

GENDER AND EMPLOYMENT, INCOME, HOUSEHOLDS AND ASSETS

– FACTS AND IMPLICATIONS

The Samoa Gender Monograph (SGM) 2020 is a detailed analysis of the differences that exist between females and males, based on national census data, administrative data and other available research and studies. This Policy Brief provides a snapshot of the key findings of the SGM highlighting the main differences between the lived experiences of men and women and the persistent gender inequalities. The brief can be used to inform evidence-based policy, programmes and further research.



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1. INTRODUCTION

Males and females have different roles, needs and interests based upon socially-ascribed norms that inform gendered attitudes and behaviours. These can be measured in a variety of ways including by an analysis of census data. In order to achieve gender equality, it is critical to both understand these gendered social norms and develop laws and policies that address the power imbalances that some norms serve to sustain and enforce. Sustainable Development Goal 5: “Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls” recognizes that realizing gender equality is a foundation for sustainable and inclusive development. The Government of Samoa acknowledges the existence of gender inequality in Samoa and that equality can support national development as evidenced by the Strategy for the Development of Samoa 2016-2020, Outcome 8.1, which stipulates that the *‘inclusion of vulnerable groups (women, youth, people with disabilities, children, elderly and disadvantaged people) in community planning and governance activities will be enhanced’*.



2. EMPLOYMENT, INCOME, HOUSEHOLDS AND ASSETS

Access to resources through the measurement of employment and income levels, housing conditions, and ownership of assets/properties are important indicators of social and economic prosperity and resilience.¹ In addition, gender dimensions in these socioeconomic indicators are important indicators of women’s economic empowerment. For a range of reasons, not least structural barriers, women continue to lag behind men in access to productive resources and employment opportunities, with observed gaps in labour force participation, access to quality jobs and wages. Such gaps decrease the decision-making autonomy of women and their control over financial and productive resources to act on decisions. Globally, the economic empowerment of women is a recognized pathway to population health and well-being and sustainable development.² Moreover, economically empowered women are more likely to use preventive health services for women and children such as voluntary family planning and modern methods of contraception that allow women and couples to space/limit births to improve individual and household health/well-being.³ Policies and interventions that aim to foster women’s economic empowerment, therefore, can strategically unlock a cascade of health, education and economic benefits that improve human capital, economic growth and development.

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Using 2016 Census data, the following sections highlight the work, employment and income status, as well as household and assets, of males and females in Samoa, and outline policy implications and recommendations to strengthen women’s economic empowerment and decision-making and access to health services and employment opportunities.

2.1 Employment

Employment status

The profiling of employment in a country is often analysed in terms of the economic characteristics of a population within a certain age group who are able to work or perform economic activities.⁴ The 2016 Census shows that 40 per cent of the population aged 10 years and above are economically active, and 60 per cent are non-economically active (see Figure 1). The ratio of males-to-females that are economically active is 7:3 compared to a ratio of 2:3 males-to-females that are non-economically active; therefore, females are less likely to be economically active and more likely to be non-economically active.

Main activity

Economically active

Data collected in the 2016 Census shows that of the 40 per cent of the Samoan population that was economically active, most males (60 per cent) and females (40 per cent) are engaged as employees, followed by subsistence workers (90 per cent male; 10 per cent female) and self-employed (63 per cent male; 37 per cent female) (see Table 1 and Figure 3). The proportion of females, however, working as employees rather than subsistence workers is higher (see Table 1 and Figure 3). In contrast there were more men (54 per cent) than women (45 per cent), looking for work at the time of the census, which may indicate that males tend to look, or are more able, to seek employment than their female counterparts.

Table 1: Population aged 10 years and over economically active and non-economically active, 2016 Census

Main activity	% Total	% Male	% Female
Economically active (A)			
Employee (formal/informal)	18.9%	60.1%	39.9%
Subsistence	14.7%	90.3%	9.7%
Self-employed	2.7%	63.0%	37.0%
Contributing member	1.6%	64.9%	35.1%
Looking for work (unemployed)	1.5%	54.5%	45.5%
Employer (formal/informal)	0.8%	62.1%	37.9%
Voluntary	0.2%	52.2%	47.8%
Total (A)	40.4%	71.2%	28.8%
Non-economically active (B)			
Student (full/part time)	26.0%	50.3%	49.7%
Domestic duties	29.7%	25.4%	74.6%
Incapable (elderly/disability)	3.8%	46.9%	53.1%
Beggar	0.0%	61.8%	38.2%
Total (B)	59.6%	37.7%	62.3%
Not stated	0.0%	54.3%	45.7%
Total (A + B)	100%	51.2%	48.8%

The Samoa workforce is young, with most of the economically active aged between 21 to 46 years. At the time of the 2016 Census there was also a total of 86 persons (83 per cent male) aged 10 to 14 years (children and adolescents)

Figure 1: Population aged 10 years and over economically and non-economically active, 2016 Census

