



Issue 25 – October 2014

WOMEN IN FISHERIES

information bulletin

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Produced with financial assistance from
Australia, France and New Zealand

Editor's note

Congratulations SPC on the 25th issue of the *Women in Fisheries Information Bulletin*. The Bulletin has come a long way from its inception in 1989. I would like to thank SPC, donors, the editorial team and the Fisheries Information Section of SPC for their work and commitment. I am grateful for the untiring support of Aymeric Desurmont and his dedication to keeping the *WIF Information Bulletin* going. I also wish to thank the writers, particularly Meryl Williams, Mecki Kronen and Aliti Vunisea.

In the first article, Moses Amos, the new Director of SPC's Fisheries, Aquaculture and Marine Ecosystems (FAME) Division, outlines his vision for women in fisheries. I am delighted that he responded to my invitation to contribute to the 25th issue and appreciate the time he has taken to think through the possibilities for reviving the "women in fisheries" work at SPC. As FAME's leader, he has opportunities to provide a platform both for discussion of gender issues in fisheries and aquaculture and for development of new initiatives.

I would also like to thank Meryl Williams for her review of work done at SPC during the last 25 years on women in fisheries. Her insights and analyses of this work and the *WIF Information Bulletin* are greatly appreciated. Her article, "Twenty-five issues of the *Women in Fisheries Information Bulletin*: The story within the story of 25 years of women in fisheries at SPC", highlights the origins and progress of the Bulletin and the support given by SPC and donors. She also briefly reviews other SPC information bulletins (such as *Beche-de-mer* and *Traditional Marine Resources Management and Knowledge*) that have supported the women in fisheries theme.

After examining the work done over 25 years, Meryl concludes that SPC's fisheries programmes have only sporadically addressed women's interests in fisheries and aquaculture. She suggests that if FAME is to better address women's interests in the Pacific region, it needs to revive and support the women in fisheries work in addition to producing the *WIF Information Bulletin*. The first task for SPC, according to Meryl, is to revisit its strategic plan and work with experts to develop sound gender objectives and targets for the fisheries and aquaculture programmes. She also emphasises the need to include gender equality objectives to improve social and economic justice for women in the Pacific Islands.

Papers 3 and 4 were first presented at SPC meetings in the 1990s. They are reproduced here to provide some insight into the women's programme at the beginning of the Women in Fisheries Development Project at SPC. These two papers present some of the gender issues prevalent at that time, which are still relevant today, and an account of the humble beginnings of the project's work.

The article, “An overview of the involvement of women in fisheries activities in Oceania” by Lambeth et al. was first published in 2002. The authors reported that 70% to 80% of the catches from inshore fisheries were for subsistence purposes with women contributing the majority share. In recent years, women have become increasingly engaged in small businesses involving marine resources. This is in addition to their participation in traditional activities such as inshore harvesting and seafood processing. The article suggests that the whole community should be included in fisheries development instead of just including women in fisheries work. In fact, the paper reiterates ideas that led SPC to change the Women’s Fisheries Development Section into a Community Fisheries Section in 1998. As explained in Meryl Williams’s paper, this move may have reduced the attention paid to women’s involvement in fisheries in SPC’s programmes.

In the following article, “Gender and fisheries and aquaculture — from policy to implementation. Lessons learned from Germany’s policy for sustainable development”, Mechthild Kronen notes the need for gender analyses, for gender disaggregated data and for a focus on gender in all steps of a project cycle. Other important lessons relate to gender equity and equality in fisheries and aquaculture decision-making, and the need to address gender discrimination in employment practices in fisheries and aquaculture industries.

The article by Ruci Yauvoli, “Non-government organisations, civil society, women’s welfare and development in the Pacific Islands”, describes the relationship between women, non-government organisations and their contributions to the economic empowerment of women in the Pacific Islands, especially in Fiji. She says Pacific Island NGOs have played strong advocacy roles in supporting women’s rights, democracy, human rights, peace and development, media freedom, good governance and the rule of law.

Finally, the article by Veikila Vuki and Maria Elder discusses gender mainstreaming of forestry policies in Fiji. Forestry seems far removed from fisheries, but the article is included because it gives an example of how to involve women in a male dominated natural resource management sector, like the fisheries management sector.

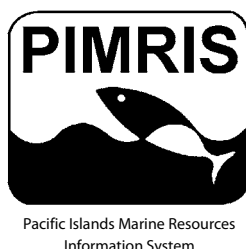
More specifically, the paper explains the need to include gender in Fiji’s forest policies. It provides an overview of gender mainstreaming of policies in other sectors as a basis for the inclusion of gender in policies for sustainable forest management and development. It also highlights the need for gender inclusiveness in private sector development of handicraft, eco-tourism and forest conservation initiatives.

I welcome feedback on these articles and encourage you to submit articles on gender and fisheries issues from your country or region for the next issue of this bulletin. Again, congratulations to SPC on this 25th issue. I hope that the future will be much brighter for women in fisheries work in the Pacific region and there will be more support for new initiatives in this area rather than relegating it to a “cross-cutting” issue in fisheries programmes.

Veikila Curu Vuki

Cover picture: *Female fisher in Kiritimati (Kiribati). Photo by Mechthild Kronen.*

PIMRIS is a joint project of five international organisations concerned with fisheries and marine resource development in the Pacific Islands region. The project is executed by the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC), the Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA), the University of the South Pacific (USP) and the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP). This bulletin is produced by SPC as part of its commitment to PIMRIS. The aim of PIMRIS is to improve the availability of information



on marine resources to users in the region, so as to support their rational development and management. PIMRIS activities include: the active collection, cataloguing and archiving of technical documents, especially ephemera (‘grey literature’); evaluation, repackaging and dissemination of information; provision of literature searches, question-and-answer services and bibliographic support; and assistance with the development of in-country reference collections and databases on marine resources.

Growing and empowering women in fisheries work in the Pacific region

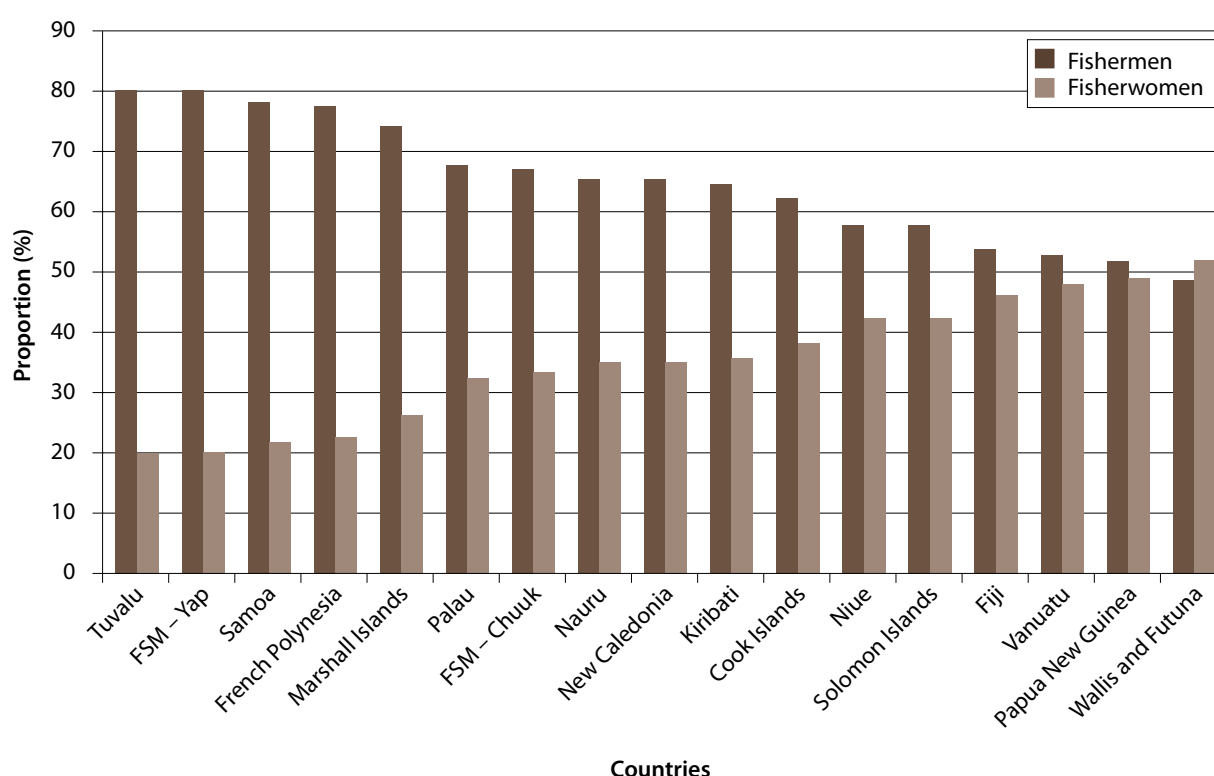
Moses Amos¹

In most Pacific Islands, decisions impacting on management and conservation of coastal fisheries are traditionally made by male community leaders, elders and chiefs with very little or no input from women. This is because women's contributions to fisheries are hardly recognised or appreciated, and are often forgotten in a sector commonly perceived by society to be primarily a male domain. This is despite women playing important roles and participating in most activities from catching, harvesting and processing to being heavily involved in selling and marketing.

Women can bring a wealth of knowledge about the fishery and useful information that can assist with the development of management undertakings.

They therefore have a major role in the implementation of management activities. Moreover, their roles and perspectives are important to the overall management and development of Pacific Island coastal and oceanic fisheries.

Although women have distinct roles in coastal and oceanic fisheries, no new study on the respective roles of women and men in capture fisheries has been done since the PROCFish Project² (2002–2009). In the informal fisheries sector, the general predominance of men in fishing continues. This is particularly apparent among fishers who exclusively target finfish, while women predominate among fishers who exclusively target invertebrates, as depicted in the graph below.



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² The Pacific Regional Oceanic and Coastal Fisheries Development project was designed to enhance management of fisheries in the Pacific Islands by providing Pacific Island governments and communities with accurate, unbiased scientific information about the status and prospects of fisheries.

However, in the formal fisheries sector, a 2010 study on the participation of women in fisheries science and management in three Pacific Island countries (Tuara and Passfield 2011) reported that women comprised only 18% of the total number of staff working in fisheries in government fisheries departments, environmental institutions and non-governmental organisations.

Over the past few years, SPC has been helping to increase participation of women in various ways. In the area of coastal fisheries, FAME has been working with many Pacific Island countries and territories, including American Samoa, Federated States of Micronesia, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, Niue, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu, and with the Coral Triangle Initiative to expand conventional fisheries management to a community-based ecosystem approach to fisheries management (CEAFM). This approach involves the management of fisheries, within an ecosystem context, by local communities as resource owners and users, working with government and other partners across relevant sectors that impact on fisheries. The approach is based on consultation and decision-making that includes all stakeholder groups in the community and it has empowered women to bring their wealth of knowledge to assist with development of community fisheries management plans. Women are now well represented on Fisheries Management Committees and participate actively in the implementation of management activities where decision-making used to be male-dominated in the past.

SPC is also raising the profile of fisheries as a career option for women through publications (such as the *Women in Fisheries Bulletin*, or brochures on the work of fishing vessel observers³), providing positive role models, and removing barriers to women's participation in its wide range of training workshops and mentoring attachments for fisheries officers. This includes on-the-job training in coastal fisheries data collection and analysis (e.g. women make up 40% of participants in biological sampling, and 60% in market and creel surveys). In oceanic fisheries, national and regional level training is provided to staff in fisheries departments who collect, manage and summarise the data needed for assessment of tuna stocks. Two-thirds (63%) of the participants at the last four SPC annual Regional Tuna Data Workshops have been women. This is a reflection of increasing opportunities for women in this sector, with more young Pacific women graduating with degrees in marine science and joining fisheries departments in their countries.

However, there are still considerable gaps in our knowledge of how Pacific communities are likely to embrace women's role in climate change adaptation and the need for change. Learning to catch or produce fish in new ways, and to eat different types of fish are important adjustments to which women's contributions are essential. Therefore growing, building, and empowering women in fisheries work in the Pacific region will require intentional growth and provision of leadership experience. This will require changes in the way business is carried out. Building on SPC's past and present efforts to empower women in fisheries, there will be greater emphasis on multi-sector and cross-cutting approaches to programme and project design. FAME can draw on work and contributions from multiple sectors both in and outside SPC and apply cross-cutting processes to contribute to effective empowerment of women in fisheries in the Pacific including through project implemented activities. The role of women in fisheries science and management at the national level must be promoted, while at the community level, the Community-Based Ecosystems Approach to Fisheries Management programme and Community-based Aquaculture Development programme actively empower and enhance women's participation in the development of community fisheries management and aquaculture. Coastal communities will also be encouraged to increase participation of women in the implementation of community management activities.

The following FAME programmes and activities are particularly relevant to promoting women in fisheries work in the Pacific:

- (i) coastal fisheries science and management;
- (ii) collection and analysis of accurate and comprehensive oceanic fisheries data, targeting the region's resources of tuna, billfish and other oceanic species;
- (iii) Community-Based Ecosystems Approach to Fisheries Management programme;
- (iv) Community-Based Aquaculture Development programme;
- (v) Sustainable Nearshore Fisheries Development programme, focusing on improved seafood quality standards and value-adding; and
- (vi) training workshops and mentoring attachments for fisheries officers.

³ http://www.spc.int/DigitalLibrary/Doc/FAME/Brochures/Anon_13_Fisheries_Careers_brochure.pdf and http://www.spc.int/DigitalLibrary/Doc/FAME/Brochures/Anon_13_Observer_brochure.pdf

Reference

Tuara P. and Passfield K. 2011. Gender in oceanic and coastal fisheries science and management — Based on case studies in Solomon Islands, Marshall Islands and Tonga. Noumea, New Caledonia: Secretariat of the Pacific Community. 62 p.

Twenty-five issues of the Women in Fisheries Information Bulletin: The story within the story of 25 years of women in fisheries at SPC

Meryl J. Williams¹

Congratulations to the Secretariat of the Pacific Community's Fisheries, Aquaculture and Marine Ecosystems (FAME) Division, and all the editors, translators, contributors, producers and donors, on the 25th issue of SPC's *Women in Fisheries Information Bulletin* (WIF). This is a worthy milestone and one enjoyed by relatively few publications, including only some of the sibling SPC Information Bulletins (Table 1).

The milestone caused me to reflect on how themes such as women in fisheries can become part of the fabric of institutions even when they are not major core themes, as in the case of coastal and oceanic fisheries and aquaculture with their own dedicated programmes. I conclude that the more marginal themes — marginal in a programme sense, if not in potential importance — persist because of the tenacious effort of individuals and because of the genuine importance of the theme. This is the first and more immediate "story" of the title. To arrive at my conclusion, I briefly trace the history of WIF, and make some observations on how women's involvement is handled in some other key SPC Information Bulletins.

However, in putting together the story of 25 issues of WIF, I stumbled on a larger and longer story

— that of the topic of women in fisheries at SPC over the last 25 years. After telling something of the story of WIF, therefore, I will share a short version of the longer story. At times in its progress, the longer story seems like "one step forward and two steps back." When "two steps back" have occurred, WIF and other Information Bulletins became the "one step" that held the line.

Origins of WIF

WIF was not the first SPC Information Bulletin — the *Beche-de-Mer Information Bulletin* (BDM) has that distinction — nor the most prolific. Again, BDM wins, but WIF is one of the longer lasting and one of only three that persist to the present day. The other current Information Bulletins are BDM and *Traditional Marine Resources Management and Knowledge* (TRAD for short). The *Fisheries Education and Training Information Bulletin*, though relatively short-lived, also produced quite a few issues and figures in this story.

In 1996, the 26th Regional Technical Meeting on Fisheries (RTMF) heard that SPC had created a separate Women's Fisheries Development Section, elevating the previous work from project status. This

Table 1. SPC Information Bulletins.

