to work or to have sex, and they cannot leave."

Figure 27: Perception of female victims of trafficking in the community by gender



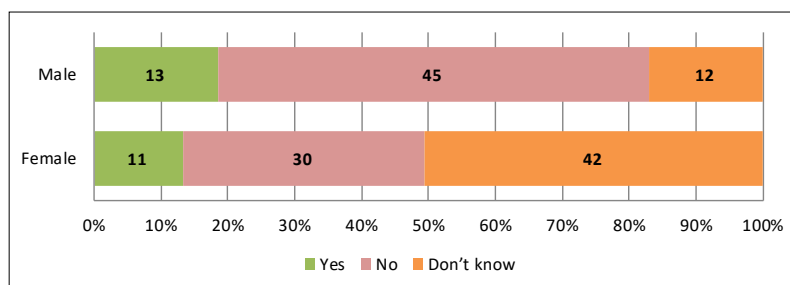
Note: Labels denote number of survey respondent answers by section.

Figure 28: Perception of male victims of trafficking in the community by gender



Note: Labels denote number of survey respondent answers by section.

Figure 29: Perception of migrant worker victims of trafficking in the community by gender



Note: Labels denote number of survey respondent answers by section.

The transportation of a person either within or across borders is just one element of identifying trafficking and a key factor in considering risks and vulnerabilities of women and girls to trafficking in Solomon Islands. Key informants often described girls and women who were in relationships with migrant workers travelling with them onto the next logging operation, either within the same province or to a different province. Interviewees expressed concern for the welfare of these girls and women whereby they may be isolated from the protection of their families, financially reliant on their partners and vulnerable to further exploitation. In some cases, women in relationships with international migrant workers returned with their partners to their countries of origin.

The updated Solomon Islands Immigration Act (No 3. 2012) legally commenced in 2014, and for the first time in Solomon Islands, trafficking in persons and human smuggling were criminalized in domestic legislation. To date, no cases have been prosecuted under the trafficking legislation; however, two cases are currently being investigated, of which one went to trial during the period of research – described here by an interviewee:

*The victim was married to one of the Asian loggers, and to my knowledge, the Asian provided house, money for the parents of the girl. They lived as a couple. And the trial will proceed this week in Gizo. It's an active case that will go to course this week.*

*So that's the kind of circumstances we see – loggers come in, support young girls, “friend” them, give them money, show bride price. The parents will see that as a source of income, so they respond, too, and receive whatever goods the Asian provides. And then the parents’ consent to giving up their daughter to marriage to maintain that relationship and to receive constant benefits out of the relationship. So that’s the scenario that we are working with. (Government officer, female, Honiara)*

The case contained elements that were illustrated in numerous recounted anecdotes and cases across the survey sites and in interviews at the national level. When asked why this case was prosecuted while others were not, key informants explained that this was due to the willingness of the victim to file a report and the fact that the alleged offender remained in the country. On the contrary, authorities stated the reluctance of the victim to report and the departure of the person in question as key barriers to investigation and prosecution.

Finally, while key informants working in police, forestry and social welfare demonstrated an understanding of trafficking, many remained unsure how to respond to the issue or did not know the legal options available for response. For example, one interviewee who worked in forestry asked about relevant laws and critiqued their effectiveness.

*The law is there, the immigration law or the labour act law. They are there. But they don't work. No one implements it. That is why people still continue on. Not only Malaysians alone. But there are people involved – second or third parties. Sending those girls to that Asian. There are people who are affected by the law, too. We have to find them. But that's why I see the law doesn't work. (Government officer, male)*

## 2.3. HEALTH PRIORITIZATION AND SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

Asking broadly about health priorities in migration-affected communities allowed respondents to draw attention to health concerns and emerging health issues. The research also enquired specifically about targeted health issues typically associated with increased mobility dynamics – namely, communicable diseases (e.g. TB and HIV) and sexual and reproductive health issues (e.g. family planning and STIs) – to shed light on the status of these issues within the communities, and any link with increased migration.

### 2.3.1. GENERAL HEALTH PRIORITIES

Survey respondents were asked to identify what they considered to be the key health priorities in their communities. The three most common responses included malaria (52.29%; n=80), WASH (47.06%; n=72) and general community cleanliness/hygiene (30.72%; n=47). Diarrhoea (28.76%; n=44), alcohol (27.45%; n=42) and flu/respiratory illness (24.84%; n=38) were also commonly identified.

When asked where they would usually go for health treatment, all but one respondent (99.35%; n=152) indicated they would visit a clinic or a hospital.

Health concerns cited by key informants overlapped with survey results and further expanded on other additional areas of concern regarding health. These included access to clean water and the environment, change in diet and community sanitation, as described in the sections that follow.



## Access to clean water

The impact of logging on access to clean water was raised as a key concern by a number of interviewees, either due to damaged water sources or to damaged water pipes. Interviewees also expressed concern with the long-term impact of logging on the surrounding natural environment, on which many depend as sources for housing materials and food gardens.

## Change in diet

At the community level, key informants often cited a change in diet and an increase in diet-related sicknesses as a health concern generally, and one specifically related to the impact of migration and the logging industry.<sup>27</sup> Key informants described the impact of logging and increased migration as changing diet in a number of ways. Firstly, the increase in money in the community enables the purchase of – and increases reliance on – store-bought food. While generally lacking in nutritional content, such food is seen as desirable, convenient and easy, compared with locally sourced food:

*Also, in terms of food – people eat too much “white man food”; they do away with bush food and then a lot of sicknesses happen – they get diabetes and high blood. Health information officers come and say it’s because of store-bought food. That is one challenge too that I see. Today, young people, they don’t want to eat bush food, they want to drink “white man food”, drink tea. So sickness happens. (Community leader, male, Isabel)*

Secondly, the logging industry was noted as affecting access to gardens – for example, for internal migrant workers and their families who may not have access to land for gardening. Community members also complained of nearby industry negatively affecting their gardening land:

*Some of us are not happy because some of them [logging workers] come and destroy our gardens, but it is hard for us to say anything because it is not our land. The logging spoils our gardens. Our gardens are near the logging sites, and the logging can disturb our gardens. Then the landowners give us some money to compensate for our ruined gardens. (Community leader, female, Isabel)*

The change in diet and increased NCDs were often noted concerns among interviewees, and the need for nutritional awareness and education was frequently highlighted:

*Diet is a big concern. Because food security has been affected, it’s gone. And the change of diet has introduced new sickness. When mothers are pregnant, they eat poorly and it affects their baby child. That’s something I see. (NGO representative, female, Isabel)*

*In my own opinion, before it was good. We would eat local food. We were big and tough people. But not now, development comes, people have money, and people pay food at the store. We are no longer healthy like we were before when we ate local food. And what I see now, the sickness that we have now, we didn’t have before. But today we have different illnesses. From sugar, diabetes, high blood, stroke. Before I didn’t see these issues. (Community leader, male, Makira)*

## Community cleanliness

Community cleanliness, sanitation and overall hygiene was another health concern often raised. This referred to access to clean toilet facilities, as well as the general maintenance and cleanliness of villages, especially in regard to the confinement of animals, such as pigs, and the maintenance

<sup>27</sup> The effect of the logging industry on diet pertains to a number of factors and was recently the focus of a report by World Fish, which exclusively looked at the impact of logging on food security in Malaita (see: T. Minter, G. Orirana, D. Boso and J. van der Ploeg, *From Happy Hour to Hungry Hour: Logging, Fisheries and Food Security in Malaita, Solomon Islands* (Penang, Malaysia, World Fish, 2018)).

of landscaping and gardens. Across Solomon Islands, access to sanitation is a major development challenge. The Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) reported in 2013 that two thirds of all Solomon Islanders lack access to safe drinking water and less than 20 per cent have access to basic sanitation facilities (DFAT, 2013). Only 27 per cent of schools have basic sanitation services (WHO and UNICEF, 2018). Many communities practise open defecation in the bush or on the seaside, and efforts are being made by the Government of Solomon Islands, UN agencies, donors and a number of NGOs to improve sanitation. General maintenance and cleanliness of villages was often cited as an issue. Key informants described the logging industry as attracting workers away from community activities and programmes, as individuals and families focused on employment opportunities and individual economic imperatives. This reportedly culminated in an overall reduction of community engagement, especially in regard to maintaining communal areas.

*Some of them stay near the logging camps for work, so they aren't interested in sanitation programmes. (NGO representative, female, Isabel)*

### Tuberculosis

Survey respondents were asked specifically about their knowledge of TB as a communicable disease that may be linked with increased mobility dynamics. Overall, the majority of respondents (89.54%) indicated that they had heard of TB. In Makira, 98.39 per cent (n=61) indicated that they had knowledge of TB, as compared with 83.52 per cent (n=76) of respondents in Isabel. On the other hand, 47.71 per cent (n=73) of respondents did not perceive TB as a serious concern within their communities, and 26.14 per cent (n=40) said the disease was a very serious concern. Moreover, 8.50 per cent (n=13) said TB was somewhat serious, while 7.19 per cent (n=11) did not know. Interestingly, across research sites in both provinces, males perceived TB to be more serious than females did, with 47.69 per cent (n=31) of the 65 male respondents reporting it to be “very serious” compared with 12.68 per cent (n=9) of the 71 female respondents.

