MAKING CHANGE HAPPEN

An analysis of the use and results of the gender WASH monitoring tool

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INTRODUCTION

Advancing gender equality and improving access to water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) are both critical issues for Pacific Island Nations. WASH can provide an entry point for gender equity in communities, addressing the two issues side by side.

The New Times, New Targets (NTNT) Project aims to do this by improving sustainable and inclusive access to WASH services and facilities in schools, clinics and communities in rural Solomon Islands. The project mainstreams gender and social inclusion elements into all WASH activities to ensure the participation, consultation and consideration of all.

Developed by Plan International, the Gender WASH Monitoring Tool (GWMT) has been designed to recognise the gaps and challenges to measuring gender equality in WASH projects. For project staff the GWMT can:

- Support WASH implementing staff to develop their understanding of gender analysis.
- Develop practical skills for gender monitoring.
- Collect sex-disaggregated information

The GWMT can also be used in communities to:

- Raise awareness about gender roles and relationships in household and community WASH activities.
- To promote (aspirations for) gender equality by providing opportunities for women and men in WASH program communities to discuss gender relations and to set their own agenda for change.

This document will first review feedback from project staff on the use of the GWMT (including recommendations for future use) in Part 1, and in Part 2 will include key findings from the use of the Gender WASH Monitoring tool in Guadalcanal, Solomon Islands.

WHAT IS THE GWMT?

8 Steps of the GWMT

The GWMT comprises of 8 steps, a majority of which are conducted within the community. After facilitators have been trained and project staff are familiar with the tool the following community steps can begin, where a number of activities take place;

Community steps:

Step 1: Introduction and preparation for community facilitation.
Step 2: Identifying men's and women' WASH workload in the household and community.
Step 3: Roles in household WASH decision making.
Step 4: Participatory gender analysis and identifying gender equality aspirations.
Step 5: Sharing results in the plenary.
Step 6: Close the meeting.

Facilitators meeting (post-community activities):

Step 7: Analysis of community's current situation and progress towards gender equality.

 Project implementation team:

Step 8: Integration with the monitoring and evaluation system and data utilisation.

Participant subgroups

The GWMT provides the space for community participants to reflect on their WASH roles and responsibilities in separate single sex groups, further disaggregated by age.

When selecting participants, it is important to follow inclusive approaches and ensure that adequate support is given to marginalised (e.g. the elderly and people with disabilities), so they are able to attend.

The subgroups for community facilitation are as follows:

1. Young women
2. Young men
3. Middle aged women
4. Middle aged men
5. Older women
6. Older men

GWMT and NTNT

The New Times, New Targets project has implemented the GWMT in Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands. The GWMT has been a valuable tool for the project, to help project staff better understand the WASH needs of their target communities and how to improve gender equality in regards to WASH.

In Papua New Guinea 7 wards have participated in the GWMT. In total 193 community members took part, with more wards to be involved in 2023.

PARTICIPATING WARDS

Panapaii
Kafkaf
Madina
Lavolai
Mapua
Kimadan
Dalom

PARTICIPATING WARDS

Tandai
Saghalu
Savulei
Tangarare
Wanderer Bay

In the Solomon Islands 5 wards across Guadalcanal were involved in the GWMT. In total 822 community members took part in the workshops.

PART ONE

Feedback from NTNT staff on using the Gender WASH monitoring tool

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BENEFITS OF USING THE TOOL

Community awareness

A key benefit of the tool was the awareness it created for the community on gender roles and responsibility in relation to WASH.

'It gave people something to think about that related to their real-life situations. So, the tool itself and activities that were part of it were really helpful.'

'When doing other WASH activities, they were just generic gender training, but this tool actually goes into the core of what we are doing. From the participants point of view, it's an eye opener and they get to understand why gender is important in our programs. It's deeper than what we've done before.'

Participants have been able to connect with the activities on a personal level. An example is the Photo Card activity. This activity involves photo cards designed to reflect positive WASH images of men and women (including those with disabilities), and to challenge gender stereotypes, by depicting both men and women in all age groups undertaking the full range of WASH activities. The photo cards address barriers to participation due to literacy levels and are used as discussion tools about how much time each participant spends doing the WASH activities depicted in the household and community. The photos on the cards can be adapted to suit local context.