Information Bulletin	Period	No. of issues
Beche-de-Mer	1990–present	34
Ciguatera	1991–1993	3
Fish Aggregating Device	1996–1998	3
Fisheries Education and Training	1993–2007	26
Live Reef Fish	1996–2011	20
Pearl Oyster	1990–2011	19
Sea Safety	2005–2011	6
Traditional Marine Resource Management and Knowledge	1992–present	33
Trochus	1992–2010	15
Women in Fisheries	1997–present	24

¹ Meryl Williams worked for the SPC Tuna and Billfish Assessment Programme (1981–1984), represented the Australian government at the RTMF from 1987 to 1989 and chaired the 1988 meeting and the first Standing Committee on Tuna and Billfish. She was Director General of ICLARM/WorldFish Center (1994–2004) and Chair of the ACIAR Board of Management and Commission (2004–2010). Since 1996, she has been active in women/gender in aquaculture and fisheries research and development through several professional societies and agencies, particularly in Asia-Pacific. She was Director General of ICLARM/WorldFish Center (1994–2004) and Chair of the ACIAR Board of Management and Commission (2004–2010). Since 1996, she has been active in women/gender in aquaculture and fisheries research and development through several professional societies and agencies, particularly in Asia-Pacific.

drew good support from many delegates but concern from a few. One feared it would draw scarce resources from other fisheries work and another that it would overlap with, or be redundant to, work being done at the University of the South Pacific. Funding of the new section was already in jeopardy and the RTMF recommended (Recommendation 9) that “the Secretariat pursue every avenue to secure funding for the continuation of the section.”

More significantly, the discussion on the proposed work of the Fisheries Information Section (which still produces WIF to this day) led to the recommendation to create a Special Interest Group (SIG) Bulletin on Women in Fisheries. The RTMF record (SPC 1996a) credits Ursula Kolkola, the delegate from Papua New Guinea and a pioneering woman senior fisheries officer in the region, with speaking first to support the SIG. The 26th RTMF report on SPC Coastal Fisheries Programme Activities also gave a short account of the struggle since 1991 to establish work on women in fisheries at SPC that went beyond simple project activities, although these definitely gave the theme a toehold (SPC 1996b). The struggle is described further below. Information Paper 11 (SPC 1996c) expanded on the reasons for giving more attention to women’s roles and contributions in fisheries. It did not, however, explicitly mention the issues of equal rights for women, as might have been expected so soon after the 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform of Action that sought to “advance the goals of equality, development and peace for all women everywhere in the interest of all humanity.”

Recommendation No. 10 (26th RTMF): *The Meeting recognised the significant involvement of women in fisheries activities. In order to facilitate the role of women in fisheries in the region through the exchange of ideas, knowledge and experience, the Meeting recommended that a Special Interest Group Bulletin on Women in Fisheries be set up under the SPC Fisheries Information Section. The Bulletin would serve as an information and communication network outlining the activities of interest and concern to women in the fisheries sector.*

As Aliti Vunisea, the first Coordinator of the SIG and editor of WIF (see Table 2 for full list), said in introducing the first WIF (October 1997): “... SIG was established as a result of Recommendation No.

10 of the 26th Regional Technical Meeting on Fisheries (RTMF) held at SPC headquarters in Noumea from 5 to 9 August 1996.”

And so WIF was launched.

WIF has been fortunate to have financial support from the governments of Australia, France and New Zealand, enabling continual production. In contrast, SPC’s own work on women in fisheries has only received sporadic financial and other resources. At times, including the present, the WIF coordinators, editors and Aymeric Desurmont from SPC’s Fisheries Information Section have had a key role in keeping the women in fisheries theme alive at SPC.

While WIF is the Information Bulletin for a Special Interest Group, it is also affected directly and indirectly by what is happening in SPC’s own programmes, for example, in the amount of material available to WIF. In the 18 years since its launch, WIF has enjoyed relatively rich years and some thin ones. In each of the good years (eight, counting this year), two issues were produced; in the lean (two years only), none; and in the other years (seven), one issue came out. The richer years were often associated with SPC having relevant projects and activities underway. Particularly, from 1998 to 2003, the Women’s Fisheries Development Section and then the Community Fisheries Section were very active in doing country assessments, delivering training programmes and developing manuals. From 2007 to 2009, women in fisheries assessment results were reported in WIF from the PROCFish (Pacific Regional Oceanic and Coastal Fisheries Development Programme) and SciCOFish (Scientific Support for the Management of Coastal and Oceanic Fisheries in the Pacific Islands Region) projects. Lean years may now be expected as FAME’s strategic plan for 2013–2016 refers to women/gender as “cross-cutting” issues but does not specify any related objectives and targets.

So with the waxing and waning of resources, which I discuss further below, and despite the successful efforts to maintain WIF, “women in fisheries” still struggles in the Pacific. This is despite the Pacific being the region of the world with probably the richest involvement of women in coastal fisheries (Pinca et al. 2010; Williams 2010; Kleiber et al. 2014) and the important but little documented

Table 2. Coordinators and editors of the WIF Information Bulletin.

Coordinators and editors of WIF	Years	Issues
Aliti Vunisea, University of the South Pacific	1997–1998	01–03
Lyn Lambeth, SPC	1999–2001	04–09
Kim Des Rochers, SPC	2002–2003	10–13
Aliti Vunisea, SPC	2004–2007	14–16
Veikila Vuki, University of Guam and Oceania Environment Consultants	2007–present	17–25

participation of women in industrial oceanic fisheries supply chains (Williams 2014).

If we look a little more broadly than the key programme documents and reports of SPC's fisheries and aquaculture programmes, we find in the other two remaining SPC Information Bulletins (*Beche-de-mer* and *Traditional Marine Resources Management and Knowledge*), and in the most recent selection (1999 to 2007) of the Training and Education Information Bulletin, evidence of an underlying interest in the women in fisheries theme.

Traditional Marine Resource Management and Knowledge Information Bulletin (TRAD)

Two thirds of the issues of TRAD (22 of 33) contained substantive articles of relevance to women in fisheries. This would be expected from the nature of TRAD, but one may also ask why there were not more, and why in several cases the interest in women's roles focused on what was *tapu* for women rather than on women's agency. Nevertheless, TRAD contained many articles relevant to women in fisheries. Articles on research methods applicable to collecting gendered information were published in issues 2, 10, 16. Articles on fisheries in Pacific Island countries related to northern Australia (1), Cook Islands (8), Federated States of Micronesia (4, 6), Fiji (3, 5, 8, 29), Marshall Islands (21), Samoa (11), Solomon Islands (1, 7, 8, 12, 14, 16, 19), Tokelau (11), Tonga (13, 24), Tuvalu (7) and Vanuatu (20, 24, 32). Other countries were mentioned briefly in more regional articles. In addition, women were taken into account in articles on Malthusian overfishing (3), foraging strategies (9), turtle taboos (15), and marine protected areas, food security, and the Millennium Development Goals (17, 24).

Beche-de-Mer Information Bulletin (BDM)

Women have long played a role in traditional inshore fishing for and processing of holothurians (sea cucumber or beche-de-mer). BDM, SPC's longest running fisheries Information Bulletin, included substantive mentions of women's roles in sea cucumber collection, processing, marketing and mariculture in about a quarter of its issues (8 of 34). In some other issues, bibliographies included material on women. The fisheries involving women (with Information Bulletin number in brackets) were in: Indonesia — Sulawesi (10) and Pualu Misa (34); Philippines and Pacific — an overview of *Stichopus* use (13); Madagascar (21, 29); Oman (25, 30); and Malaysia/Sabah (32).

Fisheries Training and Education Information Bulletin (issues 12–26 only)

In 1999, this Information Bulletin reported on sea-food quality training by SPC's women's training

programme at the New Zealand School of Fisheries, Nelson (12). Not surprisingly, when a training course for marine engineers was mooted, the SPC Women in Fisheries network and its Pacific Women's Bureau had to be called in, in an effort to source women candidates (21).

Vanuatu featured in two of the issues. In one (13), a training needs assessment for Vanuatu highlighted the need for training for women in fish processing. In the second (22), a report on a Vanuatu rural fishing training programme run by the Vanuatu Maritime College (VMC) contained the "delicious" photo caption: "Capt. Ken Barnett, head of VMC, cuts a cake as instructor Alickson Aru and students watch. The cake was made by the women of Tutuba, and was designed to remind VMC that women should attend the next course held there."

In addition to specific training programs targeting women, they obviously also entered mainstream training programmes. For example, by 2002, the SPC National Fisheries Officers training course, which had been running for 20 years, was seeing an increasing number of women officers enrolling in this intensive course (18). When course participants visited New Zealand after the 2003 fourth regional training course for managers of medium-to-large size fisheries enterprises, Beverly Levi from Samoa remarked on the number of women in New Zealand who were employed at sea (23).

Conclusions on the WIF story

The origins and progress of the WIF Information Bulletin show it has been supported by SPC and donors despite an apparently patchy record of relevant activities in SPC's fisheries programmes. The dedication of all those who produce it should be saluted. But although the occasion of the 25th issue caused me to look at WIF itself, some of my observations prompted me to go further and look into the larger and longer story of women in fisheries at SPC.

The story of 25 years of women in fisheries at SPC (1989–2014)

In delving into the SPC Fisheries Digital Library to learn more about the story of how the WIF Information Bulletin came about, I started to find pieces of the bigger story, beyond the timeframe of its 25 issues. By coincidence, the bigger story started around 1989 and covered about 25 years, not just the period of WIF (1997 to the present).

From SPC's excellent Fisheries Digital Library,² I found that SPC fisheries programmes (including aquaculture) had a varied record of including women and gender topics. From the start of the Regional

² All errors or misinterpretations of the archive material are the responsibility of the author.

Technical Meeting on Fisheries (RTMF) records (1952) until 1989, and apart from one external RTMF information paper on women in fisheries (Lal and Slatter 1982), the subject of women in fisheries was simply not mentioned. It seemed 1989 was a good year from which to start as for the first time, the word “women” began appearing more often in SPC high-level reports, especially those of the RTMF meetings and the more recent Heads of Fisheries (HoF) meetings.

From 1989 to 1990, women in fisheries activities were reported under the Fish Handling and Processing Project (FHPP) (RTMF 22, 1990 reports). The Fish Handling and Processing Officer, Steve Roberts, recommended a “Women in Fisheries Programme”, noting that SPC’s Pacific Women’s Resource Bureau and the Fish Handling and Processing Project were already undertaking women’s fisheries work.

Recommendation No. 5: *Following discussion which emphasised the growing interest region-wide in activities which support the needs of women from coastal fishing communities, the meeting recommended that a Women in Fisheries Programme be implemented as proposed and that a position of Women’s Fisheries Programme Officer be created.*

In May 1991, a Women’s Fisheries Development Sub-Project (with Canadian Government funds) under the FHPP started, with Ms Shirley Steele as Women’s Fisheries Programme Officer. Also in 1991, at the 23rd RTMF, an information paper was presented on women in Papua New Guinea fisheries (Wararu 1991).

By the time of the 24th RTMF (August 1992), the position of Women’s Fisheries Programme Officer was vacant and unlikely to be refilled due to budget constraints. The word “women” did not appear in the RTMF report, although support for women’s post-harvest activities continued according to programme work reports.

At the 25th RTMF (March 1994), women in fisheries activities at SPC remained stalled owing to lack of staff and despite strong support for the activities from three countries (Palau, Papua New Guinea and Vanuatu).

Recommendation No. 7: *The meeting re-stated the importance of the SPC Women’s Fisheries Development Project, which had provided valuable support to a number of national level women in fisheries initiatives. The Meeting recommended that the Secretariat take all possible action to reinstate Canadian funding support for this important project, or, failing this, attempt to identify an alternative source of funding for it.*

By the time of the 26th and last RTMF in August 1996, the Women’s Fisheries Development Project had been reinstated and had moved from being a

sub-project of the Fish Handling and Processing project to the newly established Women’s Fisheries Development Section (WFDS). In 1995, Patricia Tuara was recruited as the Women’s Fisheries Development Officer. “The main objectives of the WFDS are to promote the increased involvement of women from coastal fishing communities in regional and national fisheries development activities; and enhance income-earning opportunities for women...” The work was funded by the Government of Canada and project funds were also sourced from the United Kingdom and New Zealand.

In 1998, the Women’s Fisheries Development Section became the Community Fisheries Section. Patricia Tuara headed the section as Adviser and Lyn Lambeth was appointed as an Officer with Marie Therese Bui as a Project Assistant. From 1997, the section was funded by the Governments of Australia and New Zealand. From 1996 to 1999, the section was active in national assessments, national and regional training programmes and in developing training manuals (Community Fisheries Section 1999) focusing on women but also turning to broader gender-based work, including in the tuna industry. In August 1999 at the 1st Heads of Fisheries meeting, most delegates were highly supportive of the section’s work, though some thought it was attempting to do too much without perhaps sufficient skills, and one perceived a bias towards women’s interests.

The dissenting views reflected that, in the region, opinions on the relevance of women in fisheries were in flux. The terminology and concepts that were acceptable to Pacific Island countries and regional fisheries agencies were debated. Apparently women-only projects sometimes caused negative reactions. In the Global Women in Fisheries Symposium (2001), Lyn Lambeth and colleagues discussed alternatives such as inclusive or “cross-cutting” positions or agencies that would be concerned with “equal opportunity and involvement of men and women in development and management activities, rather than the specific promotion of women’s involvement” (Lambeth et al. 2002). This explains the change of name of the SPC section relevant to women in fisheries.

The report of the Community Fisheries Section at the 2nd Heads of Fisheries meeting in 2001 provided a history of the development of the section and its work, with a new emphasis on community-based fisheries management, albeit with a focus on women. The meeting did not appear to discuss women’s or community fisheries issues, perhaps indicating that the area was already falling off the agenda.

By the 3rd Heads of Fisheries meeting in 2003, the Community Fisheries Section had become the Coastal Fisheries Management Section to broaden the focus further to other aspects of

fisheries management. The only mention of the word “women” in the 3rd Heads of Fisheries meeting outputs summary was the following: “The lack of specific mention of gender, or women in fisheries, in the objectives of the Coastal Fisheries Programme Strategic Plan was noted by the meeting. Although gender is included at the fundamental cross-cutting level of ‘basic principles and specific policies’ in the Annex to the plan, the meeting felt that the issue should also be expressed as a specific strategy or objective at a high level within the plan the next time that this ‘living document’ is published.”

The journey away from a women’s focus was now almost complete, but was it? By the time of the meeting, Aliti Vunisea (the first editor of WIF) had joined SPC as the Coastal Fisheries Management Officer and Mecki Kronen as Community Fisheries Scientist. They both worked on PROCFish (2002–2009), funded by the European Union and Pacific partners (Pinca et al. 2010), which collected and analysed a large volume of sex-disaggregated coastal fishing data (Pinca et al. 2010). From 2008 to 2010, PROCFish started producing the results of its in-depth country coastal fisheries assessments, including sex-disaggregated data for fishing, culminating in 2012 with its final synthesis report. The report (Pinca et al. 2010) included important and new gender-specific results that even now have not been given enough recognition. For example, the study found that in Pacific countries, finfisheries for commercial purposes are mainly the domain of men, with women catching finfish mainly for home consumption, except in parts of Melanesia where women also market their finfish. For most types of invertebrates, however, women and men spend about the same amount of time fishing and catch about the same amount of product. The analyses were led by Mecki Kronen and Aliti Vunisea, yet overall, the reports often seemed reluctant to highlight the results for gender or to draw policy-relevant conclusions for gendered action.

Meanwhile, at the 4th, 5th, and 6th Heads of Fisheries meetings (2004, 2006 and 2009, respectively), women and gender issues were no longer prominent in SPC’s fisheries work, except for a rather unusual paper on “Social and gender considerations of the tuna industry in Pacific Island countries (PICs)” presented at the 5th meeting.

