



Rotuma *Women*
ASSOCIATION

Rotuma Women Association

STRATEGIC PLAN

2020-2022





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**Hagua ‘os mäeva
se ag ne ‘os
temamfua**

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Message from Mrs. Mareta Tiuhea President of the Rotuma Women Association

I am honored to be given this opportunity on behalf of all the women's club of Rotuma which unite to form the Rotuma Women Association since its formation in 1979.

We are all indebted to our former Leaders to name a few past presidents, Elizabeth Inia, Hangata Susau Titofaga, and all our mothers who supported and nurtured the association in its young days for us the mothers and women of today to carry on the visions of our late women leaders. Rotuma Women Association has come a long way from the 1900's. Today we have a rest house for paying guests, 12 women clubs and many more yet to register.

Rotuma Women Association is fortunate to have LäjeRotuma Initiative (LRI) as one of her working partners for so many years. LRI is supporting us through transport cost in getting women from around Rotuma for our monthly meetings, organized workshops and trainings, activities and many more. We operate under Council of Rotuma through the Ministry of Women and the great support of LRI.

The year 2020 is a year of achievements regarding the 'TAUGA' our traditional food basket. The TAUGA is unique to us as only Rotuman's weave this certain basket in the world. This skill of TAUGA weaving will be shared through a training session with the hope that every woman is given an opportunity to learn the weaving technique and own a TAUGA.

I would also like to acknowledge the Mothers of Rotuma for the support throughout the years and I believe working together, we can achieve great things.

1. INTRODUCTION

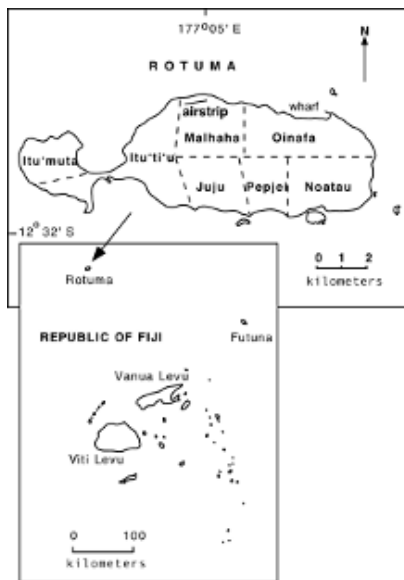


Figure 1: Rotuma Island in the Fiji Group

Rotuma is a small island of 44 square km situated about 465 km to the north of the Fiji Islands, at 30°12'S and 05°177'E. The main island is about 14.5 km long by 4.5 km wide at its widest point, with hills up to 262 m, and is surrounded by eight smaller uninhabited islets. The main island is divided into seven districts (Noa'tau, Oinafa, Ituti'u, Malha'a, Juju, Pepjei and Itumuta), subdivided into approximately 15 main villages located around the Rotuman coast.

The Rotuma Island Council is responsible for the overall governance of the Island. Each of the district chiefs sits on the Rotuma Island Council, and the District Officer, the most senior Medical Officer, and the most senior Agricultural Officer resident on Rotuma as advisory members without any voting powers ^[1]. Representatives from the Rotuma Women Association and Rotuma Youth Association have been invited to recent Council meetings ^[2].

The population in Rotuma is approximately 1,594 (817 males and 777 females) ^[3]. The major commercial crop is copra, and other agricultural produce such as dasalo, breadfruit, yams, cassava, sweet potatoes and fruits such as oranges, pineapples, watermelons, bananas and pawpaws grow abundantly. Rotuma's offshore resources are abundant with potentially rich stores of coastal pelagics/ tunas (yellowfin, skipjack, dogtooth tuna, blue fin), deepwater snappers, sharks, and deepwater shrimps ^[4]. Sources of income come from copra, kava, remittances from migrant family members, small entrepreneurial family businesses, and salaried jobs for a few employed in schools and government offices ^[5].

[1] Laws of Fiji; Rotuma Act [Cap 122]; Ed. 1978; http://www.pacii.org/fj/legis/consol_act_OK/ra103/

[2] Currently the institution of the Rotuma Island Council and development projects for Rotuma falls under the Prime Minister's Office, with the Prime Minister as the minister responsible for the general welfare of the Rotuman Community.

[3] FBoS Release No: 1; 2017 Population and Housing Census Release 1 Age, Sex, Geography and Economic Activity; 2018.

[4] Fisheries Division; The Fishery Resources of Rotuma; Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries; 1983.