It was noted by facilitators that this activity could help people relate to the information and helped people get involved with the content as opposed to feeling like they were just being talked to.

'The communities seemed to enjoy it. Community leaders who turned up were like, 'Wow, we actually have to make improvements.' Not just women and marginalized people should do WASH work. Leaders saw the changes they needed to make.'

Inclusion

Using the GWMT has prompted the community to consider all people, including women, youths, people living with disabilities and other marginalised groups to be identified and included in water management activities and process.

Three different age groups were able to participate via 3 separate focus groups: one for the elderly, one for middle aged community members and one for youth. Each group was then divided into male and female, making 6 separate groups in total.

The greatest impact is in enabling their voices to influence decisions on issues that directly affect them and empowering them to take active roles within the community to represent marginalised voices.

'This space made young people feel confident to talk and share ideas...Older people are expected to talk and young people can be quiet. This is appropriate for our context that out of respect young people will listen.'

Female inclusion in WASH committees

The GWMT encourages women to take up leadership positions in their communities. This has helped to create a more inclusive environment and bring awareness to the importance of female decision making.

'In the past when we did not conduct this, the set-up of the WASH committee would be all male, but when we used the tool the community realized the importance of involving women in the committee.'
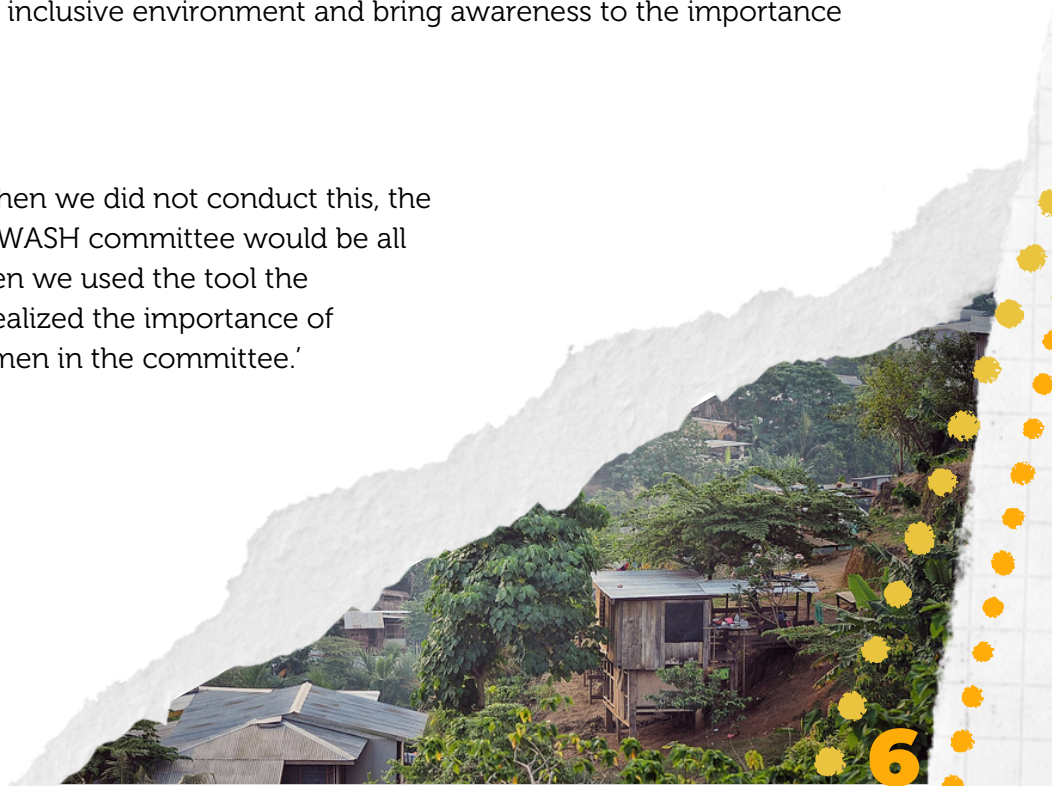
Project staff were able to see firsthand that when men decided where the taps should stand, they chose the center of the village (reasoning that it would be easy for everyone to access). However, when women were included in the decision, they said that this location of the taps would lack the privacy that they needed.