At the 2009 meeting, the staffing of all SPC fisheries programmes was reported to be about one-third female, but the data were not disaggregated by type and level of employee. In 2009, the European Union funded SciCOFish project was just about to start. One component of the project involved case studies on employment of women and men in fisheries and environmental research and management in Solomon Islands, Tonga and Marshall Islands. The results showed that women made up only 18% of

the total number of staff, or 25% if observers were taken out of the calculations (Tuara and Passfield 2011). However, women made up more than 60% of administrative and clerical staff.

The 7th (2011) and 8th (2013) Heads of Fisheries meetings, and an informal meeting in 2012, did not address any women/gender in fisheries issues. The WIF Information Bulletin seems to be the only work on women in fisheries now done by SPC.

Conclusions on the larger story of women in fisheries at SPC

The results of studying key SPC documents show that from 1989 to the present, a period of 25 years, women’s interests in fisheries and aquaculture have only been intermittently addressed by SPC’s fisheries programmes. Women in fisheries professional positions were filled in 1991 (one year only) and from 1995 to 2001, during which time women’s positions became community fisheries positions and then were effectively absorbed into more general coastal fisheries work. Project work, especially PROCFish and a small element of SciCOFish, staffed by competent women in fisheries researchers, included very valuable gender studies, even in projects that seemed reluctant to show that they were addressing gender. Indeed, in the case of PROCFish, the outcomes of the project from a gender perspective need to be further published and more widely used and promoted to guide the programmes of SPC and national agencies fisheries. The studies are unique and valuable.

The written records of high-level SPC meetings show that when SPC has undertaken women/gender work, it has achieved a high standard — as indeed it does in all its work — and the work has been appreciated by Pacific countries. Several times, the Secretariat was requested to raise the funds to continue or expand the work. However, when the Secretariat did not achieve this, and took the topic off the agenda, the issue was not raised by the countries. This has been the case since 2001, although substantial work has been done under PROCFish and SciCOFish.

In addition to supporting the *Women in Fisheries Information Bulletin*, where will SPC go now on women/gender in aquaculture and fisheries?

The first step must be to immediately revisit the Strategic Plan, with a small group of women/gender in aquaculture, fisheries and development experts from the region and beyond, to develop some sound objectives and targets. Gender equality must be brought into the new objectives as a social justice issue in addition to recognition of the economic case that can be made in its favour. To support such efforts, maximum use must be made of the PROCFish findings and all other relevant data and publications. A simple first step would be to

create gender-themed pages on the FAME website and make all relevant SPC publications available. All publications relating to women/gender issues must be digitised. Although the Digital Library is excellent, it requires a reasonable level of knowledge of the types of documents that are available to search. A gender page could provide guidance and easier access to content.

To date, SPC's women/gender work has largely related to fisheries; women must not be left behind in aquaculture as it develops. In other regions, signs are already emerging that this is indeed happening.

Finally, all organisations that have previously ignored gender find that major internal cultural and attitudinal changes are required when gender is added to the programme. These changes need enlightened leadership and time. As the key fisheries and aquaculture regional body, SPC must both lead itself and be the leader. The *Women in Fisheries Information Bulletin* is well established and highly respected. It will be the perfect platform from which SPC can show the region what it is doing and how it is changing.

Acknowledgements

Most of the information for this article was sourced from the reports and papers available in the SPC FAME digital library.

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Women in fisheries development

Shirley Steele¹

Source: Paper presented at the South Pacific Commission Twenty-third Regional Technical Meeting on Fisheries (Noumea, New Caledonia, 5–9 August 1991).

Women in the South Pacific have always played a major role in fishing communities, yet it is only during the past decade that consideration has been given to bring women into the fisheries development process. This paper will briefly (1) analyse what “women in development” means and more specifically what “women in fisheries development” means; (2) review some of the mistakes that have been made with respect to “women in development” and (3) explore some concepts critical to the implementation of an integrated development programme that promotes the enhanced quality of a fisherwoman’s life.

Before looking at the concept of development, I would like to mention that while I am relatively new to the area of fisheries, I have been involved in “women in development” (WID) issues both in Canada and in Papua New Guinea. Having spent a large portion of my first three months at SPC familiarising myself with literature pertaining to women in fisheries, I have concluded that many of the issues that need to be addressed relating to women in fisheries development are the same as those which have been and continue to be addressed within the general area of women in development. I must also say that I am not so presumptuous as to suggest this session will even begin to address all the issues as this subject is extremely complex, one which needs much attention and thought. What I do hope this workshop will accomplish is that it will act as a catalyst for future dialogue and stimulate people to consider new ways to approach women in fisheries development.

Development

The one obvious fact that I have personally encountered and observed and which is reinforced by the literature on women in development is that in the past, women’s economic roles have been undervalued and ineffectively supported, their potential as partners in development largely ignored, and their needs and interests as human beings neglected. When you consider that nearly 50 per cent of the population in the developing countries are women, we must also

then acknowledge that 50 per cent of the population in these countries are not achieving their full potential as individuals in their own right nor as economically productive members of the community.

To address this imbalance that has existed throughout the world, the concept of women in development has evolved. Although every country and every organisation may have its own specific definition relating to WID, I believe it would be accurate to say that the general aim of WID is to allow women to participate on an equal basis with men in the social, economic, and political processes. More precisely but consistent with the general aim of women in development, FAO states that the basic goal for women in fisheries development is to make them equal partners, and productive and self-reliant participants, in the process of improving their own and their family’s nutritional and living standards, and to enable them to realise their full potential as human beings in their own right and as members of their family and community (Raque and Tietae 1988).

Today then when I speak of improving the role of women in fisheries development, I am referring to the process approach that will eventuate into women being equal partners, productive and self-reliant participants within their fishing community.

I think it is worthwhile to mention that equality does not necessarily mean the same. I have frequently heard the comment that equality amongst the sexes is impossible because men and women are different. Yes, men and women are different, and will most likely have different roles within the fishing community but that doesn’t mean they are unequal. Equality or equity recognises differences between human beings, acknowledges that men are different from women, that Australians are different from Canadians, but does not attribute greater value to one over the other. So when I speak of equality for women in fisheries development, I am not suggesting that women be necessarily treated in the same way as men but that they, and the role they

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play, must be accorded equal value to men and their roles. Equal partners imply that neither partner is superior or more important even though they have different roles within the family and community.

Past mistakes

There have been numerous studies done in the last number of years to determine the progress that has been made in terms of advancement of women, particularly those in the rural areas since International Women's Year. The picture is far from brilliant. In fact a general consensus is that the developing world is littered with projects that have failed (Mathie and Cox 1987).

From discussions I have had with various people since being with SPC, there appears to be a genuine interest within the Commission and its member countries to pursue initiatives within women in fisheries development. While it is encouraging to see this increasing interest, it is vital we don't continue to repeat the mistakes that have been made in the past with women in development projects. If we can learn from the past mistakes, then even those projects that have been labelled as failures will contribute to the future successes.

What then were some of the mistakes?

- A. The concept of women's work and lack of recognition of the woman's role in the community.

The unpaid, unrecognised nature of much of the women's work leads to lack of status recognition and confusion over who are the productive members of the family. Every society has its own ways of assigning worth to individuals but too often an individual's worth and value is based on how much they earn. As women have not been traditionally paid for their work, their roles have often been perceived as unimportant and non-productive.

We must, therefore, begin to accept the fact that women do real work. In fact, they usually work longer hours, a "double day" — producing and preparing food and supplying the other basic needs of their families, and communities such as water, fuel, shelter, health care, child care and other household chores. International statistics claim most women do two thirds of all the world's work, yet only receive one tenth of all the world's income (Mathie and Cox 1987). But because most of their work centres on the family and as they do not receive wages, society fails to call this important contribution of women "work", and consequently it is not given value.

If development is to be beneficial to society at large, recognition and awareness regarding the

work of rural women and the enormous importance of their contribution must be heightened.

- B. Another mistake that has been frequently made is that of mounting/developing women's programs in isolation. There are two aspects of isolation that need to be addressed.

First, men must not be excluded from the development process for women, and women must not work in isolation. Without support from men, it is often difficult for women to move ahead. This is why it is very important for husbands, fathers and brothers to understand the value of what women are trying to do. Encouraging men's support rather than men's alienation will surely help the women to reach their goals and be more productive.

I think it is fair to say that men hold the balance of power in the South Pacific. Therefore if men are not part of the solutions to the problems facing women, the chances of the solutions working are very limited. Men must be made aware of the concerns of women, the needs of women and understand what the women are striving for. (In recognition of the customs in various countries where women are not encouraged to speak out, it will be the responsibility of the male leaders and the planners to ensure that the women are invited to articulate their concerns and needs.) Men must be given the opportunity to participate in the development process for women — I am not suggesting men dictate policies and programmes but if they are ignored and excluded the women can't expect to receive support from men for on-going activities.

Back in Canada, I would suggest that one of the major mistakes the feminist movement made in its initial stages was excluding men from the movement. What eventuated was that there were groups of women throughout Canada who had their awareness heightened and who now realised that they had not been given equal opportunity rather had been relegated to traditional roles, which were no longer acceptable to them. But the men who held the power in Canada, be it in government, banking or business, had largely been ignored throughout this awareness period and when women reached the stage of wanting some choice in their destiny, society in general (which was largely controlled by men) was not receptive to these concerns and interests of the women. It is my belief that this lack of receptiveness was primarily the result of lack of understanding and awareness. Another aspect that was lacking was the infrastructure to absorb these enlightened

women — women who now wanted to be part of the paid working world.

It has only been in the last 10 years that we have seen real progress in the area of equality for women in Canada and much of this is the result of finally bringing men into the development process and creating an awareness throughout all of society on the potential of women as full economic, political and social partners.

The other mistake that has been made in respect to isolation is to believe that by providing women with some training and economic opportunities, the women's lives will be enhanced. Past experiences have demonstrated that one does not necessarily follow the other.

As I have already mentioned, many of the village women are presently doing a double day's work. By introducing training sessions, income-generating opportunities, we may be adding to the burdens of women rather than helping them live more productive lives. Unfortunately for women, development has often meant an increased workload, not a diminished workload. Development must, therefore, consider ways of lessening their burdens so that they can have more time for the welfare of their family and for cash generating activities. Planners must begin to design training and support services that will help reduce the workload so that they have the time to develop skills and resources that will give them some economic rewards.

For example, in order to make fish processing economically viable, it is usually not sufficient to simply train women in improved fishing preservation and processing techniques. It may also be necessary to provide support and/or training in childcare, sanitation, water and fuel supply, banking, business practises and improved methods of food preparation.

- C. A third mistake that has been made in respect to development scale projects is not considering the impact male-dominated development programmes will have on women and on community life. Past experiences have demonstrated that large-scale development projects, mechanisation and improved technologies that have largely been aimed at men can have a negative rippling effect on women's lives. Great care must be taken to minimise this negative side of development programmes and activities.

In *New directions for women in non-formal education*, Mathie and Cox (1987) present a number

of examples, which illustrate how the women's positions as individuals has worsened as the result of improved technology.

In the Vaimo district of West Sepik, Papua New Guinea, it was found that the introduction of speedboats, outboard motors and nylon nets did positively impact on the income of men. The negative side to this development was that men were frequently away from home, away from their responsibilities to the family, thus leaving the women with much more work to do as a result. It was also found that very little of the increased income was directed back to the family.

In the Southern Highlands province of Papua New Guinea, village people live on a diet of sago and fish. New technologies have changed travel from canoes with paddles to dinghies with outboard motors. Fishing is now done on a large scale with nets. Although these things seem to make life easier, it is becoming clear that there are fewer fish and the grasses where many prawn and crayfish used to hide are disappearing because of increased pollution. These changes may help men to make more money but are reducing the women's capacities to support themselves and their families (Mathie and Cox 1987).

While it is important to support and encourage improvements and enhanced economic opportunities for men as well as women, these activities must take into account the impact they will have on women. Just as it is critical that men are part of development for women, the converse is just as important — women must be included in the development process that is mainly aimed at men. Often, it is only by talking to the women that the outsider can determine the real needs and constraints within the village.

There are a number of other mistakes that have been made but due to time limitations I have only touched on those that I see as the major ones.

So what can we do?

To address the imbalances and the injustices that women have experienced in the past, and to ensure success in the area of women in fisheries development it is crucial that the framework for all fisheries development be based on three important concepts: sensitivity, integration and support. To help you to remember these three points, I have called it the SIS design.

- A. ***Sensitivity.*** Planners and field staff must be sensitive to local patterns and methods of work, traditional attitudes and habits and existing economic and social structures,

including women's roles. They must understand and be empathetic toward the real and perceived needs of the people the project is designed to assist. They must allow women to be involved in the decision making processes as sensitivity cannot occur if planners ignore what the women have to say.

- B. **Integration.** Women's development should not be separately planned or treated in isolation. They must be part of the regional development strategies and/or local government directives.

Women's development programmes that are mounted in isolation often marginalise women further from the mainstream economy. The activities can be specific to women but part of the mainstream. An example of this is my own programme and position. Even though my programme is specific to women it has been mainstreamed into Fisheries and (I hope) is seen as being as important as projects primarily aimed at men. I believe it is important to have a Women's Fisheries Programme Officer at this time to ensure that women's concerns and needs are fairly addressed but our ultimate goal should be complete integration of development activities thus eliminating the need for a WFPO. This however will only occur when women have been accorded true equality within society.

- C. **Support.** Women must be given appropriate organisational, technical and financial support for their domestic, economic and social activities. This essentially means that it may be imperative to provide the necessities of life so that the women can make better use of their time. It also may mean introducing technologies that would improve the efficiency of their activities and not one that would displace them. In still others it is providing the necessary equipment and training to bring them into the realm of modernising for advancement.

This support can be demonstrated in various ways:

- a. research aimed at developing improved technologies for fish processing or non-fisheries enterprises in which women are engaged;
- b. provision of banking service and credit facilities;
- c. extension services and training;
- d. improved facilities that will ease the burden of domestic chores such as collecting water and fuel;
- e. better sanitation, housing and medical facilities;
- f. nursery day schools;
- g. introduction of improved methods of food preparation and cooking; and
- h. ensuring women have equal legal rights to property and other assets.

If you propose to establish an income-generating project with and for the women within a village, you will need to look at the other factors that impact on the women's success within the project, consideration may need to be given to childcare, sanitation and water supply. Therefore, not only should fisheries advisors be brought into the planning process but also rural development advisors, youth workers and possibly health care workers. In doing this, the project becomes completely integrated and addresses all the factors that could contribute to the success or failure of the project.

Conclusion

To conclude my comments I would like to refer to an article by Penelope Schoeffel (1985), "Women in the Fisheries of the South Pacific".

In this article, Ms Schoeffel points out that Government Fisheries Departments in the South Pacific are primarily committed to the development of commercial and industrial fisheries, which involve training local men to become full-time professional fishermen or skilled workers on government or private industrial fisheries vessels. She further states that the subsistence and small part-time fisheries characteristic of most fishing communities in the South Pacific receives little attention in the face of more pressing national economic priorities. Since contribution is greatest in subsistence fishing and in selling fish on local markets it tends to be ignored or under-estimated.

Ms Schoeffel's conclusion is that the fundamental structure of fisheries development in the South Pacific is the greatest barrier to increasing women's participation in fisheries. While she recognises an understanding and appreciation of the reasons why regional governments pursue this type of development in fisheries, she purports that a more balanced policy in fisheries development is required which would allocate more staff, funds and other technical resources to increasing the efficiency and productivity of small-scale part-time commercial fisherwomen and women fish vendors.

Therefore, in addition to my previous comments as to what is required to implement development programmes successfully, attention must be given to Government policies and strategies and analyse the impact they have on the quality of women's lives. Sensitivity, integration and support is not only required at the community level but also at the government level.