[5] Erasito, E et al.; Leadership Training and Dialogue for Chiefs, Community Leaders and Youth in Rotuma; An Initiative of the Strengthening Citizen Engagement in Fiji Initiative (SCEFI); UNDP, Suva, Fiji; 2015 & Howard, A; Reflections on Change in Rotuma, 1959-1989; in Fatiaki, A. et al. Rotuma: Hanua Pumue (Precious Land); Institute for Pacific Studies, University of the South Pacific; Suva, Fiji; 1991; pp 227-254.

<http://www.hawaii.edu/oceanic/rotuma/os/howse/16reflections.html>

Like any other island community the people of Rotuma face enormous social, economic and environmental challenges. Rotuma is a geographically isolated island with a distinct range of habitats and species, high endemism and uniqueness. Rotuma's biodiversity and marine environment is at risk due to shifts in values and use of natural resources accelerating the loss of Rotuman traditional knowledge and practices important to biodiversity conservation and sustainable development ^[6].

Rotuma's economy has become increasingly dependent on imported goods and services, although every household on the island has access to both garden lands and reef resources (fish, shellfish, and edible seaweed). Because of Rotuma's isolation and high dependency on the irregular shipping service for imports and exports, Rotuma has not been able to diversify and take advantage of the economic potential of exporting surplus produce from the island.

Escalating loss of traditional knowledge, practices of food preservation and craft making by the very few skilled artisans, who are able to make fish traps, weave finemats and cultural practices are closely linked to island biodiversity and livelihood. This affects women as they play a critical role as resource managers at the family and community levels and are often responsible for enriching their children's cultural identity and shaping their eco-attitudes through intergenerational sharing of knowledge and skills. The loss of traditional craft making skills impacts the identity of both girls and boys and the potential opportunity for generating income and improving livelihoods ^[7].

Gender differences in representation and leadership of women on Rotuma is limited to informal decision-making processes through women's groups or clubs formed at the village level. However, at this level it is sometimes difficult for women in leadership roles to identify with and prioritise the needs of other women, resulting in disconnect and disadvantage particularly between younger and older women. Women's groups therefore range in effectiveness, capacity, internal governance and leadership ability. Rotuma's remote location also limits opportunities for rural women's development due to high costs and unreliable inter-island transport.

Other challenges relate to leadership and governance issues, abandoned lands and homes and older generation taking on the responsibilities left by youth who are drifting to urban areas, move from communalism to individual lifestyles, negative impacts of climate change and lack of access to quality facilities and services such as electricity and internet. ^[8]

^[6] Information in this section is adapted from the LRI proposal to Fiji Women's Fund for the project: Strengthening the stewardship role of women through creation of self-sustaining alternative livelihoods for a resilient Rotuma.

^[7] From LRI Gender Needs Assessment Report, 2019

^[8] Leadership Training and Dialogue for Chiefs, Community Leaders and Youth in Rotuma; An Initiative of the Strengthening Citizen Engagement In Fiji Initiative (SCEFI); UNDP, Suva, Fiji; 2015, Erasito, E et.al

2. BACKGROUND

The Rotuma Women Association was established with the following objectives; ^[9]

- (i) To assist as many women as possible in areas of family life.
- (ii) To promote the welfare of other members of the communities in which they live.
- (iii) To enhance the teaching of mothercraft, cooking and handcraft.
- (iv) To identify the ways and means of improving homes and villages.
- (v) To encourage women's involvement in cash generating projects and marketing of products.
- (vi) To assist school leavers and unemployed youths through organised classes on basic agriculture, carpentry and homecraft.
- (vii) To seek to provide a complete ministry to the whole person, physically, mentally, socially and spiritually based on the Bible teaching of the life of Christ.
- (viii) To provide voluntary community services sponsored by the RWA.
- (ix) To preserve our cultural identity.

Membership was open to all Rotuman women irrespective of religion, and social and occupational background. Today, the Rotuma Women Association is the umbrella body for district women's clubs and special interest clubs in Rotuma, including the:

Noa'tau Women's Club	Kalvaka Women's Club	Hatamara Women's Club (Oinafa)	Sarafu Women's Club (Tuakoi)
Tieri Women's Club (Savlei)	Malha'a Women's Club	Itumuta Women's Club	Juju Women's Club
Solnoho Women's Club (Juju)	Hanisaka Women's Club (Losa)	Women & Youths in Business Club	Women Market Vendors Club (Ahau)

The Rotuma Women Association Strategic Plan 2020-2022 is the result of consultation and planning of the RWA and all women's clubs of Rotuma, facilitated through the joint RWA and Läje Rotuma Initiative (LRI) project, "Strengthening the stewardship role of women through creation of self-sustaining alternative livelihoods for a resilient Rotuma", funded by the Fiji Women's Fund from 2019 to 2020. The purpose of the consultation and planning was to develop a strategic plan to assist the RWA and women's clubs to work together to achieve specific objectives and strategies within a 3- year timeframe.