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'This tool makes it easier to include everyone's opinion. Men do not always think of how their decisions affect women, but later in life it affects everyone. That's the good thing about this tool that makes me think there is value in continuing to use it.'

POTENTIAL ISSUES

Finding facilitators

At the program level the GWMT was very human resource intensive. Each of the 6 sessions required 2 facilitators, making 12 facilitators needed in total for each community. Issues finding 12 facilitators with the right skills needed for the role proved challenging for project staff.

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'In some communities, 'it did not work well because community facilitators who we thought might be helpful were illiterate and did not have the education level we needed to help us run the project effectively. Our staff were also not free to support.'

In other instances, however, finding qualified facilitators wasn't as much of a problem.

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'We engaged 8 to 10 people who were educated. We trained them in town to be co-facilitators. Then they accompanied staff to each ward. The more we conducted the training the easier it became for them. After three or four sessions they were very confident.'

Context appropriate questions

Facilitators struggled to get correct answers from participants regarding time-related questions e.g. How long does it take to fetch water? This resulted in the potential for inadequate or incorrect data.

'People don't think about it and don't have that knowledge of time. Facilitators need to prompt them, which takes more time to facilitate. They had to ask 'how far away is the well? How long is the line to wait?' and figure it out. So, the results are not aways accurate.'

Simplifying the tool

Despite the tool being well received, some facilitators said that it took them a while to understand it. It was noted that for a first-time user the tool could seem overwhelming.

'The first time I laid eyes on the book, I thought it was hard to understand. I flipped through the pages and it was all a muddle in my head. But when someone talked us through it and once you understand the first 3 steps the rest falls into place.'

Facilitators said that they had to review the tool again after each session to make sure they had understood it and were following the correct process.

Finding participants for each age group

It wasn't possible in all communities to have a good number of participants for each target group. Due to the school schedules of young people their attendance was largely missing from some communities.

'In some cases, we had too many people of middle age and not enough young people. So, we had to ask them to think about what young people would do and want but they couldn't put themselves in their shoes easily.'

Follow up

Possibly the biggest challenge faced by project staff was following up after the GWMT was complete. In most communities participants expressed their issues and aspirations for improvement, but project staff didn't have the mechanisms in place to start a new tool and provide ongoing support.

'The tool itself has helped but no tool to follow on, it just ends... If there are conflicts in leadership there will be no one to continue to support that issue when we leave. We are asking them to tell us their issues and if we didn't conduct this activity we wouldn't know. They need us to help them make this change happen. We come back to check after 6 months and nothing really happens.'

One recommendation from project staff was to encourage male champions, who could maintain community engagement with the project.

'We need male champions to run the program after facilitators leave. We want to know someone is trying to make the tool work after we leave. They often wait for us to come back and they tell us they haven't done anything.'

RECOMMENDATIONS

- A clear path is needed for follow up after the GWMT is complete to provide ongoing community support: Live & Learn has several WASH tools available for this purpose, which could be recommended in a follow up package. This follow up package could also outline other available resources to compliment the GWMT after it is completed. Paths for follow up after the completion of the GWMT should also include the identification of local champions to take leadership roles and support ongoing community work.

- Revision of the GWMT: This is an opportunity for time-specific questions to be made more culturally appropriate and to make sure the guide is as easy to understand as possible for new facilitators.

- Improving channels to access appropriate facilitators: This could include creating opportunities for university level students to gain experience as facilitators, and at times that are suitable to their schedules.