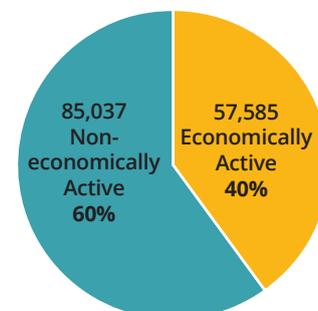
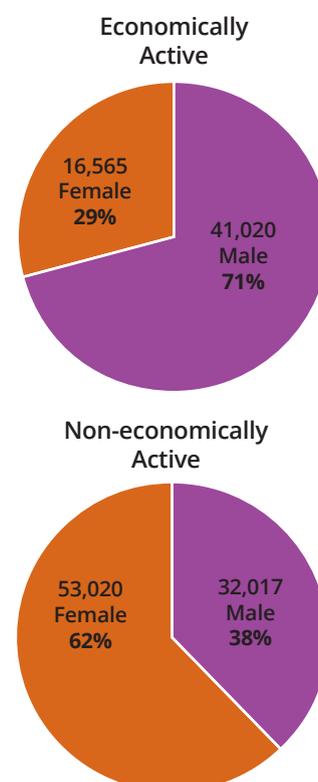


Figure 2: Population aged 10 years and over economically active and non-economically active by sex, 2016 Census



who were currently employed, mostly in subsistence economic activities, with a few working as employees. This has implications for child labour and other related areas (e.g. poverty, school non-attendance and exposure to criminalization), which need to be considered in policy and programming initiatives.

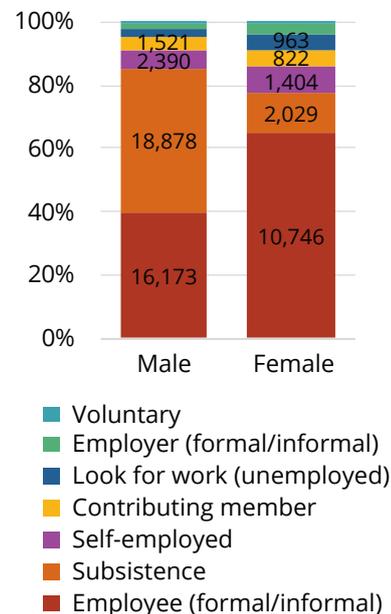
These findings on the economically active population are comparable to other small island developing states, particularly those in the Pacific island region.⁵ They suggest the need for adequate public policy and programmes to address Samoa's significant unemployment especially among male and female youth, and the need for more economic empowerment (with decent employment opportunities) for the female population.

Non-economically active

The most common activities of the non-economically active population are unpaid care work (domestic duties) and schooling (part-time and full-time). In contrast to the gender distribution seen for the economically active population, females in Samoa bear a disproportionate burden of unpaid care work. Three out of every four persons 10 years and over engaged in unpaid care work are female (75 per cent). There is no age-specific variation in the patterns of unpaid care work for males and females.

The disproportionate burden of unpaid care work on females in Samoa is notably higher than the regional average for the Asia and Pacific region; while six out of ten economically inactive women and three out of ten economically inactive Samoan men are engaged in unpaid care work, five out of ten women and men in the Asia and Pacific region cite unpaid care work as a reason for being economically inactive.⁶ The gender gap in the burden of unpaid care work is also notably higher in Samoa than in the region with dire implications for the economic participation of women. There is little sex variation between those engaged in schooling as a main activity, while there are more females than males among those who are non-economically active due to incapacitation (elderly/disability).

Figure 3: Population aged 10 years and over economically active and non-economically active by main activity, 2016 Census



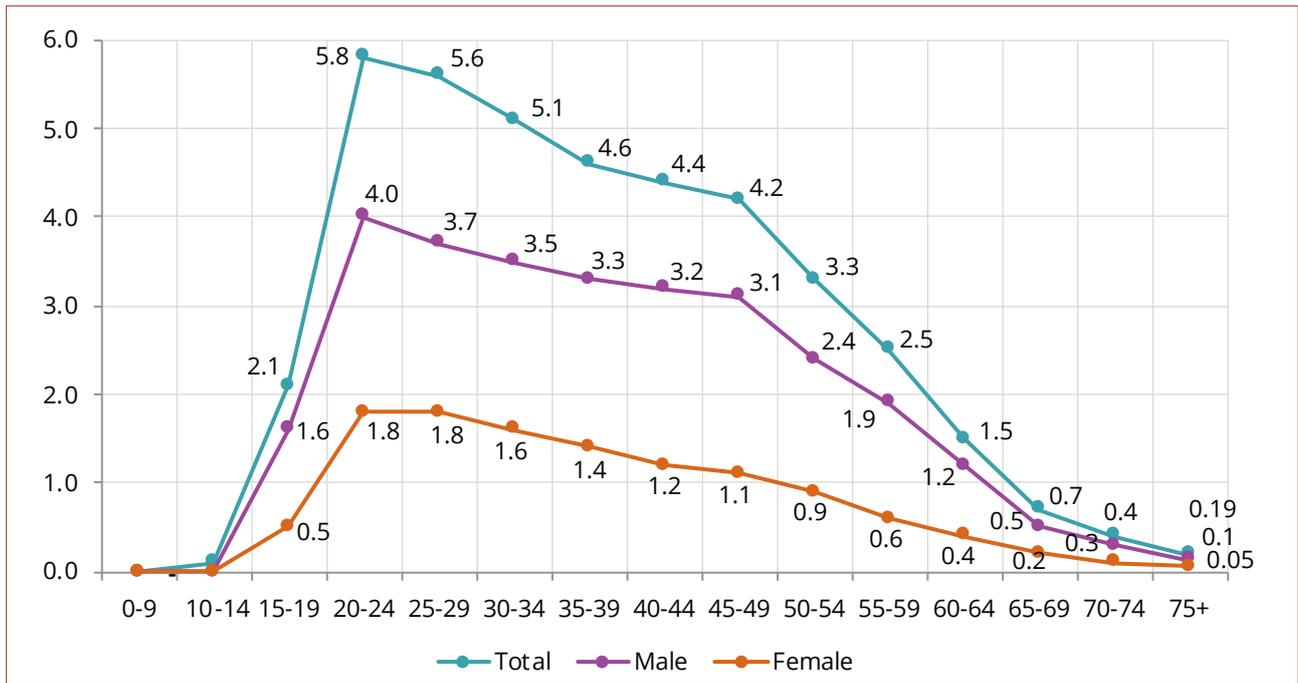
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Labour force participation and unemployment rates

