

Some sources of help in how to gather gender disaggregated data

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Last year was the 30th anniversary of the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). In the 30 years since this convention and other international agreements on development were signed, development approaches have grappled with how to raise the status of women, children and people with little power. Action – and results – have been slow, however, and have varied from activism, national policy prescriptions, research and capacity building to apathy. In their iconic 1995 paper, Ravazi and Miller analysed the conceptual shift then underway from ‘women in’ to the broader ‘gender and’ approaches in economic and social development, perceiving that ‘what the two approaches share is a gender-disaggregated analysis of roles and access/control over resources’. Indeed, whether you are interested in women and gender from a strong feminist, social justice or pragmatic economic perspective, you will need gender-disaggregated data and information to get anywhere.

This conclusion on the need for gender-disaggregated data applies just as much to fisheries and aquaculture as to any other sector, but gender-disaggregated data are nearly non-existent. Many national statistics barely identify fishing sector participation, let alone gender participation. Occupational studies at household, locality, ethnic group or other social level rarely delve into gender roles.

Indeed, when preparing this article, I emailed Joni Seager, Professor of Global Studies at Bentley University in the United States, to request a copy of a paper she wrote on the topic of gender disaggregated statistics. When she found out why I sought her paper, she remarked: ‘the whole question of sex-disaggregated data is vexing, in just about every field. ... I ... have written an international atlas on the status of women (Seager 2009) and in the most recent edition tried to include something on women in fisheries – and found ... slim pickings’.

So when we stress that fisheries and aquaculture research and development professionals should be collecting (and analysing) gender disaggregated data, this raises the question of how to do it. In other economic sectors, recent expert meetings have addressed this question and gone on to develop guidance on gathering and using the data.

Most started with how to ensure the basic national, industry and occupational statistics address gender and then ventured into how to gather gender data in research, diagnostic surveys, development projects, advocacy campaigns and evaluation and impact assessment.

Water, sanitation and energy are among the more advanced sectors in developing guidance manuals. Agriculture and natural resource management are improving but still have some way to go. While we await and agitate for a revolution in collecting gender disaggregated data in fisheries and aquaculture, here are some sources that might be useful and that can be adapted for fisheries and aquaculture work.

Agriculture, rural development (including fisheries and aquaculture)

- *Gender in agriculture sourcebook*, FAO, IFAD and World Bank, 2008. <http://worldbank.org/genderinag>. The sourcebook contains various types of advice, especially on impact assessments in Module 16 on Gender Issues in Monitoring and Evaluation.
- *Types of gender analysis in natural resource management and plant breeding*, Nina Lilja and Jacqueline A. Ashby, 1999. Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research, Participatory Research and Gender Analysis, Working Document No. 8. <http://www.prgaprogram.org/>. This document contains a useful checklist for ‘assessing the types of gender analysis in each stage of innovation based on who participates’.
- *Gender-disaggregated data for agriculture and rural development guide for facilitators*, FAO 2003. <http://www.fao.org/SD/seaga/downloads/En/GDDEn.pdf>. This guide is targeted at field staff and seeks to help make their work, including in the collection of data, more gender sensitive.
- *Filling the data gap: Gender-sensitive statistics for agricultural development*, FAO 1999. <http://www.fao.org/docrep/X2785E/X2785e00.htm>. This ‘early’ guide is mainly concerned with national level participation statistics and is intended to sensitise policy-makers to the importance and value of having gender disaggregated data.

Water and sanitation

- *Expert Group Meeting Report on Gender-Disaggregated Data on Water and Sanitation, United Nations Headquarters, New York 2-3 December 2008*, United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs and UN-Water Decade Programme on Capacity Development, 2009. http://esa.un.org/iys/docs/EGM_Report.pdf. This very useful report contains much that can be applied, albeit with some adaptation, to fisheries and aquaculture. Especially see Chapter 5 'Data collection needs: gender-disaggregated indicators currently unrepresented or under-represented' and Chapter 6 'Summary Indicator Table'.

Household energy sector

- *Field tools for collection of gender-disaggregated data*, 2009. <http://www.hedon.info/docs/E-MINDSET-Field-Tools-Collection-Gender-Disaggregated-Data.pdf>. This 10-page guide, put out by Hedon, a network in the household energy sector, gives guidance on collecting gender-disaggregated data with a number of social science field tools, many of them from participatory appraisal approaches.

If any reader is aware of good materials on collecting gender disaggregated data in the fisheries and aquaculture sector, please share it with us!

References

- Razavi S. and Miller C. 1995). From WID to GAD: Conceptual shifts in the women and development discourse. Occasional Paper 1. United Nations Research Institute for Social Development United Nations Development Programme.
- Seager J. The state of women in the World Atlas (4th Ed), Penguin, New York, 2009.