

**EMPOWERING COASTAL WOMEN IN FIJI THROUGH SUSTAINABLE
MABÈ PEARL CULTURE**

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My story will include how the introduction of pearl oyster spat collection and mabe farming has transformed lives of women and youths in some of the local coastal communities in Fiji. It will explain why and how these were introduced, and benefits it provided to local women. Women involved have been provided all relevant trainings on pearl oyster spat deployments, pearl oyster culture, mabe implanting, mabe culture and mabe harvest. There are also women's groups that are now known in the country for making high quality shell handicrafts after they were trained under our pearl project. One of the women trained by our project now manages a commercial handicraft center for a company that our project has partnered with to sell mabe. This company currently has mabe in 8 of the stores in the country with plans to expand it to other stores to increase retail hubs for mabe products.