Labour force participation

The labour force participation rate is higher for males in Samoa at 28.8 per cent compared to their female counterparts (11.6 per cent) and this is consistent across all age groups (see Figure 4). (note that only 40 per cent of Samoa's working-age population were economically active at the time of the 2016 Census). Most of Samoa's males and females are economically active between the ages of 20 to 44 years, with labour participation rates declining for both sexes beyond the age of 29 years and as retirement nears at the age of 55.

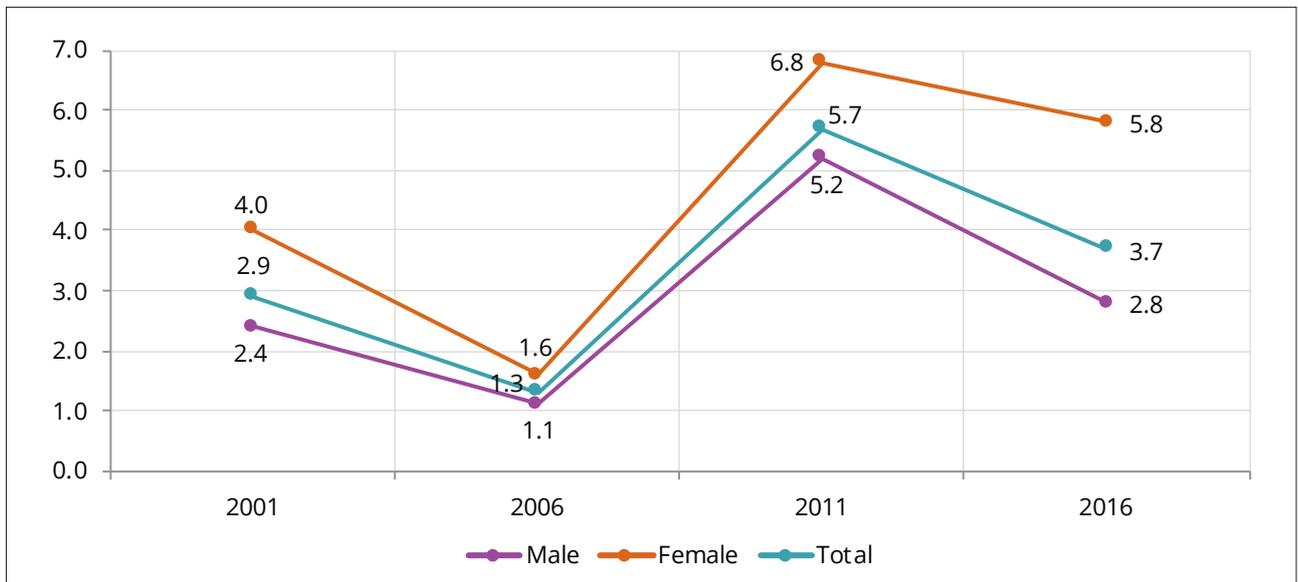
Figure 4: Labour force participation rate by sex and age, 2016 Census



Unemployment rate by sex

Despite the fluctuation in the unemployment rate, as recorded in the last four censuses (2001 to 2016), it has remained higher among females over this period (see Figure 5). Reflecting Samoa’s population dynamics, and that males dominate, 55 per cent of the total unemployed population aged 10 year and over are men, and the proportion of unemployed males remains higher than females up to the age of 55 years and over when this trend reverses.