PART TWO

GUADALCANAL GWMT RESULTS

This GWMT was carried out in five wards across Guadalcanal, Solomon Islands in 2022. These wards included:

Ward 1 - Tandai
Ward 2 - Saghalu
Ward 3 - Savulei
Ward 4 - Tangarare
Ward 5 - Wanderer Bay

RESPONDENT OVERVIEW

Total number of young female participants	131
Total number of middle-aged female participants	202
Total number of older female participants	121
Total female participants	**454**

Total number of young male participants	133
Total number of middle-aged male participants	131
Total number of older male participants	104
Total male participants	**368**

Specific preparations to accommodate the participation of marginalised community members included choosing an accessible location for training, marginalised people were specifically invited and made aware of the event and an appropriate time was selected to enable high rates of participants. Assistance was provided in most locations to people with mobility issues.

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

This summary of key findings from the use of the GWMT in Guadalcanal, Solomon Islands. The results are based on four key indicators:

Indicator 1 - Level of shared workload in households
Indicator 2 - Level of participation in WASH activities in the community
Indicator 3 - Level of women's leadership in the community around WASH
Indicator 4 - Level of shared WASH decision making in the household

- Half (50%) of participants said that day to day household WASH work is always done by women and girls.
- Gender stereotypes encouraged the mentality that household WASH roles should be left to women and girls.
- Participants aspired to distribute WASH roles more fairly in the household and include women in WASH decision-making.
- Almost half (45%) of the participants felt that women's participation in community WASH activities was limited.
- Reasons for women's limited participation in community WASH was mostly due to their high level of engagement with WASH at the household level.
- Capacity training was proposed as a way to boost women's confidence and self-esteem.
- A large majority of participants (87%) felt that formal leadership positions in relation to WASH are all or mostly held by men.

# INDICATOR 1: LEVEL OF SHARED WASH WORKLOAD IN HOUSEHOLDS

Participants attending the focus group discussions were asked to choose one of the below ratings;

Rating 1: Day to day household WASH work is always done by women and girls.

Rating 2: Day to day WASH work is shared between women, men, girls and boys in the household (However, the work may not always be shared equally).

Rating 3: Day to day household WASH work is equitably shared between women, men, girls and boys in the household and challenges gender stereotypes.

As a result, 50% of participants said that day to day household WASH work is always done by women and girls, with 37% agreeing that, day to day WASH work is shared between women, men, girls and boys in the household but that the work isn't always shared equally.

50.0%

37.5%

8.3%
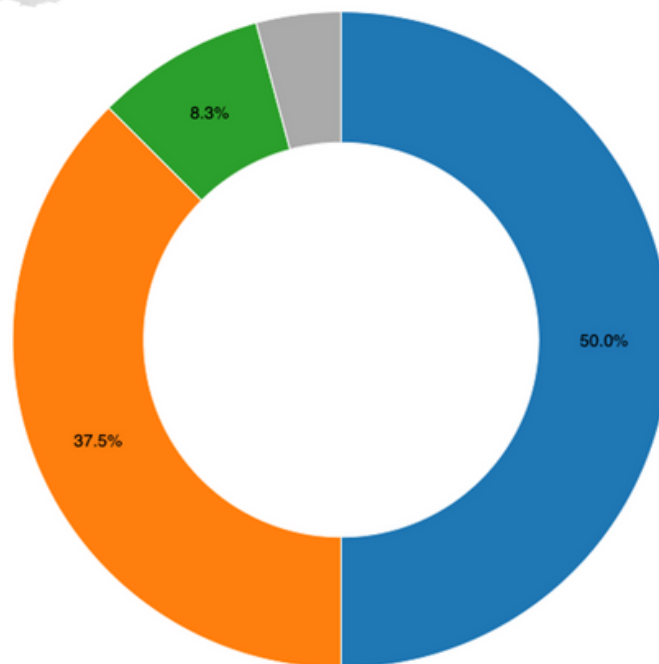
■ Rating 1.   ■ Rating 2.   ■ Rating 3.   ■ Not answered

Culture and tradition appear to be major contributing factors for a lack of gender equity in day to day household WASH work. It was noted that gender stereotypes encouraged the mentality that household WASH roles should be left to women and girls, with women spending up to 4 to 5 hours per day on household WASH chores. These chores included fetching water for cooking/drinking and cleaning.