As Ms Schoeffel has expressed in her article it is understandable why regional governments are committed to large commercial ventures — economic growth is essential for the development and stability of any country. It is therefore not logical to suggest that governments halt all large commercial and industrial fisheries development — these still have to be fostered. But the government must carefully plan the ventures to ensure that one segment of the community or country is not benefiting at the expense of another. Should the development of commercial initiatives have a negative impact on a group of individuals, it is then the government's responsibility to incorporate some corrective action to redress these potential imbalances.

All of you present today modifying government policies that may unintentionally have a negative impact on certain segments of the population in the South Pacific. Even though governments have not intentionally set out to discriminate against women, we can no longer ignore the negative rippling effect of economic initiatives upon women. Consideration must be given to incorporating at the national level policies and programmes that will help to offset some of the detrimental consequences of social and economic change. Just as men must support women and women support men, so must governments support community initiatives and concerns. Without this support, local initiatives will not be sustainable.

As I stated in my introduction, the issue of women in fisheries development is extremely complex and cannot be resolved easily or quickly. I have only briefly touched upon some of the problems and some possible actions that can be taken to assist the women in fishing communities. What is important now is that we recognise that there are actions that we can pursue that will empower women to be self-reliant and partners in development. A famous quote from John F. Kennedy was "Ask not what your country can do for you but what you can do for your country." To conclude I leave with you a similar remark, "Ask not what the women can do for you but what you can do for the women."

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Supporting women in fisheries

Paper prepared by the Women's Fisheries Development Section, Secretariat of the Pacific Community

Source: Information Paper 11 presented at the South Pacific Commission Twenty-sixth Regional Technical Meeting on Fisheries (Noumea, New Caledonia, 5–9 August 1996).

The concept of “women in fisheries” continues to baffle and amuse those who believe that fisheries are the exclusive domain of men. The view is that men use an array of gear and employ techniques requiring dexterity to catch fish. Women, on the other hand, do not catch fish but merely walk along the reef picking up shellfish by hand. This generalisation of women's involvement in fisheries is based on the restricted definition of what is entailed in “fisheries”. There is a saying, “men only catch fish, while women do everything else”, which refers to the active role women play in the preparation and sale of marine resources. Studies by Schoeffel (1985), Chapman (1987), Mathews (1991), the Commonwealth Secretariat (1989, 1990) and others have shown that many women do catch fish using poles and lines, nets and other techniques employed by men. In addition, they are responsible for gutting, drying, salting, and preparing the catch for preservation and consumption, and in most island countries are exclusively responsible for the marketing of the catch.

However, recognising that women play a significant role in the fisheries sector does not necessarily mean that they are accorded the support required for development. This paper takes a look at the rationale for supporting women in fisheries, looks at the type of assistance required, and provides suggestions for support, examples of national and regional initiatives and areas for future development.

Supporting women in fisheries — Why bother?

In countries of the region, the subsistence fishing carried out by women — catching lagoon resources primarily for the family diet — is not seen as a priority development area. With limited finances to support development initiatives, the tendency of national planners is to invest in research, training, equipment, and credit resources for developing commercial, export-oriented fishing activities. The aim is to encourage activities that will bring in income for the country. Figures documenting the contribution of commercial fisheries to national revenue justify the support provided each year.

However, a closer look at the activities of women shows that women contribute not only to the

national revenue of many island countries, but to the well-being of the population as a whole, as detailed below:

1. Commercial value of women's fishing activities

In many island countries, women harvest marine resources of commercial value. These resources include beche-de-mer, trochus, black pearl oysters and freshwater clams. Indeed in countries with limited tuna and other deep-sea resources, the financial contribution to the national budget from such resources as trochus and black pearl oysters may be significant.

2. Provision of protein in diets

Women tend to fish every day, while men fish less often. In some instances, women's fish collection may actually contribute more substantially to Pacific Island diets than men's efforts (Mathews 1991). In countries with access to limited or expensive meat and dairy resources, there is a dependence on the dietary protein provided by shellfish, crustaceans, seaweed and reef fish caught by women.

3. The importance of coastal subsistence fisheries

According to Ram-Bidesi (1994), the subsistence sector (to which women's fisheries belong) supports more than three and a half million people in the Pacific today, almost two thirds of the region's entire population. Figures for the mean annual coastal fisheries production of the region from 1989 to 1994 show the total subsistence catch of 83,914 tonnes to be nearly four times that of the total commercial catch at 24,325 tonnes (Dalzell et al. 1995).

4. Fisherwomen as resource banks of information

Because they fish on a daily basis, women possess a vast knowledge of the biology and ecology of marine resources. Their knowledge of local distribution, relative abundance, “catchability” and daily seasonal variability of resources, appropriate procurement techniques and inter-relationships between these factors is their forte and outside the domain

of most men's expertise (Chapman 1987). For this reason, Botkin (1980, cited in Chapman 1987) has recommended that in Fiji, women rather than men should be consulted about fisheries matters.

5. The co-operation of women as resource users to achieve sustainable development

Possibly every national fisheries development plan in the region will include the goal of developing and managing fisheries resources on a sustainable basis. However, the focus may be on gathering data solely on the dynamics of resources (population, distribution, life cycles) while forgetting the role of resource users in exploiting the resources. Where there is research carried out on the habits of resource users, it may only focus on fishermen. In order to get a comprehensive view of resource exploitation, the activities of both fishermen and fisherwomen must be taken into consideration. The promotion of sustainable development requires both comprehensive data, as well as the participation of all resource users. In this respect, two-way communication is necessary between the resource users and the resource managers.

Accepting that women in fisheries are worthy of support leads to the next step of determining the type of support required by them.

What do women in fisheries want?

In many countries it may be difficult to ascertain what support women in the fisheries sector actually require. Written information documenting their activities may be absent and oral information sketchy. In addition, there may be little interaction between fisheries departments, women's government and non-government agencies, and fisherwomen.

However, a number of countries and organisations in the region have carried out research to determine the needs of women in fisheries. Feedback from fisherwomen concerning the type of assistance required from fisheries departments includes information on alternative fishing techniques, provision of fishing gear, credit, training in marketing and management skills, and the improvement of market facilities.

The availability of transport to the market and restaurants to sell marine products is a common problem facing women. Transportation to the collection area is also a problem for women as they have limited or no access to fishing boats. In addition, storage and processing facilities are lacking in many countries. Women would like to market more than they do but lack the facilities to store and prepare quality seafood products.

Assistance can therefore be classified into two areas: the provision of information and training, and the provision of support services including

credit, equipment and infrastructure services such as transport, storage and processing facilities.

Where to begin? National initiatives

Once the decision has been taken by a national government to support women in fisheries, the challenge is to decide where to begin. Over the past 18 months, a number of fisheries departments have contacted the SPC Women's Fisheries Development Project for assistance in incorporating the interests of women within fisheries development programmes.

A look at national support initiatives taken by such countries as Papua New Guinea and Tuvalu show that the first step has been to hold a round-table meeting of fisherwomen and representatives of fisheries, internal affairs, development ministries and women's government and non government agencies to determine the ways in which women in the fisheries sector can be provided with assistance. Such meetings have led to the formulation of a policy geared to encourage the development and support of women in fisheries activities. The input of women's organisations such as the National Council of Women has been beneficial in developing such a policy. However, a policy in itself is not of benefit unless there is a formal mechanism for implementing policy strategies.

In Papua New Guinea, there is the "Women in Fisheries Development Project Steering Committee", which acts as a formal decision-making body for implementing the work programme in support of women's activities. Working closely with the National Council of Women, and the Department of Religion, Home Affairs and Youth, the National Fisheries Authority has brought together the technical expertise of fisheries personnel and the networking of women's organisations to provide training to village women in developing income-generating ventures.

Tonga is another country that has taken formal steps within the fisheries department. The Tonga Ministry of Fisheries has been structured to include a unit responsible for "women's development". Since its establishment in 1989, the unit has been involved in executing extension work in rural areas for both men and women (Ngahe 1995; Ngahe and Vichman 1995).

Where countries may lack a formal policy and mechanism for supporting women's projects in fisheries, assistance may be provided on an ad hoc basis.

Fisheries departments tend to form links with fisherwomen through the provision of training programmes. Examples include the provision of workshops on freshwater clam (Fiji), beche-de-mer (Vanuatu) and post-harvest handling (Kiribati and Solomon Islands). However, although

training is extremely beneficial, attention must be paid to ensuring support services are available. For example, there is no point teaching women how to process fish and market fish if ice is not readily accessible and market facilities are non-existent.

In addition, the provision of training on setting up a seafood business is not feasible if there are no credit schemes available to provide loans to potential businesswomen. The task then is to ensure that support services are in place (access to water, fuel, transport, credit and equipment) in order to implement the knowledge gained through training.

In order to make women more self sufficient, countries have encouraged income-generating activities. Examples of such ventures include clam farming (Solomon Islands, Palau), prawn farming (Solomon Islands), seaweed farming (Kiribati, Fiji), freshwater clam fishing (Fiji), tilapia farming (Fiji), and beche-de-mer fishing (Papua New Guinea, Vanuatu and Tonga).

How can the SPC Women's Fisheries Development Project provide support?

A progress report on the activities of the SPC Women's Fisheries Development Project (WFDP) shows that the type of support provided over the last 18 months has tended to be in four main areas: providing a mechanism for regional networking; providing technical advice to fisheries governments on supporting women in fisheries activities; supporting research into collecting information on the activities and needs of women in fisheries; and the provision of training.

However, although information concerning the services of the WFDP has been distributed to all the member countries of the region, requests for assistance tend to come from about a third of member countries. With the project ending in February 1997, the question is whether member countries feel there is a need to continue the project.

Should member countries decide that the project should be extended beyond February 1997, donor funds will be needed to support continuation. With Canadian funding ending, other donors have been approached for assistance. Unfortunately, to date, donors appear to be interested in providing only short-term support; for example, offering to finance a national or regional workshop. However, if deemed necessary by member countries, every attempt will be made to secure continued funding for the project.

Although the future work programme of the project will need to be guided by member countries, possible suggestions for future activities include the following:

1. Research through the carrying out of in-depth country assessments to collect both qualitative and quantitative data on the role of women in the fisheries sector.
2. The provision of training programmes.
3. In-country training attachments. Where necessary, attachments for women to undertake specialised training in other countries can be arranged by the project. In addition, the transfer of technical expertise from one country to another can be encouraged.
4. The maintenance of a regional network of information exchange. One mechanism for the exchange of ideas, knowledge and experience concerning the participation of women in fisheries is the creation of a Special Interest Group newsletter.

On the other hand, should member countries feel that the WFDP is of low priority then a number of other avenues can be explored. Apart from terminating the project altogether, one option is for it to be merged into an existing Coastal Fisheries Project. A second option is for the project to be merged into an existing Commission Programme. The activities of women in fisheries include issues of health and nutrition, household food security, and women in development and as such the possibility of transferring the project to another programme is worth exploring.

Whatever the outcome, ideally, one would hope that the ultimate decision concerning the future of regional support for women in fisheries is made by fisheries departments in collaboration with fisherwomen, and representatives of women's government and non-government organisations.

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An overview of the involvement of women in fisheries activities in Oceania

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Source: Williams M.J., Chao N.H., Choo P.S., Matics K., Nandeesha M.C., Shariff M., Siason I., Tech E. and Wong J.M.C. (eds.). 2002. *Global Symposium on Women in Fisheries*. Penang, Malaysia: ICLARM – The World Fish Center. 209 p.

Abstract

In the Pacific Islands, an estimated 70 to 80% of the catch from inshore fisheries is used for subsistence purposes. It is uncertain what percentage of that is taken by women, although a recent study in Samoa found that 18% of all village fishers are female, who harvest around 23% of the total weight of seafood. Aside from traditional activities such as inshore harvesting and seafood processing for the family, women are becoming increasingly active in small businesses involving marine resources.

Australia and New Zealand possess established commercial fishing industry sectors, and women's involvement in fisheries in those two countries tends to be different from their largely subsistence and artisanal involvement in the majority of Pacific Island countries and territories. Countries with large-scale, on-shore processing facilities show a relatively large percentage of women employed in the commercial fishing industry — in New Zealand about 34% of the fishing industry workforce are women.

This paper brings together information from the vast region of Oceania, including Polynesia, Micronesia, Melanesia, Australia and New Zealand. It also examines research and development needs; government policies with regard to women's role in fisheries; and constraints that affect women's involvement in fisheries management and development in Oceania.

Introduction

Oceania includes Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific Islands — a region with enormous differences in geography, culture, language, available resources, and economic development. Australia and New Zealand are considered to be developed countries with prosperous economies. The Pacific Islands, on the other hand, are usually considered to be developing economies. In many, economic development is hindered by isolation from markets, lack of natural resources, and minimal infrastructure. Trade deficits are often made up for by remittances from expatriates, and by foreign aid and assistance. Many have a large subsistence sector that contributes substantially to household food security.

The Pacific Islands are often grouped into the three subregions of Polynesia (southeast), Micronesia (north) and Melanesia (west). Spread over 30 million km², more than 98% of which consist of ocean, the islands feature great geographical diversity. Melanesian islands tend to be large, mountainous and volcanic (with rich soils, mineral deposits and plentiful marine resources), while the Polynesian and Micronesian islands are smaller with fewer resources. Some, such as Kiribati, Marshall Islands (Micronesia),

Tokelau and Tuvalu (Polynesia), consist of low-lying atolls, only one or two metres above sea level.

The geography of the islands has influenced the degree of dependency on marine resources. Seafood is not as important in the subsistence diets of the larger Melanesian islands as it is in the smaller countries (Coyne et al. 1984). For many countries however, particularly in land-deficient Micronesia and Polynesia, fresh fish and invertebrates caught in coastal waters are a staple source of protein. The world average per capita seafood consumption is around 13 kg — in the Pacific Islands it is estimated to vary from around 20 kg per year in larger island countries such as Papua New Guinea, to over 200 kg per year in the low-lying coral atoll nations such as Kiribati, the highest per capita seafood consumption in the world (Gillett and Lightfoot 2001). These figures include locally harvested fish and invertebrates as well as imported seafood products. Marine resources remain an important part of the diet for many Pacific Islanders, and increasingly provide income to communities with few other available economic opportunities.

Traditionally, fishing beyond the reef was the domain of men, while women concentrated their

activities on fishing and collecting invertebrates within lagoons and inshore areas. The same is still practised today, although in many countries women can be found fishing from boats, usually with husbands or brothers. Women continue to be responsible for much of the processing and marketing of their own and their husbands' catches.

Pacific Island states have been keen to encourage the development of offshore fishing activities, to generate income and to reduce pressure on inshore resources. Because the offshore fishery primarily involves men, most initiatives have concentrated on supporting men's activities in development and management of fisheries in the region. Until recently, little has been done to document the activities of women, to identify women's potential for involvement in development and management opportunities, or to assess problems such as over-harvesting or the impact of development on women's fishing areas.

In Australia and New Zealand, as in the Pacific Islands, women's issues and concerns have received scant attention within the fishing industry, and women's contributions have been largely invisible until very recently. Coastal Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in Australia, and Maori communities in New Zealand, were traditionally dependent on marine resources and continue many of their customary fishing activities today. Women's involvement in fisheries in those communities is closely aligned with that of women in the Pacific region.

Australia and New Zealand also possess well-established commercial fishing industry sectors, and women's involvement in commercial fisheries in those two countries tends to be different from their largely subsistence and artisanal involvement in the majority of Pacific Island countries and territories. Areas with large-scale, on-shore processing facilities show a relatively large percentage of women employed in the commercial fishing industry. In addition, in Australia and New Zealand women have substantial, but largely unrecognised involvement in family-based fishing businesses, where they are often responsible for tasks such as correspondence, record keeping, organising the sale of the catch, and ordering supplies.