Figure 5: Unemployment rate by sex, 2016 Census

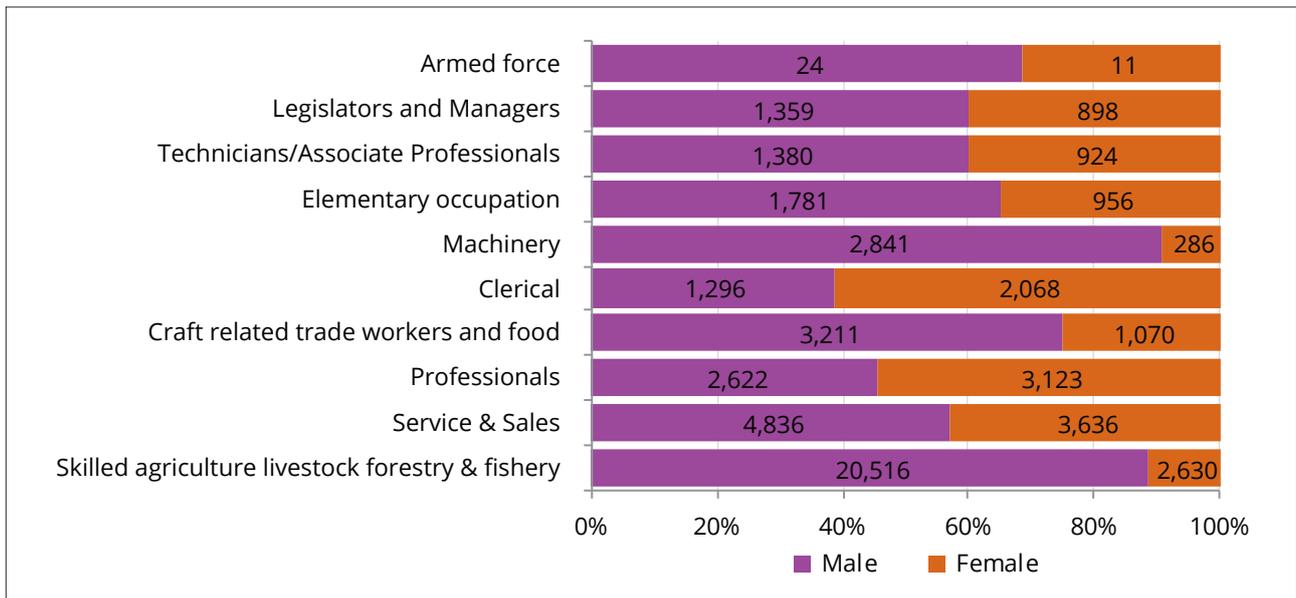


Employment by occupation

Occupation is defined as the profession or job of an individual in which she/he was employed at the time of the 2016 Census. Data indicates that:

- Males dominate most occupations except the professionals and clerical occupations where females outnumber males (see Figure 6). This suggests that females are more likely to participate in high wage occupations than males.
- Males tend to be employed or work in hard labour and trade related occupations such as in machinery, skilled agriculture, livestock, forestry and fishery, craft related trade and food, and armed forces.
- Females tend to work in office-related professionals and clerical work.
- Males still outnumber females in legislation and managerial occupations, although female legislators and managers have increased from 29 per cent in 2001 to 40 per cent in 2016, while there was a corresponding decrease in males in these occupations, from 71 per cent to 60 per cent, over the same period.
- Similar patterns of employment exist across most age groups for both males and females.
- The majority of employed males and females across all occupations are in the youth and middle-aged groups of 21 to 50 years. Samoa has a young workforce, with no significant variation in employment by sex across most age groups.
- The number of employed persons (both male and female) declines as the population ages.
- A total of 62 males and 12 females aged 10 to 14 were employed at the time of the census, with 62 persons employed as skilled workers in agriculture, livestock, forestry and fishery.
- A total of eight persons aged 10 to 14 years were employed at the time of the census in services and sales while seven persons aged 10 to 14 years were working in the craft and trade, machinery and elementary occupations.

Figure 6: Employment by occupation and sex, 2016 Census



Samoa has a young workforce, with no significant variation in employment by sex across most age groups

Employment by industry

In addition to information on employment and occupation, the 2016 Census also collected information on industry, this relates to the main job of employees and is derived from the information provided on the main activity of their employer or business. Analysis of the data on industry reveals:

- Males dominate most industries, except in the education, human health and social workers sector, financial and insurance sector, and domestic sector (employment within households as employers), in which females outnumber males.
- Industries dominated by males include the construction, transportation and storage, agriculture, forestry and fishing, electricity gas steam and air conditioning supply, water supply sewage waste management and remediation activities, professional scientific and technical activities, mining and quarrying, and real estate activities. Most of these industries involve hard labour, and more physically-oriented and trade related work activities that are traditionally male-dominated.
- Females slightly outnumber males in education and health and teaching and nursing professions, which are traditionally dominated by females.
- Females slightly outnumber males in the financial and insurance sector.
- There is minimal age difference between male and female employment patterns across various industries.
- Employment by industry reiterates a younger workforce across all industries.
- The majority of persons employed in different industries are in the youth and middle-aged groups, with the number of employed persons declining as the population ages.

2.2 Income

A high number of respondents in the census (19,457 or 35 per cent of employed persons in Samoa) did not state their wage levels. Data collected on income, as well as the gender disparities around wage levels, are summarized below.