### Health and mobility dynamics

The perception of spread of diseases linked with increased mobility was not reported as a major concern among the research respondents. While migration was occasionally mentioned as a potential risk, particularly in regard to STIs, when asked if migration had affected the health of the community members, nearly all interviewees – including a number of health and nursing staff – did not report that it had any impact. That said, the environmental impacts of the logging industry were frequently cited as negatively affecting health outcomes of nearby communities, as detailed above. The health standards of the camps themselves were often described as poor, unsanitary and susceptible to illnesses, as described by a forestry official:

*In terms of housing, it's of a poor standard ... They know they will be temporary, so it's temporary housing. But when sickness spreads, it spreads quickly between everyone. Malaria, diarrhoea, every year. In the past, check with health, but gonorrhoea is a bigger sickness in logging camps and communities close to logging camps. And malaria, maybe because more canned food is around and mosquitos breed in the litter. (Government officer, male)*

Forestry officers stressed the need for greater collaboration between relevant authorities to manage the basic conditions for the logging camps:

*The logging camps have normal sicknesses that we have here. Like diarrhoea, malaria, red eye, because the camps are not clean. They are dirty. The camps are not good, they are nasty ... Logging camps, they are not permanent, they are temporary, so people, expats, are not worried to put in good houses, because they know they come to stay for 5 or 6 years only. So they make very temporary houses.*

... Ministries need to make laws combined with the Forestry Act, so that when companies come in, they are in line with the Ministry of Health, with the Labour Act, with the Forestry Act. So they have good houses, toilets, sanitation. If not, then we cannot give the licence. You should have to comply. (Government officer, male)

### 2.3.2. SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

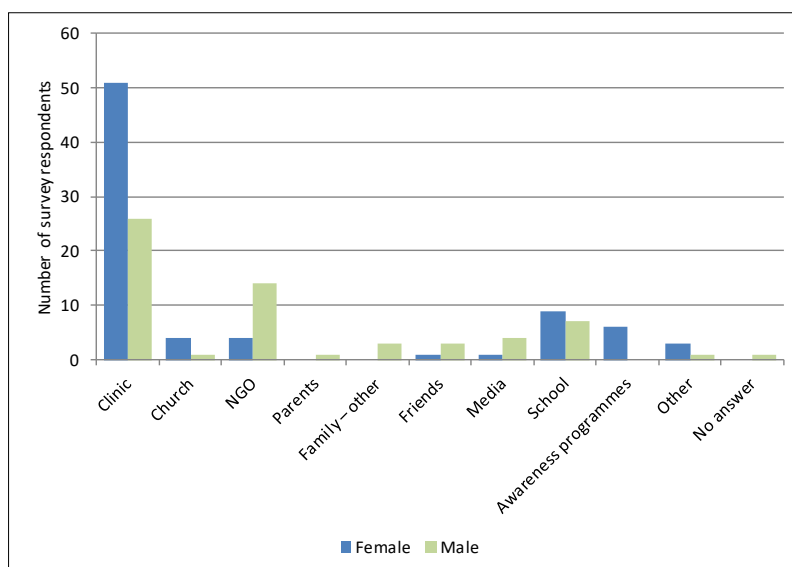
Survey respondents were asked about their personal access to information or services in regard to family planning, contraception or STIs. A total of 75.16 per cent (n=115) of all survey respondents indicated they had received information on family planning, contraception or STIs. Table 2 provides a breakdown of this data by survey location, gender and age. Half of the respondents who had received information (50.33%; n=77) indicated that they received this information from a clinic/ health facility.

**Table 2: Summary of survey respondents ever receiving information or services on family planning, contraception, pregnancy, abortion or sexually transmitted infections by location, gender and age**

Province	Gender	Age group	Yes	No	Don't know	
Isabel	Female	15–24	7	8	1	
		25–34	10	2	0	
		35–44	9	0	0	
		Over 45	10	1	0	
	Female total			36	11	1
	Male	15–24	4	4	0	
		25–34	8	6	0	
		35–44	8	2	0	
		Over 45	10	1	0	
	Male total			30	13	0
Isabel total			66	24	1	
Makira	Female	15–24	6	1	0	
		25–34	14	0	0	
		35–44	6	0	0	
		Over 45	6	1	1	
	Female total			32	2	1
	Male	15–24	2	3	1	
		25–34	7	4	0	
		35–44	3	0	0	
		Over 45	5	2	0	
	Male total			17	9	1
Makira total			49	11	2	
<b>Grand total</b>			<b>115</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>3</b>	

Sources of family planning information primarily included health clinics, NGOs, schools and awareness programmes. Figure 30 illustrates sources of family planning information, according to province, age and gender.

**Figure 30: Sources of information or services on family planning, contraception, pregnancy, abortion or sexually transmitted infections by gender**

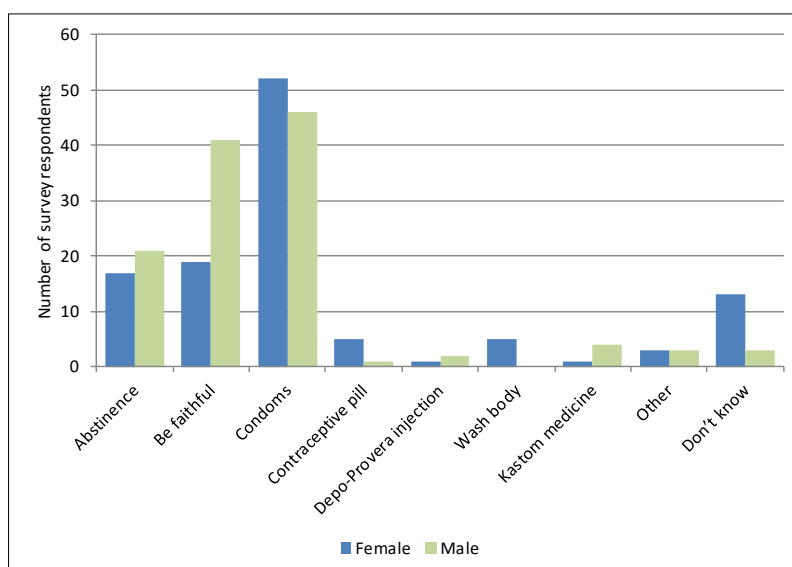


Note: Survey respondents were able to select more than one choice.

When asked if they had heard of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) or STIs, 67.97 per cent (n=104) of survey respondents indicated they had not. However, after learning that STIs are infections that are transmitted through sexual activities, and then when asked to name any STIs they had heard of, 89.54 per cent of respondents (n=137) mentioned at least one. The most commonly stated STIs identified by respondents were gonorrhoea (86.27%; n=132), syphilis (59.48%; n=91) and HIV/AIDS (58.82%; n=90). Other STIs (e.g. herpes, HPV and chlamydia) were not mentioned by more than 1 or 2 survey respondents each. Interestingly, of the 16 survey respondents who did not identify any STIs, 15 were either under the age of 24 (females n=5; males n=3) or over the age of 45 (females n=4; males n=3).

Abstinence, being faithful and using condoms were the most frequently cited ways identified to prevent the spread of STIs. Figure 31 illustrates the responses provided by survey respondents when asked how to prevent the spread of STIs.

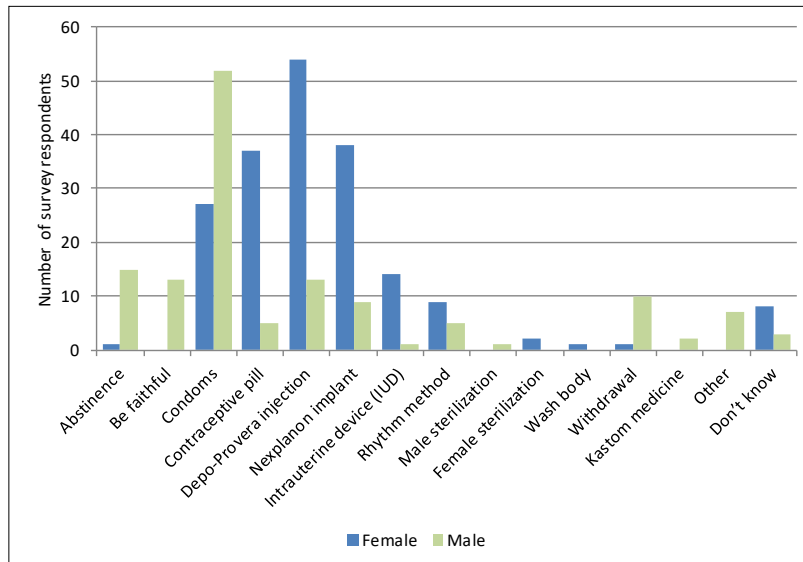
**Figure 31: Identified methods to prevent spread of sexually transmitted infections by gender**



Note: Survey respondents were able to select more than one choice.

Knowledge of methods to prevent pregnancy reflected the range of options available at the clinic level in Solomon Islands. While “condoms” was the most cited response from all participants (51.63%; n=79), Figure 32 shows a wider diversity in methods cited, especially by females.

