

## Exploring the importance of gender equality and social inclusion in fisheries

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In most Pacific Islands cultures, women and girls are resource gatherers, and active participants of fisheries and aquaculture, yet their contributions are often only seen in a post-harvest context when they take their catch to sell in the markets. At the Women's Fund Fiji (the Fund) – through our experience with grantee partners such as the Women in Fisheries Network, Kioa Women's Group and Udu Point Women's Initiative – we know that women play a significant role in both harvesting and post-harvesting processes.

The Fund supports its grantee partners in strengthening their capacity to promote and achieve gender-transformative change. The Fund's capacity building strategy is complemented by a gender equality and social inclusion (GESI) strategy that ensures that gender equality and the empowerment of women is integrated into every aspect of its work to support grantee partners to reduce inequalities and exclusion.

There are 14 activities that can be used by managers and practitioners in a diversity of sectors, including fisheries and agriculture, and include the following.

### Activity 1: Exploring our own expertise about gender and diversity

This activity helps begin the process of community building and starting a dialogue on diversity, and sets the tone that we are all teachers and learners together and all have experience.

### Activity 2: Social and personal identity wheel

This activity encourages participants to deeply reflect and consider their identities, and how we express our identities differently, depending on the social context. It also explains how privilege operates to normalise some identities over others, and sensitises participants to their shared identities with others as well as the diversity of identities in the home, work, community, and encourages empathy.

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**Activity 3: Exploring our diversity**

The aim here is to open the conversation on diversity, acknowledging that everyone has experience and expertise on the subject, and acknowledge multiple and intersecting aspects of our identities.

**Activity 4: The Story of Joana and Jona**

This activity examines the roles of women and men in a comparative way.

**Activity 5: Choosing the sex of your child**

The aim here is to bring out participants' assumptions about female and male children, and examine how true and deep-rooted these assumptions are.

**Activity 6: Ideal man, ideal woman**

Here, participants learn the difference between sex and gender, and explore ideas of socially defined gender roles and stereotypes.

**Activity 7: Pressures and privileges of being a man/woman**

This activity explores the consequences and harms of gender stereotypes, and helps participants understand the pressures and privileges of ideals of masculinity and femininity.

**Activity 8: Definitions**

Here, participants understand important gender terminology such as gender, sex, gender equality, gender equity, women's empowerment, transformative approach, and social inclusion.

**Activity 9: The new planet**

This activity aims to create an immediate experience of power up.

**Activity 10: Group activity**

Participants are encouraged to share an event or time in their life when they were in a power up position, and when they were in a power down situation. After sharing, participants are asked to tell their story to the larger group.

**Activity 11: Power walk**

Participants share their learning up to this point about GESI and/or their own lives to understand power and privilege.

**Activity 12: Power role play (if enough time)**

Continuing on from Activity 11, this activity deepens participants' understanding of power and privilege.

**Activity 13: The gender equality framework**

Participants learn about the gender equality framework in order to build agency, change relations and transform structures.

**Activity 14: Community - Solution tree**

This activity helps participants to identify the gender equality and inclusion changes they want to see, and explore the impacts of each of these changes.

To ensure that GESI is integrated into all aspects of programming, the Fund delivers training on GESI for its partners. Based on the practical learnings, challenges, approaches and opportunities to adapt the theoretical material to practical examples through our information-rich grantee partners, the Fund has developed a localised GESI toolkit, which is available and can be used by practitioners in all areas of development, including fisheries in the Pacific.

We encourage fisheries practitioners and managers to integrate GESI into their work and not treat the challenges and opportunities faced by women fishers as isolated cases. It is important to analyse and understand gendered forms of equality or inequality and social inclusion or exclusion within the Pacific Islands region, which is often deep-rooted in our cultures.



The GESI toolkit can be accessed and used with relevant acknowledgements through:  
<https://womensfundfiji.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Toolkit-web-final.pdf>