- A total of 23,509 (or 42 per cent) of employed persons in Samoa receive annual wage levels of US\$12,000 and below, with 22.4 per cent earning US\$5,001 to US\$12,000 and 20 per cent earning less than US\$5,000 per annum (see Figure 7 and Table 2). Only 1.7 per cent of employees earn a wage of above US\$79,000.
- Given that males dominate Samoa's paid workforce, there is a clear disparity between the wage levels of males and females.
- Males dominate the low wage levels of up to US\$12,000 as well as the higher wage range of \$79,000 and over, showing a wide gap between males and females. This gap is narrower in the middle wage ranges of US\$12,001 to US\$79,000, reflecting the differences in occupations in which most males and females are employed.
- The difference between the number of males and females earning wage ranges of between US\$12,001 to US\$29,000, US\$29,001 to US\$49,000 and US\$49,001 to US\$79,000 is much less than those earning wages of less than US\$5,000 and US\$5,001 to US\$12,000. This is mainly because males dominate the skilled, trades, crafts and technicians/associated occupations that are usually remunerated at lower wage rates compared to remuneration levels for professional occupations. The majority of employees earning annual wages below US\$5,000 are males, mostly employed in machinery related occupations followed by clerical roles.
- While males receive more wages in most occupations, there are a few salary ranges where females outnumber males. These include the service and sales occupation where there are more females with wages of US\$12,001 to US\$29,000 and US\$29,001 to US\$49,000; the craft related trade and food occupations, where there are more females earning wages of US\$5,001 to US\$12,000, US\$12,001 to US\$29,000, and US\$29,001 to US\$49,000; and the professionals where there are more females earning wages of US\$12,001-US\$29,000.

Figure 7: Population aged 10 years and above by wage level, 2016 Census



Table 2: Population aged 10 years and over by occupation, 2016 Census

Male								
Occupation	Total	< \$5,000	\$5,001-\$12,000	\$12,001-\$29,000	\$29,001-\$49,000	\$49,001-\$79,000	\$79,001+	Not Stated
Machinery	20,516	4,418	1,338	357	84	34	107	14,178
Clerical	4,836	1,052	2,033	857	178	61	42	613
Elementary occupation	3,211	772	1,425	557	76	24	10	347
Technicians/Associate Professionals	2,841	701	1,321	437	43	18	13	308
Service & Sales	2,622	207	381	813	457	252	163	349
Legislators and Managers	1,781	553	902	158	14	2	4	148
Professionals	1,380	120	354	511	224	78	18	75
Skilled agriculture livestock forestry & fishery	1,359	181	241	226	163	181	208	159
Craft related trade workers and food	1,296	113	448	500	112	39	16	68
Armed force	24	5	5	3	3	1	-	7
Total	39,866	8,122	8,448	4,419	1,354	690	581	16,252
Females								
Occupation	Total	< \$5,000	\$5,001-\$12,000	\$12,001-\$29,000	\$29,001-\$49,000	\$49,001-\$79,000	\$79,001+	Not Stated
Machinery	2,630	746	198	45	20	7	27	1,587
Clerical	3,636	855	1,509	516	114	44	24	574
Elementary occupation	1,070	339	377	96	13	13	8	224
Technicians/Associate Professionals	286	97	137	26	2	2	-	22
Service & Sales	3,123	201	436	1,341	511	206	133	295
Legislators and Managers	956	355	456	57	8	3	4	73
Professionals	924	71	126	258	186	52	10	221
Skilled agriculture livestock forestry & fishery	898	93	131	181	139	125	137	92
Craft related trade workers and food	2,068	198	607	845	233	50	22	113
Armed force	11	4	3	-	-	-	-	4
Total	15,602	2,959	3,980	3,365	1,226	502	365	3,205