**Figure 32: Identified methods to prevent pregnancy by gender**

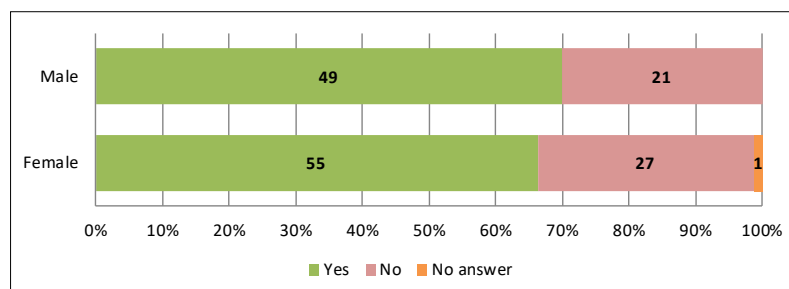


Note: Survey respondents were able to select more than one choice.

When asked how they would respond if they were worried if they had contracted an STI, the overwhelming majority of respondents stated they would visit a health clinic (87.58%; n=134). Other popular responses included using traditional or *kastom* medicine (18.30%; n=28) and taking medicine (12.42%; n=19).

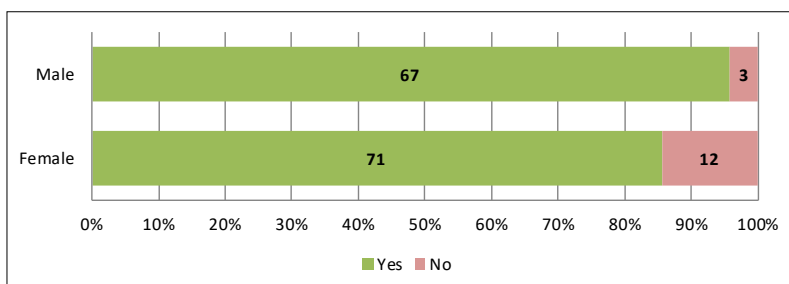
Figures 33–36 show respondents’ self-reported knowledge of STIs, HIV/AIDS, family planning and condoms. Of those who had heard of HIV/AIDS (90.2%; n=138) (see Figure 34), almost half had heard about it from a clinic or a health facility (47.71%; n=73). Other sources cited included friends (17.65%; n=27), NGOs (14.38%; n=22) and the school (13.73%; n=21). Of the respondents who had heard of HIV, 56.86 per cent (n=87) stated they thought it was “not a very serious problem” in their communities and 21.57 per cent (n=33) stated they thought it was a “very serious problem” in their communities. Knowledge of HIV transmission was high among those who had heard of HIV, with 89.13 per cent (n=123) identifying sexual intercourse and/or unprotected sex as possible modes of transmission.

**Figure 33: Self-reported knowledge of sexually transmitted infections by gender**



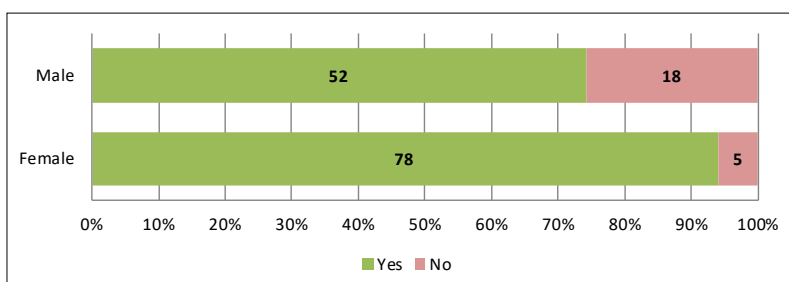
Note: Labels denote number of survey respondent answers by section.

Figure 34: Self-reported knowledge of HIV by gender



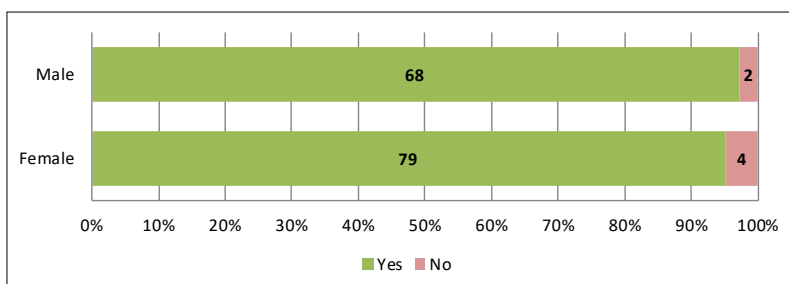
Note: Labels denote number of survey respondent answers by section.

Figure 35: Self-reported knowledge of family planning by gender



Note: Labels denote number of survey respondent answers by section.

Figure 36: Self-reported knowledge of condoms by gender

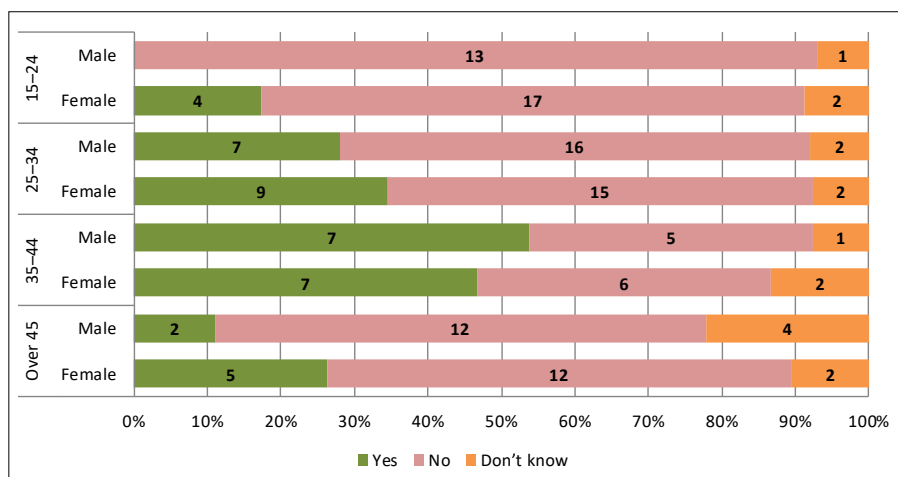


Note: Labels denote number of survey respondent answers by section.

Figure 35 shows respondents' knowledge of family planning methods. Women in Isabel and Makira reported higher rates of knowledge of family planning than men did. As illustrated in Figure 36, there is a high knowledge of condoms in the survey sites among both males and females. When asked if condoms were available in their communities, over half of total survey respondents said no (62.75%; n=96) and an additional 10.46 per cent (n=16) said they did not know. Figure 37 shows the perceived availability of condoms disaggregated by age and gender.

Just over a quarter of survey respondents (26.8%; n=41) said that condoms were available. Of those that said they were available, all but one respondent (n=40) said condoms were available at the clinic. When asked if they were comfortable to access condoms, just 23 survey respondents said that they were. This is illustrated according to gender and age in Table 3.

Figure 37: Perceived availability of condoms by age and gender



Note: Labels denote number of survey respondent answers by section.

Table 3: Level of comfort to access condoms in the community by age and gender

Age group	Gender	Yes	No	Don't know
15-24	Female	2	2	0
	Male	0	0	0
25-34	Female	7	2	0
	Male	3	4	0
35-44	Female	5	1	1
	Male	4	2	1
Over 45	Female	1	4	0
	Male	1	1	0
<b>Total</b>		<b>23</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>2</b>

Health clinics offer a range of family planning methods at the village level; however, interviewees frequently explained that single or unmarried people often felt uncomfortable to access these services. Provincial health officers also conduct routine awareness programmes, but due to funding and resource limitations, they reported their reach as limited. As a result, key groups excluded from sexual and reproductive health awareness and services are those in rural areas, and young, unmarried or single people. The following two key informants – who were health officers – reiterated the lack of access to family planning in remote areas, particularly for unmarried or younger people.

*There is a lot of awareness that has been given. So people in the village access services. Lots of them use it. We have a good number of family planning and contraceptives in the community. But then, it is common for just married people to access it. For the men in the camp, they take the condoms from the clinic. Some take them. I think it's hard for the young people though. (Government officer, male, location withheld)*

*In the villages, they [young people] find it hard. But here [provincial capital], they start to provide services for young girls at the area health centre – attached to the hospital. (Government officer, male, location withheld)*

Interviewees working in the NGO sector reiterated the difficulty in accessing contraceptives for those in rural and remote areas:

*In the village, they don't really have access to contraception. Maybe those close to Buala only. (NGO representative, female, Isabel)*

*Health promotion go to nearby areas only, like where there is a clinic, or where there is a main village. But to go into villages inside Makira, inland, no, they don't do that. (NGO representative, female, Makira)*

When younger interviewees were asked if they were comfortable to access condoms in their communities, most said they were not, explaining:

*No, I'd be shy. Some friends are comfortable, but for me it's a bit hard. (Youth, female, Makira)*

Interviewees also emphasized the importance of education on and awareness of family planning and sexual and reproductive health. While formal education touches on the topic, it was emphasized that many young people did not reach those classes in school and overall lacked a good awareness of sexual and reproductive health:

*Public knowledge is an issue, in regard to health, reproduction, contraception and family planning. In the rural areas, people don't understand the system of the body, they don't know the functions. And our culture and family values are not consistent with the laws around us, so it is taboo to talk about bodies and the reproductive system. (Government officer, male, Honiara)*

*Once they are 12, they start going all about, and then they get pregnant. Then they are surprised to realize they are pregnant. They think sex is just fun but then they have a baby. (NGO representative, female, Makira)*

### **Teenage pregnancy**

Teenage pregnancy was raised as a key social and health issue of concern and one that is also closely connected with increased mobility dynamics, as discussed above. However, it was also described as a key concern irrespective of increased mobility:

*Teenage pregnancy is an issue in all communities, not just logging communities. Young people don't really learn about family planning and contraception. At school, this subject is there ... they don't learn about contraception at school. Maybe just about their bodies, or what exists, but not how to use it. (Government officer, male, Isabel)*

Key informants who worked in the health sector expressed concern at the occurrence of teenage pregnancies due to the health implications for mothers and infants. Shortly after the field research in Makira, the demise of a 14-year-old girl after delivering twins in the provincial hospital made headline news in a national newspaper. A senior health official expressed gratitude at the focus of this research and concern about the Ministry of Health's ability to address issues such as teenage pregnancy:

*I'm happy with what you are doing. Because they will come to the clinic at 12 or 13 years old and the nurses worry about keeping the mommy and baby alive. So, for us at Health, we are mostly responding. So how can health workers prevent things? We don't have the resources. (Government officer, male, Honiara)*



### 3. MIGRATION-AFFECTED COMMUNITIES AS SPACES OF VULNERABILITY

This study investigated the dynamics of the nexus of gender, health and mobility in Solomon Islands. By narrowing the focus to project-induced in-migration and selecting case sites close to logging operations, the research also investigated necessarily the health and social impacts of logging industries on remote communities in Solomon Islands. This data highlights the perceptions, attitudes, behaviours and practices on a range of community health issues, which will be utilized to inform the development of training resources addressing the key issues. The remaining discussion and analysis offered in this report focuses on the impact of these findings on women and girls, particularly in relation to risks and vulnerabilities associated with sexual exploitation and trafficking.

Adopting a sociogeographical spaces-of-vulnerability approach to the study allowed a broad review of the perceived health and social issues in the migration-affected communities and purposefully shifted the tendency to focus on specific population groups (e.g. migrant workers) to examine the broader dynamics enabling risk and vulnerability in these communities. To reiterate, spaces of vulnerability refers to:

- The social and economic conditions within a locality which can affect the welfare of the resident population; and
- The personal circumstances of individuals in those conditions, which can influence their behaviour (IOM, 2014).

Narrowing the focus to communities that have experienced project-induced in-migration helpfully framed the research topic, to capture mobility dynamics related to both international and internal migrant workers and to draw attention to the unique dynamics associated with the extractive resources industry. Migration is deeply entwined with the logging industry in Solomon Islands, and while not intending to examine the logging industry per se, the study findings necessarily draw attention to the impacts of the industry. In particular, the study findings confirm and echo existing research linking the logging industry with the sexual exploitation of women and girls and highlight the need for increased regulation of the industry, including the implementation and enforcement of mandatory child protection and social safeguarding policies at the national and provincial levels, and the need for greater awareness of relevant laws and reporting mechanisms at the community level.

#### **Project-induced mobility dynamics and impact**

The study found that the communities in the study sites were largely homogenous societies – most of the surveyed populations were from those areas. As reflected in the findings, governance in these communities is predominately centred on traditional and local leaders, such as chiefs and church leaders, with formal government structures having a relatively minimal presence. An influx of people from different parts of Solomon Islands, as well as from overseas, reportedly had a perceived high impact on the communities. Migrant workers, both internal and international, were perceived to bring with them different cultural attitudes and behaviours, some of which were perceived as causing offence. These mobility dynamics also created increased pressure on existing localized governance structures.

Given the centralized nature of development in Solomon Islands and the associated difficulties with rural population engaging in the cash economy, industries that reach into the rural areas, such as logging, are often initially viewed as an opportunity for potential economic and infrastructure developments. The study found that perceived positive developments related to logging included improved infrastructure, in the forms of roads and housing materials, and improved economic opportunities, in the forms of employment opportunities and opportunity to market local products.

Overall, however, the research findings present a bleak image of the impact of logging and related migration on affected communities in Solomon Islands. On the whole, communities were dissatisfied with logging operations, and while few noted the material and infrastructure benefits of the industry, more often than not community members reported grievances. While not all of these grievances can be attributed to logging or migration, the unique dynamics created by the influx of money associated with a minimally regulated industry, and increased mobility, were reported to heighten vulnerability in these communities, particularly for women and children. These dynamics have been recognized as a risk factor linking mobility with HIV vulnerability in the Pacific region (UNDP and SPC, 2010). Referring to a social group of “mobile men with money” (MMM), research highlights the increased risk in social contexts in which there is high population movement and economic disparity, particularly where men are involved in various forms of itinerant wage labour such as in extractive resource industries and where limited educational and employment opportunities for women encourage commercial and transactional sex (UNDP and SPC, 2010).

### **3.1. TRAFFICKING AND RELATED DYNAMICS**

In line with previous research, this study confirms that heightened mobility dynamics related to project-induced in-migration in logging-affected communities of Solomon Islands is linked with CSEC, sexual exploitation and trafficking in persons. Of particular concern is the high number of cases reportedly involving children.

### Elements of trafficking in persons

In most cases, a victim of trafficking is a person who has been deceived, coerced or forced to move from his/her family, community or country by another person for the purpose of exploitation. To convict someone of trafficking in persons requires that all three elements are proven: action + means + purpose.

Figure 38: Necessary elements for identifying an adult victim of human trafficking

Adult human trafficking		
Action	Means	Purpose
Recruitment Transport Transfer Harbouring Receipt of persons	Threat or use of force Coercion Abduction Fraud Deception Abuse of power or vulnerability Giving payments or benefits	Exploitation: - Prostitution of others - Sexual exploitation - Forced labour - Slavery or similar practices - Removal of organs - Other types of exploitation

For a child victim of trafficking, the means is irrelevant. Therefore, a child is a victim of trafficking when any one element from each of the “activity” and “purpose” categories is present.

Figure 39: Necessary elements for identifying a child victim of human trafficking

Child human trafficking	
Action	Purpose
Recruitment Transport Transfer Harbouring Receipt of persons	Exploitation: - Prostitution of others - Sexual exploitation - Forced labour - Slavery or similar practices - Removal of organs - Other types of exploitation

Relationships, marriages, and transactional sex between migrant workers and local girls or women were consistently raised by survey respondents and key informants alike. When respondents were asked about the social and health impacts of logging-related migration, these were often the first points raised. Of the 68 KIs conducted, transactional and exploitative sexual relationships were raised as key issues in 57 of these interviews.<sup>28</sup>

Child marriage and sexual exploitation of children were frequently raised, at times in reference to girl children as young as 12 years old. Young women over the age of 18 were also at risk of exploitation and forced marriage, often reportedly encouraged by family members for financial or material gain. Interviewees described the exchange or “lure” of goods or money to either the female or her parents in order to initiate a relationship. These were often in the form of relatively low-value items such as soft drinks and cigarettes, as well as packaged food and housing materials.

<sup>28</sup> It is prudent and imperative to note that the focus and findings of this study regarding transactional and exploitative relationships do not extend to all relationships which involve mobility dynamics and migrant workers. Nor does this study intend to imply judgement or cast assumption of the consensual and willing relationships between adults.

While the transactional and exploitative nature of relationships were consistently acknowledged, levels of acceptance of these relationships differed between the communities and provinces – for example, communities visited in Isabel demonstrate a higher degree of acceptance compared with those in Makira. This was likely due to prevailing social norms and cultural attitudes regarding accepted social behaviours which differ between the provinces, as well as the degree of exposure to logging operations in the past. Attitudes of acceptance also differed in regard to the migrant groups involved. Internal migrants were more likely able to address any perceived infractions with cultural and traditional protocols and typically had access to fewer resources in which to engage in transactional relationships. Extramarital affairs involving internal migrants, however, were often reported as a social issue. International migrants, meanwhile, were seen as often being more deceptive about their marital statuses at home, which reportedly caused offence in the predominantly Christian communities, and typically had more access to resources and coercive power. Also, international migrants were seen as more likely to engage in temporary or “rubbish” marriages for the term of their employment and were less likely to be held accountable for the responsibility of their children on their departure.

Regardless of the differences in attitudes towards internal and international migrant workers, the transactional and exploitative nature of relationships were consistently raised and indicated heightened dynamics of vulnerability within the migration-affected communities.

## 3.2. DYNAMICS OF VULNERABILITY

*The issues that make children and girls vulnerable around logging camps are the same issues that make them vulnerable to all abuse everywhere. (NGO representative, female, Honiara)*

Rates of VAW in Solomon Islands are high, with 64 per cent of ever-partnered women aged 15–49 years reporting physical and/or sexual abuse by an intimate partner (SPC, 2009). At the same time, communities in close proximity to logging operations portray unique dynamics that heighten the risks of and vulnerability to sexual exploitation and trafficking, particularly for young girls and women. While these issues are attracting increased public and media attention, there is a prevailing misplaced focus on race as opposed to the broader dynamics of vulnerability, coercive power and cash influx. Findings from this study illustrate risks of and exposure to sexual exploitation and trafficking, as well as other social and health impacts, in migration-affected communities. These stem from local, pre-existing conditions as well as heightened mobility and project-induced in-migration.

### 3.2.1. LOCALIZED AND PRE-EXISTING DYNAMICS OF VULNERABILITY

A number of localized and pre-existing issues were highlighted in the study that contributed to heightened risk and vulnerability of women and girls. These included the limited reach of and access to essential service provision – including health, education and justice – and reliance on traditional forms of authority which often do not cater to gender-sensitive matters. Cultural attitudes and beliefs around gender and sex were also highlighted, including the existing high rates of VAW and minimal availability of specialized services for survivors of GBV outside of Honiara.