Participants aspired to distribute WASH roles more fairly in the household and include women in WASH decision-making. A reduction in the time spend on WASH activities in the by women could be achieved by sharing roles more equally in the home. Some ideas to support this included a roster to allocate tasks to each family member, engaging young family members in WASH work and encouraging family discussion about sharing the workload.
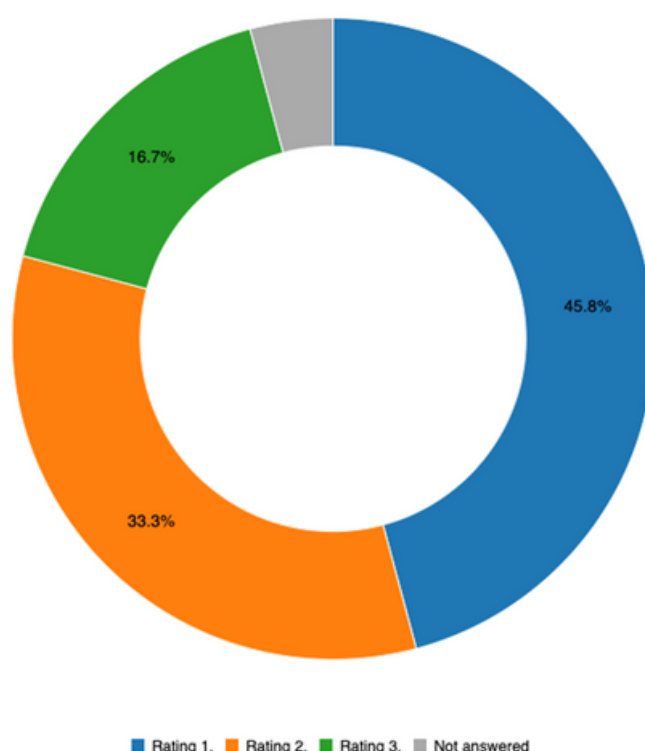
When discussing WASH activities in the community, participants were asked to choose between the three ratings below;

Rating 1: Women's participation in community WASH activities is limited.

Rating 2: Women and men participate equally in community WASH activities.

Rating 3: Women's and men's participation in community WASH activities is equally valued.

Rating 1. ■ Rating 2. ■ Rating 3. ■ Not answered

Almost half (45%) of the participants felt that women's participation in community WASH activities was limited. This was followed closely by Women and men participate equally in community WASH activities, with 33% of participants agreeing with this statement.

Focus group discussions revealed that reasons for women's limited participation in community WASH was mostly due to their high level of engagement with WASH at the household level. It was noted that, 'Women usually do the household workloads, while men are engaged with community WASH activities.' Reasons for this included women's voices being neglected due to cultural norms, women's low self-esteem, preoccupation with family commitments (including caring for children) and willingness to be involved.

While some participants said that both men and women are involved in community WASH discussions, equal participation from both genders was strongly desired. To improve women's level of engagement, household members need to support each other with household WASH tasks to allow them the opportunity to participate in community WASH activities. While women's position in WASH leadership roles needs to be further established and respected, the group also proposed capacity training to boost women's self-esteem and confidence.

INDICATOR 3:
## LEVEL OF WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP IN THE COMMUNITY AROUND WASH

Focus group participants were asked to choose between the following three ratings when discussing the level of women's leadership in the community around WASH;

Rating 1: Formal leadership positions in relation to WASH are all or mostly held by men.

Rating 2: A number of women have formal leadership roles in WASH committees and structures and there's a commitment for equal representation.