Australia and New Zealand also have a substantial recreational fisheries sector, in which women play a role, both in participation in the sport or recreation, and in providing goods and services to the sector.

Inshore fisheries in the Pacific Islands

An estimated 70 to 80% of the catch from inshore fisheries in the Pacific Islands (reefs, estuaries and freshwater) is used for subsistence purposes, with the remaining 20% going to commercial markets

(Dalzell et al. 1996; Gillett and Lightfoot 2001). Very few studies have examined the subsistence contribution to inshore catch, an area of fisheries in which women are traditionally involved. However, there are studies that suggest women's contribution is substantial (Avalos 1995; Rawlinson et al. 1995; Passfield et al. 2001). Traditional fishing activities in the Pacific Islands are generally segregated, with men focusing on offshore areas, and women's activities confined to inshore areas. Aside from traditional activities such as inshore harvesting and seafood processing for the family, women are increasingly taking up economic opportunities offered by small businesses involving marine resources. When domestic commercial fisheries develop, they are often employed in various capacities onshore. Women also play a significant role, directly and indirectly, in the three main aquaculture industries in the region — pearls in Cook Islands and French Polynesia, prawns in New Caledonia, and seaweed in Kiribati and Fiji.

Polynesia

The Polynesian nations of the central Pacific include Tonga, Samoa, American Samoa, Cook Islands, Wallis and Futuna, French Polynesia, Pitcairn Islands, Niue, Tokelau, and Tuvalu. Polynesian islands vary from volcanic islands with some fertile land to low-lying coral atolls or phosphate rock islands. Most have barrier or fringing reefs, often with large protected lagoons.

In Samoa, women and children collect many species of shellfish, sea cucumbers, sea urchins, octopus, crabs, and seaweed from the inshore area at low tide. Often, the only tools are a bush knife or short stick for probing coral holes or prising up shellfish, and a bag or container for the catch. A recent study of subsistence fisheries in Samoa found that 18% of all village fishers are females who harvest around 23% of the total weight of seafood (Passfield et al. 2001). Considering women are responsible for collecting most of the marine bivalves and other invertebrates in Samoa, they would provide close to 20% of the per capita seafood consumption of 71 kg per year (made up of 44 kg of fish, 13 kg of invertebrates and seaweed, and 14 kg of canned fish).

In Niue, an elevated former atoll with a very narrow fringing reef, women collect at least 40 different invertebrate and three seaweed species for food, including chitons, limpets, vermetid snails, nerites, drupe shells, bivalves, crabs, sea urchins, and sea cucumbers (Lambeth and Fay-Sauni 2001). Many other species are collected for shell craft. At first glance, the rugged coastline and small reef flat area would appear to have few resources that could be utilised, but up to half of its fisheries production (fish and invertebrates) is estimated to come from the fringing reef (Dalzell et al. 1993). As well as

harvesting invertebrates, Niuean women fish with homemade rods and lines and join the rest of the community in catching juvenile goatfish, *Mulloidops flavolineatus*, when the fish school in shallow waters from December to March. As in many Pacific Islands, it has long been taboo for women in Niue to go out on boats. Although this is slowly changing, their involvement in fisheries is still mostly confined to harvesting from the small reef flat, processing their own and the men's catch, and some marketing activities (Tuara 2000).

In Tuvalu, women's role in fisheries has changed with the introduction of the outboard motor — men now find it easier and quicker to provide regular supplies of pelagic fish for the family and for sale. Women see less need to supplement the family diet with seafood from their inshore fishing and collecting activities and feel that fishing with motorboats is a distinctly male occupation (Lambeth 2000). Women collect more now for enjoyment and as a social activity with other women, but they remain the main processors and marketers of fish and fish products.

In the small French Territory of Wallis and Futuna, geography has dictated traditional roles of men and women. On Futuna, villages are built around a very narrow coastal strip and gardens are planted on the mountainside, which rises abruptly from the coast. To work the gardens means a steep climb and extended time away from the home, and agriculture is an almost exclusively male job. Men fish from small boats (mainly trolling and bottom fishing) and use cast nets and spear lobsters, but it is the women who provide the daily catch of seafood. The island of Wallis, on the other hand, is relatively flat compared with Futuna and gardens are in convenient spots, relatively close to the villages. Agriculture is not exclusively a male activity on Wallis, and women are not involved in fishing to the same extent as Futunan women.

Micronesia

Micronesia includes the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), Guam, Palau, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, and Nauru. Much of Micronesia is characterised by small, remote and widespread island states and territories with few natural resources.

Kiribati consists of 33 coral atolls (with the exception of Banaba, a phosphate rock island), spread over a vast area of the Pacific, straddling both the equator and the international dateline. It is widely believed that women's fishing activities in Kiribati are confined to reef gleaning (Taniera and Mitchell 1995); however, women also use gill nets, rods and lines, traditional fish traps and catch octopus at night using hooked metal rods and coconut frond flares or kerosene pressure lamps as a light source.

Traditionally, women also caught fish using poison from the sea cucumber, *Holothuria atra*.

In South Tarawa, this poison has sometimes been replaced with tobacco. Women are the main harvesters of the bivalve, *Anadara* sp., with the 1,400 tonnes yearly harvest making it one of the largest fisheries in South Tarawa. In the outer islands many women are also involved in *Eucheuma* seaweed farming — an export industry of considerable importance to many communities. Women undertake much of the processing and marketing of fish for domestic consumption in Kiribati, a role often overlooked in development project planning.

In Palau, women have always played an important part in harvesting marine resources through their reef-gleaning activities, especially in bad weather when the men were unable to go fishing. Matthews and Oiterong (1991) found that women regularly collect eight species of sea cucumber, four species of sea urchin, seven species of mollusc, three species of crab and more than 15 species of fish. Many more invertebrate species are collected when they can be found. Palauan women are now broadening the scope of their fisheries activities, with an increase in the marketing of their produce and, for some, the use of small motorboats for fishing (Lambeth 1999).

In the Federated States of Micronesia, women's involvement in harvesting and fishing varies across the states, with women in Kosrae and Chuuk being very involved in inshore fishing and collecting, while women in Pohnpei and Yap are less so. Even within the state of Yap activities vary, with outer island women much more likely to collect from the reef and fish with hand lines than the women of the main group of Yap islands. Yap has very strong taboos, rituals and prestige associated with different fishing methods, gear and areas, and the type of fishing or collecting done by women and children ranks at the bottom of the scale in terms of prestige (Falanruw 1992). On Kosrae, on the other hand, men were traditionally involved in farming and occasional fishing beyond the reef, while women were regular providers of seafood for the family through their netting, hand lining and reef gleaning activities. Net fishing was a varied and highly developed activity practiced by Kosraean women, with different nets designed for specific fishing techniques, marine habitat, tide, and number of people (Des Rochers 1992). By the early 1990s, these varied techniques and specialised gear had been replaced almost entirely by the use of monofilament gill nets, but women have maintained their involvement in inshore netting.

Like most women in Polynesia and Micronesia, women in the Marshall Islands collect shellfish, crustaceans and other invertebrates from the lagoons and inner reef areas. Women are also responsible for

primary and secondary processing, while marketing is limited to selling their produce through retail shops and handicraft outlets in the capital, Majuro. In general, it is culturally taboo for Marshallese women to go on fishing boats (Tuara 1998).

Melanesia

Papua New Guinea (PNG) accounts for 84% of the land area of the entire Pacific Islands region, with the Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, New Caledonia and Fiji forming a further 14%. The larger islands and more productive land available in Melanesian countries offer greater subsistence and commercial alternatives to marine resource production compared with many other parts of the Pacific. However, fish and invertebrates (marine and freshwater) still play an important role in the diet and economy, and women's involvement in harvesting, processing and marketing is substantial.

As in other Pacific Islands, women in Fiji are involved in subsistence fishing and are increasingly becoming involved in the commercial fisheries sector. A study by Rawlinson et al. (1995) found that Fijian women were the most active fishing group in the country. Women dominate the subsistence fishing sector and, with their daily fishing activities and generations of knowledge, have an intimate knowledge of the coastal zone. More recently, they have entered the lucrative *beche-de-mer* (processed sea cucumber) fishery as divers. Women are also the dominant sellers of crustaceans, molluscs and seaweed in Fiji. The freshwater clam, *Batissa violacea* or *kai*, is collected largely by women and forms the basis of the largest single domestic fishery in Fiji.

Fishing methods and equipment are generally simple, many involving the use of hands and simple tools. The methods and skills, however, are diverse and require an intimate knowledge of the environment and the species targeted. In addition to the collection of invertebrates, women net fish, set up barriers and traps, and use hand lines. Seasonality of different species and the effects of lunar cycles, winds and other natural phenomena on marine species are well known and used to advantage when fishing. Women can often identify fish species by how they bite or nibble on the line, and subsequently change hooks, bait and lines to suit the particular fish (Vunisea 1996).

There is a great diversity of coastal and marine environments in PNG, ranging from large delta flats, mud flats and mangrove swamps, to fringing coral reefs and narrow lagoons. The range of small-scale fisheries activities reflects the diversity of the country's environments, and includes reef gleaning, spear fishing, shallow-water hand lining from dugout canoes, netting, and trapping in the larger rivers. Two major river systems, the Sepik/Ramu

and the Fly/Purari, are extensive and account for most of the annual freshwater fish harvest. Subsistence harvesting is the most important component of PNG's domestic fishery, but commercial prawn trawling and small-scale tuna longlining are becoming increasingly important (FAO 1998).

Women's harvesting activities in PNG are mainly confined to shallow inshore areas, with an emphasis on invertebrate collection. Although information on subsistence production is scarce, the collection of invertebrates, both commercially (*beche-de-mer* as well as *trochus* and other shellfish) and for subsistence purposes is thought to exceed finfish harvesting. Women catch a substantial proportion of the annual catch weight of marine resources — reported in Chapman (1987) and Avalos (1995) as more than 25% — and are dominant in the processing and marketing sectors.

In New Caledonia, subsistence fisheries still form an important part of the traditional lifestyle for the local *kanak* people. Two forms of fishing are recognised: collective fishing for special gifts or ceremonial exchanges, and individual fishing for family consumption. Collective fishing is carried out by fishing clans, using nets and catching large quantities of "custom" fish. Targeted species included unicorn fish, mullet, turtles and dugongs. Individual fishing can be practised by anyone, as long as it is in an area recognised as belonging to his or her tribe, which is usually the lagoon area directly in front of the land belonging to the tribe. Women fish for mangrove crabs, hand line from shore or boats, and collect from the reef. Catching mangrove crabs with traps or hooked sticks provides important income for many women. Women are also involved in the successful prawn farming industry, especially in post-harvest operations. Commercial fisheries are becoming increasingly important in New Caledonia, and mainly involve men, although there are a few women who run small fishing boat operations with their husbands. Recreational fishing from the numerous small pleasure craft berthed in Noumea is also an important activity, especially for Europeans and New Caledonians of European descent.

The tuna fishery in the Pacific

The tuna fishery in the western and central Pacific Ocean represents an important resource for the people of the region, providing financial returns, employment and food security. In terms of volume and value, the tuna fishing area of the Pacific region is the most important in the world. A third of the world catch of tuna, estimated to average 3.6 tonnes a year with a value of USD 1.9 billion, is reported to come from the Pacific region (Gillett et al. 2001). In the face of increasingly overexploited inshore areas, domestic commercial harvesting of tuna is seen to

be one of the few alternative areas with development potential in the region.

Tuna industry development across Pacific Island countries varies greatly and is influenced by features such as scale of economy, geographical location, access to markets, available land for onshore development, and population dynamics, among other things. Many countries are currently unable to support the logistics and economics of large-scale processing facilities such as canneries and loining plants, and therefore largely depend on the returns from access fees charged to fleets of distant water fishing nations. For many countries in the region, access fees make up a substantial portion of government revenue.

While the level of industry development may be low compared to Asian countries such as the Philippines and Thailand, it nonetheless provides employment and investment opportunities for countries with few other viable alternatives.

In terms of employment, women in the Pacific are rarely seen to be directly involved in the harvesting sector of the tuna industry. The few women that hold roles in the harvesting sector are more likely to be boat owners rather than crew, captains or other male-dominated roles. Women are well represented in the processing, marketing and administrative area of the industry, although largely in low-paid rather than managerial or supervisory positions.

Up until recently, at the cannery in Western Province, Solomon Islands, approximately 600 of the 2,298 workers were women fish processors (Nelson and Tuara 2000). In Fiji, women make up the bulk of cannery workers (90%) and in other tuna processing establishments, they comprise between 30 and 80% of the workers (Arama 2000).

Until the closure of the Solomon Islands cannery (as a result of the economic downturn caused by ethnic tension), the five tuna canneries in the Pacific were estimated to employ 5% of all formally employed women in the region (Gillett et al. 2001). Women also hold a large proportion of jobs in the increasing number of export firms in the region. Women perform tasks in the marketing and administrative areas of the tuna industry, and are represented in many of the areas indirectly linked to the tuna industry such as businesses servicing the industry, and government and non-governmental agencies concerned with fisheries, environmental and social issues.

Constraints and areas of need for women in Pacific Island fisheries

When thinking of fishing in the Pacific Islands, many people tend to think of fishing from canoes or boats, spear fishing, diving for giant clams and beche-de-mer, and other activities women are not

traditionally involved in. The collection of seafood from the reefs and mangroves, the use of hand lines and nets in shallow waters, and the preparation and sale of fish and shellfish have often been overlooked as fisheries activities by researchers and training providers. This has affected the way the fisheries sector is supported, both nationally and regionally, and the manner in which management and conservation of marine resources is approached. Part of the problem has been the way in which the terms “fishing” and “fisheries” have been interpreted in the Pacific, and the emphasis placed by donors and governments on commercial fisheries development and management. Most Pacific Islanders have a number of different terms for the various fisheries activities practised by men and women, but “fishing” is sometimes thought to only mean those activities practised by men. Cultural taboos against women’s involvement in men’s fishing activities (and sometimes vice versa) still exist in many countries and tend to reinforce both men’s and women’s views that fishing and fisheries are predominantly male activities.

The emphasis placed by donors and governments on commercial fisheries development, especially offshore fishing where women have virtually no involvement, has also contributed to the lack of recognition and support of women’s role in fisheries. The drive for the development of the formal economic sector in the Pacific has meant support for commercial fisheries development has been given priority over subsistence and small-scale artisanal fisheries activities.

Women’s harvesting activities continue to be mostly small-scale, and their involvement in commercial fisheries is limited.

National programmes of support for the fisheries sector also tend to be demand driven, and women rarely approach government fisheries agencies for assistance with their fisheries activities. This is often because of their own perception that what they do is not really a part of “fisheries”, and that fisheries agencies only deal with men’s activities, and the fact that it is often against the social norm for women to ask for assistance.

Pacific Island fisheries agencies are now becoming increasingly concerned about declining catches of fish and invertebrates in the most accessible inshore areas, but few have the staff or resources to address the problems. Women are one of the largest groups of users of inshore reef areas, and yet their contribution to fisheries production remains largely undocumented and unsupported.

Generally though, it may be said that the entire domestic fisheries production, particularly subsistence, is undocumented in most places. Where

good figures do exist, there are usually gender-disaggregated data available. In addition, subsistence-harvesting activities are often unmanaged, with impacts on marine species and habitat poorly understood. Despite women's involvement in harvesting, processing and marketing, women are still poorly represented in national fisheries agencies, fisheries training courses and fisheries meetings, and are often not included in fisheries development and management planning processes.

More information on subsistence fisheries production, consumption and environmental impact is needed, with the analysis of the differing activities and contributions of men and women. Household and creel surveys collect fisheries data such as seafood consumption, economic data, and fishing activities, and provide important sex disaggregated data on fisheries production and consumption. This allows for the development of profiles that show differences in fishing areas, species, fishing effort, economic or nutritional contribution between the activities of men and women — data needed for determining the gender impact of development activities and also for planning management strategies. These types of specialised surveys do, however, require funding and expertise beyond that available to most national fisheries agencies.