Limited livelihood opportunities and access to the cash economy, particularly for young women, were identified as key drivers of transactional relationships, and interviewees highlighted the need to counter awareness programmes on these issues with constructive programmes offering an opportunity for engagement with the cash economy.

Attitudes of acceptance regarding forced or child marriage were also highlighted. While teenage marriage was often raised as an issue of concern in the communities, it was also explained that it was considered culturally acceptable and marriages of children aged above 15 years old remain permissible in Solomon Islands law.

While a majority of survey respondents indicated they had received information on family planning, contraception or STIs, and could identify a range of contraceptive methods, only a quarter indicated that condoms were available in their communities. Health officials in Honiara and the provincial capitals reiterated human, financial and logistical restrictions to the delivery of awareness programmes in remote communities.

### 3.2.2. PROJECT-INDUCED DYNAMICS OF VULNERABILITY

Project-induced in-migration introduces additional risks for community members, particularly women and girls. While logging operations have existed in Solomon Islands for a long time, they are increasingly going into smaller and more remote areas. At the same time, people are having increased exposure to cash and commodities. While the majority of Solomon Islanders in remote communities have access to essential resources for the provision of housing and food security through subsistence means of production, they are relatively cash-poor.

The findings from this study show that the major influential factor underlying drivers of vulnerability was the pre-existing limited availability and access to money converging with the sudden influx of cash associated with extractive industries. This provided a compelling motivation for women to engage in transactional and exploitative sexual relationships, as well as for third parties to exploit vulnerable members of the community. In the context of cash-poverty, the coercive power of money was consistently reiterated:

*They know it's illegal. They know. But because of the power of the money, because of the influence, these people are influenced by the money. It places them in an awkward position to make a good judgement. (Government officer, male, Makira)*

*They see the money, 500 dollars or 1,000 dollars.<sup>29</sup> So it's not physically forced, but the lure of the money, the power. For a girl in the community to see this, she sees this as a good thing. (Government officer, male, Honiara)*

*The big problem is that people struggle to live. It's a big problem. Individual families find it very difficult to find money. So when someone comes with money, families say, "ok, take my daughter". (Government officer, male, Honiara)*

At the same time, the influx of money through extractive industries was found to accelerate the process of change to cash-based economies and increase the overall reliance on and the need for cash in the logging-affected communities. Key informants described that money was an increasing necessity:

*Money is more of an issue now – before we didn't need money so much, we had a barter system, we could trade fish and taro, etc. But now with all the developments, we need money. If you talk about natural resources, we have so many resources. But the system creates poverty for the people ... So we now face poverty in terms of cash. (Government officer, female, Honiara)*

<sup>29</sup> The amounts are in SBD.

A number of factors also reportedly contributed to reduced community cohesion and increased destabilization, such as: increased pursuit for individual economic benefit; increased conflicts over logging- and land-related matters; and reported increase in the use of alcohol and drugs. In turn, these also affect informal and community-based forms of social protection. NGO workers similarly described the shift towards a cash-based economy as affecting participation in their programmes in logging-affected communities, reporting decreased voluntary participation.

The study findings also highlighted that the influx of migrant workers influenced social norm regulating behaviour, with changing attitudes and reduced adherence to traditional forms of governance. The research also found that the proximity of logging operations to communities often distracted children from their education, with a number of teachers reporting students not attending classes to visit the logging points or follow relatives who worked at the logging camps.

### 3.3. PROTECTION AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Social welfare and police officers universally reported human, financial and logistical resource constraints as affecting their capacity in providing service to remote communities within their respective jurisdictions. Considering this factor and the introduction and operations of minimally regulated industry, such as logging, the migration-affected communities were found to be spaces of vulnerability with limited protective services or industry accountability.

The research findings show that while community members perceive transactional and exploitative relationships to be common, they are generally not approved of, nor are they necessarily seen as a means of status or wealth. This disapproval, however, mostly did not relate to perceived illegal activity nor the infraction of children's or women's rights. Rather, the basis for condemnation referred to sociocultural or financial factors.

Relationships and marriages were seen to be the purview of families, and as long as parents provided their consent, they were not considered a matter that could or should be addressed beyond the family. For example, when asked if cases of exploitation were reported to the police, one of the key informants explained:

*No, at the community level, the pathway for reporting is hard. Because if the dad is involved, then it's hard for them to report it, because they get a benefit out of it. (Government officer, male, Honiara)*

The research found these attitudes culminated in a pervasive culture of silence, and while service providers, police officers and government officials readily described the occurrence of exploitation, there was minimal action for change at the community level.

*Then another thing is silence. You notice the problem is there. And then culture and kastom of Isabel, you'll know that the problem is there, but you keep silent. And then you just ignore that problem. You don't want to report that case. You keep silent and then the problem will continue. (Government officer, male, Isabel)*

The provision of essential services across Solomon Islands is an ongoing challenge, and those services available outside of the capital Honiara are typically restricted to the provincial towns and stations. Communities generally have access to a health clinic (which may require transport to reach), primary schools and occasionally high schools. Police presence is limited to provincial capitals or other major stations, and community policing units have limited resources restricting regular touring to communities. Communities typically have access to one or more churches.

Specialized service provision for women and girls who are victims of sexual violence and GBV are mostly limited to Honiara, with emerging referral networks being established at the provincial level. At the community level, issues and concerns were typically reported to local leaders, such as chiefs, church leaders and occasionally women's leaders.

Service providers at the national and provincial levels described financial, human and resource limitations as key limitations, particularly in regard to the provision of safe and confidential services for survivors of GBV, and to conduct awareness and deliver outreach services in communities. There was also limited awareness at the provincial level of the different roles and offerings of the existing service providers.

The study found that knowledge of formal laws in relation to consent, marriage and trafficking was low among survey respondents and key informants. Similarly, key informants reiterated that the majority of the population were not aware of laws relating to sexual exploitation and trafficking, and highlighted the importance of awareness and education. It is worth noting that key informants frequently reflected on awareness programmes of the recently introduced Family Protection Act, indicating increased community understanding and a shift in attitudes towards reporting what was previously seen as a "family" or "community" issue. At the same time, it was also highlighted that knowledge of and confidence in reporting pathways remain low.

Findings from the study also indicate a significant reluctance to report matters relating to sexual exploitation and trafficking to government authorities. Police officers explained that without the willingness of victims (or their parents) to report, prosecuting cases was not possible. Survey respondents often described such issues as being family or community matters and indicated a reluctance to be personally involved. Key informants also described formal government authorities as relatively inaccessible or non-responsive, and were only referred to for serious matters after community responses were exhausted:

*If there is abuse in the family, we don't go to the police, we sit down and advise them. If they keep doing it, then we go to the chiefs, then the chiefs can warn them or refer it to a police case. We settle it first at the village level, if it still continues, then we refer them to the police ... Police, medical ... are for serious cases. But for small cases, we settle it within the community. (NGO representative, female, Isabel)*

Additional factors influencing reluctance to report included a limited knowledge of formal laws and what constitutes a criminal offence. These attitudes and practices appear to contribute an ongoing culture of silence, despite the widespread acknowledgement of the occurrence of transactional and exploitative relationships, and indicate a need for ongoing awareness programmes. Importantly, some representatives of the Royal Solomon Islands Police Force (RSIPF) noted that due to increased awareness of women's rights, attitudes to reporting were shifting, and while reporting remains low, a majority of service providers and community leaders advocated for more awareness of and education on relevant laws:

*When we did awareness on family violence, reporting increased. Then everyone ended up in court. On rape cases. Then it went down again. When there is awareness, people understand and then they make reports. The clinics call us and report to the police, and the police go and get them to do examinations. (Government officer, female, Isabel)*

*So the community needs to know about the issues, conduct workshops for them, to know about the law, what the side effects of human trafficking are, who will suffer. They must have knowledge and skills. (Government officer, male, Isabel)*

At the time of the research, the first offence of trafficking in children, as set out in section 77 (trafficking) of the Immigration Act, took place in Gizo, Western Province. The case involved similar elements of sexual exploitation and trafficking as frequently described in the findings of this report. When asked why other such cases were not reported, numerous key informants involved in the forestry or the law enforcement sector explained that without an official report from the victim or her parents, they were unable to proceed with investigations and prosecutions. Therefore, the key elements that constitute such cases as trafficking simultaneously prevent them from being reported and charged, as one key informant explained:

*But they have permission from their parents to get married, and they agree because they take money. So that stops us from making a report. I talk about this with police, but the parents hold back because they say it has been arranged and the parents have agreed. (Government officer, male, Isabel)*

Findings from the study identify a key gap in regard to industry regulation and accountability for community welfare and well-being. Existing forestry legislation does not include minimum social safeguards or child protection policies and forestry officers described their role as restrictive in this area, expressing interest in working with other government departments to address key issues:

*For me, forestry officers implement what forest law says only. We cannot do what is not in our law. We need to have some law, or a review of other laws, where forestry officers can report or do other activities to try and stop or slow down activities that cause danger to girls and women. (Government officer, male)*

Key informants at the village level similarly described increased interest in maintaining accountability of the logging industry's impact on community welfare and reported ad hoc attempts to address transgressions, such as agreements with the companies to enforce punitive measures for workers who engaged in relationships with individual community members, including monetary fines and termination of employment:

*Some men get married here, and they are married already at home. So they leave children here and go back. Now it's lower, because the company management made a memorandum that if any company worker (foreigner) marries or goes around with any girl here, then he gets sacked and a fine of 25,000 dollars.<sup>30</sup> (Community leader, male, Isabel)*

*One company here, they say if a worker has a local marriage, they have to pay a big fine to the company. So some of them are afraid if they go with girls, then their salary will be deducted. If he is a married man. So they get penalized. (Government officer, male, Isabel)*

These ad hoc policies and agreements highlight the desire for increased accountability from both communities and companies and indicate a need for effective and enforceable national policies.