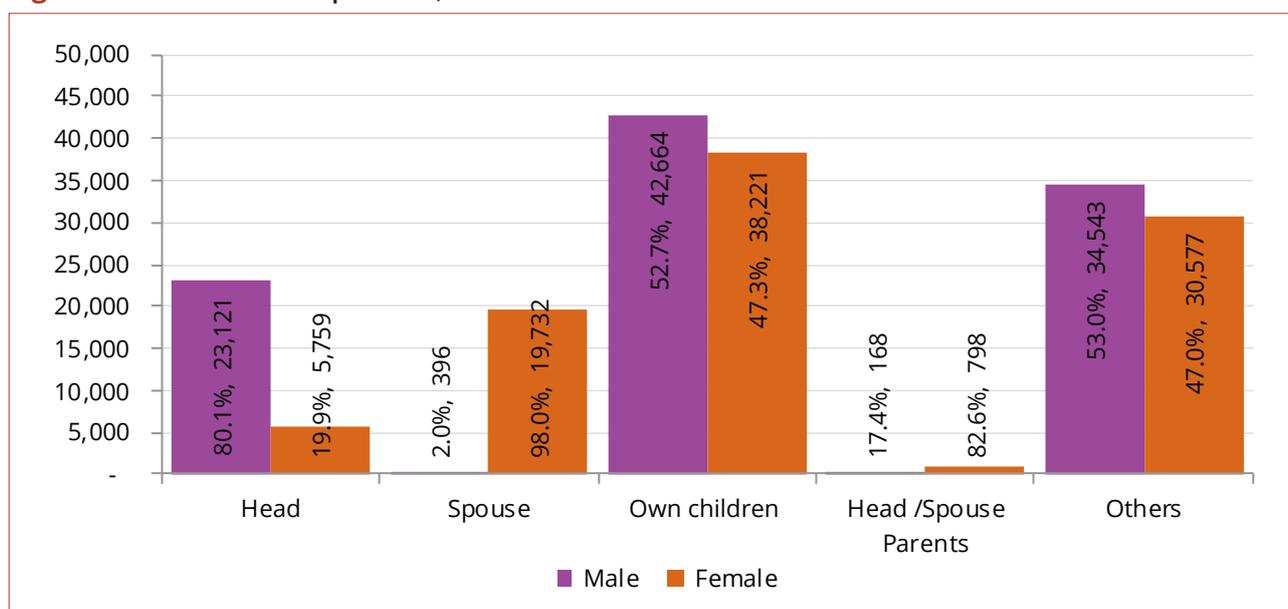
2.3 Household and assets

Household heads and composition

The average household size in Samoa is seven persons per household. Four out of five household heads are male (80 per cent) compared to only one in five households headed by females (20 per cent) (see Figure 8). In addition, 98 per cent of spouses in households are females compared to only 2 per cent of male spouses. Females who are heads of households are mostly widowed reflecting the underlying social structure in Samoa.⁷ Furthermore, most head/spouse parents are female (83%), compared to only 17 per cent male, which may indicate that a mother/female parent is most likely to stay with the head/spouse parent.

Females who are heads of households are mostly widowed reflecting the underlying social structure in Samoa

Figure 8: Household composition, 2016 Census

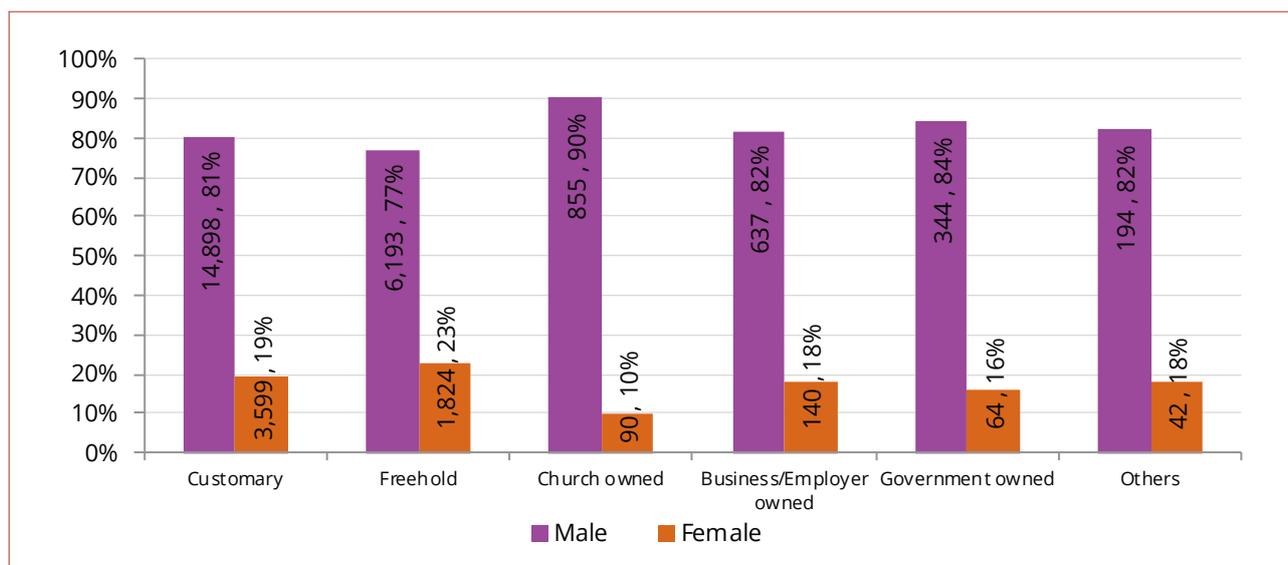


Land tenure

Gender disparity exists in control/ownership of land, a critical asset for economic empowerment. Approximately two in three Samoan households (64 per cent) live on customary land, and only 19 per cent of these households are headed by females (see Figure 9). Similar disparities exist across other types of land ownership (freehold, government-owned, employer-owned), however, freehold land has a larger percentage of female-headed households compared to other types of land – suggesting that more females are likely to own freehold than customary land. The ownership of freehold land depends on the economic empowerment of females and whether they can access and afford to purchase freehold land and have the resources and capability to become more economically independent.

Patterns of gender disparities in different types of land tenure reflect the patriarchal structure of local society

Figure 9: Land tenure by household head and sex, 2016 Census



Patterns of gender disparities in different types of land tenure reflect the patriarchal structure of local society. For example, customary land, which forms the majority of land tenure in Samoa, is held by *matai*, a male-dominated leadership structure in Samoan villages. In addition, the existence of gender disparity in favour of male-headed households compared to female-headed households for government-owned land may reflect the low labour force participation rates of females in Samoa. Geographical patterns of land tenure also perpetuate a spatial disparity in land tenure across Samoa, which puts female household heads in rural areas at a greater disadvantage.