More research is needed on the differing contributions of men's and women's activities to household food security and GDP. Agriculture and fisheries are far more dominant features of Pacific Island economies than they are in larger, more developed economies. Despite Australia's large landmass, coastline and exclusive economic zone (EEZ), agriculture, forestry and fisheries accounted for only 3% of its GDP in 2000, compared with 17% for Samoa. Agriculture and fishing account for over 20% of GDP in many Pacific Island countries (Parry 2001). Statistics publications often combine agriculture and fishing data, or forestry and fishing data, making it impossible to analyse the separate characteristics of each. In addition, current international classification standards for agriculture and fisheries do not adequately reflect the economic structure of a typical Pacific Island country. Existing classifications make it difficult to separate out men's and women's varying degrees of involvement in vastly different fishing activities such as gathering shellfish or trolling for pelagic fish. The Statistics Programme of the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) is currently working on a regional standard classification for agriculture and fishing activities in the Pacific that will overcome these problems.

A further problem with fisheries statistics is the lack of an accurate picture of women in fisheries employment. This is caused by: a) the concept of using "main unpaid activity" for defining the subsistence sector, as it misses the importance of secondary

activities — for example, even for women who do considerable fishing, childcare may be recorded as the main unpaid activity; and b) placing commercial fish processing (where many women are employed) in the manufacturing sector (Gillett and Lightfoot 2001).

Encouraging women to enrol in marine biology and fisheries courses is important in order that more women are able to be employed in national fisheries agencies in the future. At the same time, fisheries agencies need to be encouraged to support and manage the fisheries activities of women as well as men.

While there are overlaps in roles between women and men in fisheries, there are also obvious differences. The different roles and potentially different impacts of development on men and women need to be understood and addressed if fisheries management and development aspirations of the island states are to be realised. Subsistence and artisanal harvesting and, to a lesser extent, commercial fisheries, contribute greatly to food security in the region. In addition, the tuna industry provides significant employment for men and women in what often were previously semi-subsistence communities. The impacts, both positive and negative, can be different for men and women. Employment can provide wage and benefit packages that can contribute to family welfare, although women are more likely than men to spend their wages on children and family.

The social outcome of women becoming waged earners is not always ideal because they are often expected to maintain their traditional gender roles within the home and community in addition to full-time work. Domestic responsibilities, childcare and community responsibilities, in addition to working full time, have been referred to as "women's double day" and place burdens on family dynamics and women's health. The spread of sexually transmitted disease, including HIV/AIDS, is an issue of concern, particularly for the tuna industry and its management. The risks of contracting these diseases are obviously higher among those involved in the sex trade, but spouses of seafarers are another high-risk group. Strategies to overcome or minimise negative impacts need to be addressed at the planning stages of tuna industry development.

Constraints to ensuring sustainable development of the tuna industry in the Pacific include low levels of education, weak public sector administration, rigid cultural gender roles and a profit-driven private sector with an incentive to disregard social and environmental responsibilities. Potential negative impacts can be identified and minimisation strategies suggested, but considerable hurdles exist regarding the adoption of those strategies. It is sometimes difficult for national fisheries agencies

to identify their role in addressing the impact of fisheries development on health, labour or environment, particularly when there is little history of dialogue with and between the different departments responsible for those areas.

In recent years, formal tuna fishery management planning has become a national activity, and this has involved the study of the different impacts of tuna fishing industry development on men and women. The Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA) provides assistance to its member countries in support of the preparation of national tuna development and management plans. This gender analysis has, however, been included at the instigation of the donor agencies, and there remains a degree of doubt about the necessity or appropriateness of this component by national policy makers and some stakeholders. In some Pacific Island cultures, gender and related concepts such as equity and women's empowerment may be seen as potential attacks on culture and tradition.

Existing policies and support for women in fisheries in the Pacific Islands

Very few Pacific Island governments have policies in place specifically addressing women's role in fisheries, although most have policies encouraging the equal and active participation of women in development activities. In addition, donor agencies and regional organisations increasingly require projects to assess gender issues at the planning, implementation and monitoring stages of projects. Donor preferences and requirements, along with a slowly increasing awareness of women's involvement in fisheries, have led to a few steps in the region towards supporting women's fisheries activities. Some fisheries courses are actively encouraging women participants in what were previously men-only courses, or are designing fisheries courses that specifically target women. In a few countries such as Kiribati, Tonga and Samoa, fisheries agencies have increased the employment of female fisheries officers and are including women in fish handling workshops.

The Pacific Platform for Action (PPA) is a regional statement developed by Pacific women and men and endorsed at a regional women's conference in New Caledonia in 1994. The document looks at key issues in the region that must be addressed if the goals of equality and sustainable development are to be realised. The aim is to accelerate full and equal partnership of women and men in all spheres of life. One of the 13 key issues listed in the document is agriculture and fishing, with the strategic objective being "to promote and support women's participation in agriculture and fishing (both paid and unpaid activities) and to recognise women's role in food security" (SPC 1995). This document assists women's agencies throughout the region to

focus their work on the key issues, but it is highly unlikely that national fisheries agencies are aware of the document or would feel the need to incorporate the recommendations into their work plan.

Some countries have implemented women in fisheries programmes, mostly with the assistance of outside agencies such as SPC's Women in Fisheries Development Project. As a result, fisheries agencies in Niue and Nauru have created new positions for women's fisheries development officers. In other countries, non-governmental agencies have set up support schemes for women in fisheries, such as the Women in Fisheries Network in Fiji. The University of the South Pacific has done a considerable amount of work with women, through its Canadian-funded Post-Harvest Fisheries Project. A collaborative project between this project and SPC has seen the introduction of a fisheries elective in the SPC Community Education and Training Centre course for young Pacific Island women.

Women's role in fisheries in Australia and New Zealand

Australia and New Zealand have industrial economies and infrastructure capable of exploiting their marine resources, and as a consequence have more established domestic commercial fisheries than Pacific Island countries. Women's involvement in fisheries tends to reflect this, with increasing numbers of women employed in the commercial fisheries sector, and a small number having achieved powerful positions in the industry and on industry decision-making bodies. Despite this, there remains a lack of information about women's involvement and contributions to the industry.

Australia

By international standards, Australia's fishing industry has comparatively few people working in it. Australian seas are generally low in nutrients compared with other world regions and this contributes to the low production of its waters — production is well below that of neighbouring nations such as Indonesia and New Zealand. Despite having a small total production, Australia's fisheries are economically valuable due to the contribution of highly priced species such as abalone, prawns, scallops and rock lobster (Kailola et al. 1993).

More than 110,000 people are employed in the seafood industry in Australia: 28,000 in the commercial fishing industry capture sector; 60,000 to 70,000 in seafood-dependent operations on land (processing, marketing and sales); and 10,000 in the aquaculture sector. Women form only a small percentage of vessel owners and crew in the wild-catch sector, but are better represented in the processing or post-harvest sector, and in aquaculture. This is partly because

these shore-based activities are more compatible with women's home and family responsibilities than are vessel-based fishing activities. Many women are involved in family-based fishing businesses where they are responsible for managing the business from a home office while their partners go to sea.

A recent survey of more than 200 women involved in the Australian commercial fishing industry (both government and private sector) revealed that 41% of respondents were joint or sole owner-operators of fishing businesses (Aslin et al. 2000). Most respondents wanted better status and recognition for their work and the majority reported barriers to involvement and progression in the industry. Barriers included practical ones (time constraints, child care responsibilities, conditions on boats), and discrimination or prejudice from men in the industry.

As with Pacific Islanders, coastal Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities have always been dependent on marine resources and continue many of their traditional practices today. Research in southern New South Wales indicated that up to 90% of Aboriginal adults regularly collect fish and shellfish from their local area (FRDC 2000). Aboriginal women are a major contributor to these activities. The continuing nature of traditional activities forms the basis for current and future land and sea title claims by indigenous people. Female traditional owners are likely to be significant winners if these claims succeed, with the result that they may gain additional property rights in Australia's coastal and marine environment in the future. These claims are likely to exacerbate conflicts already experienced between commercial, recreational and traditional fishing sectors, but may ultimately lead to more equitable allocations of marine resources.

Since European settlement of Australia began, indigenous people have also been engaged in commercial fishing as well as continuing traditional fishing practices. They provided many of the crew, divers and skippers for the early beche-de-mer, trochus and pearl fisheries of northern Australia. Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men and women were divers, working under difficult and dangerous conditions in the early days of the pearling industry.

As many as 20 to 30% of all Australians participate in recreational fishing in Australia, with women and girls forming an estimated one third of these recreational fishers (FRDC 2000). Direct and indirect expenditure on recreational fishing is estimated to be AUD 2.9 billion, making it a major national industry with considerable lobbying power (McIlgorm and Pepperell 2000). Recreational fishing generates jobs in the tourism, tackle, boating, charter and diving sectors, many of which have a large services component where women are well represented as employees.

New Zealand

Fisheries in New Zealand are predominantly commercial and recreational, with a small subsistence component. New Zealand's capabilities for exploiting its marine resources, combined with its temperate continental shelf and nutrient run-off from land, ensure more productive fisheries than those of the Pacific Islands or Australia. Temperate continental shelf fisheries have lower biodiversity but much higher biomass-per-species compared with coral reef areas and account for 90% of all world fisheries (Adams et al. 1999).

Maori have strong cultural ties to fisheries and this has been recognised in common law and legislation. Fisheries are managed by a quota system, in which an annual total allowable catch is set for commercial species, within specific quota management areas. Following the settlement of Maori fisheries claims against the Crown in 1992, and the passing of the Treaty of Waitangi (Fisheries Claims) Settlement Act 1992, Maori have become the biggest player in New Zealand's commercial fishing industry, controlling over half of all commercial fishing quota (FAO 1999).

Over the last six years, employment in the seafood industry in New Zealand has risen by 14%, with jobs in the processing sector increasing by 41%. This growth is a direct result of an increasing proportion of catches being taken by New Zealand-operated rather than foreign owned vessels, and an increased commitment to value-added processing (Statistics New Zealand 2000).

The seafood industry in New Zealand directly employs over 10,000 people, with fish and shellfish processing plants accounting for around half of this. Around 66% of the seafood industry workforce is male and 34% female. Men dominate the wild-harvest and aquaculture sectors while women are well represented in the seafood-processing sector. Within the sectors, there are more women in lower-paid positions such as administration, fish processing, packing and checking, rather than managerial positions; 40% of men, compared to 14% of women, employed in the industry earn over NZD 30,000 per year (Information Resource Centre 1998).

Wives of fishermen have always played an active role in the onshore business side of fishing operations, doing everything from paper work to mending nets and making lobster pots. There is a huge amount of unrecognised voluntary support work that keeps small fisheries businesses operating. Over the past two decades there has been an increase in the number of women working in the harvesting sector, with husband and wife teams working together in small fishing operations and, more recently, second generation children taking over the boats and working as crew or skippers.

One recent change in the role of women in fisheries has been their entry into the political arena, with two women being voted on to the New Zealand Federation of Commercial Fishermen's executive in recent years (Yvonne Powell, pers. comm. 2001). As women are often shore-based they are able to attend management meetings, keeping the business abreast of changing requirements and ensuring the fisher's perspective is not overlooked.

More fisheries training courses are now available around the country to help men and women qualify for seagoing work, or seafood processing onshore and at sea. Over a third of the seafood industry workforce in New Zealand has completed nationally recognised training. A one-year project has been designed by the Seafood Industry Training Organisation to increase the number of women in fishing industry training. Of the current 1,500 industry trainees, 35% are women (SeaFIC 2001).

An estimated 20% of New Zealand's population participates in recreational fishing, a figure including men, women and children. Goods and services based directly or indirectly on the recreational fishing sector provide jobs for many men and women.

Existing policies, support and areas of need for Australia and New Zealand

Australia and New Zealand have several government policy initiatives to address women's disadvantage and under-representation in natural resource management, including fisheries. National, state and territory governments are guided by equal employment opportunity, anti-discrimination, and workplace diversity legislation and policies. Many government agencies have sections devoted to addressing women's issues. In Australia, fisheries fall under the umbrella of the Women in Rural Industries Section, within the Commonwealth Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry.

The Agriculture and Resource Management Council of Australia and New Zealand (ARMCANZ) was set up to develop integrated and sustainable agricultural and land and water management policies, strategies and practices for the benefit of Australian and New Zealand communities. The Council is supported by the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Resource Management (SCARM).

In 1998, SCARM produced a national plan entitled "A vision for change", designed to improve women's representation on statutory boards and committees, advisory panels and on the staff of government natural resource management agencies (SCARM 1998). This was followed by complementary state and territory action plans. Statistics on women's representation in the natural resource management sector indicate a slight improvement, with the percentage of women on statutory boards

and committees within SCARM agencies overall increasing from 18.9 to 20.1 between June 1999 and June 2000 (SCARM 2001). As the emphasis is on rural women in the agriculture sector, it is difficult to separate out the impact on women's involvement in marine resource management. New Zealand similarly combines fisheries with agriculture when it looks at the particular problems faced by women in primary industry, with the emphasis predominantly on agriculture and livestock sectors.

While many appropriate policies and plans have been formulated, rhetoric is not matched by sufficient action and there is a lack of genuine commitment to advance women's interests from many senior players in government and politics.

There remains a serious lack of information about women's involvement and contributions to the fishing industry in Australia and New Zealand. Women's issues and concerns have also received scant attention within the fishing industry and their contributions remain largely unrecognised. One of the primary needs is for a systematic collection of data on gender-related aspects of the industry. This could, for example, include the number of women who are owners or joint owners of fishing businesses; women's ownership of property and capital (gear, vessels, fishing licenses, fishing quota); and the number of women working in different industry sectors (aquaculture, wild-catch, fish processing, retailing, fish restaurants, fishing charters, etc.). Collecting this information is complicated by the fact that the wild-catch sector is divided into many different fisheries operating under various regulatory regimes and managed by a range of agencies.

Women in fisheries development or gender and development?

One of the problems with setting up special "women in fisheries" programmes is the tendency for this to separate women's issues from fisheries issues. Successful fisheries development and management needs to deal with the entire community involved in harvesting, processing and marketing marine resources. Having specific "women in fisheries" programmes can reinforce the tendency of national fisheries agencies to only work with men. Issues relating to women tend to get offloaded onto women in fisheries programmes, or onto women's agencies that have no experience, resources or expertise in fisheries.

Fisheries agencies, however, can also encounter problems if they try to establish programmes dealing specifically with women. Nearly 10 years ago, a project was set up in Papua New Guinea (PNG) to support women's fisheries activities in coastal communities. The project was initially located at the PNG Department of Fisheries and Marine

Resources (DFMR), with considerable informal input from the Women's Division of the Department of Home Affairs and Youth (DHAY). The fisheries department had trouble running what was essentially a technical fisheries project as well as a women's project. Much of the opposition came from women in the field who expected a project involving women to go through DHAY, while DHAY also believed they should control and implement the project (Fairbairn-Dunlop 1992). The project was eventually moved to DHAY about three years ago, where it was later terminated due to lack of staff and resources.

In the late 1980s, SPC set up the Women's Fisheries Development Project (WFDP), managed by one officer, to support and encourage the involvement of women in fisheries in the region. Requests for assistance were almost entirely initiated by national women's agencies, rather than fisheries agencies, and the project worked predominantly through national women's focal points. While this was necessary at the time, the section did face the danger of creating complacency among national fisheries agencies and other sections within SPC's Marine Resources Division. The tendency was for them to not actively bring more women into their work because one small section of SPC would be taking care of the fisheries concerns of women around the region.