<sup>30</sup> The amount is in SBD.



## 4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

*I'm really glad you came – I wanted to talk about these things. (Government officer, male, Isabel)*

### 4.1. CONCLUSION

There is momentum for change in migration-affected communities. At the community, provincial and national levels, the increasing social impacts of extractive industries are being acknowledged. Media reports are increasingly drawing attention to the issue, and community members and leaders alike are raising their concern.

From a spaces of vulnerability perspective, this research highlights that migration-affected communities are simultaneously impacted by pre-existing localized factors as well as introduced dynamics associated with logging operations and heightened mobility. These factors – coupled with limited industry accountability and formal protective policies, and restricted access to service provision in these remote areas – create an environment where these drivers of vulnerability can go unchecked. This is enhanced by the lack of prosecution of perpetrators of abuse, for example, in the incidents of forced and child marriage as described in this report.

### 4.2. RECOMMENDATIONS

Future efforts to address community health impacts in migration-affected communities within Solomon Islands should incorporate understanding of the varying drivers of vulnerability and improve community awareness, formal protective policies and industry accountability.<sup>31</sup> The following recommendations stem from the research findings; however, it is likely that these are relevant to all logging areas in Solomon Islands and communities impacted by other forms of natural resources industries (e.g. tourism and mining):

#### **Recommendations for communities:**

- Identify leaders in each community including youth, women and men, as well as individuals from faith-based organizations and churches, to be trained on child protection, sexual exploitation and relevant legislation, and who can provide referrals and advice regarding relevant services and authorities, and reporting processes.
- Enable reporting to formal justice representatives.
- Devise, implement and monitor community-led child protection protocols in line with national standards.

<sup>31</sup> As a direct follow-up activity of this study, training materials will be developed by IOM, informed by the study results and the KAP survey findings.

### **Recommendations for service provision:**

Service provision from provincial and national governments, as well as CSOs, should target the following areas:

- Raise awareness of the impact of increased mobility on gender and health outcomes in communities, including relevant preventative and responsive actions.
- Promote sustainable livelihood opportunities, particularly for young women, in rural and remote communities.
- Raise awareness of relevant laws and reporting mechanisms at the community level and enable reporting processes and response. Consult with communities on appropriate messaging.
- Address reluctance of community members to report cases of trafficking and sexual exploitation.
- Improve essential service availability, particularly in regard to SRH and justice services.
- Consult with communities, in particular women and youth, to develop appropriate outreach and messaging about accessing services. Raise awareness among community members and stakeholders of service provision availability at the community and provincial levels, including contact details for reporting or referral pathways.
- Continue raising awareness of and providing training in relevant laws and reporting mechanisms among key civil society, government and law enforcement personnel.
- Incorporate information dissemination and awareness-raising of risks of and vulnerabilities to trafficking into existing VAW and GBV and health training programmes.
- Expand provision of safe houses and SafeNet to survivors of GBV in provincial areas and to victims of trafficking.

### **Recommendations for logging companies, extractive industries and regulating government bodies (including the police):**

- Distribute these research findings to extractive industries and regulating government bodies to ensure awareness of current issues and encourage engagement in response.
- Promote and mandate more inclusive decision-making at the community level, including the direct representation of women, prior to the provision of extractive resource licensing.
- Make social impact assessments a mandatory component of all licensing applications.
- Enforce mandatory social safeguards within the regulations of extractive industries, including child protection policies, and appropriate penalties for noncompliance.
- Improve knowledge among workers and migration-affected communities of relevant laws, illegal activities including sexual exploitation and reporting pathways.
- Respond promptly and effectively to reports of underage marriage, sexual exploitation and child abuse, and utilize the updated trafficking legislation where appropriate.
- Foster greater cooperation between regulating authorities – such as the Ministry of Forestry and Research, the RSIPF, the MWYCFA and the SWD – and increase regulating authorities' skills in and knowledge of relevant laws and policies.

- Increase the frequency of monitoring of logging (or other extractive industry) camps by joint monitoring teams, including representatives from the SWD, the MWYCFA and the RSIPF.

#### **Recommendations for policy and protective services:**

- Accede to the United Nations Convention on Transnational Organized Crime and the Palermo protocols.
- Raise the minimum legal age for marriage to 18 years and address harmful practices such as child marriage.
- Increase investigation and prosecution of CSEC and trafficking cases in migration-affected communities.
- Collaborate with regulating authorities to raise awareness through media initiatives.
- Review, monitor and prosecute breaches of alcohol licensing, with the aim of reducing the prevalence and impact of alcohol consumption.
- Sign the United Nations CRC Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography.
- Assess the need for standalone legislation for trafficking in persons and related crimes.
- Review, monitor and prosecute breaches of labour laws, including the provision of household and domestic services in industry camps.
- Incorporate information dissemination on and awareness-raising of risks of and vulnerabilities to trafficking into existing GBV-related training programmes.

#### **Recommendations for further research:**

- Conduct follow-up research on the experiences and perceptions of migrant workers in extractive industries in Solomon Islands to complement the findings presented in this report.
- Investigate risks and occurrence of labour trafficking in Solomon Islands.
- Conduct targeted research on clinical and mental health outcomes of mobile and migration-affected populations.
- Conduct research on the focus areas of this report in all provinces.
- Conduct research into service provision gaps in communities near logging camps.

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## APPENDIX A: INTERNATIONAL AND REGIONAL POLICY COMMITMENTS

Solomon Islands is party to several core international human rights instruments, including the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), the Convention to Eliminate All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and its Optional Protocol, the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), and the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD). Solomon Islands has signed but not yet ratified two of the three optional protocols to the CRC – the optional protocol on the involvement of children in armed conflict and, of most concern to this research, the optional protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography.

Solomon Islands is not party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (ICRMW), or the Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC) and its additional protocols, also referred to as the Palermo protocols, which include the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children (also referred to as the Trafficking Protocol or UN TIP Protocol).

At the regional level, Solomon Islands is a member of the Pacific Immigration Development Community (PIDC), formerly known as the Pacific Immigration Directors' Conference. The PIDC enables heads of immigration agencies to discuss issues of mutual interest and foster multilateral cooperation. The country is also a member of the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF), a regional forum for discussions on regional cooperation and integration. Other key regional bodies of particular relevance in the context of migration and protection of human rights include the following: (a) the Pacific Islands Development Forum (PIDF); (b) the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC), which includes the human rights-focused Regional Rights Resource Team (RRRT); (c) the University of the South Pacific (USP), which has a wide presence in the region; and (d) the Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA), an advisory body that assists with the sustainable use of fisheries resources including monitoring.



# APPENDIX B: STUDY METHODOLOGY

A research consultant was engaged to conduct qualitative interviews with key informants and to lead a team of four enumerators to conduct a knowledge, attitudes and practices (KAP) survey in two provincial case study sites – Isabel and Makira provinces. The locations of the case study sites were decided in collaboration with the Family Support Centre, the partner organization in a complementary IOM project on protecting the rights of women and girls in migration-affected communities. Reasons for the selection of these locations included the following:

- These sites have active Family Support Centre Volunteer Provincial Committees. The research aims to inform the production of training materials, which will be utilized by the Family Support Centres and their Volunteer Provincial Committees. As such, the research should take place in an existing sphere of influence of these committees, to learn from existing awareness activities, and identify training needs.
- Both provinces experience heightened mobility dynamics related to logging.
- Isabel and Makira have not previously attracted significant attention regarding the impact of logging-related migration, compared with other provinces such as Western Province and Malaita. There is not a high presence of international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in these locations.

Consultations with national stakeholders confirmed Isabel and Makira as suitable locations, and permission was sought and provided by the relevant provincial health directors prior to commencing the field research.

## METHODS

Research was undertaken over seven weeks in June and July 2018, including five days in Makira province and seven days in Isabel province. The provincial visits included key informant interviews (KIIs) at the provincial capital and village levels, and data collection for the KAP survey at the village level. KIIs were also conducted in Honiara prior to, and following, the provincial visits. The following research tools were used during the primary data collection exercise:

- Desk review and literature review
- Stakeholder consultation
- KIIs
- KAP survey
- Informal observations of spaces of vulnerability

### Desk review and literature review

Prior to the Solomon Islands case study research, a literature review was completed for the regional Community Health and Mobility in the Pacific (CHAMP) project, which involved reviewing existing research on the impact of migration on violence against women, sexual and reproductive health, and communicable diseases across the four project countries.

## Stakeholder consultation

Stakeholder consultation and round-table discussion was held in Honiara on 20 June. The CHAMP project and research was formally introduced to relevant stakeholders, and participants exchanged knowledge and developed shared understandings of key issues relating to gender, mobility and health in Solomon Islands. This included drawing mind maps of the various positive and negative impacts of logging-related migration and analysing these impacts for various demographic groups within communities, which was used to inform the development of the KAP survey. The research methodology was also discussed, and the research locations were confirmed.