Rating 3: Women and men are equally engaged in formal WASH leadership positions and women hold equal decision making power with men in WASH meetings and committee.
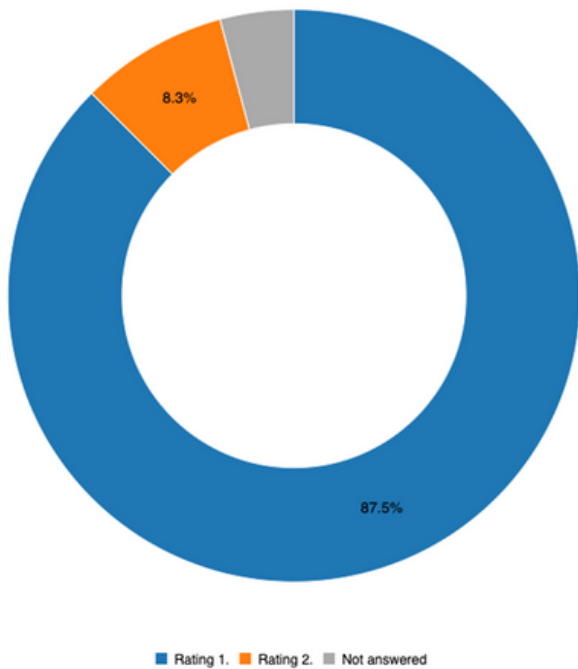
A large majority of participants (87%) in the focus group discussion felt that formal leadership positions in relation to WASH are all or mostly held by men. It was verbally said and noted in the clock card activity, that these positions within WASH committees are mostly held by middle-aged men.

One comment stated that, 'Women hold some positions in community committees but only as members and most of the time their voice is neglected.' It was noted that men did not give space for women's participation in the community, as they were jealous of women getting leadership roles and devalued women's ability to lead. Women were also burdened with duties in the home like raising children, a lack of education and trust issues in themselves to lead.

These issues are exacerbated further by cultural norms and traditions of men having positions of status and being more influential in the community. It is likely this has also led to women refusing leadership positions in the community and a lack of willingness to engage. However, it was an aspiration of the group to see more women in positions of leadership. Participants suggested that capacity building and training could be done with women to improve their confidence and self-esteem. Supporting women in leadership roles and empowering them to undertake practical WASH roles is hoped to change community attitudes.

During a discussion about the level of shared decision making in the household participants were asked to select which one of the below rating was the most accurate;

Rating 1: Men make all major decision about household WASH and women are not consulted, or consulted in a limited way).

Rating 2: Women and men both have a say about major household WASH decisions.

Rating 3: Women and men share final decisions about major household WASH.

45.8% 50.0%

■ Rating 1. ■ Rating 2. ■ Not answered
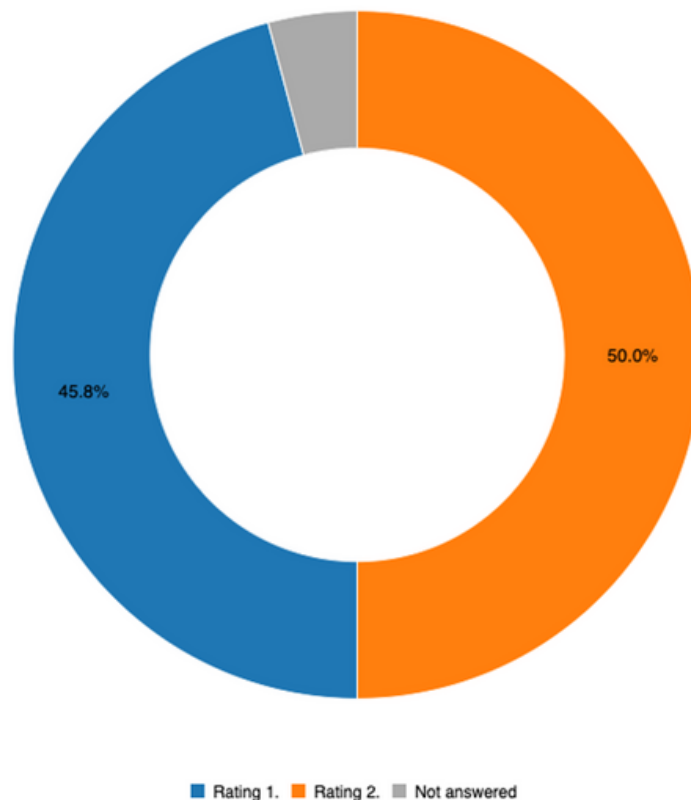
The results of the group discussion were mixed, with 50% agreeing with rating 2 (Women and men both have a say about major household WASH decisions) and 45% agreeing with rating 1 (Men make all major decision about household WASH and women are not consulted, or consulted in a limited way).