In order to discourage this, WFDP undertook a number of strategies to ensure women's needs and perspectives were considered in all relevant fisheries activities, both at the national and regional level. One was changing the name of the Women's Fisheries Development Section to the Community Fisheries Section (CFS), reflecting the need to consider all sectors of the community in fisheries development and management. Secondly, the section strongly encouraged women's agencies to put their requests through their national fisheries department, and recommended counterparts from both agencies to be involved in the work. This has helped create linkages between national women's and fisheries agencies in some countries, and has made women less uncomfortable with turning to national fisheries agencies for assistance. Some fisheries agencies are now more inclined to consider the role of women in the management and development of domestic fisheries. Finally the CFS encouraged and became more involved in collaborative work with other sections within SPC, and with regional organisations.

The emphasis on community support and involvement, rather than adding "women only" components to fisheries projects, is closely aligned with the aims of gender planning — promoting equal opportunities for men and women. However, unlike explanations of the gender and development approach, the idea of addressing the needs of the entire community is more easily understood by

fisheries agencies, especially in the Pacific Islands. Gender concepts are poorly understood, difficult to explain without unhelpful jargon, nearly impossible to translate in most languages (including SPC's other official language, French), and in many cases, are perceived to be just "women in development" dressed up in different terms.

Future directions

Although there have been some initiatives to support women's involvement in fisheries in recent years, on the whole, women's contributions to the fishing industry in Oceania are under-recognised, and their potential contributions are not being maximised.

The questions that need to be asked by those responsible for fisheries development and management in the region are "Who are the target groups for fisheries development and management?" and "Do we need special skills or people to work with them?" If fish market operators are predominantly women, seafood-handling training should include them. In the Pacific Islands, inshore fisheries management initiatives should include species and areas used by women, and women need to be involved in the planning processes and included in awareness programs. This does not mean national and regional fisheries agencies necessarily need special women fisheries officers in order to successfully work with women. It does help if they have more women fisheries officers as part of their general technical staff, and it may mean that male staff need to be encouraged to support women's fisheries activities.

Most national fisheries agencies will continue to require assistance in conducting specialised surveys aimed at addressing the lack of information on inshore fisheries production and consumption, and on women's involvement and contributions to fisheries in the Pacific Islands. Research should be relevant to the needs of national governments; standardised as much as possible; and made easily accessible and understood by those it is meant to assist. Often, these important requirements are lost in the desire for scientific rigour and academic acceptance.

To improve the accuracy of fisheries statistics, national fisheries agencies need to develop closer links with statistics agencies and actively involve themselves in the planning stage to ensure that useful fisheries data are obtained. Gillett and Lightfoot (2001) suggest that the lack of knowledge of the volume of production of small-scale fisheries is a major factor causing an underestimation of fishing contribution to GDP. They suggest that an alternative to using specialised surveys for estimating subsistence production is to use surveys outside the fisheries sector. At little cost, production information could be collected through the national census, nutrition surveys, agriculture censuses, household

employment and income surveys, and poverty studies. Sex disaggregated data should naturally be a part of the information collected by both the statistics agencies and other surveys.

In Australia and New Zealand, information is needed on gender-related aspects of the fishing industry. The current practice of combining fisheries under women in rural industries or women in primary industry makes it difficult to separate out the contribution of fisheries, and also fails to take into account other aspects of the fishing industry such as processing or marketing. In Australia, a study will attempt to gather better information on women's current contributions to the fishing industry. The emphasis should be on obtaining gender-related information on the respective contributions and differing needs of both men and women in the industry.

Encouraging more women to participate in fisheries training can be accomplished by either offering training specifically for women, or promoting their involvement on established courses. The advantages and disadvantages of providing training courses specifically for women, as opposed to running mixed courses, should be examined for both regional and national training courses. Evaluation of SPC fisheries courses involving women suggests that, in some circumstances, segregated courses are needed, while in others mixed, courses are useful. The most important factor is to avoid having one sex in the extreme minority on the course.

The inclusion of women as a minority on a course usually attended by men can be a problem, especially in the Pacific Islands. Women's behaviour and ability within the course may be judged more severely than that of their fellow trainees; women participants are usually quiet and do not assert themselves as much as they would in an all-female class; and, if there are practical exercises usually associated with "men's work", the women will sometimes step back and leave it to the men. The aim should be to have at least several women in a course involving a dozen participants, rather than just one or two.

Mixed courses can be very useful for increasing awareness of the differences and similarities in men's and women's fisheries activities, and for introducing men and women to areas of work outside of their usual roles. Even if participants never use those skills again, they gain a much broader understanding of what "fisheries" means. Courses just for women can also be valuable. Participants are often more relaxed and less shy at speaking up in a group, and the course content can be adapted to suit their specific activities and needs. The most appropriate course for the situation, mixed or separate, will vary according to target group, country and course content.

In the Pacific Islands, problems associated with the use of terminology and difficult concepts such as gender can be avoided by using explanations that fit the situation. Emphasising the need for the entire community to be involved in fisheries development and management is one way of promoting equal opportunities for men and women. The concept of 'family and development' is a useful way of introducing gender equity concepts in familiar terms. Discussing social and environmental impacts of development on the community can link aspects of gender analysis in project planning, without actually using the terminology. It is also important to ensure those carrying out gender studies of fisheries are familiar with the region, and preferably with fisheries.

When considering the need for affirmative action and the establishment of women in fisheries projects, the successes and failures of the past need to be taken into account. Overall, despite some failures, women in fisheries projects have served to raise the awareness of women's involvement in fisheries in the region, and have added to the pool of information on their role in fisheries. Perhaps now is the time to explore alternatives, or to move on to the next stage. One potential strategy to ensure women's needs and perspectives are considered in all relevant fisheries activities, is to create a cross-cutting position or agency within the sector to take over from "women only" positions or agencies. The emphasis would be on equal opportunity and involvement of men and women in development and management activities, rather than the specific promotion of women's involvement.

This was a strategy considered at one time by SPC when looking at future directions for the Women's Fisheries Development Section. At the time, it was not possible within the donor-funded, project-driven work programme of SPC. The aim was for this crosscutting agency to take a part in all activity planning by other sections, and to take part in the activity where necessary. Government policy could reflect this cross-cutting strategy rather than developing policies specifically addressing women in fisheries. This would fit in well with existing equal opportunity and gender equity policies.

Despite the gaps and areas of need, the contribution of women to fisheries development and management in Oceania is very slowly becoming more recognised and supported. National and regional fisheries agencies and private enterprises are beginning to see that sustainable and equitable development of the fishing industry means both men and women need to be involved in project planning, be given access to relevant training opportunities, and be involved in management initiatives. Continuing the practice of supporting women's involvement in fisheries through specific "women only" projects needs to be balanced with promoting equal opportunities for men and women in all projects.

Acknowledgements

The authors would like to thank the following people for contributing information and assisting in the preparation of this paper:

- Vicki Baker, Fisheries Management Services, Green Bay, Auckland, New Zealand
- Heather Scott, Executive Officer, Tuna NZ Inc., New Zealand
- Yvonne Powell, Taranaki Fishermen's Association, New Zealand
- Paula Shoulder, Commonwealth Fisheries Policy Review, Australia

The authors are also grateful to the Asian Fisheries Society and ICLARM–The WorldFish Center for the opportunity to contribute to the Global Symposium on Women in Fisheries.

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Gender and fisheries and aquaculture — From policy to implementation. Lessons learned from Germany's policy for sustainable development

Mechthild Kronen¹

Gender policy and strategy

The question of whether gender issues in fisheries are any different from other natural resource-based sectors has often been posed. Disparities that exist between men and women are documented (WorldFish 2010; Harrison 2001). However, women's involvement in and their contribution to fisheries are more significant than generally believed or indicated by statistics (Kleiber et al. 2014; Weeratunge and Snyder 2009).

Globally, across most cultural, social and political and economic strata, the role of women is still believed to relate more to post-harvest and marketing activities rather than fishing or aquaculture itself. While global average figures may support this perception, the real importance of women at country level remains thus masked. Women fishers and fish farmers of the world's two major fish producing countries, China and India, represent 21% and 24% of all fishers (FAO 2012a). Women in West Africa, Cambodia and Thailand often own and

manage fishing boats and may even have their own fishing gear. In Ghana, income from fishers' wives is vital for supporting the entire fishing industry as they invest in canoes and other gear and give loans to husbands and other fishers. Fisherwomen in the Congo, Cambodia, Thailand, the Philippines, and most of the South Pacific islands, contradict the perceived role of females as gleaners only.

Women have also assumed a leading role in the rapid growth of aquaculture (fish, shrimps, mussels, seaweed, crab fattening), with their participation along the aquaculture value chain (production, transforming, and marketing) higher than in capture fisheries.

Aquaculture is promoted as a development strategy as it enables poor women to operate low technology and low input systems that are an extension of their domestic tasks. Entry into aquaculture appears to have fewer gender barriers, perhaps because this sector developed outside cultural traditions. Bangladeshi women make up to 60% of fish farmers, and many are successful entrepreneurs (FAO 2012a). In

Sri Lanka, 30% of those engaged in the production and breeding of ornamental fish are women (FAO 2012a). In Waigina, Choiseul Province of the Solomon Islands, women participate in all stages of seaweed production, but predominantly in other than post-harvest production steps, which contradicts the stereotyped role often attributed to women in aquaculture (Kronen 2012).



Seaweed farming Waigina, Choiseul Province, Solomon Islands.

Photo by M. Kronen.

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*Tsoi fish market, Papua New Guinea.
Photo by M. Kronen.*

Even though commonalities with regard to gender issues in fisheries — as well as other natural-resource based sectors — have emerged across geographical and cultural borders, and generally it is recognised that women are likely to constitute an important part of the rural poor who depend on fisheries, agriculture and natural resources for their survival, women are still often excluded as a user group from decision processes over their management (FAO, IFAD and World Bank 2009). This fact is somehow surprising given the many developments in gender equality and equity.

At the policy level, the promotion of gender equality has been addressed in numerous international agreements and instruments, including the Treaty of Rome (Article 119) in 1957. Since the UN Conference on Environment (UNCED), Rio de Janeiro, 1992, and the Beijing Platform for Action (1995), and in particular the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) established following the Millennium Summit of the United Nations in 2000, the gender issue has become increasingly recognised in the fisheries and aquaculture sector.

At the global level, and pertinent to the fisheries and aquaculture sector, the European Commission's Agenda for Change 2011 and the Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Development 2010–2015 Action Plan provide a promising basis for further improvement at the policy level. This promise is further supported by the most recent Gender and Environment Forum, held in parallel with the First UN Environmental Assembly (UNEA) of the UN Environment Program (UNEP) (Nairobi, Kenya, 23–27 June 2014), with a focus on gender equality and women's empowerment as an integral aspect of environmental management.



*Women fisher, Maskelynes, Vanuatu.
Photo by M. Kronen.*

Strategies followed, for instance, the 2003 European Commission funded IDDRA UK Cotonou workshop on "Room to manoeuvre: Gender and coping strategies in the fisheries sector"; the 2007 FAO's "Gender policies for responsible fisheries", which promoted policies to support gender equity and livelihoods in small-scale fisheries

through studying the gender implications of ongoing changes in the sector, including resource access rights, marketing arrangements, governance and changes linked to aquaculture; the 2010 Phuket Consensus on aquaculture (FAO 2012b), designed to provide opportunities for meaningfully mainstreaming gender in fisheries management and aquaculture development; and the emergence in May 2012 of the “Zero draft of international guidelines for securing sustainable small-scale fisheries”, which particularly addresses gender equity and equality (FAO 2012c).

So far, there is no systematic but rather patchy (Williams et al. 2012) inclusion of gender issues in fisheries and aquaculture development initiatives and projects. Today, the statement that the gender issue in the fisheries sector is yet in its infancy still holds, underlining the need to boost the transition from policy and strategies to implementation. Programmes and projects continue often to be designed with a focus on ecosystem effects of fishing, illegal fishing, or improving fishery statistics (Williams 2010), rather than on the specific needs of women and men involved in the sector (Lentisco and Alonso 2012).

In the following, some emerging issues from experiences and lessons learned in the framework of German development cooperation with a focus on fisheries and aquaculture are presented to highlight some of the challenges in transferring policies and strategies at the implementation level.

Gender in Germany's Development Cooperation

“Equal rights, equal duties, equal opportunities and equal power for women and men” is one of the basic principles of German development policy. Promoting gender equality is a cross-cutting issue that touches all areas of German development cooperation and has led to the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development's (BMZ) adoption of the 2001 Gender Equality Strategy. Germany's development policy pursues a dual approach to the promotion of gender equality: gender mainstreaming and women-specific support measures.

The German Agency for International Cooperation or GIZ, an international enterprise owned by the German Federal Government, works on behalf of the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). GIZ operates in many fields across more than 130 countries. As a federal enterprise, it supports the German Government in achieving its objectives in the field of international cooperation for sustainable development.

In line with BMZ's basic principles on gender, GIZ's Gender Strategy (2012), “Gender pays off”, lays out a framework and sets a goal to comprehensively promote gender equality — both in the services that it delivers and within partner countries, and within the company itself. The strategy builds on the approaches applied and lessons learned by its three predecessor organisations (German Development Service — DED, German Agency for Technical Cooperation — GTZ, Capacity Building International, Germany — InWEnt).

GIZ has translated the dual approach by promoting gender equality in partner countries through the implementation of projects that specifically aim to reduce discrimination and inequality, and through promoting equality by mainstreaming gender at all societal levels and within different sectors. The different situations and concerns of women and men are taken into account to help eliminate gender-based socio-cultural and structural inequalities and discrimination, and to overcome structural



Kavieng, sale station for BdM, Papua New Guinea. Photo by M. Kronen.

causes of poverty and of social and political instability as a contribution to the sustainable development of partner countries.

Major activities aim at assisting partner countries in their efforts to anchor international agreements in their national legislation, policy directions and implementation to ensure women's rights, as well as to support state and non-governmental actors in gender mainstreaming at all levels, including gender analysis, collection of gender disaggregated data and capacity development.

BMZ and GIZ equally consider that their gender policy and strategy are subject to change, requiring constant monitoring and adjusting of measures to increase effectiveness and to ensure success. Within this context, the BMZ Gender Equality in Development Policy fact sheets (BMZ 2012) and a set of fact-sheets on Gender in Rural Development (GIZ 2013) were developed to assess the results and impacts of the gender policy, as well as at the implementation level. The set of fact sheets on best practices and lessons learned encompass seven focal themes: (i) gender and rural development; (ii) gender and agricultural extension; (iii) gender and access to land; (iv) gender and food and nutrition security; (v) gender and fisheries and aquaculture; (vi) gender and livestock production; and (vii) gender and value chains.

Each fact sheet follows a uniform structure: background information, action steps and best practices based on experience, stumbling blocks and lessons learned, and finally, questions to be answered in gender studies on the sector concerned.

Lessons learned from German Cooperation in fisheries and aquaculture

However, not unlike other policy and implementing agencies, both entities, BMZ and GIZ, still seek to improve processes and instruments for the application and promotion of gender mainstreaming and equality, particular in the fisheries and aquaculture sector. Analyses of project experiences have resulted in a number of lessons learned, i.e.:

- A focus on gender in all steps of the project cycle needs to be institutionalised to ensure the adoption and sustainability of planned impacts, and to align project activities with country policies and legislation.
- The need for gender-disaggregated data in the fisheries and aquaculture sector cannot be sufficiently stressed. Quantitative and qualitative data is vital for informed, effective and targeted planning of project activities that foster gender equality and improve economic development of the fisheries and aquaculture sector.
- Gender analysis in fisheries and aquaculture must be flexible in order to respond to the

complexity of cultural and socio-economic characteristics and dynamics, including regional differences in target groups.

- The role of gender discrimination in the current employment practices of fisheries and aquaculture industries needs to be scrutinised. Development cooperation needs to highlight that such practices threaten not only the credibility of policy-makers, but also jeopardise the sustainable livelihoods of fishers' families and the economic success of the sector.
- Gender equity and equality are essential for decision-making in fisheries resource management as well as at all levels of the so-called "deck-to-fish" value chain, in which both women and men have important roles to play.