## Key informant interviews

The research consultant conducted KIs with a total of 68 key informants. These were carried out with a range of stakeholders at the national, provincial and village levels. Interviews were in-depth and semi-structured, lasting on average between 30 and 60 minutes each and were primarily conducted in Solomon Islands Pijin. While all quotes included in this report are anonymized, where consent was provided, names and positions of interview respondents are included in Appendix C.

Sampling for the KIs was purposive and included those from the following sectors:

- National level: government ministries, police, NGOs, service providers and CSOs;
- Provincial level: provincial government officers, police, health officers and NGOs;
- Community level: community leaders, chiefs, women's leaders, youth leaders, teachers, nurses and young women.

KIs provided rich data regarding community health risks, needs and priorities relating to increased mobility dynamics. While key informants in Honiara were primarily interviewed in relation to their spheres of professional influence, almost all also willingly reflected on their own experiences of the social impacts of logging in their home communities. It was evident during the KIs that logging and the issues associated were pervasive, and everyone had a story to tell. KIs were analysed manually.

## Knowledge, attitudes and practices survey

A KAP survey targeting men and women, female youth and male youth<sup>32</sup> residents of the selected migration-affected communities was conducted in the chosen case-study sites, with a total of 153 participants. The resulting data is not representative outside of the study sites and is descriptive in nature. The proposed sampling approach was to employ systematic sampling at a household level, combined with convenience sampling, in account of the small and networked nature of the village setting. In reality, the sampling was constrained by a number of challenges including the limited availability of survey respondents, leading to more convenience and purposive approaches to be taken. Interviews were not taken with more than one household member, nor with anyone under the age of 15 years.

The KAP questionnaire survey was exploratory in nature. Survey questions were designed to provide insight into the knowledge, perceptions and behaviour of community members in relation to a number of identified areas relating to gender, mobility and health. Surveys were conducted on smartphones and analysed using Microsoft Excel.

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<sup>32</sup> The MWYCFA considers youth to include those between 15 and 34 years of age. The survey was not conducted with anyone below the age of 15. Surveys with those below the age of 18 were done only with parental or guardian consent.

Survey questions included closed questions (yes/no/don't know) and multiple-select questions (the ability to provide a number of responses, coded by the enumerator). Open-ended questions were kept to a minimum. Possible survey response categories were formulated in collaboration with stakeholders, and the survey instrument was reviewed by key stakeholders and partners in Solomon Islands, as well as an IOM internal research steering committee.

A team of four enumerators conducted the surveys in the two provinces. Three team members visited both sites, with a different fourth member joining the team each in Makira and Isabel. Prior to the field research, the enumerators attended a two-day training in Honiara, including a half-day pilot test in a peri-urban logging-affected area in West Guadalcanal, after which the survey questions were refined and finalized.

### **Informal observations of spaces of vulnerability**

Conducting surveys and interviews in migration-affected communities in Solomon Islands required the research team to travel to and stay in these communities. Villages are relatively small and highly networked communities, and hosted the research team in local accommodation. In addition to the formal data collection, the research team engaged informally with the community, participating in casual conversations and tours of the area. The research team engaged in reflective discussions during the field visits, and the enumerators wrote reflections of the field research upon return to Honiara.

## **RESEARCH PERMITS AND ETHICS**

A research permit was granted through the Ministry of Education, Human Resources and Development (MEHRD). Research and ethics approval was also granted by the Solomon Islands Health Research and Ethics Review Board of the Ministry of Health and Medical Services.

Prior to conducting the KIIs and KAP surveys in the two provinces, permission was sought from the respective provincial health directors, representatives from the provincial governments and local chiefs in villages.

Surveys and interviews were conducted in private locations to protect the confidentiality of the respondents. In line with the World Health Organization guidelines on conducting surveys relating to gender-based violence (Ellsberg, 2005), the survey was not conducted with more than 25 per cent of the target population. No more than one person was surveyed from each household to protect the confidentiality of survey respondents. The research team did not inform the wider community that the survey included questions on sensitive topics, such as child marriage, sexual exploitation and trafficking.

## **CHALLENGES AND LIMITATIONS**

### **Overall limitations in research design**

It is important to document the limitations and scope of research projects. This research employed qualitative and quantitative methods; however, it does not purport to be representative outside of the study areas. To do so would require more systematic sampling approaches and a more representative sample. Rather, this research provides rich insights into the mobility–gender–health nexus in logging-affected communities, particularly in relation to protecting the rights of women

and girls. Through data collection via a KAP survey, the study sheds light on the behaviours and perceptions of the target population, to inform development programming and training resource development.

Financial constraints limited the length of time permitted to conduct the research and the number of enumerators to collect survey data, which limited the number of surveys completed. The survey was lengthy, and while being comprehensive in the data collected, could have been shortened to allow for a higher number of responses. Due to the limited sample size, it is imperative to note that the findings are not representative of the population and analysis should consider the relatively limited dataset.

This research did not collect data in logging camps nor did it target migrant workers in its sample. To do so would require access to interpreters and coordination with logging companies, which were beyond the remit of the research scope. This research was focused on the nearby communities affected by migration, and particularly on the risks and vulnerabilities for women and girls. However, IOM recognizes that there is limited research on international migrant workers in Solomon Islands and would aim to address this gap in the context of follow-up research.

### **Fieldwork limitations and challenges**

The research team overcame a number of expected logistical challenges to achieve the data collection, including the multiple cancellations of flights and disruptive weather patterns prohibiting work on some days.

The availability of respondents in the provincial study sites proved to be a consistent challenge – villages are typically busy places as residents engage in a variety of daily activities that take them away from the household.

The research team found the assistance and support of a Community Liaison Officer (CLO) in each province to be invaluable to the research process. The CLOs were seconded from the relevant provincial governments' community affairs departments; they assisted the team by: (a) notifying the communities of the team's arrival; (b) introducing the research team to relevant local leaders; and (c) facilitating sampling processes for surveys. The CLOs also assisted the research consultant by introducing key informants at the village level and making arrangements for KIIs at the provincial level.

## **SURVEY RESPONDENT AND KEY INFORMANT DETAILS**

### **Key informant interviews**

A total of 68 key informants were consulted as part of the research. These included government representatives from the health, forestry, police, and women, youth and children ministries. KIIs were conducted in Honiara (n=18) and the two provincial field sites Makira (n=25) and Isabel (n=25). Of the interviewees, 32 were female and 36 were male. Appendix C provides a list of the stakeholders consulted, where consent was provided.

## Knowledge, attitudes and practices surveys

A total of 153 surveys were completed. The table below provides a breakdown of the KAP survey respondents by age, gender and province.

### Breakdown of knowledge, attitudes and practices survey respondents by age, gender and province

Age group	Isabel			Makira			Total
	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male	Total	
15–24	16	8	24	7	6	13	37
25–34	12	14	26	14	11	25	51
35–44	9	10	19	6	3	9	28
Over 45	11	11	22	8	7	15	37
<b>Total</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>153</b>

#### Key statistics on survey respondents:

- Locations: Isabel (59%) and Makira (41%)
- Sex distribution: men (46%) and women (54%)
- Age groups: youth (<35 years) (58%) and adults (aged 35 and over) (42%)

Survey respondents were asked if they had previously been married or lived with a partner, and if so, how old they were when they first co-habituated. Of the 117 survey respondents who answered this question, the average response was 23.04 years, and the median was 22. Answers varied widely, ranging from as young as 10 to 43 years of age.

Over half of the survey respondents stated secondary school as their highest level of education (n=91; 59.48%), with the average form of completion being form three (year 9 equivalent). Other levels of educational attainment included: primary school (n=44; 28.76%); no school (n=7; 4.58%); university (n=4; 2.62%); vocational school (n=3; 1.96%); and college diploma (n=2; 1.31%).

## FIELD SITES

### Makira

Makira is located south-east of Guadalcanal and the capital Honiara. The capital, Kira Kira, is a 40-minute flight from Honiara, and home to provincial government offices, a hospital and schools.

Logging operations occur around the island, with forestry officers reporting 18 current active licences in the province, serviced by approximately six Malaysian-owned companies. All of the villages visited were within walking distance to logging operations and logging camps – with some located right next to the logging operation. One of the logging camps was relatively new (approximately 6 months old) at the time of research, and another had been in operation of over a year. Previous logging operations, however, had also occurred in the past, and these were the second or third time logging had operated in these particular areas.

Aside from logging, other local industries include subsistence gardening, cocoa and copra plantations, and occasional fishing.

There are limited NGOs operating in the province – World Vision has an office in Kira Kira and the province’s Family Support Centre has an established volunteer provincial committee with a dedicated office space. A provincial version of SafeNet is offered in the form of “Safe Hands”, with all of the key national partners having a provincial presence in Kira Kira; however, the system for referrals needs to be strengthened.

Data collection was conducted in the areas west of the capital; these locations were 10- to 60-minute drive from Kira Kira. The research team visited the following villages (the number in brackets refers to the total estimated households in each location): Goromanu (7); NgoraNgora (56); Mwanibena (40); Mwanihuki (20); and Kaonasugu (25). There is a health clinic in Kaonasugu, staffed by two registered nurses; the other villages access health services in Kira Kira. All of the villages are accessible by road from Kira Kira.