The majority of households with freehold land tenure, with the lowest gender disparity, are in more urban areas of Samoa (39 per cent in Apia Urban Area and 43 per cent in North West Upolu (suburb of Apia)). In contrast, the majority of households living on customary land are in the most rural areas of Samoa (31 per cent in Savaii and 29 per cent in Rest of Upolu). The patterns of land tenure in Samoa increases the economic and social vulnerability of females as household heads. Policy actions that reduce barriers to women's control of land resources are important for poverty reduction and population well-being since women play a critical role in supporting households and communities to achieve food and nutrition security and general well-being.⁸

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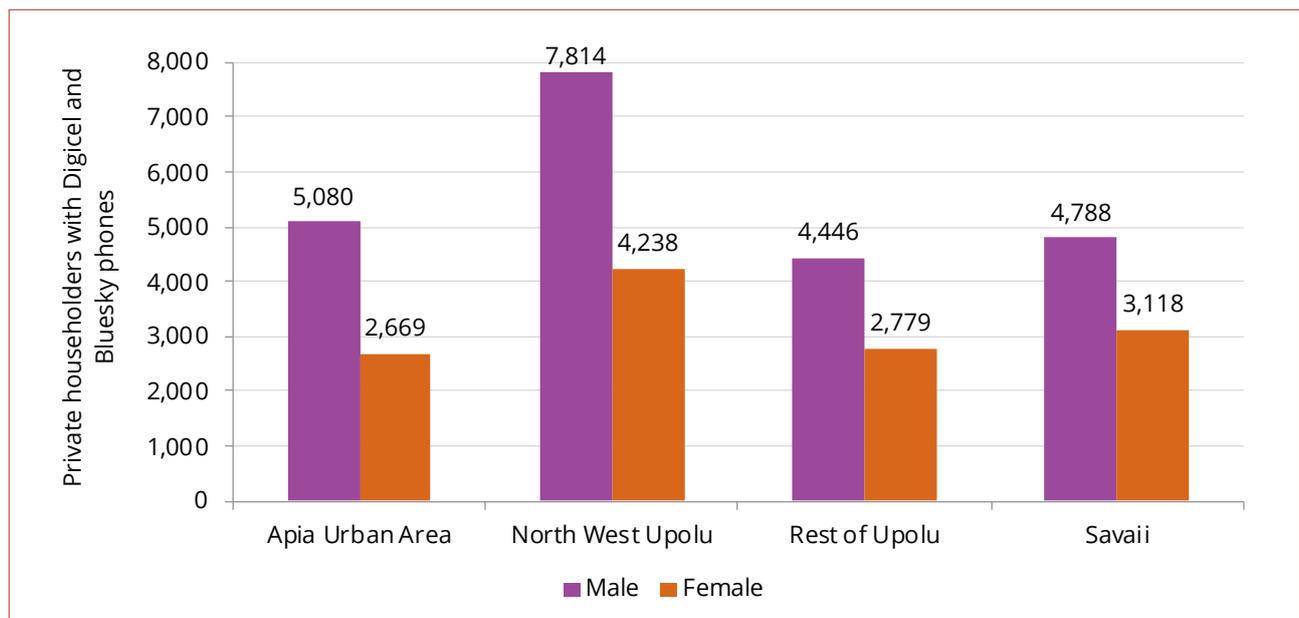
Access to mobile phone

The majority of private households using mobile phones reside in North West Upolu, followed by Savaii and Apia Urban Area. The Rest of Upolu region has the lowest number of males and females with access to a mobile phone.

The proportion of private households with access to mobile phones is much higher among households headed by males across all regions. This may imply males are more likely to have access to information, communication and technology (ICT) and the accompanying benefits such as using a mobile phone compared to females (see Figure 10). Increased access to and control over the use of mobile phones by women could reduce development barriers including access to information, literacy and education, economic opportunities, agency and autonomy, and social and political participation.⁹

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Figure 10: Private households with mobile phone by region and household and by sex, 2016 Census



3. RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 Economic vulnerability

Women are more economically vulnerable than men making up only 29 per cent of the economically active population. This indicates that there are high levels of women in unpaid work, which leaves them exposed to increased levels of dependence and vulnerability. The limited proportion of females seeking jobs at the time of the census may indicate that females are less willing or able to join the formal workforce than males, reflecting both an expectation of women's role in unpaid work or barriers that exist to accessing employment as a result of being primary caregivers, as well as a lack of employment policies that support women/mothers in the labour force.