In conclusion, and as a guide for gender studies in fisheries and aquaculture, five major questions to be answered are formulated:

Sustainable livelihood, improved food security and sustainable resource management

1. What are the key factors to be addressed in the project region for ensuring that women have equal access to and control over the fisheries/aquaculture value chain?
2. How can the sustainable livelihood framework be best integrated into a community-based fisheries/aquaculture management approach for achieving gender equality and equity?
3. Which are the most appropriate quantitative and qualitative indicators to evaluate and monitor the impact and effectiveness of gender-sensitive fisheries and aquaculture policies and projects, in particular their contribution to reducing gender gaps?

Mainstreaming gender in fisheries and aquaculture

4. Based on project experience, develop and disseminate a model for the successful promotion and adoption of gender mainstreaming at the policy level and for large fisheries development projects.
5. What are the minimum/main disaggregated data sets on social and gender related aspects at the macro level in fisheries and aquaculture?

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Non-government organisations, civil society, women's welfare and development in the Pacific Islands

Ruci Yauvoli¹

Introduction

In this paper, the relationship between women's non-government organisations and their contributions towards the empowerment of women are examined with a special focus on economic empowerment.

Non-government organisations (NGOs) have continued to gain wide recognition in their capacity as agents of development. Some important aspects of development work that NGOs often spearhead include humanitarian relief, long-term development, policy formation and political advocacy. In most developing countries, some development assistance is channelled through NGOs, giving them an important role of serving as an alternative to government. "As development actors, NGOs have become the main service providers in countries where government is unable to fulfil its traditional role" (Ulleberg 2009).

Even in well-developed countries, NGO's contributions are recognised and acknowledged. Japan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in trying to promote its partnership with NGOs, conceded that they are always in tune with the needs of people at the grass-roots level, especially in catastrophic situations that governmental assistance may not be able to reach.

Streeten (1997), however, pointed out that some NGOs might be claiming credit for activities that they are not really performing to expectations, even though they have virtues that are frequently not proclaimed. He further commented that some NGOs rarely reach the poorest and in many ways are quite dependent on governmental support. He supported the notion though that NGOs are very adaptable and well-suited to promoting self-reliance, even if they are not usually participatory.

He further highlighted NGO functions and advantages, including the following:

- They are good at reaching and mobilising the poor and remote communities.
- They help empower poor people to gain control of their lives, and they work with and strengthen local institutions.
- They carry out projects at lower cost and more efficiently than government agencies.
- They promote sustainable development.

As stated by Ulleberg (2009), NGO activities are increasingly diverse and in many instances, may undermine government initiatives due mainly to the innovative and adaptive capacities they possess as compared to those of government. However, once NGOs start to scale up their various activities and techniques, so that they are in line with the government level, then a string of benefits can be expected to flow to the country as a whole. A scenario is emerging where NGOs are playing a proactive role in various development areas, particularly in relation to women's welfare, with one of the main objectives being the empowerment of women.

Pacific Island NGOs

Pacific Island NGOs have always played strong advocacy roles when it comes to supporting women's rights, democracy, human rights, peace and development, media freedom, good governance and the rule of law. Assistance has been provided to Pacific Island countries to ensure they can meet their obligations to the international conventions they have signed through the United Nations.

Slatter (2006) declared that women's NGOs in Fiji and Samoa, in particular, played key roles in shadow reporting on their countries' performance in relation to their obligations to the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women. The Fiji-based NGO, Coalition on Human Rights, has also produced a shadow report on Fiji's obligations under the Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.

Women's empowerment in the Pacific Islands

The Women's Empowerment Principles are a set of principles for business, which offer guidance on how to empower women in the workplace, marketplace and community. They are the result of collaboration between the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) and the United Nations Global

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Compact and are adapted from the Calvert Women's Principles.

The development of the Women's Empowerment Principles included an international multi-stakeholder consultation process, which began in March 2009 and culminated in their launch on International Women's Day in March 2010. Pacific Island countries and territories adopted the principles at the 9th Triennial Conference of Pacific Women held in Fiji in 2005 as part of a regional charter for advancing gender equality and women's progress. The charter is reviewed every three years during the Triennial Conference of Pacific Women.

Women's economic empowerment was also highlighted as one of the critical areas of concern under the Revised Pacific Platform for Action on Advancement of Women and Gender Equality 2005–2015². "It is about increasing women's participation and influence over economic decisions that affect their own lives and society. Women's economic empowerment can be achieved through equal access to and control over critical economic resources; gaining the skills to use economic resources; and equal access to economic opportunities" (Pacific Islands Forum briefing paper).

The 2011 Pacific Regional Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) Tracking Report showed that "across the majority of countries, governments have done little to raise the economic participation of women, with civil society organisations (CSOs) and the private sector taking the lead".³

According to a Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat briefing paper, "Economic Empowerment of Women,"⁴ women make critical contributions to the household and national economy with their involvement in multiple activities that support and sustain their livelihoods — subsistence farming, cash cropping, fishing, production of handicrafts and small-scale businesses. While the general business environment in Pacific Island countries is improving, secure property rights and access to financial services (including credit) remain issues for women.⁴

According to a World Bank report (2010), in some Pacific countries, 70% of male employees spent between 50 to 80% of their fortnightly wages on alcohol and kava. In contrast, women's income is mostly used for the purchase of food, school fees and other household needs. This is a reflection of entrenched behaviours that dictate decisions regarding the use of income.

Women's NGOs in Fiji

A recent call by Fiji's Minister for Social Welfare, Women and Poverty Alleviation to NGOs working in the interests of children and women to strengthen their roles in times of disaster management and rehabilitation could signify a strengthening of their partnering relationship with the government. Alternatively, it could also suggest that NGOs are not really doing what they are supposed to do.

Similar calls have been made by the Permanent Secretary of Information, who was quoted as saying that women's NGOs were too focused on political issues and were not doing enough on the issue of sexual assault in Fiji. This statement was, however, refuted strongly by the Fiji Women's Crisis Centre, the NGO that focuses on counselling and providing legal and medical assistance and practical support for woman and children who are victims of violence.

Such instances create uncertainty about the impact of NGO projects and raise questions about the effectiveness of development aid channelled through NGOs. With the increase in donor funding to women's NGOs in Fiji, public expectations for higher quality services are also expected to rise.

It is important to appraise, analyse and critique projects undertaken by women's NGOs to ascertain the extent of their impacts/influence on the empowerment of women in Fiji. Such a study may also raise critical issues concerning women's empowerment and the effectiveness of women's NGO projects and development in general.

Further studies will also assist in extending the existing space for literature and policy relating to the experience of women in development in Fiji, and help identify barriers and obstacles to mainstreaming women's participation in commerce and business. The new knowledge and information thus generated will be valuable to government, development planners, policy makers, donors, NGOs and other stakeholders.

Impacts of development assistance

The real impacts of development assistance on programme beneficiaries remain largely unknown in many developing countries. NGOs in the Pacific have come a long way despite challenges that include government hostility, questioning of their legitimacy, funding constraints and over-dependence on donor support (Slatter 2006).

² <http://www.pacmas.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/Revised-Pacific-Platform.pdf>

³ [http://www.forumsec.org/resources/uploads/attachments/documents/2011 Pacific Regional MDGs Tracking Report_FINAL.pdf](http://www.forumsec.org/resources/uploads/attachments/documents/2011%20Pacific%20Regional%20MDGs%20Tracking%20Report_FINAL.pdf)

⁴ <http://www.forumsec.org/resources/uploads/attachments/documents/FEMK.04.Rev%201%20-%20Economic%20Empowerment%20of%20Women.pdf>

However, now that they are better resourced than in the past and are taking on much wider social responsibilities, much is expected from Pacific NGOs. Delivery of high-quality, meaningful outputs are expected by stakeholders, the government, donors, service recipients, employees and society as a whole.

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Gender mainstreaming of Fiji's forest policies — Issues, challenges and the future for women in the development of the forest sector

Veikila C. Vuki¹ and Maria Elder²

Introduction

Fiji is a patrilineal society and tribal land ownership passes down the male line. In terms of their use of land and other natural resources including forests, men and women in Fiji have traditional and distinct gender roles.

Food, fruit, nuts, herbal medicines and building materials for most Fijian traditional communities have been sourced from forests (Bynoe et al. 2011). Women have good knowledge of forests and plants that are used for traditional herbal medicines for all types of ailments.

Women also use the forest to collect firewood and food such as wild yams. Seasonal abundance of food crops, fruits, nuts and vegetables are well known to both men and women.

Men dominate decision-making processes concerning the management of forests and use of forest products. They also dominate decision-making on management of other natural resources and any form of development targeting traditional Fijian communities in villages. Women's participation in forest governance at the national level or traditional community level is therefore very limited.

Customary land tenure is a key issue, with 82 per cent of Fijian land owned by customary landowners. Land ownership follows the traditional structure recorded by the British colonial administration (Nayacakalou 2001). The primary land-owning unit is the clan, often headed by the most senior male member.

The clan is then further subdivided into kinship groups based on patrilineal descent. But generally each male member of the clan will be allocated a plot of land to plant for his and his household's use. In some cases, women will have user rights to access customary land for their use and that of their households, although Fijian women are generally excluded from inheritance rights to customary land.

The Fiji Legislative Assembly approved the first Fiji Forest Policy in 1950. Then in 1953 the Forest Act

was endorsed. The Forest Act was formulated primarily for timber production according to the forest managers. In 1988, the Forest Sector reviewed and initiated changes to the forest legislation. However, in 1990, the Forest Act was reviewed, but the revised act was short-lived and was replaced by a Forest Decree in 1992. The Decree took into account social, economic, environmental, cultural and political developments.

In 2003, there was a need to redefine Fiji's Forest Policy to reflect the adoption of sustainable forest management and to ensure full implementation of strategic directions and landowners' aspirations for the management of their resources. Several issues provided opportunities for wider stakeholder consultations. These included the focus on sustainable forest management, increased landowner aspirations, climate change and globalisation of concerns for the environment. In 2004, a full review of the Forest Policy was undertaken and this was endorsed in 2005 by the Rural Land Use Policy (RLUP; Framework for Fiji Forest Policy on Sustainable Land Use). The Forest Policy was approved and endorsed in 2007 (Fiji Forest Policy Statement 2007).

Fiji's Forest Policy context and key challenges

Despite the Fiji Government ratifying its commitment to eight major international programmes and developing legislation, frameworks and action plans to enable women to fully participate in the socio-economic development of the country, there are still challenges.

The key challenges include the fact that women are under-represented in managerial positions but tend to be well represented in lower administration positions in the sector. There is still a lack of gender policy details in the two main relevant policies (Fiji National Forest Statement and the Fiji Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation (REDD)-Plus Policy). There is also a lack of gender mainstreaming in the national programme for the sector and no budget for specifically addressing gender issues and undertaking targeted activities.

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² Land Resources Division, Secretariat of the Pacific Community, Suva, Fiji.

Initiatives to support gender equality in the forest sector

There have been several initiatives undertaken by government institutions and non-government organisations to promote and encourage the participation and empowerment of women in the forestry sector. These have included workshops on traditional medicine and “women and forests”. In addition, International Women’s Day activities have focused on discussions and displays relating to women and forests.

National women and forest workshops

The Fiji Government has organised national women and forest workshops in response to women’s requests for awareness workshops, and non-government organisations have held community-based forest awareness workshops and built nurseries in Fijian villages. Some of these workshops have identified the value of trees and forests that supply fruits, nuts, husks and leaves. Most importantly, these workshops have identified trees that supply materials for handicrafts and medicines. Awareness of the need to protect these valuable trees from fire and logging has been identified in the workshops. Biological diversity surveys have also been important aspects of the workshops for both men and women.

Traditional medicine workshops

In the past, traditional medicine workshops have been organised where documentation, usage and promotion of indigenous knowledge of herbal medicinal plants have been encouraged. Further work undertaken by the Department of Forestry in response to requests by women has included the identification and awareness of plants from native forests that are used for traditional medicine.

A non-government organisation (Wainimate) was established to promote traditional medicine awareness within the community and women’s specialised knowledge of forests, such as plant availability and habitat, was recognised at various workshops.

International Women’s Day

Events held on International Women’s Day included a panel discussion on the role of women in integrated forest management, which concluded that women have specialised knowledge of forests, such as which plants are suitable for medicinal purposes. However, men make the important decisions on forest management while women’s voices are not heard. When planning and implementing forest projects, it is important to consider how the project will affect men and women differently in the long term and to ensure women’s opinions are taken into consideration.

Displays of handicrafts made by women from raw materials harvested from forests have been a feature of most community events, especially on International Women’s Day. There is still great potential for the development of the handicraft industry for Fijian women. Currently, women earn money from handicrafts that use trees and plants from the forest to make mats, baskets and bark cloth for local and overseas markets. Development of the handicraft industry, including better access to markets and improved product design, will need to be strengthened.

Tree planting programme for women

A tree planting programme organised by the Fiji Women’s Rights Movement was specifically undertaken to promote women’s participation in the forest sector and forest conservation. Partnerships with civil societies are important in strengthening women’s participation and in integrating women into forest management. Organisations such as Future Forest, Nature Fiji, World Wildlife Fund for Nature (WWF) and the World Conservation Society have focused on rehabilitating degraded areas and have established seedlings and nurseries for native and introduced species of trees. Stronger partnerships with civil society, government institutions and the private sector will benefit women’s participation and provide sustainable livelihoods for communities.

The future for women in the forestry sector

Although Fiji has made progress in keeping its commitment to international agreements on gender and has made some efforts in integrating gender issues into its national programme and some policies, there is still a need for gender mainstreaming in the forestry sector. Although progress has been made in the recruitment of women to fill roles in entomology, geographical information systems (GIS), database management, data analyses and reporting, women’s participation needs to be strategically planned to address gender disparity in the sector.

A review of the two most relevant policies in the sector (Fiji National Forest Policy Statement and the Fiji REDD-Plus Policy) is needed. The revision of the policies should incorporate gender perspectives in both policies and guide gender mainstreaming in the sector to help increase awareness and the design of relevant interventions and measures to reduce gender disparity.

Strengthening of forestry-related women’s networks such as Wainimate to encourage research and development of traditional herbal medicine is also needed. Funding support for the participation of women’s organisations in the sector will contribute to further research and discussion on gender issues in the forest sector.

There is a need to encourage capacity building in technical training on gender issues and development of appropriate training materials. A toolkit for gender awareness and analysis will have to be developed for the sector. Financial resources for the Fiji National University's forestry programme also need to be developed to ensure inclusion of training materials and capacity building on technical gender assessment.

Gender mainstreaming within the forestry department needs to be undertaken to increase the level of awareness on gender issues. A gender taskforce group may be required to help direct this mainstreaming within the department. Further gender mainstreaming in building technical assessment skills (gender analyses, collection of disaggregated data, gender planning and budgeting) will have to be developed with a gender focal point in the department, leading to assessment of the department's national programme to include gender-based activities. The linkage between the Ministry of Women (responsible for gender work in Fiji) and the Department of Forestry is weak and needs to be strengthened to develop future partnerships in gender training.

Adequate financing of gender-based activities by the government and funding agencies is important in addressing gender issues and gender disparity. The provision of an on-going budget for recruitment of women in the sector and to positions on relevant

boards and committees needs to continue. Continued collection of disaggregated data is needed to provide a basis for research and planning.

The promotion of women's involvement in the private sector is also vital. In particular, development of the handicraft industry and the protection and planting of trees that are used for handicraft are essential roles for the private sector. The active participation of women in agroforestry and in the establishment of nurseries is also important in promoting the role of women in the sector. The development of eco-tourism and forest conservation will ensure the sustainability of livelihoods for women in traditional communities.

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Original text: English

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