A common theme of the focus group discussion was that men always make household decisions on their own, and believe themselves to be 'the boss.' According to the decision making chart, most decisions were made by middle-aged men, with little input from women, girls or boys. In contrast, most of the household WASH work is carried out by women. During the discussion some women started that, 'The husband is the lead of the family and we only do what is instructed to us.'

Sharing household WASH tasks equally among family members was noted as a key aspiration of the group. Men and boys were encouraged to provide strong support to assist women with the household WASH workload. Several participants suggested that parents undertake household planning to delegate tasks and discussing issues openly before decisions are made.
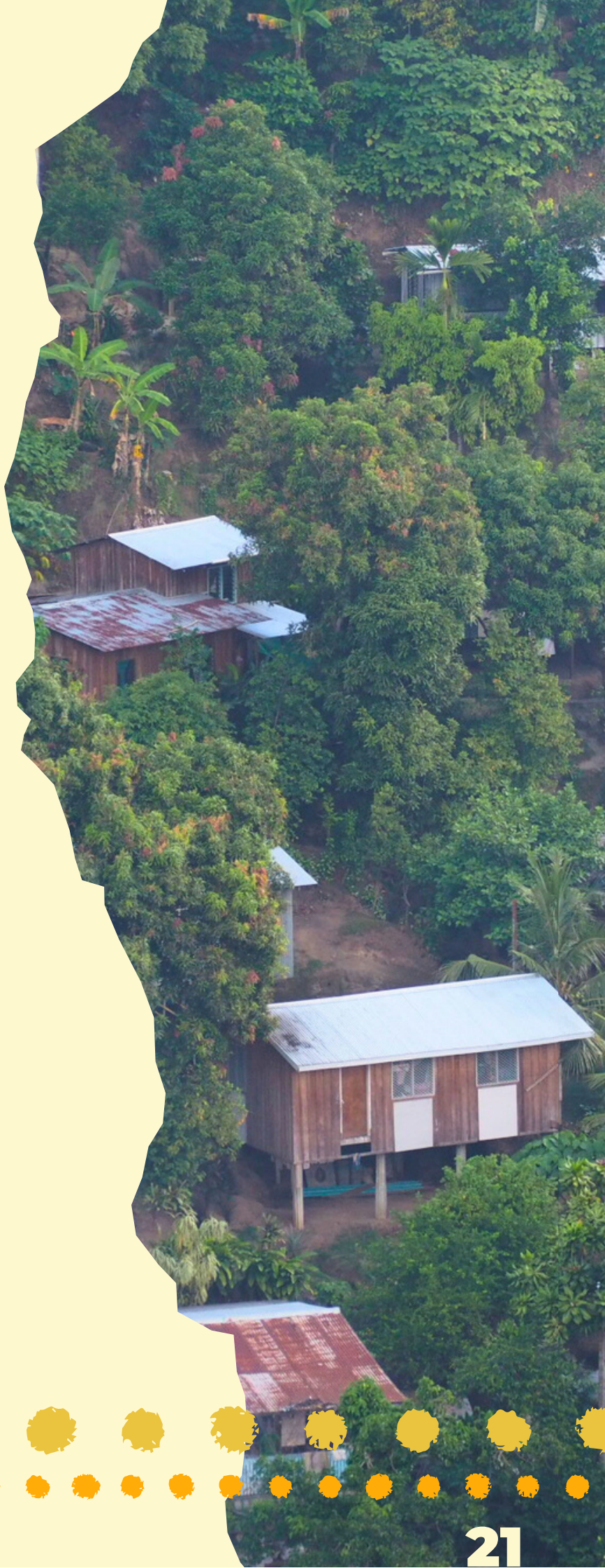
CONCLUSION

The GWMT comes highly recommended by Live & Learn Solomon Islands project staff. It is an approach worth doing before any WASH program so that communities are aware of their WASH roles and project staff understand the current state of WASH roles. After doing the activities communities aspired to share WASH roles and responsibilities, shifting their understanding of gender norms.