To address the low representation of women in the labour force, it is recommended that:

- Awareness-raising and advocacy activities should be implemented around female's high burden of unpaid care work and low labour participation rate and the implications this current gender imbalance has for women's economic independence and family livelihoods, child care and protection, and sustainable and inclusive development.
- Awareness-raising should take place around gender and cultural norms to redistribute female's household and community burdens of unpaid care work.
- Protective social protection policies should be formulated that increase access to social services to reduce the burden of unpaid work on women and increase labour force participation, for example child care and long-term care for the elderly. Such policies could in turn generate more jobs in the formal economy in which women could participate. In addition, maternity protection in private and public employment laws should be aligned with global standards.
- The findings of this monograph should be integrated into current, ongoing and future budgetary decisions and economic empowerment policies, interventions and programmes.
- Samoa's employment policy and programmes (MCIL or Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Labour, 2016) should be reviewed to support increased access for women into the labour force as well as retaining women in the formal sector.
- Interventions and programmes should be initiated and developed aimed at supporting and encouraging females who are in unpaid work to take up further studies, especially breaching courses and programmes in technical and vocational education and training.
- Interventions should be implemented that encourage females and girls in the school system and industries where the majority of youth females are employed to take up studies in occupations that are traditionally male-dominated.

3.2 Child labour

The employment of 86 children and adolescents aged 10 to 14 years is considered by international labour standards to be child labour. These children and adolescents have missed out on an education as part of their development and should be given special consideration as persons in vulnerable circumstances.

In additional to recommendations provided under SGM Policy Brief 2: Gender and education in Samoa on enforcing compulsory education, it is recommended:

- That the government and other relevant authorities closely examine the situation of these 86 child labour cases for relevant action.
- More in-depth investigations should take place to establish the reasons and factors for child labour and school non-attendance among children and adolescents.
- Parents/guardians should be involved in discussions around their children's labour and non-attendance at school and the implications.
- Initiatives should be taken to provide special measures to address the issues of these 86 cases of child labour.

3.3 Economic empowerment of females

Females are more economically, political and socially vulnerable than males in Samoa. They have a low representation in the labour force; the majority of households are headed by males; and the majority of land is customary land under the control of *matai*, a male-dominated structure/system. These deeply seated gendered structural inequalities are embedded in Samoa's social structure and will require significant long-term investment to reverse.

It is recommended that:

- Further research be conducted to determine the way in which the *matai* system serves as either a barrier or opportunity for women's access to paid employment. This will support evidence-based policy and decision-making.
- Policy interventions should be considered that address norms and customs around how women acquire, own and control land including land purchase, inheritance, and land transfer at marriage or a spouse's death. These could include:
 - Engaging customary leaders such as *matai* and village systems to promote women's access to and control over land.
 - Awareness and education for both women and men on the benefits of recognizing and promoting women's land rights.
 - Policy interventions that increase access to ICT for females and create gender-sensitive content reflecting women's needs and voices through safe and secure online spaces.

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ENDNOTES

- ¹ Samoa's economy is dependent on agriculture, fishing, tourism, remittances and service industries. Manufacturing is very small and the economy is highly vulnerable to natural disasters and external shocks. Samoa inherits the unique features of a small island economy of remoteness (from world markets), income volatility, limited economic diversification, susceptibility to natural disasters, and a limited pool of locally available people with technical and specialized skills. Samoa's dual labour force is comprised of the formal segment (40 per cent) and non-formal segment (60 per cent) (MCIL, 2016). Samoa has been an ILO member since 2005 and is undertaking a range of activities under its decent work programme to strengthen the legal framework for labour and employment, to improve female and male access to information and employment services, and to strengthen labour tripartite capacity (ILO, 2013). There is no national legislated retirement age and most employers and employees follow the mandated retirement age of 55 years of the public service (Samoa Public Service Act 2014 and regulations). There is no social security system in Samoa for workers and those who reach the age of 65 years are entitled to a senior citizen pension of Samoan tala (ST\$)135 per month (<https://www.npf.ws/>).
- ² Langer et al. 2015.
- ³ Ahmed et al. 2010, Pratlet et al. 2016.
- ⁴ This group is called the 'economically active population' or the labour force – all persons who are active in an economy, and are, or should be, able to carry out economic activities, in capacities such as an employee, employer, self-employed, contributing member, volunteer, job seeker or subsistent worker. In previous censuses, the economically active population was 'persons aged 15 years and over'. In the 2016 Census, the 'economically active' population was defined as 'persons aged 10 years and over' who were employed, this was to count children at young ages who were already in the labour force. All persons attending school or training courses, doing housework and care, unable to work due to old age and disability, or any other reasons were classified as 'non-economically active' (SBS, 2018b, p. 18).
- ⁵ Duncan, R & Voigt-Graf, C., 2015. Labour Market Scenarios for the Asian Decent Work Decade in the Pacific Island Count, ILO Asia-Pacific Working Paper Series.
- ⁶ Addati et al. 2018.
- ⁷ Samoa's governance system is a blend of the Westminster system of government and the local *fa'aSamoa* system where only *matai* (local chiefs) stand for elections to national parliament. The local village-based community is governed by *matai* (90 per cent are males) under the *fa'amatai* (chiefly system), which operates relatively independently from the national government in terms of decision-making, law and order, and village affairs (see Samoa Gender Monograph 2020).
- ⁸ USAID 2016. Namubiru-Mwaura, E. 2017 and Higgins et al. 2018.
- ⁹ World Bank Group 2016.