[6] Note that these are objectives in the constitution of the Rotuma Country Womens Association - the HQ was based in Suva.



The Rotuma Women Association Strategic Plan 2020-2022 presents the unified vision, mission and priority objectives of the Rotuma Women Association and Women's Clubs of Rotuma to preserve and protect the Rotuman traditional culture, language and customs, to strengthen the membership of women's clubs and improve the development aspirations of women in Rotuma.

VISION

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HAĞUA 'OS MÄEVA SE AG NE 'OS TEMAMFUA

- To see the preservation of our Rotuman heritage shown by our speech and the work of our hands!
- For every Rotuman person to know and protect our culture, traditional values, the Rotuman language and ways of speaking, and to promote the learning and sharing of knowledge of our traditional handicrafts!
- For all of us to be proud of our cultural heritage, to work hard and work together to share the knowledge so that it is not forgotten!

MISSION

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- To uphold the values and respect of our traditions, culture, customs and language through learning and teaching traditional Rotuman protocol, culture, and written and spoken Rotuman language!
- To promote togetherness, unity, love, hard work and perseverance for a better Rotuma!
- To mobilise all women in Rotuma to join the women's clubs and the Rotuma Women Association!

Groups Feedback from RWA Strategic Planning Workshop, Rotuma, October 2019

4. Strategic objectives and areas for action

The Rotuma Women Association Strategic Plan 2020-2022 presents the unified vision, mission and priority objectives of the Rotuma Women Association and women clubs of Rotuma to preserve and protect the Rotuman traditional culture, language and customs, to strengthen the membership of women's clubs and improve the development aspirations of women in Rotuma.

01 Strengthening governance and leadership

- **Outcome 1.1** - Rotuma Women Association constitution is updated by December 2020 and formalised by December 2021
- **Outcome 1.2** - Rotuma Women Association operational guidelines manual is developed and endorsed by December 2020
- **Outcome 1.3** - At least one training workshop on governance and leadership for members of women's clubs is conducted annually, including topics such as spiritual leadership, time management, developing a workplan and other skills

02 Preserving traditional culture, language, customs and craft

- **Outcome 2.1** - Knowledge and skills sharing sessions on language, stories, customs, dress, food preparation, maintaining pandanus plants and growing food crops, and on traditional and contemporary crafts is conducted between the women's clubs every quarter
- **Outcome 2.2** - One RWA resource book is developed and published to showcase one area of the work of women's clubs by 2021
- **Outcome 2.3** - At least one market day to showcase the achievements of women's clubs is organised by the RWA annually
- **Outcome 2.4** - An exhibition space where women's crafts can be put on display is established and managed by the RWA by December 2020

03 Increasing and improving membership of women's clubs

- **Outcome 3.1** - Special topic sessions for all women in the community organised by women's clubs every second month beginning in mid- 2020
- **Outcome 3.2** - Club classes for all women in the community on food preparation, sewing and other skills is organised by each women's club every quarter beginning in 2021
- **Outcome 3.3** - Brochures on the RWA and individual women's clubs are developed by and published by the RWA by December 2020

04 Diversifying activities and programmes

- **Outcome 4.1** - Project proposal to provide an extractor and training for processing dilo and other oils is developed by 2020 and submitted for funding by 2021
- **Outcome 4.2** - At least one training workshop on new topics such as small business training, various uses of the coconut tree, sustainable agriculture and food preservation, clothes design and other topics is organised by the RWA and women's clubs annually
- **Outcome 4.3** - At least two new projects are developed by RWA and women's clubs by 2022

5. Management, monitoring and evaluation



The Rotuma Women Association and individual women's clubs who are members of the RWA are implementers of the Rotuma Women Association Development Strategy 2020-2022, and responsible for the management, monitoring and evaluation of the strategy.

The LäjeRotuma will be a major partner and will provide assistance to the RWA where possible to mobilise technical expertise and resources to support the implementation of the strategy.

A draft workplan is annexed and will be reviewed on a quarterly basis at RWA meetings and adjusted accordingly.