### **Isabel**

Isabel is located north-west of Guadalcanal and the capital Honiara. The capital, Buala, is a 60-minute flight from Honiara, and home to provincial government offices, a hospital and schools.

Logging occurs around the island, with forestry officers reporting 22 current active licences in the province, serviced by approximately nine Malaysian-owned companies. Logging operations were not located directly next to the villages, but they are a short distance away. Each village was close to more than one current logging operation – Ghoveo had four logging camps located nearby. Logging had also repeatedly occurred in the past. Aside from logging, other local industries include subsistence gardening, fishing, and copra and minimal cocoa plantations.

There are few NGOs operating in the province – none of the major international NGOs operating in Solomon Islands have a presence in Buala; however, there is a Live & Learn Officer who delivers WASH projects and works from the Provincial Council of Women’s Building. Isabel’s Family Support Centre has recently started a volunteer provincial committee; however, it is yet to have an office space from which to offer services. Isabel province is uniquely mostly unified in its church affiliation, with a majority of the population identifying as Anglican. Mothers Union, an Anglican women’s group, has a strong presence across the province and promotes Christian living for families through its programmes, including positive parenting, savings clubs, literacy classes and girls friendly society. The Isabel Alliance against Family Violence, a network that connects relevant service providers and stakeholders to deliver training and services, has been established in the province; however, the Chair is currently away, and, as a result, the network is not currently operational.

Data collection was conducted in three villages located west of Buala; travelling to and from these locations took 15–60 minutes by 60 horsepower engine on an outboard motorized boat. The research team visited the following villages (the number in brackets refers to the total estimated households in each location): Popoheo (25); Ghoveo (110); and Sisiga (55). A number of community members also maintain a second “settlement” house away from the village, close to logging operations and gardens, where they reside when working. There is a health clinic in Ghoveo, staffed by a registered nurse. All three villages are located on the coast and accessible by boat/sea.

# APPENDIX C: KEY INFORMANTS

	Organization/Community	Name	Position
<b>Honiara</b>	Immigration Division	Christopher Akosawa	Chief Immigration Officer
	Youth Division, Ministry of Women, Youth, Children and Family Affairs (MWYCFA)	Andre Tipoki	Director
	National Youth Congress, MWYCFA	Theresa Oeta	National Youth Congress Manager
	Children's Division, MWYCFA	Loretta Ta'ake	National Advisory and Action Committee for Children (NAACC) Coordinator
	Women's Division, MWYCFA	Koisau Sade	EVAW Policy Coordinator
	Social Welfare Division	Linda Tupe	Acting Director
	Ministry of Health and Medical Services (MHMS)	Nashley Vozoto	GBV and SafeNet Manager
	Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions	Margaret Suifa'asia	Principal Legal Officer, Family and Sexual Offences Unit Coordinator
	Ministry for Forestry and Research	Vaeno Vigulu	Permanent Secretary
	Ministry of Police and Justice	Gabriel Manelusi	Deputy Commissioner of Police
	Sexual Assault Unit, Royal Solomon Islands Police Force (RSIPF)	Cathy Hoiiau	Senior Detective Investigator
	Seif Ples	Falu Maesugea	Deputy Centre Manager
	Family Support Centre	Lynffer Wini-Maltungtung	Centre Manager
	Save the Children	Louise Hiele	Program Quality Manager
	Empower Pacific	Lavinia Dakei	Country Manager
	Christian Care Centre	[Withheld]	[Withheld]
Oxfam	Julianne Wickham	Project Manager (Safe Families)	
World Vision Solomon Islands	Jackson Tasa	National Technical Gender Specialist	
<b>Isabel</b>	Family Support Centre	Augustine Habala	Volunteer
	Non-governmental organization (NGO)	[Withheld]	[Withheld]
	NGO	[Withheld]	[Withheld]
	Live & Learn	Freda Pooti	Project Officer
	Mothers Union	Selina Lonamei	President
	Isabel Provincial Government	Rina Evo	Chief Administration Officer, Community Affairs
	Isabel Provincial Government	Edward Tadarea	Youth and Children's Desk Officer, Community Affairs
	Isabel Provincial Government	[Withheld]	[Withheld]
	Isabel Provincial Government	Hubert Odikana	Human Resources Manager
	Isabel Provincial Government	Jason Loxy	Principal Health Promotion Officer
	Social Welfare Division	Philip Lonsdale	Social Welfare Officer
	RSIPF	Rodney Herovaka	Sergeant
	Forestry Division	Jacob Arisikeni	Senior Forestry Officer
	Forestry Division	Moffat Habru	Forestry Ranger Officer
	Sisiga Primary School	James Pulomei	Teacher
	Sisiga Primary School	Brylyn Lester	Teacher
	Ghoveo Primary School	Patrick Virivolomo	Headmaster
	Ghoveo Rural Health Clinic	Habish Lehui	Registered nurse
	Community	John Loko	
	Community	Desmond Proberts	
Community	Hugo Manegegu		

	Organization/Community	Name	Position
<b>Isabel</b>	Community	Robinson Harvey	
	Community	Nathaniel Boileleana	
	Community	[Withheld]	
	Community	[Withheld]	
<b>Makira</b>	Family Support Centre	Lilian Carlos	Treasurer
	Family Support Centre	Nina Waitara	Member
	Makira Provincial Government	Faith Pwe'a	Senior Admin Officer, Community Governance and Social Services Division
	Makira Provincial Government	[Withheld]	[Withheld]
	Makira Provincial Government	Saul Wangi	Nurse educator
	Forestry Division	Harold Parisuri	Ranger Officer
	Social Welfare Division Makira	John Mari	Assistant Social Welfare Officer
	RSIPF	Peter Sitau	Provincial Police Commander
	RSIPF	James Lapoe	Provincial Crime Manager, Investigation Unit
	Provincial Council of Women	Lincey Agnes Ketara	Vice President
	Provincial Council of Women	Hilda Wale	Treasurer
	World Vision	Iris Parisuri	Area Manager
	Manama School	Josephine Taremae	Headmistress
	Kaonasugu Area Health Clinic	Liston Poloso	Registered nurse
	Community	Thomas Watairua	
	Community	Casper Awasi	
	Community	Douglas Daumonea	
	Community	Michael Mono	
	Community	Stensol Taro	
	Community	Clera Ngiriapu	
	Community	[Withheld]	
	Community	[Withheld]	
Community	[Withheld]		
Community	[Withheld]		
Community	[Withheld]		



# APPENDIX D: RESEARCH PERMIT



**Solomon Islands Government**  
Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development  
P O Box G 28  
Honiara, Solomon Islands

Ph: (677) 24664  
Fax: (677) 22042

Our Ref: 12/18

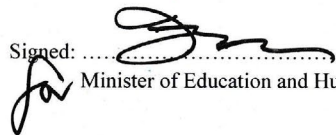
Date: 06<sup>th</sup> /06/2018

**In Accordance to the Research Act 1982 (No. 9 of 1982) RESEARCH PERMIT:**

Permission is hereby given to:

1. Name (s): Louise Vella
2. Country: Australia
3. Research subject areas: The study is to explore community Health and mobility in the Pacific
4. Ward (s): Honiara
5. Provinces: Honiara, Guadalcanal
6. Conditions:
  - a. To undertake research only in subject areas specified in 3 above.
  - b. To undertake research only in the ward (s) and Province (s) specified in 4 and 5 above.
  - c. To observe with respect at all times local customs and the way of life of people in the area in which the research is carried out.
  - d. Not to take part at any time in any political or missionary activities or local disputes.
  - e. To leave four (4) copies of your final research report in English with the Solomon islands Government Ministry responsible for research at your own expense.
  - f. A research fee of SBD500.00 must be paid in full or the Research Permit will be cancelled. (See sec. 3 subject 7 of the Research Act).
  - g. This permit is valid until **31 December 2018** provided all conditions are adhered to.
  - h. No live species of plants and animals to be taken out of the country without approval from relevant authorities.
  - i. A failure to observe the above conditions will result in automatic cancellation of this permit and the forfeit of your deposit.

Signed: .....

  
Minister of Education and Human Resources Development

Date: 7/6/18

# APPENDIX E: ETHICS APPROVAL



No: HRE023/18

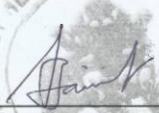
Solomon Islands Health Research and Ethics Review Board  
Ministry of Health & Medical Services

## Research Certificate

To **Ms. Angelica Neville**  
International Organization for Migration  
UN Migration Agency  
Hyundai Mall, Honiara

*The Solomon Islands Health Research and Ethics Review Board (SIHRERB) of the Ministry of Health & Medical Services has received amendments following recommendations made on 03<sup>rd</sup> July 2018 and has approved your application to do research titled: "Community health and mobility in the Pacific."*

You are hereby granted permission to conduct the research in Solomon Islands for the proposed duration in 11<sup>th</sup> July 2018 to 1<sup>st</sup> Dec 2018 only. This approval is for the one-time conduction of your research and any amendments, repetition and/or extension of this research will need further SIHRERB approval. Refer to the SIHRERB report for terms and conditions of your permit. Failure to abide to the terms will result in suspension or discontinuation of approval.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Dr Nemja Bainivatu  
Chairman, SIHRERB

15/08/2018  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date



# COMMUNITY HEALTH AND MOBILITY IN THE PACIFIC

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SOLOMON ISLANDS  
CASE STUDY