Annex

Rotuma Women Development Strategy 2020-2022: Draft Workplan

Outcomes	Indicators of Achievement	Timeframe	Responsibility	Resources
Objective 1: Strengthening governance and leadership				
Outcome 1.1 - Rotuma Women Association constitution is updated by December 2020 and formalised by December 2021	(i) Draft RWA constitution (ii) Endorsed and signed RWA constitution (iii) Submission of RWA constitution to Ministry	June 2020- Dec 2021	RWA Committee	Technical support from LRI for consultant lawyer to draft and finalise RWA constitution
Outcome 1.2 - Rotuma Women Association operational guidelines manual is developed and endorsed by December 2020	(i) Draft RWA operational guidelines manual (ii) Endorsed RWA operational guidelines manual	June 2020- Dec 2020	RWA Committee	Technical support from LRI for consultant facilitator draft and finalise RWA operational guidelines and templates
Outcome 1.3 - At least one training workshop on governance and leadership for members of women's clubs is conducted annually, including topics such as spiritual leadership, time management, developing a workplan and other skills	(i) Three workshops completed (one per year) (ii) Three workshop reports (iii) Number of women trained in each workshop	Jan 2020- Dec 2022	RWA Committee	Technical support from LRI to fund one leadership training workshop
Objective 2: Preserving traditional culture, language, customs and craft				
Outcome 2.1 - Knowledge and skills sharing sessions on language, stories, customs, dress, food preparation, maintaining pandanus plants and growing food crops, and on traditional and contemporary crafts is conducted between the women's clubs every quarter	(i) Twelve knowledge and skills sharing sessions completed and documented (four per year) (ii) Number of women participating in each session	Jan 2020- Dec 2022	Women's Clubs	Technical support from LRI to fund two knowledge and skills sharing sessions in 2020
Outcome 2.2 - Rotuma Women Association operational guidelines manual is developed and endorsed by December 2020	(i) Draft RWA operational guidelines manual (ii) Endorsed RWA operational guidelines manual	June 2020- Dec 2021	RWA Committee & Women's Clubs	Technical support from LRI to assist RWA and women's clubs develop and publish one resource book
Outcome 2.3 - At least one training workshop on governance and leadership for members of women's clubs is conducted annually, including topics such as spiritual leadership, time management, developing a workplan and other skills	(i) Three workshops completed (one per year) (ii) Three workshop reports (iii) Number of women trained in each workshop	June 2020- Dec 2022	RWA Committee & Women's Clubs	Technical support from LRI to fund one market day in 2020
Outcome 2.4 - An exhibition space where women's crafts can be put on display is established and managed by the RWA by December 2020	(i) Exhibition space set up and launched (ii) Management guidelines and roster for the exhibition space developed	Jan 2020- Dec 2020	RWA Committee & Women's Clubs	

Outcomes	Indicators of Achievement	Timeframe	Responsibility	Resources
Objective 3: Increasing and improving membership of women's clubs				
Outcome 3.1 - Special topic sessions for all women in the community organised by women's clubs every second month beginning in mid- 2020	(i) At least 18 special topic sessions completed per women's club by Dec 2022 (ii) Number of women and non-members attending each session	June 2020- Dec 2022	Women's Clubs	Technical support from LRI to fund six special topic sessions in 2020
Outcome 3.2 - Club classes for all women in the community on food preparation, sewing and other skills is organised by each women's club every quarter beginning in 2021	(i) At least 8 club classes completed per women's club by 2022 (ii) Number of women and non-members attending each club	Jan 2021- Dec 2022	Women's Clubs	Technical support from LRI to fund two club classes in 2020
Outcome 3.3 - Brochures on the RWA and individual women's clubs are developed by and published by the RWA by December 2020	(i) One brochure published (ii) Twelve profiles for women's clubs completed	Jan 2020- Dec 2020	RWA Committee & Women's Clubs	Technical support from LRI to assist RWA and women's clubs draft one RWA brochure and twelve club profiles in 2020
Objective 4: Diversifying activities and programmes				
Outcome 4.1 - Project proposal to provide an extractor and training for processing dilo and other oils is developed by 2020 and submitted for funding by 2021	(i) Twelve knowledge and skills sharing sessions completed and documented (four per year) (ii) Number of women participating in each session	Jan 2020- Dec 2021	RWA Committee & Women's Clubs	Technical support from LRI to assist RWA and women's clubs to develop one project concept note and full project proposal
Outcome 4.2 - At least one training workshop on new topics such as small business training, various uses of the coconut tree, sustainable agriculture and food preservation, clothes design and other topics is organised by the RWA and women's clubs annually	(i) Three workshops completed (one per year) (ii) Three workshop reports (iii) Number of women trained in each workshop	Jan 2020- Dec 2022	RWA Committee & Women's Clubs	
Outcome 4.3 - At least one training workshop on governance and leadership for members of women's clubs is conducted annually, including topics such as spiritual leadership, time management, developing a workplan and other skills	(i) Two concept notes developed (iii) Full project proposals submitted	Jan 2021- Dec 2022	RWA Committee & Women's Clubs	Technical support from LRI to assist RWA and women's clubs to develop two project concept notes and two full project proposals



Rotuma *Women*
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